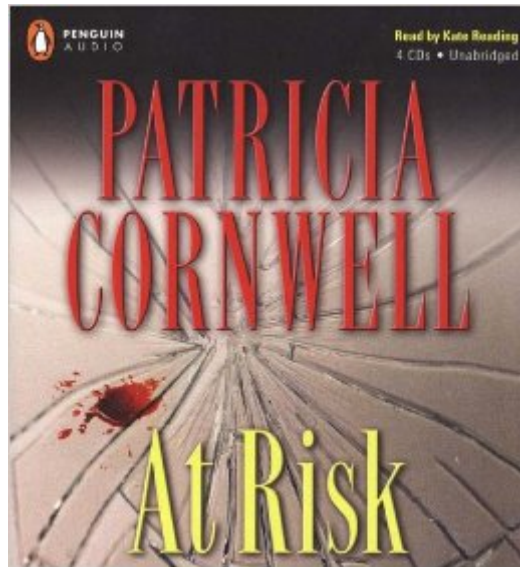


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# At Risk



## Synopsis

From America's #1 bestselling crime writer, an electrifying new thriller-with a twist. Unabridged CDs  
- 4 CDs, 4 hours

## Book Information

Series: At Risk

Audio CD

Publisher: Penguin Audio; Unabridged edition (May 23, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0143058738

ISBN-13: 978-0143058731

Product Dimensions: 6.6 x 6.7 x 1.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces

Average Customer Review: 2.1 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (293 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,106,346 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #37 in [Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > \( C \) > Cornwell, Patricia](#) #3056 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Medical](#) #3869 in [Books > Books on CD > Mystery & Thrillers](#)

## Customer Reviews

I don't usually write negative reviews even when I don't like a particular book. But in this case, I have to make an exception. As usual, I rushed out to get *At Risk* just as soon as the local bookstore opened with it (sorry about that ....in the case of Cornwell books, I usually just can't wait!). Finished it in a couple of hours and felt like throwing it against the wall. It's a real stretch to believe that the same person who wrote *Cruel and Unusual*, *The Body Farm*, *From Potter's Field* and *Unnatural Exposure* could have written this book. The dust jacket says it was originally written as a fifteen-part serial for a magazine, and it shows. Very little plot continuity with disjointed leaps all over the place; little, if any, meaningful character development; even the usual sterling scientific minutiae we've come to expect from a Cornwell book is superficial and mostly unexplained. I have been a loyal fan of Cornwell's since I first stumbled across *Postmortem*. I even enjoyed her efforts in the *Andy Brazil* series that most everyone else hated. But in all honesty, *At Risk* seems like she felt obligated to get another book out in a hurry and just threw this one together. The dust jacket says "...this is the master working at the top of her game." If this is the top of Cornwell's game she's at risk of losing her legions of fans. Not worth the time or money, folks.

At Risk is an interesting novel. It is much shorter than Patricia Cornwell's previous books, with new characters within the medical examiner/police framework. However, in this case, the mystery story is weak, the characters forgettable, and the motivations and plot are, frankly, unclear. It seems as if this is the prelude for a deeper, richer story, not a complete story in itself. The wordsmithing isn't quite up to my expectations of her standard work. All in all, this book reads like a rush job, an editorial demand that a book, whether ready or not, had to come out prior to the start of the summer reading season. I'm not the biggest fan of Patricia Cornwell's more recent work. Body Farm, to me, was her best book. Since Body Farm, the characters in her books (and their behaviors) are getting more bizarre, as are the crimes. Let's hope Cornwell's stories improve at the same rate our crime-fighting technologies advance.... quickly. This book needs to go back into the incubator... it's not ready to hatch.

Having worked at a library for more years than I care to tell, I have seen Cornwell's novels consistently snatched from the shelves the moment they arrived. She has been on my "to read" list for ages and this book seemed like a good way to get acquainted with her work. However, after reading about two-thirds of the book, I couldn't take any more. Nobody likes anybody. Heck, they don't even like themselves! Now, I'm no Pollyanna, but shouldn't SOMEONE have SOME kind of positive interaction or relationship with SOMEBODY? Don't get me wrong - any good tale needs tension and adversarial relationships, but an entire volume of insecure, mean-spirited internal dialogue is not my idea of a good read. I don't even care enough to finish the book. I can't help thinking that this author must be better than this, or she wouldn't be so popular. Maybe once I get the taste of "At Risk" out of my mouth, I'll try one of her others.

I've been a huge fan of Ms Cornwell for a long time, and I have a hard time believing that the author who wrote the first nine Scarpetta books is the same person who wrote Blowfly, Trace, Predator, and now, At Risk. The last of Ms Cornwell's books that I actually purchased was Blowfly (big mistake!), and since then I will not spend a cent on one of her books until I've read a copy from the library. When I first read the jacket on At Risk, I was very surprised and pleased to see that it wasn't another Scarpetta novel - all her characters in that series had become much too bizarre, pathetic, or just plain unlikeable - and had great hopes that she had written something new and fresh. However, At Risk is no better (and probably worse in many ways) than her last three. It actually doesn't start out too badly (not brilliant, but the characters and plot have some potential), but then, just as the plot and suspense are rising, you start the next chapter and find out that the detectives have it all solved!

The story has no rhythm, continuity, or logic to it. The last half of the book reads like it was thrown together in about an hour. Very disappointing. I'm still hoping that Ms Cornwell will write another wonderful thriller (particularly if she continues to concentrate on fresh material and forget about the Scarpetta series) - after all, that talent must still be in there somewhere! In the meantime, I won't waste my money and will be using my library card more.

First of all let me say that I loved Patricia Cornwell and the Scarpetta series was very addicting. I was very excited about this new book *At Risk*, well not anymore. I think she must have just been dumped or went through a traumatic time in her life for her to just dump her fans like this. From the moment I opened the "official" hardback which by the way is book club size, I was disgusted. The margins are so wide and the text is double spaced, I felt like I was about to read a third grader's Goosebumps book. That would have been okay had the book been about 750 pages. However, you just know if the publisher has to space it out just to make it 212 pages, this is not going to be good or have any suitable detail. Luckily I opened the book before wasting my money. I sat down at the book store and read the whole book in an hour and half. The conclusion: Cornwell- maybe someone needs to study your brain and figure out what went wrong with it like they did with the criminals in *PREDATOR* because something isn't working anymore up there!

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