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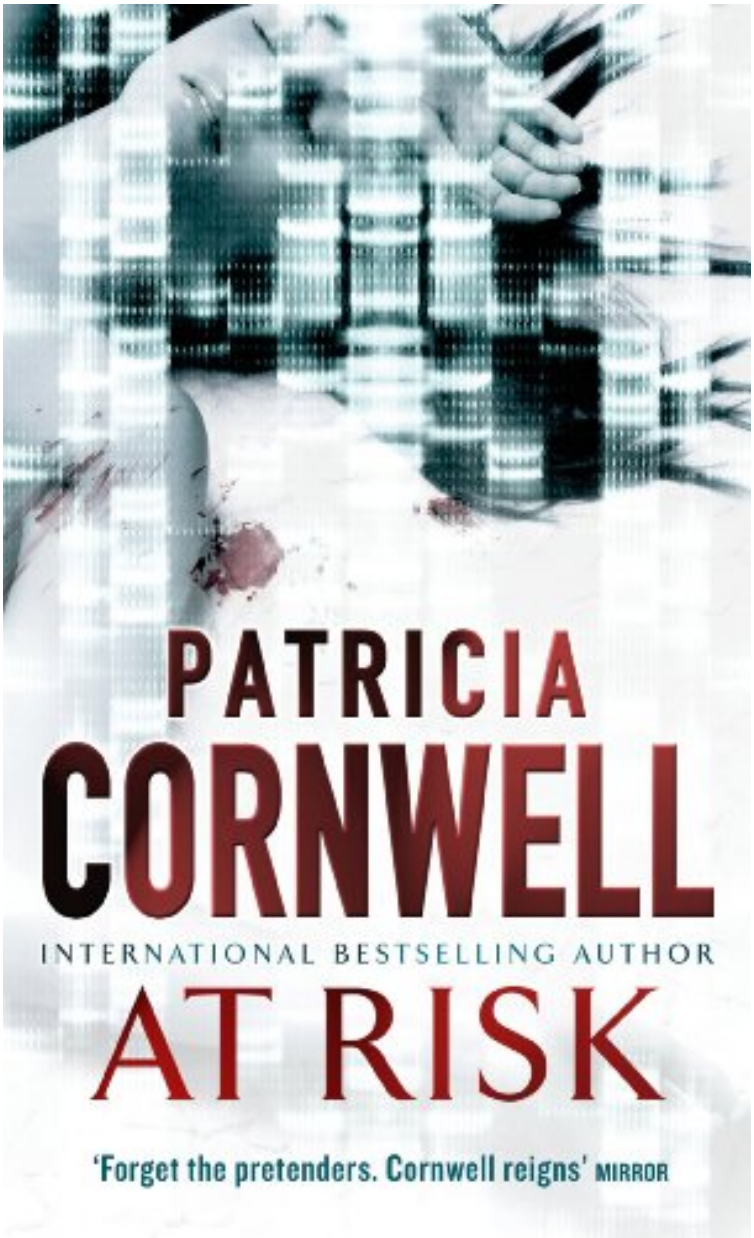
At Risk



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Par Patricia Cornwell : At Risk before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised At Risk:

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

Prsentation de l'diteurA 'one-off' from the best-selling creator of the Dr Kay Scarpetta series, based on the serialisation in the New York Times.Moving between the chill of Cambridge, Massachusetts and the sultry humidity of Knoxville, Tennessee, Winston Garano, a police investigator, is instructed to look into a twenty-year-old murder case. Although Win reckons there are many more pressing current cases which should have higher priority, he gets on with the task, unaware of the can of worms he will prise open. With her hallmark

qualities of deft characterisation, perfect research and tense story-telling, Patricia Cornwell has created a novel which entertains, intrigues and satisfies..co.ukAnother Patricia Cornwell appears, and it's a pretty safe bet that At Risk will storm its way to the top of the best-selling charts. Cornwell has been at the top of the American crime writing tree for so long now that her position is virtually unassailable--even when she produces the odd misfire (which he has been known to do). Fortunately, At Risk can be counted among her successes, though its brevity may disappoint some. The book is based on a recent story of the same name serialised in The New York Times, but those hoping for the return of Cornwells resourceful forensic specialist Dr Kay Scarpetta will have to wait a little longer, as Cornwell introduces a new central character in this book. Having inhabited the mind of a female protagonist for so long, the author has felt the need to move into very different territory with a charismatic male police investigator at the centre of the narrative. The book takes the reader from the cool climes of Cambridge, Massachusetts to the overbearing heat of Knoxville Tennessee. Win Garano is handed a tricky assignment: he is to investigate a murder case that is over two decades old. District Attorney Monique Lamont isn't concerned about the difficulties of the case, though--she simply wants results for personal reasons. Win is convinced that he has been saddled with a very low priority case, but quickly finds that there is much more to this twenty-year-old mystery than he thought. As some very dangerous secrets are uncovered, Win finds himself dealing with both the consequences of his investigation and the remarkable ambitiousness of Monique Lamont as he pursues a political grand prize. In the past, when Cornwell has moved away from the safe territory of the Kay Scarpetta novels, she has slightly alienated her dedicated fan base. But she is absolutely right to take chances like this in order to freshen her literary inspiration, and this fast-moving piece is a laudable effort, even if it comes in at a rather shortish page count. --Barry ForshawExtraitAn autumn storm has pounded Cambridge all day and is set to play a violent encore into the night. Lightning sears and thunder startles as Winston Garano (Win or Geronimo most people call him) strides through the dusk along the eastern border of Harvard Yard.He has no umbrella. He has no jacket. His Hugo Boss suit and dark hair are dripping wet and pressed flat against him, his Prada shoes soaked and filthy from a false step out of the taxi into a puddle. Of course, the damn taxi driver let him out at the wrong damn address, not at 20 Quincy Street in front of the Harvard Faculty Club but at the Fogg Art Museum, and that was Wins miscalculation, really. When he got into the taxi at Logan International Airport, he happened to tell the driver, Harvard Faculty Club, its near the Fogg, thought maybe if he referenced both he might sound like someone who went to Harvard or collects fine art instead of what he is, an investigator with the Massachusetts State Police who applied to Harvard seventeen years ago and didnt get in.Big raindrops feel like irritable fingers tapping the top of his head and he is overcome by anxiety as he stands on the old red-brick walk in the midst of the old red-brick Yard, looking up and down Quincy Street, watching people spew past in cars and on bicycles, a few on foot and hunched under umbrellas. Privileged people move through the rain and mist, belonging here and knowing they do and where they are going.Big raindrops feel like irritable fingers tapping the top of his head and he is overcome by anxiety as he stands on the old red-brick walk in the midst of the old red-brick Yard, looking up and down Quincy Street, watching people spew past in cars and on bicycles, a few on foot and hunched under umbrellas. Privileged people move through the rain and mist, belonging here and knowing they do and where they are going.Excuse me, Win says to a guy in a black windbreaker and baggy, faded jeans. Your Mensa question for the day.Huh? He scowls, having just crossed the wet one-way street, a soggy satchel dripping from his back.Wheres the faculty club?Right there, he replies with unnecessary snottiness, probably because if Win were a faculty member or anyone important, obviously he would know where the faculty club is.He heads toward a handsome Georgian Revival building with a gray slate roof, the brick patio blossoming with wet, white umbrellas. Lighted windows are warm in the gathering darkness, and the quiet splashing of a fountain blends with the sounds of the rain as he follows slick cobblestones to the front door, running his fingers through his wet hair. Inside, he looks around as if hes just entered a crime scene, taking in his surroundings, making judgments about what must have been a parlor for some wealthy aristocrat more than a century ago. He surveys mahogany paneling, Persian rugs, brass chandeliers, Victorian theater broadsheets, oil portraits and polished old stairs that lead somewhere hell probably never go.He takes a seat on a stiff antique sofa, a grandfather clock reminding him that he is exactly on time and that District Attorney Monique Lamont (Money La-Mount, as he calls her), the woman who basically runs his life, is nowhere in sight. In Massachusetts, the DAs have jurisdiction over all homicides and have their own state police investigative service assigned to them, and what that means is that Lamont can bring anybody she wants into her personal squad, meaning she can also get rid of anybody she wants. He belongs to her and she

has her ways of reminding him of that.This is the latest, the worst of all her political maneuvering, and in some instances shortsighted reasoning, or what he sometimes views as her fantasies, all of it radiating from her insatiable ambition and need to control. She suddenly decides to send him way down South to Knoxville, Tennessee, to attend the National Forensic Academy, saying that when he returns he will enlighten his colleagues about the latest innovations in crime scene investigation, show them how to do it right, exactly right. Show them how to ensure that no criminal investigation will ever, and I mean ever, be compromised by the mishandling of evidence or the absence of procedures and analyses that should have been done, she said. He doesnt understand it. The Massachusetts State Police has CSIs. Why not send one of them? She wouldnt listen. She wouldnt explain.Win looks down at the soggy shoes he bought for twenty-two dollars at the vintage clothing shop called Hand-Me-Ups. He notices the beginning of dried water spots on the gray suit he got for a hundred and twenty dollars at the same shop where hes gotten quite a lot of designer clothing dirt cheap because everything is used, cast off by rich people who easily tire of things or are infirm or dead. He waits and worries, wondering what is so important that Lamont has summoned him all the way up here from Knoxville. Roy, her wimpish, supercilious press secretary, called him this morning, yanked him out of class, told him to be on the next flight to Boston.Right this minute? Why? Win protested.Because she said so, Roy replied.Inside the high-rise, precast Cambridge District Court building, Monique Lamont emerges from the private powder room inside her large private office. Unlike many DAs and others who wade in the world of criminal justice, she doesnt collect police caps and patches or foreign uniforms and weapons or framed photographs of famed law enforcement officials. Those who give her such mementos do so only once, because she doesnt hesitate to give them back or away. She happens to like glass.Art glass, stained glass, Venetian glass, new glass, old glass. When sunlight fills her office, it turns into a prismatic fire, flashing, winking, glowing, sparkling in a spectrum of colors, distracting people, amazing them.She welcomes distracted, amazed people to her rainbow, then introduces them to the nasty storm that preceded it.Hell no, she picks up where she left off as she sits down at her expansive glass desk, a see-through desk that doesnt deter her in the least from wearing short skirts. Another damn educational video on drunk driving is not going to happen. Does anybody besides me think outside the box?Last week in Tewksbury, an entire family was killed by a drunk driver, Roy says from a sofa catty-corner to the desk, looking at her legs when he assumes she doesnt notice. Thats far more relevant to citizens than some old murder case from some provincial Southern city nobody around here cares . . .Roy. Lamont crosses her legs and watches him watching her. Do you have a mother?Come on, Monique.Of course you have a mother. She gets up, starts pacing, wishes the sun was out.She hates rain.How would you like it, Roy, if your ninety-pound elderly mother were beaten savagely in her own home and left to die alone?Oh come on, Monique. Thats not the point. We should be focusing on a Massachusetts unsolved homicide, not one in Hickville. How many times do we have to go through this?Youre foolish, Roy. We send in one of our .nest and solve it and getI know, I know. Huge national attention.The sure, strong hand reaching down to help those less fortunate, less, well... less everything. We get the old evidence, reexamine itAnd make Huber look good. Somehow, it will be him and the governor who look good. Youre kidding yourself if you think otherwise.It will make me look good. And youre going to make sure of thatShe abruptly stops talking as the office door opens and coincidentally, maybe too coincidentally, her law clerk walks in without knocking. Hubers son. It briefly crosses her mind that hes been eavesdropping. But the door is shut. It isnt possible.Toby? she warns. Am I psychotic or did you just walk in without knocking again?Sorry about that. Man, I got too much on my mind. He sniffs, shakes his shaved head, looks half stoned. I just wanted to remind you Im taking off.For good, she wishes. Im completely aware, she says.Be back next Monday. Hanging out at the Vineyard, chilling, my dad knows where to find me if you need me.Youve taken care of all pending matters?He sniffs again. Lamonts pretty sure hes fond of cocaine. Uh, like what?Uh, like everything Ive put on your desk, she says, tapping a gold pen on a legal pad.Oh, yeah, sure. And I was a good boy, cleaned up everything, straightened up so you wont have to pick up after me. He smirks, his resentful feelings toward her peeking through his fog, leaves, shuts the door.One of my bigger mistakes, she says. Never do a favor for a colleague.Its obvious youve made your decision and its as final as death, Roy picks up where he left off. And I reiterate my belief that youre making a very big mistake. Maybe a fatal one.Cut the death analogies, Roy. They really annoy me. I could use a coffee.Cut the death analogies, Roy. They really annoy me. I could use a coffee.Governor Miles Crawley sits in the backseat of his black limousine, the partition up, his executive protection out of sight, unable to hear him on the phone.Dont be so damn sure you get careless, he says, staring down at his long, pinstripe-clad legs stretched out, staring blankly at his shiny black shoes. What if someone talks? And we

shouldnt be talking about this....The someone involved isnt going to talk. Thats guaranteed. And Im never careless.No guarantees except death and taxes, the governor says, cryptically.In this instance, youve got a guarantee, no way to lose. Who didnt know where it was? Who lost it? Who hid it? No matter what, who looks bad?The governor gazes out the window at the darkness, the rain, the lights of Cambridge shining through, not so sure he should have gone along with this, decides, Well, theres no turning back since its out to the press. Youd damn well better hope youre right, because the person Ill blame is you. It was your damn idea.Trust me, it will all be good news for you.The governor could use a little good news. His wife is a real pain in the ass these days, his bowels are acting up, and hes off to another dinner. This one is at the Fogg Art Museum, where hell walk around looking at Degas paintings, then say a few words to make sure all the art-loving philanthropists and Harvard elitists are reminded of what a cultured man he is.I dont want to talk about this any further, the governor says.Miles . . .He hates being called by his first name, no matter how long he has known the person. Its Governor Crawley. Someday Senator Crawley.. . . youll be thanking me, I promise . . .Dont make me repeat myself, Governor Crawley warns. This is the last time we have this conversation. He ends the call, tucks his cell phone back in his jacket pocket.The limousine pulls up to the front of the Fogg. Crawley waits for his private protection to let him out, lead him on to his next political performance, alone. Damn his wife and her damn sinus headaches. He was briefed on Degas not even an hour ago, at least knows how to pronounce his name and that he was French.Lamont gets up, slowly paces, looking out the window at a depressingly dark, wet dusk, sipping coffee that tastes burned.The medias already started calling, Roy says as a warning.I believe that was the plan, she says.And we need a damage control plan.. . .Roy. I cant hear much more of this!Hes such a coward, the gutless wonder, she thinks, her back to him.Monique, I just dont see how you can possibly believe that any scheme of the governors is going to benefit you in the end.If were going to get fifty million dollars to build a new crime lab, she repeats herself slowly, as if he is stupid, we have to get attention, show the public, the legislators, were completely justified in upgrading technology, hiring more scientists, buying more lab equipment, building the biggest DNA database in the country, maybe even in the world. We solve some old case that people in the good ol South have left in a cardboard box for twenty years, and were heroes. The taxpayers support us. Nothing succeeds like success.More of Hubers brainwashing. What crime lab director wouldnt want to talk you into that, despite the risk to you?Why cant you see what a good idea this is? she says in frustration, looking out at the rain, the relentless, dreary rain.Because Governor Crawley hates you, Roy replies flatly. Ask yourself why he would hand this off to you.Because Im the most visible DA in the commonwealth. Im a woman. So he doesnt look like the small-minded, sexist, right-wing bigot he really is.And running against himany failure will be on your head, not his. Youll be Robert E. Lee surrendering your sword, not him.. . .So now hes Ulysses S. Grant. Win will get this done.More likely do you in.She slowly turns around, faces Roy, watches him flip through a notebook.Just how much do you know about him? he says.Hes the best investigator in the unit. Politically, a perfect choice.Vain, obsessed with clothes. He reads his notes. Designer suits, a Hummer, a Harley, raising questions about his finances. A Rolex.A Breitling. Titanium. Probably gently used, from one of his many secondhand shops, she says.Roy looks up, baffled. How do you know where he gets his stuff?Because I recognize the finer things in life. One morning I asked him how he afforded the Herms tie he happened to be wearing that day.Consistently late when called to crime scenes, Roy goes on.According to whom?He flips several more pages, runs down one of them with his .nger. She waits for his lips to move as he silently reads. There, they just moved. Dear God. The world is full of imbeciles.Doesnt appear hes gay, Roy continues. Thats good news.Actually, it would be rather huge-minded of us if our poster-boy detective was gay. What does he drink?Well hes not gay, thats for sure, Roy says. A womanizer.According to whom? What does he like to drink?Roy pauses, confounded, says, Drink? No, he doesnt have that problem at least.. . .Vodka, gin, beer? Shes about to lose her patience entirely.I got no friggin idea.Then you call his pal Huber and find out. And I mean before I get to the faculty club.Sometimes I just dont understand you, Monique. He returns to his notes. Narcissistic.Who wouldnt be if he looked like him, she says.Conceited, a pretty-boy empty suit. You should hear what the other cops have to say about him.I believe I just did.Win Garano enters her mind. His dark, wavy hair, flawless face. A body that looks sculpted of creamy tan stone. And his eyes, something about his eyes. When he looks at her, she gets the uncanny sensation that he is reading her, knows her, maybe even knows something she doesnt.Hell be perfect on TV, perfect in photo shoots.. . . probably the only two good things I can say about him is he shows well, poor inadequate Roy is saying, and has somewhat of a minority status. Albeit high-yellow, neither nor.What did you just say? Lamont stares at him. Im going to pretend you didnt.Then what do we

call it?We dont call it anything.African-Italian? Well, I guess so, he answers his own questions as he skips through the notebook. Father was black, mother Italian. Apparently decided to give him his mothers name, Garano, for obvious reasons. Both parents dead. Faulty heater. Some dump they lived in when he was a kid.Lamont fetches her coat from the back of the door.His upbringings a mystery. Got no idea who raised him, lists no closest next of kin, the person to contact in an emergency someone named Farouk, apparently his landlord.She digs her car keys out of her bag.Less about him, more about me, she says. His history isnt important. Mine is. My accomplishments. My record. My stand on the issues that matter. Crime. Not just todays crime. Not just yesterdays crime. She walks out the door. Any crime, any time.Yup, Roy follows her. Some campaign slogan you got there.