

PATRICIA CORNWELL

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A SCARPETTA NOVEL

UNNATURAL EXPOSURE

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION BY THE AUTHOR



This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

UNNATURAL EXPOSURE

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Also by Patricia Cornwell

POSTMORTEM

BODY OF EVIDENCE

ALL THAT REMAINS

CRUEL AND UNUSUAL

THE BODY FARM

FROM POTTER'S FIELD

CAUSE OF DEATH

HORNET'S NEST

UNNATURAL EXPOSURE

POINT OF ORIGIN

SCARPETTA'S WINTER TABLE

SOUTHERN CROSS

LIFE'S LITTLE FABLE

BLACK NOTICE

RUTH, A PORTRAIT:

THE STORY OF RUTH BELL GRAHAM

TO ESTHER NEWBERG
Vision, No Fear

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*And there came unto
me one of the seven
angels which had the
seven vials full of the
seven last plagues . . .*

REVELATION 21:9

One

Night fell clean and cold in Dublin, and wind moaned beyond my room as if a million pipes played the air. Gusts shook old windowpanes and sounded like spirits rushing past as I rearranged pillows one more time, finally resting on my back in a snarl of Irish linen. But sleep would not touch me, and images from the day returned. I saw bodies without limbs or heads, and sat up, sweating.

I switched on lamps, and the Shelbourne Hotel was suddenly around me in a warm glow of rich old woods and deep red plaids. I put on a robe, my eyes lingering on the phone by my fitfully-slept-in bed. It was almost two A.M. In Richmond, Virginia, it would be five hours earlier, and Pete Marino, commander of the city police department's homicide squad, should be up. He was probably watching TV, smoking, eating something bad for him, unless he was on the street.

I dialed his number, and he grabbed the phone as if he were right next to it.

"Trick or treat." He was loudly on his way to being drunk.

"You're a little early," I said, already regretting the call. "By a couple of weeks."

"Doc?" He paused in confusion. "That you? You back in Richmond?"

"Still in Dublin. What's all the commotion?"

"Just some of us guys with faces so ugly we don't need masks. So every day is Halloween. Hey! Bubba's bluffing," he yelled out.

"You always think everybody's bluffing," a voice fired back. "It's from being a detective too long."

"What you talking about? Marino can't even detect his own B.O."