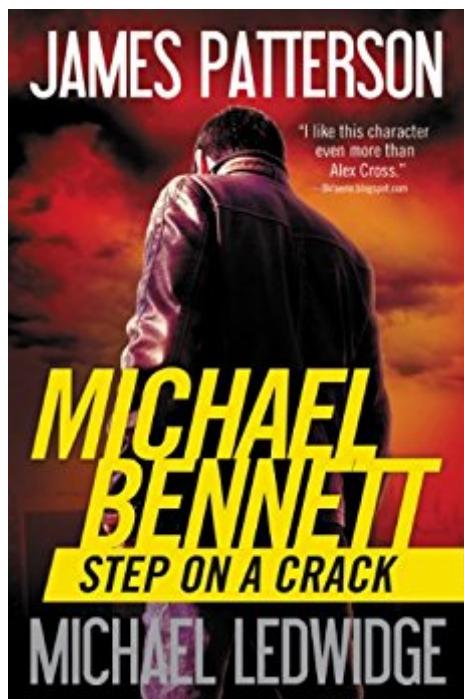


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Step On A Crack (Michael Bennett, Book 1)



Synopsis

During a state funeral for a beloved former First Lady in New York City's largest cathedral, the unthinkable occurs. Armed men disguised as monks seize the church and seal themselves inside, along with more than one hundred of the most powerful people in America. The captives include world leaders, actors, TV stars, athletes, and politicians, and the kidnappers are armed with enough C4 explosives to blow a crater in the middle of Manhattan. NYPD officer Michael Bennett is pulled into the standoff as lead negotiator. Despite the escalating danger, Michael faces an even more terrifying crisis at home. His wife has been diagnosed with a devastating disease, and Michael faces the prospect of losing the love of his life and having to raise their ten children alone. With his own life teetering and the lives of thousands suddenly his responsibility, Michael struggles to diffuse the tense situation fast. Yet the kidnappers' moves are impossible to predict, and they block every attempt to break into the cathedral almost as if they are privy to their deliberations.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Step on a Crack is the latest novel to be released and to have James Patterson's name on the cover. This book, like all but the Alex Cross novels, has a co-author. Patterson has at least 4 books

coming out this year and the cynical will dismiss him as a hack who churns out novels for the money. He probably does do that, and it doesn't really bother me. All Patterson's novels are short and easy to read. Some are good, like the Lifeguard and 4th of July, some are bad like 5th Horseman and Beach Road. I read Step on a Crack with an open mind and was prepared to judge it on its merits. The novel deserves 1 star for incredibly poor characterization but I'm giving it two stars because the terrorist plot is quite intriguing. A former First Lady is murdered and of course a big funeral must be held. Hotshots from Hollywood, business and politics all show up and a group of terrorists strike, taking over the funeral. They release everyone except around 35 of the chosen big shots that they hope to extort money from. Michael Bennett is an NYPD homicide cop with a wife in the hospital and ten kids, yes ten kids. He gets thrust into the position as the lead negotiator with the terrorists because he has prior experience as a hostage negotiator. All Patterson novels follow a formula, and this is no exception. The characters have little depth, the plot skips over details. Basically, these books are written like a movie. The action in the book is somewhat intriguing. The hostages (pro football player, aging rock star, hollywood actress, talk show host) are entertaining as their ego-driven personalities have to find a way to cope with each other and the men holding them hostage. The terrorists are American and predictable in their brutality.

Two others in my group read Step on a Crack by James Patterson and Michael Ledwidge before I did. They both agreed that the book was not very good (to paraphrase their summaries as gently as possible), so it's fair to say that my expectations were low when I picked up the book. My expectations were met. Had I something else to read, I would have put this thing down around chapter four and never looked back. (The chapters are very short). The first sentence is a confused and awkward bit of imagery (the back of a jacket turns away...) and that sets the tone for the whole book. We start with a murder, the untimely demise of one of the finest people the world has ever known. Her highly-trained bodyguards, Secret Service, for crying out loud, who have been protecting her for several years now, are apparently unable to respond to what should be a routine medical emergency. It seems no one told them that their charge was deathly allergic to peanuts so they weren't able to do anything about it. Oops! (The bad guy knew about her allergy, however, well enough to execute a months-long plot to infiltrate a fancy restaurant in order to put peanut oil on her dinner. Wow.) On top of that, somehow on this particular night the woman forgot to pack her own medicine. And so begins the work of the greatest criminal mastermind of the century. But wait! Before we go any further with tales of murder and mayhem, it's time to meet a whole bunch of Perfect People. These people do nothing to influence the plot of the story; they're too busy being perfect.

Perfect children. A perfect stranger to take perfect care of the perfect children in the time of crisis.

Perfect people everywhere, doing the perfect things with perfect consistency. Bleeargh.

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