

# Predator (Scarpetta)

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Scarpetta, now freelancing with the National Forensic Academy in Florida, digs into a case more bizarre than any she has ever faced, one that has produced not only unusual physical evidence but tantalizing clues about the inner workings of an extremely cunning and criminal mind.

She and her team—Pete Marino, Benton Wesley, and her niece, Lucy—track the odd connections between several horrific crimes and the people who are the likely suspects. As one psychopath, safely behind bars and the subject of a classified scientific study at a Harvard-affiliated psychiatric hospital, teases Scarpetta with tips that could be fact-or-fantasy—the number of killers on the loose seems to multiply. Are these events related or merely random? And what can the study of one man's brain tell them about the methods of a psychopath still lurking in the shadows?

Patricia Cornwell's most recent bestsellers include *Red Mist*, *Port Mortuary*, and *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper Case Closed*. Her earlier works include *Postmortem*—the only novel to win five major crime awards in a single year—and *Cruel and Unusual*, which won Britain's prestigious Gold Dagger Award for the best crime novel of 1993. Dr. Kay Scarpetta herself won the 1999 Sherlock Award for the best detective created by an American author. Kay Scarpetta, renowned criminal investigator with the National Forensic Academy in Florida, hunts another serial murderer. Basil Jenrette, imprisoned serial killer and research subject, is somehow connected. Kate Reading's narration is good; she is particularly adept at depicting the therapist's calm, controlled voice, then switching to the anger and belligerence of Moreno, former city cop. Scarpetta fans may be disappointed that her focus in this novel is forensics of the dysfunctional, rather than murder and investigative work, and that the story's ending is illogical. Some parts of the story are overly gruesome, as well. Even excellent narration and characterization can't salvage this poorly plotted mystery. One expects better from Cornwell. G.D.W. AudioFile 2006, Portland, Maine-- Copyright AudioFile, Portland, Maine

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