

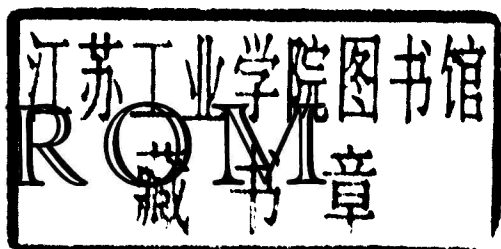
PATRICIA  
CORNWELL

FROM  
POTTER'S  
FIELD

Scribner  
New York London Toronto Sydney Tokyo Singapore

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CORNWELL

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1230 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY 10020

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

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ISBN 0-684-19598-4

**This book is for Dr. Erika Blanton  
(Scarpetta would call you friend)**

And he said, What has thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

—Genesis 4:10

FROM  
POTTER'S  
FIELD

## 'T WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

*He walked with sure steps through snow, which was deep in Central Park, and it was late now, but he was not certain how late. Toward the Ramble, rocks were black beneath stars, and he could hear and see his breathing because he was not like anybody else. Temple Gault had always been magical, a god who wore a human body. He did not slip as he walked, for example, when he was quite certain others would, and he did not know fear. Beneath the bill of a baseball cap, his eyes scanned.*

*In the spot—and he knew precisely where it was—he squatted, moving the skirt of a long black coat out of the way. He set an old army knapsack in the snow and held his bare bloody hands in front of him, and though they were cold, they weren't impossibly cold. Gault did not like gloves unless they were made of latex, which was not warm, either. He washed his hands and face in soft new snow, then patted the used snow into a bloody snowball. This he placed next to the knapsack because he could not leave them.*

*He smiled his thin smile. He was a happy dog digging on the beach as he disrupted snow in the park, eradicating footprints, looking for the emergency door. Yes, it was where he thought, and he brushed aside more snow until he found the folded aluminum foil he had placed between the door and the frame. He gripped the ring that was the handle and opened the lid in the ground. Below were the dark bowels of the subway and the screaming of a train. He dropped the knapsack and snowball inside. His boots rang on a metal ladder as he went down.*





ALSO BY PATRICIA CORNWELL

POSTMORTEM

BODY OF EVIDENCE

ALL THAT REMAINS

CRUEL AND UNUSUAL

THE BODY FARM

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