



# Midnight Rambler

*James Swain*

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Son surnom: le Tueur de minuit. SpA(c)cialitA(c) serial-killer torturant et assassinant ses victimes en A(c)coutant en boucle Midnight Rambler des Rolling Stones.

Il y a quelques mois, Jack Carpenter a mis sous les verrous Simon Skell que toute la (TM)enquAate dA(c)signait comme A(c)tant le terrifiant serial killer. Mais il y a dA(c)sormais un problA]me: le corps da (TM)une ancienne victime du Tueur de minuit vient da (TM)Aatre dA(c)couvert.

Et la (TM)enquAate mA(c)dico-lA(c)gale prouve que Skell na (TM)est pas coupable. Jack sait qua (TM)il a affaire A un gA(c)nie du crime. MAame derriA]re les barreaux, le Tueur de minuit a toujours avoir une longueur da (TM)avance. Et Carpenter se retrouve au cA-ur da (TM)un piA]ge qui se referme inexorablement a ]

Un grand nom du thriller, une rA(c)vA(c)lation saluA(c)e par le public et la critique.

## Midnight Rambler Details

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Author : James Swain

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# From Reader Review Midnight Rambler for online ebook

## Sue says

Loved it. Another book read in one single day. yum!

The only thing I didn't like was that one was left feeling as a spectator, only getting oblique views of "possible past" actions of this 'Midnight Rambler' guy. All the action was carried by his cohorts, and was discovered way later, as the author pieced it all together.

Maybe that's life, but I would have liked a more pro-active, current approach to the villain and his actions-- THEN we can proceed to piecing it together and apprehending/killing him.

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## Catherine Nelson says

There is absolutely nothing realistic about anything or anyone in this book, and there are so many inconsistencies the story has no credibility. The FBI would never let a civilian lead them around by the nose, they don't encourage civilians to shoot and kill people, and they handle kidnappings with a lot more urgency. It doesn't make any sense that an ex-cop famous for tracking missing people would not immediately jump to trying to find a missing person, especially when he knows the girl. Cops don't threaten violence and beat information out of everyone, and certainly not as a first course of action. This isn't the best way to get information. Bad guys don't confess and start telling the truth after being asked the question one time. And after tripping over conscience after happenstance after good stroke of luck, Jack Carpenter should just bag the whole thing and buy a lottery ticket, because no one is ever that fortunate and never do the pieces of the case just drop themselves in the investigator's lap.

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## Kevin says

Yes, the detective protagonist is a former police officer, burned out, broke, and isolated from his family and friends due to a high profile serial killer case, and yes, there is nothing new with that plot device.

Even so, I have to credit James Swain through his cliches for the mostly artful presentation, which moves the detective and the reader convincingly from the hunt for clues to bloody confrontations, and back on the hunt again. The specter of the serial killer's release (for which the detective is partially correct in blaming himself) makes an excellent countdown, elevating the suspense all the more since the readers do not encounter him personally until the end. So we project a lot of power on him and his abilities, and even though the trick is obvious, it still works.

Look for the lemon sharks.

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## Ensiform says

Jack Carpenter, ex-cop infamous for brutally beating a serial torture-killer (Simon Skell, the Midnight Rambler of the title), has become a private investigator who helps find missing children. When the body of one of Skell's victim's is uncovered, evidence points to another killer and Skell goes free. Immediately, Carpenter and Melinda Peters, whose evidence put him away, are in deadly peril.

Uh... I really could not believe how hilariously bad this book is. It's just really, amazingly poorly written. I was amazed to find that Swain is not a young upcoming author, nor this his first book; he's an award-winning, middle-aged fellow with seven previous books under his belt!

But where to begin about how ridiculously out of touch and cartoonishly silly this supposedly gritty, hard-boiled book is? That there is a wide circle of killers aiding Skell, one of whom is a successful businessman who picks his victims (young prostitutes) from fast food drive through cameras? Young and beautiful prostitutes, mind you, with cell phones and cars; no one would miss such people! That Carpenter is such a moron he, the experienced child abduction recovery expert, is flummoxed as to why the kidnapers would have spray paint on them (to color the kid's shoes, obviously)? That every single case Carpenter is called to in this book relates somehow to Skell (what luck!)? That Skell, supposedly a smart, crafty killer, would immediately come for the witness and cop who put him in jail, after being released very publicly? That the villains race through public streets, shooting and fleeing the FBI, even as they are (hilariously at this point) still trying to frame Carpenter for Skell's crimes? That Carpenter learns that a radio host who daily excoriates him is (of course) part of this prostitute kidnapping cartel, and learns this from a couple of random illegal workers who are putting up a billboard (the host's past is clearly known by cops and newsmen, but Carpenter doesn't know it about his most public enemy, although these blue collar aliens do, for some reason)? There's a thousand preposterous bits and major plot points like these. Swain is a Christian, and the book has an explicitly Christian undertone, so maybe he is incapable of writing a realistically gritty tale, I don't know. He's certainly capable of writing an utterly moronic sentence like "she had the sympathy of one who had raised kids," though (as if parents cannot be unsympathetic, or even evil!). Or this hilariously unaware howler of a passage: "'What if you are killed?' 'Best not to think that way.' 'But what if you are?' I hadn't weighed that option," the narrator (ex-cop, gritty private eye) muses. This is easily the worst book I've read in many years. I actually finished it just because it was so unintentionally hilarious.

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## Joe says

Midnight Rambler appears to be the first of a series featuring Jack Carpenter, a disgraced ex-cop, almost broke PI, who has a talent for finding "lost" children. The locale is the well worked ground of Southern Florida. Jack is a likeable protagonist - loving husband (although estranged from his wife), father (college age daughter) and dog owner (said dog borders on being a "partner" joining Jack on every road trip). Jack has a sense of humor, a temper, an exercise regimen, a set of seedy friends and enough "connections" to keep him informed or provide back-up and special favors when necessary. The plot revolves around the villain/case that sent Jack packing from the Police Dept. with his tail between his legs and now he has a chance to redeem himself. So all the formulaic "private eye bases" are covered.

The bad news. The story's plausibility factor is at times stretched beyond belief. The "bad guy", (with a genius IQ), not only manipulates his own cohorts but the justice system and its associated players - cops, forensic experts, judges - with an expertise that borders on farce.

Secondly, poor Jack with his "past" is constantly fighting an uphill battle in the credibility department with no one giving him the benefit of the doubt until the end.

The good news is that there are some extremely entertaining and poignant vignettes - for instance a kidnapping attempt at Disney World and the advice/solution Jack gives/provides to wealthy parents about the "disappearance" of their daughter.

Part of my problem with this book was the expectation level I had based on the previous reviews. Midnight Rambler is not a bad book - I just didn't find it a great thriller - simply an "average" one.

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### **Jim A says**

First of the Jack Carpenter series. A good place to start with this author if you haven't tried him. His Tony Valentine series is also very good but much better in the early books.

Edited to correct Valentine's first name. Thanks, Cathy

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### **Karen Wilson says**

First book I've ever read by James Swain. It was terrific! There was action from beginning to end. I liked some of the characters and disliked others. Looking forward to reading the next book in the series.

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### **Annie says**

A patron of my librarian hubby recommended this and I read it in one sitting. It was very good and I will get more by him.

A specialist in finding missing children, former cop Jack Carpenter was fired from the force for assaulting a prisoner. Broke after a civil lawsuit and estranged from his wife and daughter, he's living in a seedy beachside apartment north of Miami, Fla., with his dog. Then Simon Skell (aka the Midnight Rambler), whom Carpenter helped convict for murdering prostitutes, is released from prison on a technicality. Determined to prove Skell guilty, Carpenter is frozen out by the cop on the case, but help comes from an FBI agent whose daughter vanished years earlier. The tension rises as the investigation widens far beyond Skell. Well-defined characters and intricately woven subplots, one involving a nail-biting scene at Disney World, make this a page-turner. 12-city author tour. (Oct.)

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### **Veronica Lamb says**

**A constant barrage of excitement.**

Nook. It's not over!! What an excellent read. It wasn't like a roller coaster because there wasn't any down time to catch your breath. A constant barrage of excitement. Kept me up at night. Haven't read a book this good in such a long time. What happens next?

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## **Leon Aldrich says**

Likeable story with Disney World thrown in. Other reviewers have commented about plausible police procedures and that Swain was better off writing about what he knows. I'm leaning in the same direction.

The FBI is NOT going to let a local take lead on a serial killer investigation. Especially if the person isn't part of the po-po.

But I was so let down from Cook's Nano that Midnight Rambler has me youtubeing music videos!

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## **Don Gorman says**

(3 1/2). I saw a couple of reviews about this book on GoodReads and it piqued my interest. It is solid from start to finish. Jack Carpenter is a great protagonist. Insightful, cocky, irritating, slighted, enduring, the whole nine yards. The story gets a little out of hand here once in a while but the pursuit keeps it all hanging tough. Oh, and there is a really cool dog as well. A great vacation read for me, big fun.

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## **Connie says**

This is #1 in a Jack Carpenter Series.

This takes place in South Florida and involves women that have been abducted and have not been found. Jack has been kicked off the police force and he is kind of looking into things on his own. He is not a private investigator yet, but that may be in the works down the road.

Jack seems to be misunderstood a lot and accused of things he may or may not have done. I loved his character and am going to look for the next 2 books in the series. He left the ending of this book up in the air and I am not sure if what happened will happen in the next book or a book in the future, but it certainly had my interest.

I am giving this 5 out of 5 stars.

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## **Eric\_W says**

I have read most of Swain's Tony Valentine series and enjoy them a lot. Swain apparently knows the gambling and grifting business cold and it shows in the stories. Midnight Rambler is a departure from that knowledge set, I think. His protagonist is an ex-cop who got thrown off the force for beating up a suspect. He specializes in finding missing persons, especially children. He has Bruno, a dog to provide some comic relief. It's a good story but the detail doesn't ring as authentic as his grifter series. I was listening to this book while driving and every now and again would mutter, "you stupid son-of-a-bitch."

I have this thing about self-righteous vigilantes, for that's what our "hero" is. He has this obsession with finding lost children and he's good at it, but there are a couple of scenes where, rather than call the authorities, who have the manpower and resources to fix things right, he insists on taking the law into his own hands, all the while treating us to a discourse on why he can do things better, yada yada yada. The end result is that he is forced to kill one of the chief bad guys before getting information they desperately need to save a girl who has been kidnapped and is being tortured. They can see it happening on the screen, and they learn the location, but do they call in the cavalry? Nope, gotta do it themselves. Foolish, stupid and self-righteous.

Nevertheless, I'll give it a couple of stars for an intriguing and unusual plot in which the bad guys employ centralized order taking at a McDonald's to target their victims.

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### **Catrinka says**

Meh. So-so start to the Jack Carpenter private detective series. It was okay enough that I'll probably try the second book in the series, though, before totally giving up on it.

I listened to the audio version on a long car trip. The story itself was mostly engaging, but most of it was either too predictable or too farfetched.

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### **Marko Jovanovi? says**

Jako uzbudljiva i napeta pri?a, puna avanture i adrenalina. Džek Karpender je definitivno detektiv koga ?e ljubitelji krimi?a zavoleti. 4 zvezdica od mene zbog predvidljivog kraja i nekih nejasnih momenata i situacija. :)

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