



Deadly Deterrent

John Henrickson

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Deadly Deterrent is an engaging and wild thriller with surprises around every corner.

Brimming with intrigue, violence, deception, and cunning, John Henrickson's riveting and compelling *Deadly Deterrent* is a unique take on heroes and villains. Spurred on by his humiliation and thirst for vengeance, a gang member takes it upon himself to learn the ways of a hardened killer and become someone who is respected and feared in the underworld.

The book opens with Dustin Ford's gang initiation: the attempted murder of a police informant, an event that is the tipping point for the violence and bloodshed that follows.

The narrative begins from Ford's perspective and transitions throughout to include points of view of Detective Weeks, several victims, and passers-by. Attachments are created for characters—some of whom may not even make it through the book alive. This method creates mystery and intrigue that keep the pages turning while events build to the main story.

After its violent opening, the story follows Ford as he learns from a gang leader how to kill and commit crimes as a virtual ghost. Years later, Ford returns to Canada to avenge his humiliation and take out cops who he deems corrupt. Detectives, led by Weeks, attempt to catch the culprit before more lives are lost.

The fast-paced but easy-to-follow plot covers a few years and uses a satisfying mix of suspense, drama, action, and rough-and-tumble adventure. In this story, no one is safe or untouchable. Periods of gunfire, violence, and depravity are balanced with thoughtful inquiries into several killings. Small contextual and grammatical errors are present, but they are overshadowed by the compelling story. A conclusion that is both clear and open proves to be satisfying, even as it allows for imaginative turns and leaves what-ifs. Violence and carnage—both mental and physical—are factors until the very end.

Themes of good versus evil and how those lines become blurred are intriguing. Ford's background, motivations, and personality are all explored, though other characters are less well fleshed out. Ford's backstory makes him almost sympathetic, even though he does so many heinous, illegal things.

The story displays in-depth knowledge of police procedure and lingo, as well as of how the gang underworld works and runs. Language creates a believable world, one that could exist almost anywhere.

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ALLISON BUTLER (April 4, 2017)

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