

The Five by A P Bateman

5 stars

A more mature Alex King, but one that's just as deadly...

Anarchy to Recreate \$ociety is a group which purports to correct the unfairness of society where the richer get richer and the poor suffer as always. To do this they publicise their intent on social media by threatening to kill the top 5 richest men in the world and to continue to do so until wealth is shared more equitably. They have already made good on their promise three times.

Ex MI6 operative, Alex King, is now working for MI5 alongside his fiancée, Caroline, who has been despatched to South Africa to follow up on a lead while King remains in the UK to start his investigations.

The plot starts with another killing as a result of which Alex is thrown together with forensic pathologist Amanda Cunningham. She is young, attractive and just his type and Caroline is away..... And so the fun starts.

This is the fourth in the Alex King series. It can be read as a standalone thriller but any reader would be missing a real trick if he didn't at least consider picking up the first three. It's very easy as a reviewer to spot what you don't like in a book. It's much more difficult to identify what makes up a really satisfying read and all four books in this series are great reads.

There are several aspects which make the time spent reading this book well spent and very satisfying. First is AP Bateman's attention to detail and thorough research. This is an author on top of his game. His knowledge of weaponry and the way things work in the secret services are self-evident and if they are not borne of real life experience they are certainly very convincing. Second is the feeling that Alex King is human – cut him and he bleeds. He has emotions and cares about victims which makes him at least likeable if not loveable. Third is credibility. So often I am jolted out of the pages by disappointment that a character has just done something which in reality would not have occurred. Never does that happen in one of Bateman's novels. Actions are always logical and follow a sensible sequence.

Another tell-tale sign of an excellent story is when the reader is totally drawn into the world on the pages to the exclusion of the outside world. It's rare for me but I experienced it twice while reading this novel. The plot starts reasonably slowly and builds to a crescendo with plenty of changes of pace in between to allow the reader to recover and draw breath. There are plenty of twists and turns and the ending, although totally satisfying, leaves the reader wondering what will happen to Alex next.

Bring on the next in the series.....I can't wait!

mr zorg

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review