

# HOLMES IS MISSING

*A HOLMES,  
MARGARET  
& POE  
MYSTERY*



**JAMES**

**PATTERSON**

**and BRIAN SITTS**

# HOLMES IS MISSING

*A HOLMES, MARGARET & POE MYSTERY*

**JAMES  
PATTERSON**  
and **BRIAN SITTS**



Little, Brown and Company  
New York Boston London

The characters and events in this book are fictitious. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, is coincidental and not intended by the author.

Copyright © 2025 by James Patterson

Excerpts from *The Writer* and *Paranoia* copyright © 2025 by James Patterson

Cover design by Gregg Kulick

Cover photography © Trevillion Images

Cover copyright © 2025 by Hachette Book Group, Inc.

Hachette Book Group supports the right to free expression and the value of copyright. The purpose of copyright is to encourage writers and artists to produce the creative works that enrich our culture.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this book without permission is a theft of the author's intellectual property. If you would like permission to use material from the book (other than for review purposes), please contact [permissions@hbgusa.com](mailto:permissions@hbgusa.com). Thank you for your support of the author's rights.

Little, Brown and Company

Hachette Book Group

1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104

[littlebrown.com](http://littlebrown.com)

[X.com/littlebrown](https://x.com/littlebrown)

[Facebook.com/littlebrownandcompany](https://facebook.com/littlebrownandcompany)

[Instagram.com/littlebrown](https://instagram.com/littlebrown)

First ebook edition: January 2025

Little, Brown and Company is a division of Hachette Book Group, Inc. The Little, Brown name and logo are trademarks of Hachette Book Group, Inc.

The publisher is not responsible for websites (or their content) that

are not owned by the publisher.

The Hachette Speakers Bureau provides a wide range of authors for speaking events. To find out more, go to [hachettespeakersbureau.com](http://hachettespeakersbureau.com) or email [hachettespeakers@hbgusa.com](mailto:hachettespeakers@hbgusa.com).

Little, Brown and Company books may be purchased in bulk for business, educational, or promotional use. For information, please contact your local bookseller or the Hachette Book Group Special Markets Department at [special.markets@hbgusa.com](mailto:special.markets@hbgusa.com).

ISBN 9780316569972 (hc) / 9780316584463 (large print) /  
9780316569965 (ebook)  
LCCN 2024941730

E3-20241115-JV-NF-ORI

# Contents

[Cover](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

[Chapter 20](#)

[Chapter 21](#)

[Chapter 22](#)

[Chapter 23](#)

[Chapter 24](#)

[Chapter 25](#)

[Chapter 26](#)

[Chapter 27](#)

[Chapter 28](#)

[Chapter 29](#)

[Chapter 30](#)

[Chapter 31](#)

[Chapter 32](#)

[Chapter 33](#)

[Chapter 34](#)

[Chapter 35](#)

[Chapter 36](#)

[Chapter 37](#)

[Chapter 38](#)

[Chapter 39](#)

[Chapter 40](#)

[Chapter 41](#)

[Chapter 42](#)

[Chapter 43](#)

[Chapter 44](#)

[Chapter 45](#)

[Chapter 46](#)

[Chapter 47](#)

[Chapter 48](#)

[Chapter 49](#)

[Chapter 50](#)

[Chapter 51](#)

[Chapter 52](#)

[Chapter 53](#)

[Chapter 54](#)

[Chapter 55](#)

[Chapter 56](#)

[Chapter 57](#)

[Chapter 58](#)

[Chapter 59](#)

[Chapter 60](#)

[Chapter 61](#)

[Chapter 62](#)

[Chapter 63](#)

[Chapter 64](#)

[Chapter 65](#)

[Chapter 66](#)

[Chapter 67](#)

[Chapter 68](#)

[Chapter 69](#)

[Chapter 70](#)

[Chapter 71](#)

[Chapter 72](#)

[Chapter 73](#)

[Chapter 74](#)

[Chapter 75](#)

[Chapter 76](#)

[Chapter 77](#)

[Chapter 78](#)

[Chapter 79](#)

[Chapter 80](#)

[Chapter 81](#)

[Chapter 82](#)

[Chapter 83](#)

[Chapter 84](#)

[Chapter 85](#)

[Chapter 86](#)

[Chapter 87](#)

[Chapter 88](#)

[Chapter 89](#)

[Chapter 90](#)

[Chapter 91](#)

[Chapter 92](#)

[Chapter 93](#)

[Chapter 94](#)

[Chapter 95](#)

[Chapter 96](#)

[Discover More](#)

[About the Authors](#)



[A Preview of \*The Writer\*](#)

[A Preview of \*Paranoia\*](#)

## **What's coming next from James Patterson?**

Get on the list to find out about coming titles, deals, contests, appearances,  
and more!

[The official James Patterson newsletter.](#)



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY

# CHAPTER 1

IT WAS 2 a.m. The posted speed limit on the Williamsburg Bridge into Manhattan was 35 miles per hour. But Auguste Poe was abiding by his personal driving code: Go as fast as possible, whenever possible. For short stretches, the needle on his vintage Shelby Charger was touching 60. The hum of the tires bounced off the concrete side barriers. Margaret Marple sat beside him in the front passenger seat, gritting her teeth—and biting her tongue.

“I know what you’re thinking, so keep it to yourself,” said Poe. “Helene said to get there in a hurry.”

“And hopefully, still among the living,” Marple replied, watching the bridge struts whiz by in a blur.

The call had come in on Poe’s personal cell phone barely half an hour ago—not on the main line at their private detective agency, Holmes, Marple & Poe Investigations. Marple was usually the one with connections, so it irked her just a little that in this case Poe was the one with the inside line to an NYPD homicide detective, but she knew why. And a case was a case.

“Helene said this was a big one. That’s about all she had time to say,” Poe had told Marple after he’d knocked on her apartment door, down the hallway from his own.

Now fully awake, Marple took in the glittering lights of Manhattan, its towers and spires glowing like party ornaments. They crossed the bridge and sped west across the city. Even at two in the morning, there was traffic along Delancey. Poe downshifted through a yellow light and made an illegal screeching left turn onto Ludlow, heading south.

Marple rocked hard to the right. “*Bus!*” she shouted.

Poe swerved just in time to avoid clipping the thirty-ton brute.

"I wish Holmes was here," she said.

Poe shot her a quizzical look. "Why would you miss him right now?" he asked. "Brendan is a terrible driver."

"That makes two of you," said Marple.

Their destination was St. Michael's Hospital, but the police barricade stopped them a block short. Poe pulled the Charger to the right and double-parked, effectively blocking two NYPD patrol cars. He turned off the ignition and opened the driver-side door, ignoring the "Hey, asshole!" shouts from cops nearby. Marple could barely squeeze out between the passenger door and the police vehicle to her right. Poe met her on the sidewalk. He put both hands on her shoulders.

"Look, Margaret. It goes without saying that I miss Brendan too," he said. "Don't worry. He'll send us a sign when he's ready."

They both turned and hurried to the end of the street, where St. Michael's loomed—a ten-story hunk of granite with small, narrow windows. It had been a fixture in the neighborhood since the late 1800s, when the Sisters of Charity convinced a group of rich Upper East Siders that the Lower East Side needed help. The nuns were long gone, but the hospital had evolved into one of the city's most prestigious private medical centers.

As Marple and Poe got closer to the hospital entrance, they saw cops running in the same direction, flowing from a nearby precinct house, shoulder radios squawking. The street was lined with small businesses, most closed and shuttered for the night. One glowing exception was Cops & Docs, a worn-looking bar sitting kitty-corner from the hospital.

"There's Helene!" Poe called out. Marple spotted her at the same time.

Detective Lieutenant Helene Grey was waiting near a stone pillar in front of the hospital. She wore dark trousers and a matching jacket, with a telltale bulge from the gun belt at her hip. Her badge was suspended around her neck, dangling over her crisp white blouse.

As they got closer, Marple noted there was no overt acknowledgment between Grey and Poe that they'd been lovers for

months. There were no pleasantries at all, just cursory nods all around. Helene's face looked drawn—as grim as Marple had ever seen her. And they had been together in some very tough situations.

“What is it?” asked Poe. “What’s going on?”

“It’s a kidnapping,” said Grey. “But not just that. Honestly, I’ve never seen anything like it. Nobody at NYPD has.” She turned to lead the way past a hospital security booth and into the main lobby. Grey walked quickly, blowing past other detectives and plainclothes teams. Uniformed cops gave her room as she powered toward the first-floor elevator bank.

“Where are we headed?” asked Marple.

Grey jabbed the Up button with her thumb. Her expression turned even darker.

“Maternity,” she said.

## CHAPTER 2

POE ALWAYS FELT a tingle in Helene's presence—an enlivened state of being. Even when she was all business. Even when the circumstances were bleak. Like now. Standing a few inches behind her in the elevator, Poe fixated on the clip that held her blond hair in a tight bun above her jacket collar. It was a small circular disk the color of a blood moon. As omens go, it was far from good.

Marple squeezed his arm. "Please behave yourself when we get there," she whispered.

"When have I not?" asked Poe.

A second later, the elevator door opened onto total chaos.

Poe could hear women crying even before he saw them. He followed Grey and Marple toward the nurses' station in the center of the unit. Cops and nurses and detectives were milling around the hallways. Hospital security honchos paced the floor in dark suits while floor guards in short-sleeved shirts gripped their walkies and tried to appear useful.

Poe looked toward a small glass-fronted room off the main unit. The crying was coming from there, from where half a dozen women in shapeless hospital gowns were sobbing and wailing and clinging to one another like condemned prisoners. Suddenly, Poe felt a hard shoulder against his chest. An athletic man in a bulky grey suit was blocking the way. Like Helene, he wore a detective badge around his neck.

"What are these assholes doing here?" he asked. The question was directed at Grey, as was the follow-up: "Who the hell invited PIs to an active crime scene?"

"Back off, Vail," said Helene. "I brought them in. My call."

Poe was fully aware of the friction between his firm and the NYPD

in general. The reason for it was simple. Holmes, Marple & Poe Investigations had recently solved some very big cases—right under the noses of the police department. Those noses were still out of joint. But Poe didn't care. He poked Detective Vail in the chest. "Haven't you heard? There's been a kidnapping."

"That's not possible," said Vail. "This place has security up the ass. You couldn't steal a goddamn Band-Aid from this floor."

Before Poe could respond, Marple yanked him aside. "Stop it, Auguste! You won't make any friends with that attitude."

"I'm not here to make friends," Poe replied. "I'm here to get answers."

A nurse in burgundy scrubs walked up and handed Grey a sheet of paper.

"Is this the list?" Grey asked.

The nurse nodded grimly. She had the look of a woman at the end of a very long shift—maybe two.

Grey tapped the page. "Six," she said. "Six missing newborn babies."

Poe looked at Marple. Helene had not exaggerated. This was a huge case. Too bad their firm was not at full strength. He leaned over and whispered in Marple's ear. "Of all the times to be one brain short!"