



RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA

THE DANGEROUS DAYS OF DANIEL X

by James Patterson

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True Confessions

If this were a movie, instead of real life, this would be the part where in a strange, ominous voice I'd say, "Take me to your leader!"

But since you are far more important in making a difference in this world than the earth's leaders, and, last time I checked the Internet those leaders seem to have more than enough on their plates, and for the most part I'm not a total dork, I'll just go with a simple "Hi."

My name is Daniel, and this is the first volume of my life story, which, hopefully, will be a very long and distinguished one.

Why should you read it? Very good question.

Maybe because this is your planet after all, and you have a right to know what's actually happening on it.

And more importantly, off it.

Trust me, there are legions of strange and disturbing creatures out there you probably don't want to know about.

Like the fast-breeding creeps with burnt-looking metallic faces bristling with pointy deer horns above hornet's noses and stingers, who populate the American Midwest and parts of Europe. Or some very nasty slug-like thingees with jowls like water balloons about to burst all over much of China and Japan, but also New York City and Vancouver. Plus, a host of human skeletonish freaks with tentacle hair and green multifaceted fly eyes; some white chocolate-colored cretins that look like giant human babies, only with glowing television fuzz for their eyes and mouths; and a Praying-mantis-looking race with shrunken heads, long red dreadlocks, and a pathetic need to kill in the general area of Texas, Kansas, and Arizona.

Maybe I should stop talking though, before I get too far ahead of myself.

To those of you who feel that you've already heard enough, let me say I'm sorry I had to give you a glimpse of what's really out there, and would you please close the cover of this book down tightly on your way out.

Now, the rest of you, I need you to do three important things.

1. Take a deep, deep breath.
2. Disregard everything anyone has ever told you about life on earth.
3. Turn the page.

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PROLOGUE

That Wretched List

I wish that I didn't sometimes, but I remember everything about that cursed, unspeakably unhappy night thirteen years ago, when I was just three years old and both my parents were murdered.

I was taking an ordinary can of Play-Doh down from the playroom shelf when my mom called from the top of the basement stairs.

"Daniel? Dinner will be ready in five minutes. Time to start wrapping things up, honey."

Finish? Already? I made a face. But my latest masterpiece isn't done yet!

"Yes, Mom," I called. "One minute. I'm making Play-Doh history down here."

"Of course you are, dear. I would expect nothing less. Love you. Always."

"Love you back, Mom. Always."

In case you've already noticed that I didn't speak like a typical three-year-old, well, you should have seen what I was building.

I stared at the museum-quality replica of the Lighthouse of Alexandria I was trying to finish.

Behind it, all the way to the edge of my work table, stood matchless reproductions I'd made of the remaining Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

The Great Pyramid of Giza
The Hanging Gardens of Babylon
The Statue of Zeus at Olympia
The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus
The Mausoleum of Maussollos
The Colossus of Rhodes

I would have liked to have done the Cathedral of Notre Dame and the Chrysler Building as well, but I was only allowed one hour of playtime a day.

I squinted suddenly as I spotted what looked like a tiny, flat black seed climbing up the side of my miniature lighthouse, and really moving too.

Whoa there, little guy! Where the heck do you think you're motoring to?

It was an Arthropoda Arachnida Acari Metastigmata, I thought, recalling the phylum, class, order and sub-order of the tiny creature at a glance. A tick. A young male dog tick, to be exact.

"Hey, little fella," I whispered to the tick. "You on a sight-seeing tour?"

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Two things happened next, almost simultaneously. Two very odd and unforgettable things.

There was a strange shimmering at the back of my bright, turquoise-blue eyes.

And the tick slowly rose up onto its hind legs, and said, "Hey, Daniel, my brother, you do real nice work. Cool lighthouse!"

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