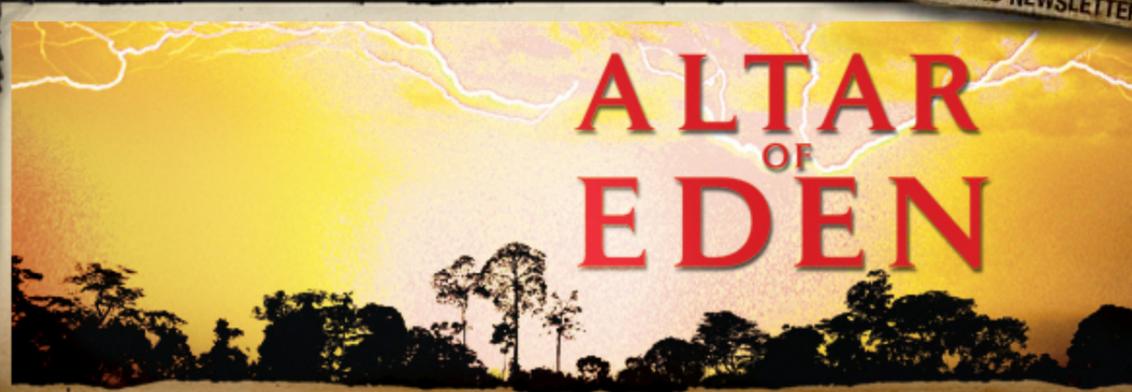


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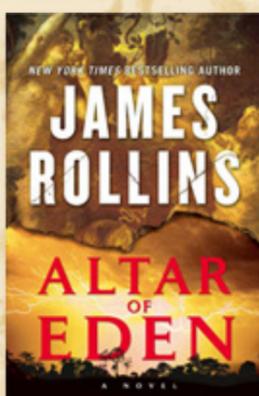
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Altar of Eden

Release Date: December 29, 2009

New Orleans veterinarian, Dr. Lorna Polk, stumbles upon an exotic animal smuggling ring, only to discover something disturbing about the animals: genetic abnormalities that defy nature. She must discover who committed these atrocities and why...and more importantly how to stop them.

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Altar of Eden, the Truth Behind the Tale pt 1 Tuesday, December 22, 2009

It started with lunch. I was having a conversation with my editor at HarperCollins. She asked me a question that I heard too often while I was still a practicing veterinarian: Why haven't you ever written about a vet, something like James Heriott's All Creatures Great and Small? My short answer was "Because not enough people die in those Heriott novels."

Back then, I was working fourteen to sixteen hours a day as a vet, and I didn't want to go home at night and write about one. I wanted to spin exciting stories of suspense, adventure, and exotic locales. So I told my editor at that lunch that if I were ever to tackle a veterinarian story it would still have to be a thriller. Based on that conversation, the story began to build in my head. What if a veterinarian stumbled upon an exotic animal smuggling ring...but something wasn't quite right with the animals? From there, the story grew quickly. And yes, like in all my novels, many people do die.

Would you like to learn more about Altar of Eden? Click [HERE](#) to read the extensive Q&A. (Be sure to click on the Q&A tab on the website).

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IN OTHER NEWS

A Christmas Story December 2009

It was always a riotous time around Christmas when I was growing up. Three brothers and three sisters made for a full house, and then add in presents and the tree and games and stories... Dinner was always a highlight, though, complete with a banquet-sized table piled high with my mom's homemade cookies.

One of the best gifts I ever received for Christmas was a ventriloquist doll when I was in the third grade. I thought I was going to be the world's best ventriloquist, a child prodigy of stage and screen.

That dream ended in about five minutes after I discovered how hard it was to 'throw your voice.'

But that didn't stop me from having fun with the doll, the kind of evil fun a third-grader who would grow up to write thrillers would come up with.

I managed to convince my younger brother that the doll, which really was a bit creepy if you think about it, would come to life after midnight and search the house for blood. After that it was just a matter of stealing the doll out of the closet at about two in the morning and hiding it under my brother's blankets — then just waiting for morning.

Okay, it did require changing a few bed sheets, but it was still worth it.

A more recent Christmas generated a bit better gift for my younger brother.

While I still had my veterinary clinic in Sacramento, the police brought in the young dog of a homeless man who had died on the streets. The dog had been defending the man's body and had been stabbed.

We tended to the dog, who recovered enough to go to a new home around Christmas time. The dog, now named Tanner, found a new family, with my younger brother. Though Tanner's sixteen now, he still lives with my younger brother and his family. I figured I owed my brother that much after all those years of terror.

If I have my way, I'll see my younger brother and everyone in my family for Christmas this year. I hope to have a quiet holiday, probably up at Lake Tahoe, with snow, family, a fire, a tree -- and a banquet-sized table covered in cookies.

Happy holidays to everyone.

HarperCollins Publishers

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