

THE CROSSING by Michael Connelly

Published by Orion

I only discovered the Bosch series by Michael Connelly about three years ago. I now wish I had done so sooner, because after reading the first book, *'The Black Echo'*, I was instantly hooked. I then proceeded to download and read the next eighteen books in quick succession, almost experiencing withdrawal symptoms at the end of the last one. Therefore, when I started to read *'The Crossing'* my expectations were high. I'm glad to say they were not misplaced.

THE PLOT

Six months ago, Harry Bosch – a detective with the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) – turned in his badge following a disciplinary incident. He then hired his half brother, Mickey Haller – a high-flying Defence Lawyer – to sue the department for forcing him out.

One of Mickey's other clients, Da'Quan Foster, has been accused of murder but Mickey firmly believes he is being set up. As Harry is unemployed at the moment, and Mickey's regular investigator is in hospital – recovering from what Mickey suspects was a deliberate hit-and-run, designed to hinder his case – he asks Harry to step in and discover who the real killer is.

As he usually works with the prosecution to convict killers, Harry considers working for Mickey tantamount to crossing to 'the dark side', and is therefore reluctant to accept. Besides, the prosecution appears to have cast-iron evidence against the accused. However, despite his reluctance to betray the very principles he has built his career on, Harry soon finds himself drawn into the case. When the trail leads him to believe police corruption may be involved, it is not long before Harry realises Mickey's client may well be innocent.

MY REVIEW

The thing I admire most about Michael Connelly's detective, Harry Bosch, is his unpredictability and human failings. Just when you think you know him, he will always surprise you by doing something totally unexpected. Although the depiction of a maverick cop can seem a bit of a cliché, there is enough substance and complexity to Bosch to make him convincing.

Harry will always follow his gut instincts, regardless of LAPD rules or the consequences to him personally. All that matters to him is finding the killer and getting justice for the victim, which sometimes makes him a difficult partner for his fellow officers and a nightmare for his superiors. *'Everybody counts, or nobody counts'* is the LAPD's motto, and Harry has based his whole career on this mantra.

Unlike in many detective stories, Harry Bosch does not remain forever frozen in a Hollywood-like time warp. Instead, he is subject to the same aging process as the rest of us, getting just that little bit older with each subsequent novel. This literary device gives the character greater credibility, enabling the reader to believe in him as a person with a real life story. Unfortunately, getting older does not necessarily mean

getting wiser, especially for Harry, who still manages to get himself into trouble, irrespective of age.

Throughout the preceding books in the Bosch series, Harry's background is gradually revealed. Born the son of a prostitute – who was murdered by an unknown assailant when he was young – Harry's early years were tough. Unaware of his father's identity, he was effectively an orphan, and brought up as such. His time in Vietnam as a 'tunnel rat' – so called because they carried out missions underground in tunnels – also brought its own problems. However, it was his mother's unsolved murder that initially instilled a deep sense of justice in Harry, prompting him to become a police officer.

In *'The Crossing'*, Harry not only knows who his deceased father was, but that he was married with a family. He is therefore now coming to terms with the fact he has a half brother – Mickey Haller – and a niece. This discovery was also a shock for Mickey, who knew nothing about his father's affair with Harry's mother. Luckily, however, the two men get on well.

Unfortunately, after a career trying to convict criminals, working for the defence goes against the grain for Harry. Therefore, when Mickey asks him to help prove a suspected killer's innocence, it causes him a real dilemma. However, Harry has always relied on his instincts, and as he gradually uncovers the trail of evidence, they do not let him down in this story.

The new situation in which he finds himself in *'The Crossing'* marks a total departure from Harry Bosch's normal world – the one loyal fans of the series are used to. Not only does he himself feel uncomfortable about working for the defence, his former colleagues also regard him as a traitor. Even his daughter, Maddie, is unhappy about him trying to help acquit a possible murderer, causing a potential crack to appear in their close bond... one he hopes he can eventually mend.

However, despite this trip to the dark side, Harry Bosch is still one hundred per cent a homicide detective and cannot resist the temptation to get back in the game. From the moment he decides Da'Quan Foster is potentially innocent – meaning the real killer is still out there – the old Bosch is back in business and an exciting story begins to unfold.

Throughout his entire series of Bosch novels, Connelly has managed to create a totally believable fictional life for his detective. Together with clever plots and intriguing twists, each story never fails to engross the reader. Connelly's time as a police reporter has obviously provided him with a solid foundation on which to build exciting and credible investigations, as well as a working knowledge of police procedure. *'The Crossing'* is no exception.

As with the previous books in the series, I thoroughly enjoyed this novel. Now, with those familiar feelings of withdrawal once again beginning to bite, I cannot wait to read Connelly's latest Bosch novel, *'The Wrong Side of Goodbye'*.

THE AUTHOR

A former police reporter for the Los Angeles Times, Michael Connelly is the author of the Harry Bosch thriller series as well as several stand-alone bestsellers, including the highly acclaimed legal thriller, *The Lincoln Lawyer*, selected for the Richard & Judy Book Club.

Michael Connelly has been President of the Mystery Writers of America. His books have been translated into 31 languages and have won awards all over the world, including the Edgar and Anthony Awards. *Bosch*, the TV series based on Michael's novels, is the most watched original series on Amazon Prime Instant Video and has just been commissioned for a fourth series. He lives in Tampa, Florida, with his family.

'The Crossing' is published by Orion and is available in eBook and paperback format. It can be purchased from Amazon, Waterstones, Foyles and other leading bookshops.