

THOMAS
Perry

RUNNER

THE NEW
BREATHTAKING
THRILLER FROM
THE BESTSELLING
AUTHOR OF
FIDELITY

Quercus

MURDOCH BOOKS

Something was wrong. She must have heard or seen something out of place, but had pushed it to the back of her mind while she concentrated on making the hospital benefit run smoothly. Ignoring the feeling had been a mistake, and she had to find the trouble now.

Jane scanned the big room. She looked at each of the entrances and exits to see which were open and which closed, who was standing near enough to control one of them, which men she knew to be physicians or hospital employees, and which were strangers. She recognized many of them, and there wasn't anyone she could spot as out of place, but she didn't stop looking. She hadn't felt this kind of uneasiness in a long time, but it was a familiar feeling. Her breathing was deep and steady, her vision was sharp, the colors almost unreal in their brightness as she moved across the ballroom. Even her skin felt more sensitive, as though she could pick up the electricity in the air.

She skirted the dessert table at a fast walk and picked up a napkin. As she swerved to the inner side of the next serving table, she swept the napkin beside a plate. When she moved on, wrapped inside the napkin was the paring knife from one of the fruit trays. She kept moving until she came upon Carey, seemingly by happy accident. He was talking with an elderly lady in an elegant black gown with long lace sleeves.

Jane walked within range and Carey saw her and ended his conversation. He stepped gracefully toward her path. She paused and leaned close. "Something's not right."

"What do you mean?"

"I don't know yet," she said. "I hope I'm imagining this, but be ready. I may have to leave in a hurry." She kept walking.

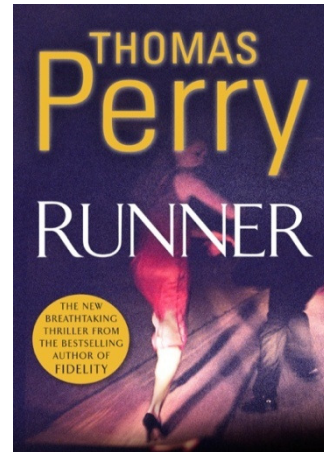
She moved toward the doorway that led to the kitchen, and she knew what she had been feeling. Nothing was happening. It had been at least twenty minutes since anyone had come out of the kitchen. The waiter who had brought the first load of desserts to the buffet tables had disappeared through the swinging door, and never reappeared. She had seen a second waiter push a cart into a corner near the dessert table, but he'd never come back. People had served themselves. The desserts that were laid out had nearly all been eaten now, but the trays had not been replenished or cleared.

Going directly into the kitchen felt to her like the wrong thing to do. Somebody could be just inside the door waiting. She altered her course slightly, moved past the accordion divider that separated the wide cafeteria entrance from the decorated and specially lighted area where the benefit was being held. The wall helped preserve the soft, unreal atmosphere of the party.

Jane held the napkin with the knife in it close to the skirt of her gown and took a step into the hall. She turned toward the outer door that led to the kitchen. There were two men in dark suits standing on both sides of the kitchen door with their backs to the wall. They were strangers, and she had not seen either of them inside the party. They didn't seem to be aware of her, so she looked away, but held them in the corner of her eye as she drifted in their direction. There was something odd about the way they held themselves, as though they were holding their breath, waiting. Were they going to harm somebody coming out of the kitchen?

The floor beneath her seemed to bump upward as though the whole building were taking a breath. Then came the noise, a deep, deafening thud, and as it tore the air the force of the explosion blew Jane off her feet and across the hall into the smooth marble wall where the names of past donors were carved.

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Description

Jane Whitefield is a fiercely intelligent, wildly resourceful Native American woman. For ten years, she worked in a very unusual profession, helping people escape from their enemies and become runners, for whom she created new identities that would never be uncovered. This was Jane's life until she married and promised her new husband, a surgeon in Amherst, New York, that she would give up her job and settle into a happy, quiet life.

But when a bomb explodes in the middle of a hospital fundraiser, Jane finds herself face to face with the cause of the explosion: a young pregnant girl who has been tracked across the country by a team of hired hunters. That night, regardless of the vow she made to her husband, Jane has to revisit old skills and old contacts. Saving one last victim is going to send Jane off on a mission that could be a rescue operation – or a chance for revenge.

Sales Points

- Thomas Perry's best loved and most critically acclaimed series character returns after a nine-year absence, in this thrilling game of cat and mouse
- '[Jane Whitefield] rates as one of his most singular creations' – *New York Times Book Review*
- '[Perry's] most complex and compelling protagonist' – *San Francisco Examiner*
- 'There are probably only half a dozen suspense writers now alive who can be depended upon to deliver high-voltage shocks, vivid, sympathetic characters and compelling narratives each time they publish. Thomas Perry is one' – Stephen King

Author Profile

Thomas Perry won an Edgar Award for his debut novel *The Butcher's Boy* (ISBN: 9781847243584) and *Nightlife* (ISBN: 9781847241153) was a *New York Times* bestseller. His most recent book, *Fidelity* (ISBN: 9781847244987), was released by Quercus in May 2008 and his previous novel *Silence* is available now in A format (ISBN: 9781847243355). Thomas is the author of sixteen novels, the Jane Whitefield novels include *Vanishing Act* and *Blood Money*. His website is www.thomasperryauthor.com.