


# The Interpretation of Murder: A Novel

*By Jed Rubenfeld*

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**International Bestseller**
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***The Wall Street Journal* Bestseller**
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In *The Interpretation of Murder*, Jed Rubenfeld weaves the facts of Freud's visit into a riveting, atmospheric story of corruption and murder set all over turn-of-the-century New York. Drawing on case histories, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and the historical details of a city on the brink of modernity, *The Interpretation of Murder* introduces a brilliant new storyteller, a novelist who, in the words of *The New York Times*, "will be no ordinary pop-cultural sensation."

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**The Interpretation of Murder: A Novel By Jed Rubenfeld Bibliography**

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## Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
It has been said that a mystery novel is "about something" and a literary tale is not. *The Interpretation of Murder* has legitimate claims to both genres. It is most definitely about something, and also replete with allusions to and explications of Shakespeare, to the very beginnings of psychology, to the infighting between psychoanalytic giants--all written in a style that an author with literary aspirations might well envy.

In 1909, Drs. Freud and Jung visit Manhattan. They no sooner arrive when a young socialite is murdered, followed by another attempted murder, bearing the same characteristics. In the second case, the victim lives. She has lost her voice and cannot remember anything. The young doctor, Stratham Younger, who has invited Freud to speak at his University, soon involves Dr. Freud in the case. Freud, saying that Nora's case will require a time committment that he does not have, turns her over to Younger. The rudiments of Nora's case are based on Freud's famous Dora, complete with sexual perversions, convoluted twists and turns and downright lies.

That is just one of the myriad plot lines in the novel, all of which are intricate, interesting and plausible. All it takes for all of the incidents to be true is a great deal of bad will--and it is abundant here! There are politicians who are less than statesmen, city employees at work for themselves and not the city, doctors who will do anything to undermine Freud's theories, thereby saving the neurotics for themselves, and opportunists at every level of society, seeking psychological or material advantage. Carl Jung is portrayed by turns as secretive, mysterious, odd, and just plain nuts, while Freud remains a gentleman whose worst problem is his bladder.

Not the least interesting aspect of the book is all the turn-of-the-century New York lore: bridge building, great mansions, the Astor versus Vanderbilt dustup, immigrant involvement, fabulous entertaining, auto versus carriage. Despite the tangle of tales, debut author Jed Rubenfeld finishes it with writerly dexterity--and the reader is sorry to see it all end. --*Valerie Ryan*

From Publishers Weekly
The search for a serial killer during Sigmund Freud's 1909 visit to New York City, his one trip to the U.S., propels the plot of Yale law professor Rubenfeld's ambitious debut. Freud's arrival coincides with the sadistic murder of a beautiful young woman in an upscale hotel. A similar attack on another woman results in the victim's hysterical paralysis. The efforts of Dr. Stratham Younger, a protégé of Freud's, to recover the survivor's memories of her assailant lead Younger into a morass of politics, big money and kinky sexual escapades. Freud plays a background role, but the father of psychoanalysis does get to expound his ideas, demonstrate his diagnostic acumen and don an apparent martyr's robe. Readers will learn much about Freud's relationship with his then-disciple Carl Jung, the building of the Manhattan Bridge, the early opponents to Freud's theories and the central problem posed by Hamlet's "to be or not to be" soliloquy. While not as well crafted as Caleb Carr's similarly themed *The Alienist*, this well-researched and thought-provoking novel is sure to be a crowd pleaser.
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From Booklist
*Starred Review* Sigmund Freud's singular visit to the U.S.--which prompted him to label Americans "savages"--provides the premise for Rubenfeld's provocative mystery debut. As the novel opens, Freud, along with rival and protege Carl Jung, arrives in America in the steamy summer of 1909 to deliver a series

of university lectures. He is soon enlisted by psychologist Stratham Younger to help solve the case of two New York debutantes preyed upon by a sadistic killer. The first young woman, Elizabeth Riverford, was found dead (whipped, mutilated, and strangled with the perpetrator's silk tie), but the second, Nora Acton, managed to escape--with no memory, alas, of the traumatic events that transpired. Under the guidance of Freud, Dr. Younger takes on Acton as a patient, becoming privy to her sexually repressed memories while fighting lustful inclinations of his own. Meanwhile, city officials pursue clues in the case, as Freud's detractors set out to ruin his reputation._Rubenfeld renders rich, complex characters, vivid period detail, and prose riddled with heady references to *Hamlet*. He deftly blends fiction and fact (a detailed author's note draws clear lines between the two), and his brisk, sinuous plot makes room for playful interpretations of the world according to Freud. When a dinner-party guest inquires as to the ramifications of her runny nose, Freud replies: "Sometimes a catarrh, I'm afraid, is just a catarrh." *Allison Block*
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## Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

**Brian Wallace:**

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**Pamela Prince:**

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**Alisa Gordon:**

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**Andrew McConnell:**

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