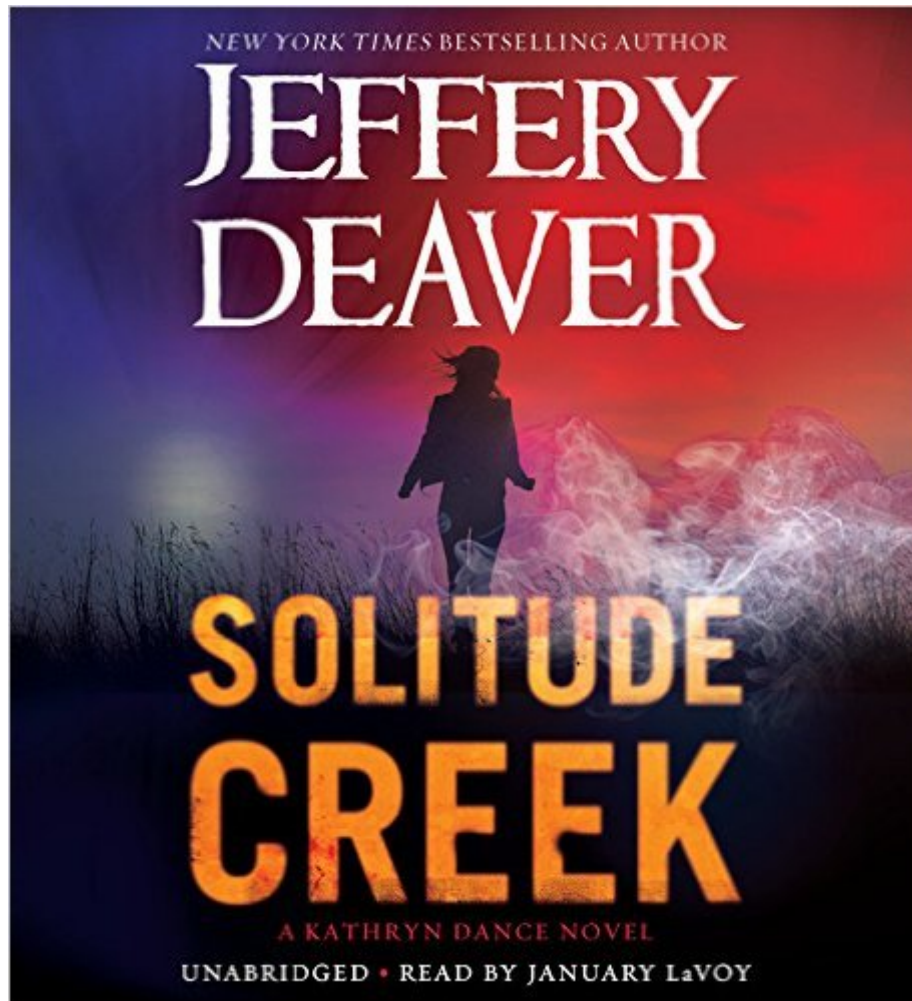


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Solitude Creek (A Kathryn Dance Novel)



Synopsis

Jeffery Deaver, "the master of manipulation" (Associated Press) and "the most creative, skilled and intriguing thriller writer in the world." (Daily Telegraph, UK) returns with the new, long-awaited, Kathryn Dance thriller. A tragedy occurs at a small concert venue on the Monterey Peninsula. Cries of "fire" are raised and, panicked, people run for the doors, only to find them blocked. A half dozen people die and others are seriously injured. But it's the panic and the stampede that killed them; there was no fire. Kathryn Dance--a brilliant California Bureau of Investigation agent and body language expert--discovers that the stampede was caused intentionally and that the perpetrator, a man obsessed with turning people's own fears and greed into weapons, has more attacks planned. She and her team must race against the clock to find where he will strike next before more innocents die.

Book Information

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Authors, A-Z > (D) > Deaver, Jeffery #1754 in Â Books > Books on CD > Mystery & Thrillers

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Customer Reviews

I generally like Jeffery Deaver, but he didn't sell me on the plot in Solitude Creek. Even if had not been contrived and implausible, it would not have been interesting. Admittedly, I approached this book with reservations, given my sense that Kathryn Dance, the fictional "body language expert" who works for the California Bureau of Investigation, is Deaver's least interesting character. Stories based on pseudo-voodoo like profiling and body language are too gimmicky for my taste. I am more tolerant of gimmicks when they don't get in the way of a good crime story, but the story here lacks originality. Dance is working on the "drugs and guns pipeline" between Oakland and Mexico when,

after apparently being fooled by a High Machiavellian (i.e., a really good liar), she is demoted to civil investigations. The pipeline reenters the story from time to time and eventually reaches a formulaic outcome (although with a mild twist that holds the novel's only real surprise). Meanwhile, Dance is assigned to check out the insurance coverage for a Monterey roadhouse called Solitude Creek after a fire produces a deadly stampede. Dance quickly realizes that the circumstances of the fire are suspicious -- not in the sense of insurance fraud, but in the sense of a deliberate attempt to induce panic. The bad guy Dance is chasing explains that he is exploiting fundamental fears (primarily confinement and claustrophobia) to satisfy a compulsion that he calls "the Get." There is little to distinguish him from thousands of other crime novel villains who are driven by compulsion. His obsession with the "brilliant" and "captivating" Kathryn Dance after glimpsing her from afar is hard to swallow. In fact, not much about the bad guy is believable.

This is Deaver's fourth novel featuring Kathryn Dance, a California Bureau of Investigation agent and kinesics expert, but only the second I've read (with the exception of her initial appearance as a consultant in Deaver's Lincoln Rhyme/Amelia Sachs novel "Cold Moon." I wish Dance were a more appealing character, but so far, I just haven't been able to warm up to her much. I haven't figured out why. Although I didn't follow that career path, I do have a bachelor's degree in psychology, so specialties like kinesics, neuro-linguistic programming and such are not only familiar to me, but subjects of substantial interest. But maybe the devil is in the details; explanations of how she interprets behavior somehow sound simplistic at best, to-wit: "Dance knew in her heart...that there was no way there would be any prints from the man who'd intentionally blocked the club doors. She knew instinctively he would be meticulous." Well duh - I knew that instinctively myself, and I'm not a trained behaviorist. Besides that, even though the situation she describes did involve a super-large truck, why would Dance, of all people, assume the perpetrator is a man? Also at issue, I think, is that too many investigations are going on at once. The first happens at a small concert arena named (are you ready for this??) Solitude Creek, where concert-goers become aware of a fire and the ensuing panic (and the blocking of exit doors) results in death. Subplots involve racial graffiti and identifying the culprits and finding who's behind a drug-running pipeline. Oh, and sandwiched in between are issues involving a couple of Dance's romantic interests.

I've read other Deaver books and liked some, so I bought this one. I don't know if he was rushed, or this was ghost-written, or what other excuse may be in the works, but this book is a disaster. Every character is compared to a popular actor instead of being thoughtfully described. "He looked like so

and so." "She resembles that actress so and so." Nearly every character speaks in incomplete sentences. "What I'm saying." "How that is." "Thought that." One character with that trait to build his personality, fine. A whole population that speaks like that for an entire book? Irritating and not relatable. The punctuation is so bad it's hard to read. There'll be pages at a time with no commas where there should be commas and then suddenly there are pages at a time with so many commas where they don't belong your brain is pausing in mid-sentence three times per line and it's hard to get through a thought. The plot is implausible and is supported by what appears to be a trivial amount of research on police work and forensics. Then at about 60% of the way through, a character who is supposed to be a computer genius and expert hacker is thinking something through in his head he wishes he could program to solve an issue in his personal life. It's written out with HTML body and paragraph tags. Maybe that won't annoy people who don't code, but the thought that a programmer could think in a web display language instead of one that can actually do calculations when the point is a calculation is like trying to paint with a pencil. If you don't understand your own character, leave it out. Why make your own character incompetent? It was the final insult, after many, to my suspended disbelief. I deleted the book without finishing it.

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