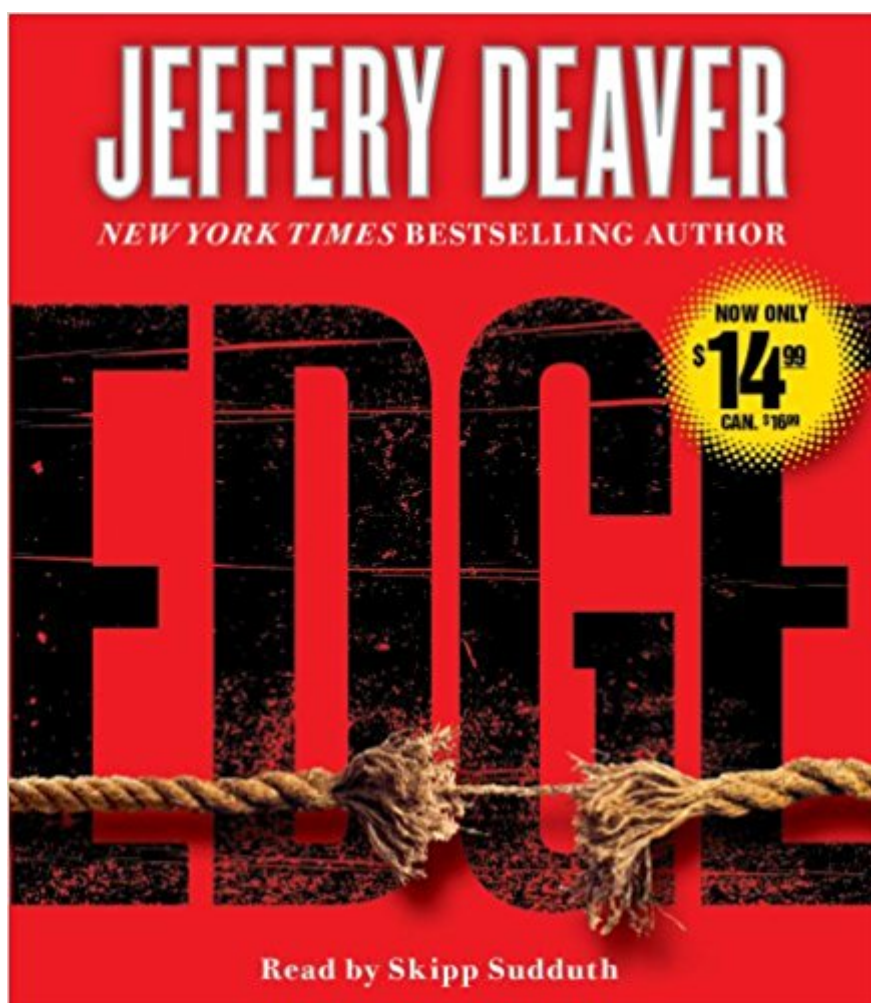


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Edge: A Novel



Synopsis

Behind the well-known U.S. security organizations—the FBI and CIA among them—lies a heavily guarded, anonymous government agency dedicated to intelligence surveillance and to a highly specialized brand of citizen protection. Shock waves of alarm ripple through the clandestine agency when Washington, D.C., police detective Ryan Kessler inexplicably becomes the target of Henry Loving, a seasoned, ruthless “lifter” hired to obtain information using whatever means necessary. While Loving is deft at torture, his expertise lies in getting an “edge” on his victim—leverage—usually by kidnapping or threatening family until the “primary” caves under pressure. The job of keeping the Kessler family alive falls to a man named Corte, a senior federal protection officer known as a “shepherd.” Uncompromising, relentlessly devoted to protecting those in his care and a passionate board game aficionado, he applies brilliant gaming strategy to his work. For Corte, the reappearance of Loving—the man who, six years earlier, had tortured and killed someone close to him—is also an opportunity to avenge his friend’s death. The assignment soon escalates into a fast-paced duel between Corte and Loving, a dangerous volley of wits and calculated risks. As he shepherds the Kesslers to a concealed safe house, Corte must anticipate Loving’s every step as the lifter moves in on his prey, and with the help of razor-sharp investigator Claire DuBois and his longtime ally, FBI agent Paul Fredericks, pinpoint which of Kessler’s seemingly insignificant cases has triggered Loving’s return. As the team digs deeper, each of the Kesslers comes under close scrutiny, and in captivity their family bonds are stretched to the breaking point—as the lifter draws near, Corte must ultimately choose between protecting his charges and exposing them to a killer in the name of long-awaited revenge.

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Customer Reviews

Thriller Award-winning Deaver (The Bodies Left Behind) unveils some nifty new tricks in this edge-of-your-seat thriller that pits two worthy antagonists against each other. Henry Loving, "a lifter," specializes in extracting information from human targets by any means necessary (i.e., torture). Corte, "a shepherd," is an agent in the Strategic Protection Department of a secret government agency normally assigned to protect high-profile targets. An intercepted communication identifies Loving as the lifter ordered to target Ryan Kessler, a Washington, D.C., metro detective. While Corte attempts to protect Kessler's family and identify the "primary," Loving's employer, Loving seeks the edge to get the information he needs to extract. Corte, a board game aficionado and game theory student, and Loving are well matched, sharing a history that ups the stakes and makes the contest personal. Deaver's first first-person narrator, Corte, is an exciting new weapon in the author's arsenal of memorable characters. (Nov.) (c) Copyright © PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This stand-alone thriller by the author of the Lincoln Rhyme and Kathryn Dance novels introduces Corte, an officer of the Strategic Protection Department, an arm of a larger government agency tasked with protecting individuals who have been targeted for abduction or murder (among other crimes). Henry Loving, a brutal "lifter" who specializes in "physical extraction" of information, has apparently targeted a cop, Ryan Kessler. The details are shaky: Corte's people don't know why Kessler has been targeted or what information Henry Loving is after. But Corte must do everything in his power to protect Kessler. This is a slightly unusual novel for Deaver. It's a prolonged cat-and-mouse game in a familiar format to the author's fans but the novel is relatively free of Deaver's customary neck-wrenching plot reversals. He's got a few tricks up his sleeve, but readers expecting the kind of jaw-dropping, out-of-left-field twists he specializes in might feel a bit cheated. Make no mistake: this is a fine thriller with strong characters and a compelling story. But Deaver devotees need to be forewarned not to look for any showstopping reverse pivots. --David Pitt --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Edge" is a mess. Deaver is known for twists at the end. And he is very good at it. His twists

generally add to the story, make sense in the end, and are not hard to follow (Mistress of Justice). In "Edge" Deaver lost me when the good guy set a trap for the bad guy, but he knew that the bad guy would suspect a trap so he set a trap within the trap, but the bad guy suspected the trap within the trap so he set a counter-counter-counter trap. Gimme a break. Harry Hunnicutt

Caution: possible spoiler. At times gripping, but not his best. The politics are not overwhelming. Rather they lurk uncomfortably in the background. You just know who the ultimate villain will be when Deaver starts describing a seemingly unconnected character's political party. It seems so many authors these days can't resist letting their own political views interfere with their storytelling. The politics of the villain are not germane to the story unless you're trying to persuade the reader that all the bad guys are in the party you don't like.

If you're on the edge at the end of every chapter, the edge ceases to lose its edginess. This story felt as if it had twenty different edges, twenty endings -- each time I got to one of them, I thought: Okay, this is the conclusion. But no, on it went. By the time I got to the "real" ending, the story felt as if it had faded away. In addition, there were many places within the story where I felt the exposition was showing through: all the research the author did seemed stuffed into the story in an uninteresting way.

This protagonist is reminiscent of those of Dick Francis - unassuming, hard working and plays down pain. I've read all of Deaver's books. This is a keeper.

Jeffery Deaver's standalone, "Edge," set in the Washington, D.C. area and featuring federal agents who protect people from those who would do them harm, doesn't work as well as his series novels, but it should keep you entertained all the same. It's a double mystery--a "primary" has hired "lifter" Henry Loving to find out what a District police detective, Ryan Kessler, knows, and the plot hinges on what does Kessler know, and who's sent Loving after him? The federal agent sent to protect Kessler and his family from Loving, federal agent Corte (he only uses one name), has had dealings with the "lifter" before. A board game enthusiast, Corte uses game theory in his attempts to stay one head of the sociopath. Since it's a Deaver novel, needless to say there are plot complications, surprises, and cliffhangers galore before all is revealed. The problem with the book is that neither Corte nor Loving are especially interesting. They're both game-players; they're both fanatics, and you probably wouldn't want to know either of them. A minor character, Maree, Kessler's sister-in-law

(when taken to a safehouse along with Kessler and his wife, Joanne, she teases Corte and calls him "Tour Guide"), steals every scene she's in. There are many cinematic elements here. George Clooney would make a great Corte. And it's good airplane reading--the author's fans will not be disappointed, but newcomers to the Deaververse would do better starting with the Lincoln Rhyme books.

Edge is a gift to Deaver's fans. He knows what his readers expect and he knows how to deliver. The standard Deaver novel is a tightly-paced thriller, occupying a brief span of time and including multiple twist endings. Edge is no exception. A standalone, it concerns a man named Corte who works as a 'shepherd' in an obscure government agency. Shepherds protect 'principals' from 'lifters', hired criminals charged with the responsibility of extracting information from those principals. They are hired by 'primaries'. You can already see where this is going--in Edge (an 'edge' being something that either a shepherd or a lifter can use for advantage) Corte is shepherding the members of a family. Knowing that this is a Deaver novel, we can't be sure, until the very end, which of the family members is the actual principal and who the dark background presence, the primary who hired the lifter, actually is. We do know the identity of the lifter--a stone killer/torturer named Henry Loving, who both tortured and killed Corte's friend and mentor. The novel is set in Washington, a city whose culture and geography Deaver knows well. The only bone I would pick concerns travel times (I lived in the D.C. area for 17 years). Corte and his friends are able to travel through the area much more quickly than I ever could. (Not quite as quickly as Jack Bauer traverses Los Angeles, but very quickly.) The characters in Edge are superb and even though this is a rapid-fire novel of suspense there's still enough time to get to know and either like or loathe all of them. With Edge on the shelves, Deaver is completing work on his James Bond novel after which he will return to alternating between Lincoln Rhymes (even-numbered years) and Kathryn Dances (odd-numbered years). Hopefully he will have occasion to return to Corte's world at some time in the future. I had the pleasure of meeting Jeff Deaver in August and attended his mini- master class at the Killer Nashville conference. In addition to being a lovely man he is a writer who is devoted to the task of pleasing his equally-devoted reading public. In Edge, Deaver (as always) delivers. Highly recommended.

One of my few fav authors.

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