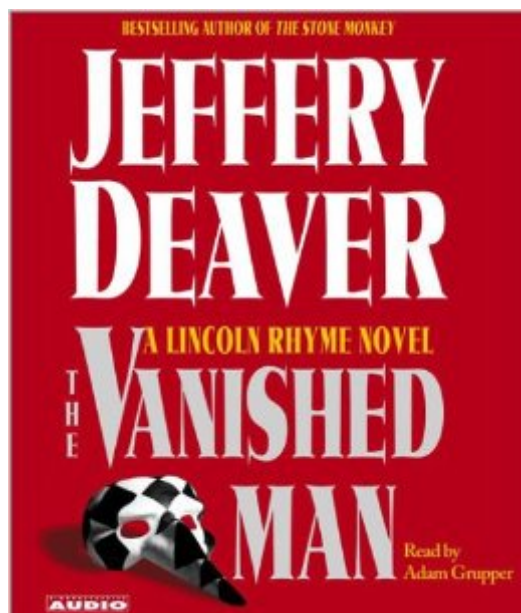


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The Vanished Man: A Lincoln Rhyme Novel



Synopsis

The New York Times bestselling author of *The Stone Monkey* is back with a brilliant thriller that pits forensic criminologist Lincoln Rhyme and his partner Amelia Sachs against an unstoppable killer with one final, horrific trick up his sleeve. The Los Angeles Times calls his novels "thrill rides between covers," The New York Times hails them "dazzling," and The Times of London crowns him "the best psychological thriller writer around." Jeffery Deaver, America's "master of ticking-bomb suspense" (*People*), delivers his most electrifying audiobook yet. It begins at the prestigious music school in New York City. A killer flees the scene of a homicide and locks himself in a classroom. Within minutes, the police have him surrounded. When the scream rings out, followed by a gunshot, they break down the door. The room is empty. Lincoln Rhyme and Amelia Sachs are brought in to help with the high-profile investigation. For the ambitious Sachs, solving the case could earn her a promotion. For the quadriplegic Rhyme, it means relying on his protégé to ferret out the master illusionist they've dubbed "the conjurer" who baits them with gruesome murders that become more diabolical with each fresh crime. As the fatalities rise and the minutes tick down, Rhyme and Sachs must move beyond the smoke and mirrors to prevent a terrifying act of vengeance that could become the greatest vanishing act of all.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Okay, so this should really be considered a 4.5 star review. Deaver is an amazing writer, skilled in the ways of writing truly engrossing mysteries. He gives the reader enough to figure out the mystery, but he doesn't really give the whole mystery away until the last word of the book. Kudos to Deaver

for that. Deaver has become my favorite fiction writer, bar none. He's just that good. But that said, the reason this review should be considered a 4.5 star review rather than a 5 star review is because of a couple of problems with this text. This story was much more engrossing than his previous Rhyme book, *The Stone Monkey* (a great book, nonetheless). The villain in this book is downright spooky and fantastically evil. The murders are grotesque yet not quite over the top. And the character development, especially the Rhyme/Sachs dynamic, is good for Deaver. It should be said, however, that if you've never read a Deaver book before, this shouldn't be your starting point. And also don't read his books for tremendous insight into the human character. His books are plot driven, and, as a result, characters often develop too quickly in time to be wholly believable. But if you can suspend your disbelief, and it's usually easy to do that with Deaver, then you should have no problems enjoying his books. Scratch that. Reverse it. You should LOVE his books if you get past that point. No plot spoilers here, but my biggest problem with the book is his big twist. His GOTCHA moment. While the twist made sense, I didn't feel that the twist had been properly developed to be truly believable. It didn't detract from my interest, though, and I enjoyed the hours I spend living in Deaver's fantasy that is *The Vanished Man*. As soon as I finished, I gave it to a friend to read.

Jeffrey Deaver has shown a tendency to overwork the same plot mechanisms in his previous volumes, causing me to have a few second thoughts about buying and reading this volume. Nor am I a big fan of the kind of suspense story where we are introduced to the villain of the piece immediately and the only mystery is which way the plot will twist next. So I was surprised when *'The Vanished Man'* caught my interest from the onset and kept it to the end. Part of the spell comes from the subject matter - stage magic and its mysteries. Deaver shows an unexpected mastery of the subject - the tricks, the psychology, and the personalities. He introduces a young magician in training, Kara, to the investigative team, and she holds her own against the strong personalities of Amelia Sachs and the paralyzed Lincoln Rhyme. When most murderers leave glaring clues they are asking to be caught. But as Rhyme and Sachs investigate a string of gruesome crimes it becomes obvious that a skilled stage artist is dragging them through a trail of misdirection - cold-bloodedly setting a grandiose trap. It is up to the team to try to pinpoint the real object of the crimes before the last grim strike. Not without a lot of help from Kara as well. Most of the story is Amelia's, Rhyme's active counter part. She has developed quite a bit from being the foil of a brilliant quadriplegic investigator. Her character has a fluidity that makes her a vibrant character with issues of her own - independent of the challenges facing Rhyme himself. If anything, it is Rhyme who has flattened out

a bit, becoming something of a caricature of himself. The story's only fault is that their opponent is a little too good and a little too lucky. Be that as it may, it is excellent reading.

Deaver's books are like movies waiting to happen in that his characters aren't all that well developed, but his plots are ingenious. Live actors give the characters dimensions the novelist hasn't provided, and the picture is more satisfying than the book. This book rocks along pretty well for awhile, but finally the incompetence of the police and the improbable good luck of the villain become a bit much. Deaver's basic cast of characters is its usual self, though, with Amelia Sachs still suffering arthritic knees and racing about Manhattan in her Camaro and Lincoln Rhyme still snapping at everyone. The author has assembled a good deal of research into sleight of hand and illusions, and some of it is interesting enough. The premise of the book is that by misdirecting your pursuers' attention and wearing makeup, one can escape from any situation. I mean, this villain goes around killing people while wearing two layers of clothing (e.g., a suit under a bellhop's uniform) and carrying all sorts of makeup, with which he manages to transform himself on the run in ways that defy detection by supposedly sharp-eyed cops who are actually trying to apprehend him. And when they do nab him, they're totally out of their depth. To wit: Our heavy is put in cuffs and taken to the Tombs, where he retrieves a lock pick from under a band-aid on his thigh and opens the cuffs. All this while being transported by police. He then grabs a revolver from a cop (do the cops carry guns in the cells?) and fires it, simultaneously triggering an explosive squib, which he has previously concealed under his hair. This propels a baggie full of bone and stuff onto a nearby wall so that it appears he's blown out his own brains, an illusion heightened by fake blood he manages to apply to the other side of his head.

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