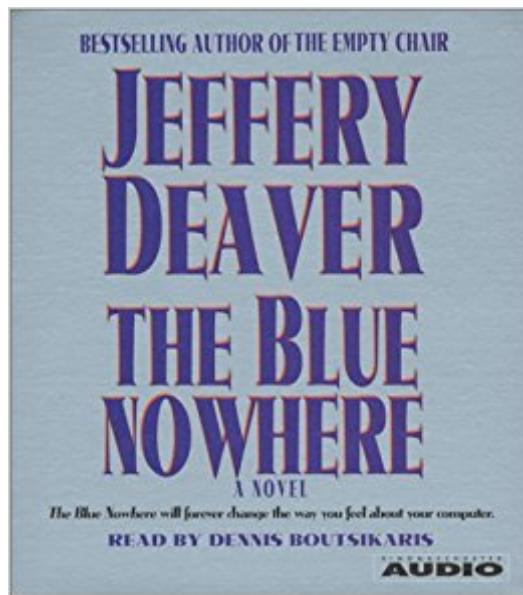


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The Blue Nowhere



Synopsis

Jeffery Deaver, bestselling author of *The Empty Chair* and *The Bone Collector*, now turns to the labyrinthine world of cyberspace -- a world where the most powerful can lose their wealth, their minds, their lives with a hacker's touch of a button. When a sadistic hacker, code-named Phate, sets his sights on Silicon Valley, his victims never know what hit them. He infiltrates their computers, invades their lives, and lures them to their deaths. To Phate, each murder is like a big, challenging computer hack: every time he succeeds, he must challenge himself anew -- by taking his methodology to a higher level, and aiming at bigger targets. Desperate, the head of The California State Police Computer Crimes Division frees Wyatt Gillette, imprisoned for hacking, to aid the investigation -- against the loud protests of the rest of the division. With an obsession emblematic of hackers, Gillette fervently attempts to trace Phate's insidious computer virus back to its source. Then Phate delivers a huge blow, murdering one of the division's own -- a "wizard" who had pioneered the internet -- and the search takes on a zealous intensity. Gillette and Detective Frank Bishop -- an old-school homicide cop who's accustomed to forensic sleuthing -- make an uneasy team. But with a merciless and brilliant killer like Phate in their crosshairs, and his twisted game reaching a fever pitch, they must utilize every ounce of their disparate talents to stop him.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this 21st century version of the "Gunfight at the O.K. Corral," two computer wizards engage in the kind of high-tech combat that only a hacker could love. Wyatt Gillette, a cybergenius who's never used his phenomenal talent for evil, is sitting in a California jail doing time for a few harmless

computer capers when he gets a temporary reprieve--a chance to help the Computer Crimes Unit of the state police nail a cracker (a criminally inclined hacker) called Phate who's using his ingenious program, Trapdoor, to lure innocent victims to their death by infiltrating their computers. Gillette and Phate were once the kings of cyberspace--the Blue Nowhere of the title--but Phate has gone way past the mischievous electronic pranks they once pulled and crossed over to the dark side. While Trapdoor can hack its way into any computer, it's Phate's skill at "social engineering" as well as his remarkable coding ability that makes him such a menace to society. As Wyatt explains to the policeman who springs him from prison so that he can find and stop Phate before he kills again, "It means conning somebody, pretending you're someone you're not. Hackers do it to get access to data bases and phone lines and pass codes. The more facts about somebody you can feed back to them, the more they believe you and the more they'll do what you want them to." Bestselling author Jeffery Deaver (*The Empty Chair*, *The Devil's Teardrop*) ratchets up the suspense one line of code at a time; his terrific pacing drives the narrative to a thrilling and explosive conclusion. This thriller is bound to induce paranoia in anyone who still believes he can hide his deepest secrets from anyone with the means, motive, and modem to ferret them out. --Jane Adams

How do you write a truly gripping thriller about people staring into computer screens? Many have tried, none have succeeded until now. Leave it to Deaver, the most clever plotter on the planet, to do it by simply applying the same rules of suspense to onscreen action as to offscreen. Much of the action in this novel about the hunt for an outlaw hacker turned homicidal maniac does takes place in the real world, but much else plays out in cyberspace as a team of California homicide and computer crime cops chase the infamous "wizard" hacker known as Phate. The odds run against the cops. With his skills, Phate can not only change identities at will (a knack known as "social engineering" in hacking parlance) but can manipulate all computerized records about himself. The cops have a wizard of their own, however: a former online companion of Phate's, a hacker doing time for having allegedly cracked the Department of Defense's encryption program. He's Wyatt Gillette, coveting Pop-Tarts (the hacker's meal of choice) and computers, but also the wife he lost when he went to prison and it's his tortured personality that gives this novel its heart as Wyatt is sprung from prison, but only for as long as it takes to track down Phate. The mad hacker, meanwhile, no longer able to discern between the virtual and the real, has adapted a notorious online role-playing game to the world of flesh and blood, with innocent humans as his prey. As he twists suspense and tension to gigahertz levels, Deaver springs an astonishing number of surprises on the reader: Who is Phate's accomplice? What are Wyatt's real motives? Who is the traitor among

the cops? His real triumph, though, is to make the hacker world come alive in all its midnight, reality-cracking intensity. This novel is, in hacker lingo, "totally moby" the most exciting, and most vivid, fiction yet about the neverland hackers call "the blue nowhere." Agent, Sterling Lord Literistic. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

As an instructor at a university dedicated to excellence in technology, I am amazed on a daily basis by my student's skills and knowledge regarding computers. This book is not at all beyond the realm of possibilities. In fact, many of the techniques shown are standard for the network security specialist. Scary realistic novel, about what not only can be, but will be-and soon.

Fascinating. I was pulled in and caught up in the story. I enjoyed it from start to finish. While I know there were liberties with the tech, I believe good storytelling needs creative liberties to entertain, as well as to educate on possibilities. The only issue I had trouble with, and a minor issue, the law enforcement departments were too willing to do shallow background checks on people and data, especially when engaged in life and death scenarios. But, be that as it may, it was a real "page turner" of an audio book.

When I watch a "hacker" movie or read a "hacker" story, the basis of my judgement on the quality of the work depends not only on plot and storyline but also whether the hacking activities are actually realistic. Less than halfway through reading this book, it was quite obvious to me that Deaver researched his material very well. Most of the things Phate was depicted doing, including the functions of the amazing Trapdoor daemon (he writes it as "demon"), can conceptually be done in reality. I am comparing these things to, for instance, the flying-through-cyberspace scenes in the 1995 movie, Hackers. Considering how computer hacking (and its origins and true meaning) has been portrayed in the media by people with little idea how the Internet works, I very much appreciated the thoroughness Deaver devoted to this book.

"The Blue Nowhere" was written by Jeffery Deaver, a contemporary and popular mystery writer. Mr. Deaver has written numerous novels, several of which were made into movies or television specials. This book is of the mystery thriller genre of fictional literature. The novel was written using an anonymous narrator and character dialog interspersed throughout the composition. The writing is straight forward, not complex, and should be acceptable to a wide audience. The writing style is fast paced clipped scenes, shallow character development with a concentration on action. The plot is

tightly controlled with several twists and turns intended to capture and pique the reader's continued interest. There is a good deal of computer jargon and functional computer descriptions, but not beyond the average computer user's general understanding. The story in main is about a brilliant computer hacker who is known by his online handle as "Phate". Jon Patrick Holloway, aka Phate, suffers a severe psychosis; he has elevated his role playing fantasy to real life scenarios and is killing people. An equally brilliant computer hacker and former role playing partner, "Valleyman", one Wyatt Gillette is recruited by the police to help capture Phate in a contest of wits and guile. I quite liked this novel. It was fast moving and interesting in its concept. The plot was enthusiastic and the many twists and turns were well done. The characters were pretty shallow in development and some of them were easily forgotten in the course of the story. The scenes were equally shallow, at times a little dopey, and didn't add to any memorable aspect of the action; but then the distinct feeling was that they were not supposed to in this fast paced thriller. It had the feel that it was designed for a movie or television special as opposed to a memorable novel. Overall this novel is a little light weight, but was quick and fun to read if you need a diversion. I would recommend it and rate it "Pleasurable not-memorable".

Excellent crime novel with well developed characters. Fast paced story of hackers lost in their machine world creating deadly havoc in the real world. I highly recommend it.

If you know a lot about computers and hacking, this book is for you. It went on and on and on....could have stopped sooner. It didn't read like a Deaver book. I've read most of his books. Just felt different.

I have recently started reading cyber crime novels and I place this one at the top of my list. I have tried other novels such as Zero Day and Trojan Horse by Mark Russinovich which were good, but I consider this a better read. Good plot twists, character development and suspenseful. I highly recommend this book. In fact I am considering reading other novels by this author even though they are not the cyber crime genre.

Another very good book by Jeffrey Deaver. This one was not my favorite suspense book of his, even though I am into computers myself. I found some of the terminology tiresome.

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