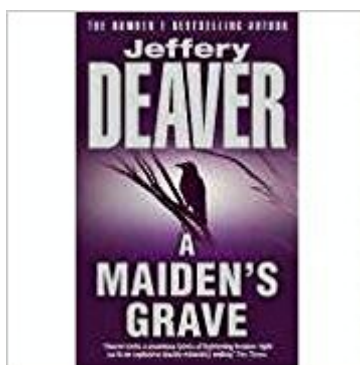


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# A Maiden's Grave



## Synopsis

When a pathological escaped convict takes a group of deaf girls hostage in a slaughterhouse, an FBI negotiator and a deaf teacher struggle to defuse the situation before it explodes in violence.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It's said that great minds think alike; apparently great thriller writers do too. Here's the second outstanding novel in as many months to see a busload of schoolchildren kidnapped by maniacs. The first was Mary Willis Walker's *Under the Beetle's Cellar* (Forecasts, June 12); Deaver's is equally gripping, with the added twist that these kids are deaf. In rural Kansas, an act of kindness launches a nightmare when Mrs. Harstrawn, along with hearing-impaired apprentice teacher Melanie Charrol, stops her busload of deaf schoolgirls at a car wreck, only to be taken hostage by Lou Handy and two other stone-cold killers who've just escaped from prison. Pursued by a state trooper, the captors race with their prey to an abandoned slaughterhouse. There, Arthur Potter, the FBI's foremost hostage negotiator, sets up a command post?but the nightmare intensifies when Handy releases one girl, then shoots her in the back just as she reaches the agent. After further brutalities, Melanie decides to rescue her students herself, tricking the killers with sign language games to convey her plan to her charges. Meanwhile, pressure mounts on Potter as the media get pushy, the local FBI stonewalls, Kansas State hostage rescue units try an end run to grab the glory and an assistant attorney general butts in. Deaver (*Praying for Sleep*) brilliantly conveys the tensions and deceit of hostage negotiations; he also proves a champion of the deaf, offering poetic insight into their world. Throughout, heartbreakingly real characters keep the wildly swerving plot

from going off-track, even during the multiple-whammy twists that bring the novel, Deaver's best to date, to its spectacular finish. 200,000 first printing; \$200,000 ad/promo; Literary Guild featured alternate; film rights to Interscope Communications; simultaneous Penguin Audiobook; author tour. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A bus carrying eight deaf children and their teachers stops in the middle of the Kansas countryside, a car wreck directly ahead. Soon, three escaped killers rise out of the nearby cornfields and take children and teachers hostage. Pursued by the police, the convicts are forced to hole up in an abandoned slaughterhouse. There they threaten to shoot a child every hour until their demands are met. A 12-hour war of wits begins between FBI hostage expert Arthur Potter and the escapees' leader, Louis Jeremiah Handy. "I aim to get outta here. ...If it means I gotta shoot 'em dead as posts then that's the way it's gonna be," Handy boasts. Potter finds himself "in the middle of the week's media big bang," battling publicity-hungry politicians, trigger-happy cops, and the press as well as the unpredictable killers. This book by the best-selling author of *Praying for Sleep* (Viking, 1994) starts with a bang, and the tension never lets up. A topnotch thriller with an unexpected kicker at the end.-?David Keymer, California State Univ., StanislausCopyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In trying to escape the police, a group of violent escaped criminals takes hostage a school bus filled with deaf students, mostly children; and the F.B.I. sends in its most successful negotiator to deal with the situation. This book is not great literature, but then it never aspires to be such. What it does attempt to offer is an exciting thriller, full of twists, with a coherent plot, and a great cast of characters; and I think it succeeds well on all of these levels. Speaking of characters, I absolutely love the fact that the negotiator is not a buff 30 year old who saves the day by single-handedly penetrating the hostage location, disabling the criminals, and saving all the hostages with no loss of life. What he is instead is a somewhat over-weight 50 something year old whose only qualifications are intelligence, a great deal of knowledge and experience, and a proven track record. Some readers have objected to the identity of the person who does take action at the end of the book, calling it implausible or frankly impossible. Perhaps these readers should check their own assumptions. Since when has "deaf" been a synonym for "mentally or physically incapable"? Besides which, Deaver has been preparing for this denouement throughout the book. Who is it who has already taken action multiple times and personally saved three of the most vulnerable

hostages?The novel is not filled with non-stop action. It does take the time to tell readers something about life among the deaf and about "Deaf" culture. And I personally enjoy a work that is full of suspense and an intricate plot and that manages to teach me something I was mostly ignorant of along the way.

I didn't find this book among Deavers' best. He's trying to ride too many horses in this race: the thriller itself, a drama of conflict between authorities and command structures, teaching lessons in negotiation techniques, and a lot of elaborate lessons on deafness and what can overcome the daily obstacles of deafness. And yes, some strange, metaphysical monologues where the negotiator is being impersonated by the deaf heroine as the 1800th century French educator Abbé de l'Épée who introduced the first modern sign language to USA. As a result, the main part of this novel is way too long and boring. Much of the ending is quite predictable, though not all, but partly also way too improbable. As a Non-American, I really hope the mess-up, the competition and the suspicion between Federal Authorities and State Authorities, between local troopers, city police and rural sheriffs, and the solo raids instigated by State leaders like the Governor himself, is not a reflection of US public & law management. If the answer is 'yes, it is', I really feel sorry for you.

Mr Reaver is my favorite writer! He's always good, but this time he's outdone himself. The twists and turns of this novel are totally unexpected, but totally in character for each person in the novel. Its a relatively long read but I ripped through it in less than 2 days. I'd love to meet Mr Reaver. I've always been fascinated by Stephen King, but Jeffrey has surpassed him, in my book I'm a psychologist, and I'd love to hear his own story. Not to analyze him, because I don't think he's "skewed" or diagnosable. Just to know where he comes from, and to admire his mind. Thank you, Mr Reaver!

It is about average for Jeffery Deaver which is extremely good by comparison with many other authors. Interesting plot, lots of twists (even a few twists of twists) that keep you reading. It also explores a world most of us have no understanding of and how the characters of that world see themselves and Others. You might guess the ending, but not until almost the end of the story.

A tense hostage recovery story with many more twists than one might expect from such a well worn device. Weaver as always delivers interesting characters and a tension filled well plotted story. But somehow this is not the caliber of Deaver when he's hooked you to a Lincoln Rhyme good one like

The Bone Collector of one of his many excellent stand alones,

I love this genre for some odd reason, maybe because every once in a while you get to read a story like this one. Twists and turns enough to make you dizzy with anticipation. Heart pounding, pulse racing suspenseful moments of pure terror or joy. Oh you just have to read this one.

Not surprising, this novel had a great deal of suspense, twists, and carefully drawn characters. It is, after all, a Deaver novel. It gave a bit more than I wanted on the workings of the Deaf community (capital D). But generally a good read and one I can recommend.

great insight into Deaf community. different twist since it starts out with the criminals already trapped and trying to negotiate their way to safety. Interesting twists in the plot. Totally different perspective. Had me second guessing the strategy in these situations and the kicker comes after you thought it ended.

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