

Book Review: The Collateral Heart
By Jeffery Deaver

Thanks to NetGalley and Putnam Books for this advance reader's copy, in exchange for an honest review. "The Collateral Heart" is scheduled for release on November 17, 2026.

"The Collateral Heart" is the latest in a long line of crime thrillers that focus on the exploits of criminalist Lincoln Rhyme and his wife, Detective Amelia Sachs. It's well written, and (in my opinion) aside from several chapters near the end that clog up the flow, a nicely paced narrative.

New York City is burning. Well, not the entire city. Just a few abandoned buildings. But the frequency and spontaneity of the fires (three of them in less than 36 hours) has Rhyme and Sachs feverishly working to unravel the mystery. They're aided, to some extent, by a fireproof box of clues left at each inferno.

Simultaneously, their paths cross with Desdemona Vale, a detective from the Long Island town of Bay Cove (fictitious), who is searching for the killer of a young woman from her community. She's also juggling the caring for her two granddaughters as her own daughter, Mare, has just been released from a drug rehab center.

Into the fray comes James Harper, a famous author and historian, as well as host of one of the country's most popular history podcasts. Can he possibly be the nexus between the fires and the murdered woman?

As mentioned, the pacing is excellent, with superb teases at the end of most chapters that make for an easy page-turning experience. If the two-plus chapters near the end that completely bog down the flow were removed, the narrative would be seamless.

I haven't read a lot of Deaver's work, in particular perhaps only one or two in the Lincoln Rhyme series. But "The Collateral Heart" pretty much stands on its own even if you've never

read any of the previous books. There's sufficient backstory on the quadriplegic criminalist to bring even first-time readers quickly up to speed.

Four-and-one-half stars for "The Collateral Heart." If you're a fan of crime-mystery thrillers, you'll want to put this one on your list when it arrives in November.