

Garden of Beasts: A Novel of Berlin 1936

By Jeffery Deaver

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Garden of Beasts: A Novel of Berlin 1936 By Jeffery Deaver

In the most ingenious and provocative thriller yet from the acclaimed *New York Times* bestselling author Jeffery Deaver, a conscience-plagued mobster turned government hitman struggles to find his moral compass amid rampant treachery and betrayal in 1936 Berlin.

Paul Schumann, a German American living in New York City in 1936, is a mobster hitman known as much for his brilliant tactics as for taking only "righteous" assignments. But then Paul gets caught. And the arresting officer offers him a stark choice: prison or covert government service. Paul is asked to pose as a journalist covering the summer Olympics taking place in Berlin. He's to hunt down and kill Reinhard Ernst -- the ruthless architect of Hitler's clandestine rearmament. If successful, Paul will be pardoned and given the financial means to go legit; if he refuses the job, his fate will be Sing Sing and the electric chair.

Paul travels to Germany, takes a room in a boardinghouse near the Tiergarten -- the huge park in central Berlin but also, literally, the "Garden of Beasts" -- and begins his hunt. In classic Deaver fashion, the next forty-eight hours are a feverish cat-and-mouse chase, as Paul stalks Ernst through Berlin while a dogged Berlin police officer and the entire Third Reich apparatus search frantically for the American.

Garden of Beasts is packed with fascinating period detail and features a cast of perfectly realized locals, Olympic athletes and senior Nazi officials -- some real, some fictional. With hairpin plot twists, the reigning "master of ticking-bomb suspense" (*People*) plumbs the nerve-jangling paranoia of prewar Berlin and steers the story to a breathtaking and wholly unpredictable ending.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
Jeffery Deaver's *Garden of Beasts* introduces anti-hero Paul Schumann, a notorious rubout man for the New York Mafia known for his cold and professional approach to his job. But the jig is up when he is duped by high-ranking feds who give him a choice--prison or one more impossible job: assassinate the man who's running Hitler's plan for rearming Germany. The hard-nosed German-American lands on the streets of Berlin where immediately the best-laid plans of the United States Government go awry. Schumman finds himself in a city living in fear, tracked by Berlin's best homicide detective. As the intricate chase wears on, both men will discover that the greatest evil is the ascendant Nazi party.

Deaver's novel, equal parts noir thriller and historical extrapolation, is a page-turner that offers a twisting visceral experience of the tension in Berlin during that fateful summer. He draws sympathetic portraits of everyday Germans caught between duty to country and their consciences. Into this mix, Deaver drops his coldly dangerous hitman who brawls with brownshirts, chums with Olympic athletes, collaborates with criminals, fraternizes with poets, and discovers the hero inside his hardened soul. --*Jeremy Pugh*

Amazon.com Interview



When starting a new book by author Jeffery Deaver, expect to have the wool pulled over your eyes. His plots twist and turn and juke and jive like no others, never ending as expected and always including a jaw-dropping plot development. His latest effort, *Garden of Beasts*, is no exception. Amazon.com caught up with Deaver to discuss plotting, characters, and the perils of soap opera acting.

From Publishers Weekly
Deaver fans expect the unexpected from this prodigiously talented thriller writer, and the creator of the Lincoln Rhyme series and other memorable yarns (*The Blue Nowhere*, etc.) doesn't disappoint with his 19th novel, this time offering a deliciously twisty tale set in Nazi Berlin. The book's hero is a mob "button man," or hit man, Paul Schumann, who's nabbed in the act in New York City but given an alternative to the electric chair: to go to Berlin undercover as a journalist writing about the upcoming Olympics, in order to assassinate Col. Reinhard Ernst, the chief architect of Hitler's militarization, seen as a threat to American interests. A German spy onboard Paul's transatlantic liner grows suspicious and sends a warning to Germany before Paul discovers and kills him. Then in Berlin, Paul, en route to meet his contact, kills a second suspicious man who may be a storm trooper, setting Insp. Willi Kohl of the Berlin police, or Kripo, on his trail. Deaver weaves the three manhunts—Paul after his target, Kohl after Paul and the Nazi hierarchy after Paul—with a deft hand, bringing to frightening life the Berlin of 1936, a city on the brink of madness. Top Nazis, including Hitler, Himmler and Göring, make colorful cameos, but it's the smart, shaded-gray characterizations of the principals that anchor the exciting plot. An affecting love affair between Paul and his German landlady goes in surprising directions, as do the main plot lines, which move outside Berlin as heroes become villains and vice versa. This is prime Deaver, which means prime entertainment.
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From School Library Journal
Adult/High School - Paul Schumann, professional hit man, is arrested by the U.S. government. He is offered a deal: he can go to prison or he can take on the job of assassinating the man who controls Hitler's rearmament. Schumann leaves for Germany. He is hounded by the German police even as he is watched or chased by every kind of control group, including the Gestapo and Hitler's Youth. He gets some help from locals as he focuses on his target, Colonel Ernst. After complicated and unforeseen events, the story leads to an ending filled with surprises. Filling the tale with historical facts skillfully woven into the fiction, Deaver deftly places the characters into the chaos of 1936. American slang, German-language translations, food, and clothing are among the details used to create the setting. Individual characters clearly serve as examples of typical people caught up in the confusion and fear felt by the general population as they witness the rise of Hitler. Fans of action, adventure, or history will enjoy this fast-paced, tightly plotted story. - *Pam Johnson, Fairfax County Public Library, VA*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mollie Walker:

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