

***“Watchlist: a Serial Thriller”* based on an idea by Jeffery Deaver.
Vanguard Press, 2010. \$25.95, 404 pages.**

Imagine a group of your favorite writers sitting in a circle telling a story. One writer after another builds upon a single tale, spinning a narrative that twists and turns and ends on the edge of a cliff before turning to the next author and challenging them to continue the story.

“Watchlist” is the result of just such collaboration. Conceived by best-selling author Jeffery Deaver, this group of 22 authors, all members of the International Thriller Writers, included Lee Child, Lisa Scottoline, Joseph Finder, David Hewson and many more well known and respected writers.

“Watchlist” contains two stories, “The Chopin Manuscript” and “The Copper Bracelet.” “The Chopin Manuscript” was originally published as an audio book in November 2008, while “The Copper Bracelet” was released in January 2010.

“The Chopin Manuscript” introduces us to Harold Middleton, a former war crimes investigator who now teaches and authenticates music manuscripts. Middleton has been tasked with identifying a purported Chopin manuscript as genuine or a forgery, a seemingly simple assignment. Unaware of the deadly secrets hidden in the manuscript, Middleton and his colleagues must race against time to reveal the truth and to stop the conspiracy that could end in thousands of deaths.

“The Copper Bracelet” brings us back to Harold Middleton, this time caught in an even more complicated plot that could end in nuclear war between India and Pakistan. Racing across the globe in an attempt to prevent disaster, Middleton and his colleagues have a bigger job ahead of them than they’ve ever faced before.

“Watchlist” is a twisting, turning, race-against-time thriller; each chapter cleverly building on what came before and laying the challenging groundwork for what will come after. You can almost hear the authors exclaiming “Beat that!” at the end of their chapters as they leave the characters in increasingly complicated situations, but time after time these writers prove just how talented they are by deftly weaving everything together into a cohesive story.

On their own, “The Chopin Manuscript” and “The Copper Bracelet” are both highly entertaining page-turners; together in “Watchlist” they make one sensational combination.

Rebekah Scott is a reference librarian at May Memorial Public Library. Visit us on the web at www.alamancelibraries.org.