

# Coben's 'Live Wire' is rich, compelling thriller



By JEFF AYERS, For The Associated Press

Mon Mar 21, 2:52 pm ET

"Live Wire" (Dutton), by Harlan Coben: Harlan Coben is one of the best thriller writers in the business, and sports agent — and occasional sleuth — Myron Bolitar has always been a great character. In the rich and compelling "Live Wire," one of Bolitar's clients has asked for his help. She's eight months pregnant and her husband, Lex, has disappeared.

Since her husband is also a client, Bolitar agrees.

With the help of his friends, he quickly finds Lex at a nightclub. But Lex, who questions whether he's the baby's father, doesn't want to go back home.

While at the nightclub, Bolitar is shocked to see his sister-in-law. He's been estranged from her and his brother for almost 16 years, and he's eager to make amends. She flees before he can talk to her.

What appeared to be a simple missing-person case suddenly becomes complicated and personal. Even Bolitar's parents seem to have some knowledge of what's really going on.

Bolitar is forced to ask tough questions, even if he's not ready for the answers.

Coben takes Bolitar on an intense journey that reveals new sides of the character. It takes a master like Coben to juggle a character study with shocking thriller elements and put readers on a vast emotional roller coaster.

Newcomers to Coben will find "Live Wire" a great starting point, and fans will be awe-struck with this latest novel, wondering how Coben maintains such a high level of excellence.

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Jeff Ayers is the author of "Voyages of Imagination: The Star Trek Fiction Companion" (Pocket Books, 2006).

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