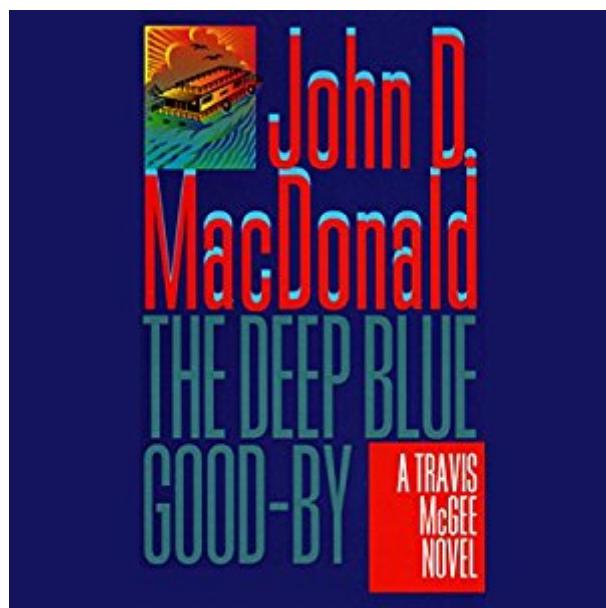


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The Deep Blue Good-By: A Travis McGee Novel, Book 1



Synopsis

He's a self-described beach bum who won his houseboat in a card game. He's also a knight errant who's wary of credit cards, retirement benefits, political parties, mortgages, and television. He only works when his cash runs out, and his rule is simple: he'll help you find whatever was taken from you, as long as he can keep half. Nothing that John D. MacDonald wrote is better loved and more enduring than the 21 books in his series about Travis McGee, the Florida-based "salvage consultant" who recovers property for a fee so he can take his retirement "a piece at a time". Narrator Robert Petkoff, hand-chosen to narrate with the approval of MacDonald's estate, brings McGee's world of the Busted Flush (his houseboat, which he won in a poker game) and "Miss Agnes" (his custom Rolls-Royce pickup truck) to vivid life.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 6 hours

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Audible Studios

Audible.com Release Date: March 13, 2012

Language: English

ASIN: B007JQN2NK

Best Sellers Rank: #1 in Â Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > Hard-Boiled #3 in Â Books > Audible Audiobooks > Mysteries & Thrillers > Suspense #12 in Â Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature

Customer Reviews

This is the book in which John D. MacDonald introduces us to Travis McGee. If you've never read MacDonald before, it's a very good book. Compared to the other books on down the line, Travis is a little weak. But, hey, it's only a beginning. We're let in on how Travis acquired Miss Agnes, his 1934 Rolls-Royce pickup and why he named his houseboat the Busted Flush. With the novel, MacDonald starts to hit his stride writing about Travis McGee. You have great dialogue and character development and, of course, action. Just what you'd want in a book about a "salvage consultant" who'll get back things you can't recover any other way for 50% of their value. You won't be disappointed.

Some 35 years after last encountering John D. McDonald's Travis McGee series, I rediscovered it. It came to mind because I've been reading Lee Child's Jack Reacher series, and the parallels became inescapable. Indeed, Lee Child acknowledges his debt to McDonald in an introduction to the Kindle editions of the Travis McGee books. I've been working my way through the McGee books. This happens to be a review of the first of the books, "The Deep Blue Good-by," but it could be a review of any of the dozen I've read so far: they've been remarkably consistent in tone. Perhaps the best way for me to assess the Travis McGee books is to compare them with the Jack Reacher books. I think that McGee is more substantial than Reacher. With his houseboat, his friend Meyer, and a recurring cast of minor characters, McGee has more of a life than does Reacher. With his acerbic ruminations, he has more of a voice. And the recurring presence of Florida adds local color. The 60's and 70's vibe adds a distinctive flavor, but I find it a plus: more amusing than cringe-inducing. The McGee books are great airplane reading, but I'm not going to apologize for that: I travel a lot, and tolerable airplane reading is hard to find. Once I've read them all, I'll miss them.

I read about JDM in esquire a couple of months back. The article quoted Steven King, Dean Koontz, and Lee Childs as having been influenced by him so I figured what the hell. I started reading the "The Deep Blue Good-by" and I couldn't put it down. I get that people say that phrase all the time and personally I'm not a fan of it but in this case it's accurate. I think this is the fastest I've read a book. Travis McGee is a deep and compelling character who surprises you with each chapter. This book is exciting, funny, heartbreakingly sad all at the same time.

When I was a kid growing up in North Miami Beach, I regularly visited my local used paperback bookstore, the Paperback Exchange, where I read and re-read every Travis McGee novel I could get my hands on, along with the Mack Bolan Executioner series and of course my favorite Remo and Chiun of Sinanju. So it was somewhat nostalgic for me to pick up the Kindle version of McGee's first adventure to see how it held up. Surprise -- it holds up great! McDonald knows how to build scenes and characters, and his economical style has a certain hard-boiled pace that is irresistible and hard to put down. I especially loved the old South Florida settings, which is exactly how I remembered the area growing up. This is a quick and highly enjoyable read, but be careful -- I'm hooked again!

Psychological thriller more than action adventures. Spends a lot of time analyzing the psychology of the various people. Not much action. Our hero too subject to poor planning. He loses a gun he

needed, because he just stuck it in his waistband, not in a holster. So lost it during exertion. No keys flavor in the story.

Ashamed to say this is my first by MacDonald. Won't be my last. Great writing like this will spoil you for anything less. Descriptive where it needs to be. Action well placed. Interesting characters. Some to love and one to hate very deeply. Good plot. Different from so much of the stuff available in this genre. Looking forward to another bite of cake.

I ordered this book pot of nostalgia. This was the first of John D. MacDonald's Travis McGee novels. I bought read and kept every one of this series when they were published. They were fantastic then. But I discovered that I found this one too outdated for me. However, I would recommend this and the others in the series as examples of good storytelling.

It's been a long time since I last read a Travis McGee mystery. It was a delight to see, on the first page, the Busted Flush, Bahia Mar, Lauderdale, Florida. It is important for potential readers to understand that MacDonald weaves in intricate themes among the mysteries and adventures. The author frequently explores the changing morals of the day, the destruction of the environment by people out for a quick buck, other concerns of the times and MacDonald. McGee is a reluctant knight, cynical and battered. When he reluctantly agrees to fight for an innocent, he will do whatever is necessary, but he is also aware that sometimes it isn't enough. There is a streak of the romantic in McGee, as well as the realist. Junior Allen is a monster, a creature who corrupts the innocent for his own amusement. He is also a very dangerous opponent. The ending isn't happy, yet sadly expected. Love doesn't always win. And sometimes the good guys have to settle for just surviving.

4.5 out of 5.

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