



Enough Rope

Lawrence Block

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Enough Rope, a collection of superb stories, establishes the extraordinary skill, power, and versatility of contemporary Grand Master Lawrence Block.

Block's beloved series characters are on hand, including ex-cop Matt Scudder, bookselling burglar Bernie Rhodenbarr, and the disarming duo of Chip Harrison and Leo Haig. Here, too, are Keller, the wistful hit man, and the natty attorney Martin Ehrengraf. Keeping them company are dozens of other refugees from Block's dazzling imagination, all caught up in more ingenious plots than you can shake a blunt instrument at.

Half a dozen of Block's stories have been short-listed for the Edgar Award, and three have won it outright. All the tales in Block's three previous collections are here, along with two dozen new stories. Some will keep you on the edge of the chair. Others will make you roll on the floor laughing. *Enough Rope* is an essential volume for Lawrence Block fans, and a dazzling introduction for others to the wonderful world of Block magic!

Enough Rope Details

Date : Published November 4th 2003 by William Morrow Paperbacks (first published August 1st 2002)

ISBN : 9780060559670

Author : Lawrence Block

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From Reader Review Enough Rope for online ebook

Twistedtexas says

A mammoth collection of short stories by one of my favorite authors. I originally had the paperback version, but lost that when my house flooded in 2015. Found it again in hardcover soon thereafter.

All Block's regular characters are well-represented here, Matthew Scudder and John Keller being my favorites. There are also plenty of "stand alone" stories, and I don't recall a bad one in the whole collection.

I'm not 100% sure I have read all the stories. There are so many and I tend to read them at random and out of order... But I've read enough that I'm going to count this as finished.

An Odd1 says

"Enough Rope" by Lawrence Block has 84 stories from scary to incomprehensible, worst the sports-based. My favorite are the surprise endings. The author gives evil-doers enough rope to hang themselves. Twists cleverly make the bad guy get it from a worse nasty; sometimes evil wins.

The most coherent tales concern lawyer Ehrengraf. He arranges complicated frameups and multiple murders to free his clients and maintain his dainty dandy custom tailoring. Lighter cases from Bernie Rhodenbarr number only three. Overall, creepy disappointment not to be read before bed unless you are in mood for fear.

Hazel says

It's taken me two or three months to get through this huge collection. And I'm not sure these are all of Block's short stories, either. I think I remember one or two others. (Isn't *Lamb to the Slaughter* his?) But here, for example, are stories about Bernie Rhodenbarr, Keller, Matthew Scudder, that dapper defence attorney whose clients are always innocent, and an assortment of crime/femme fatale/quiet psychopath stories, the twist-in-the-tale type at which Block excels.

As in any collection this size, the quality is uneven. You can tell that his earlier efforts are a little clumsy, less polished. Conversely, some of the later ones seem a little too predictable, repetitive, and written almost by rote. But the good ones are brilliant, and even those I remember very well gave me a bit of a shiver this time, a tingle up my spine.

Perhaps best read in small doses, a story or two at a time, in which case you could easily make the pleasure last a year or so. :-)

Steven says

Collected stories minus the earliest ones collected in *One Night Stands*. 882 pages! Have had my fill of Block now! For Block fans there are a bunch of stories featuring his novel series characters, so that is

something to recommend this collection. It is interesting to compare these stories with the stories in *One Night Stands*: the quality of the latter stories is clearly evident and likewise the techniques that make them better, so that comparison would be quite useful for teaching. My biggest complaint about the collection is that there is no publication history. It would have been helpful to see the year and venue where these stories were originally published.

Todd Stockslager says

883 pages is a lot of book, or as Block says in the introduction (attributing to a friend, but we know better after reading the book!), 84 stories isn't a book, it's a skyscraper.

This book merits its 5-star Rating based on a straight-through reading forced by a three-week, no-renewal new-book policy at the library, but would be even better sitting on the shelf for reading in smaller chunks.

The stories cover several different character-based series, and collections of old and new stories arranged randomly--alphabetically by title, which as Block explains and becomes obvious to the reader by book's end, is a most effective method of creating apparent order in the midst of meaningless chaos.

The stories are seldom straight standard detective fiction, often taking on a psychological Twilight Zone thriller feel, with subtle shifts of setting, meaning, and perspective keeping the reader off guard and guessing--and usually shaking his head with a gentle ironic grin at the end.

Not to pick out any favorites of a consistently quality collection, a couple of particularly strong series are based on Martin Ehrengraf, a criminal lawyer who only represents innocent clients and only collects a fee if the client never faces trial (after all, Ehrengraf tells one client, do you really want to put your life in the hands of 12 people who aren't smart enough to get out of jury duty?), and always ensures that he collects through means legal, illegal, or other; and Keller, a killer-for-hire with a strong sense of justice, a Gemini if not gentle sensitivity, and a June 19th birthday, a fact that (even though I know it affected me more than most readers purely by chance) practically lifted me out of my seat.

Jeffrey says

Fabulous book and was a great deal. Excellent for an ebook since it has almost 900 pages!!! Yes, really. Must weigh a ton.

Includes all my favorite Block characters and some I had not read of before. A great collection of short stories.

From Martin Ehrengraf (complete series of short stories set in Buffalo NY), Matthew Scudder and some shorts about Keller the hit man.

Bernie Rhodenbarr makes an appearance (the book store owner/burglar) and then some stand alone stories.

SOme date back to the 60's and are great fun.

A wonderful winter read.

Jim A says

A pretty good collection of short stories by one of my favorite authors. As the print version is almost 900 pages, Block calls it "more of a doorstop than book".

All of Block's characters are represented as well as many of his stand alone stories, so there is something for all Block fans.

Riju Ganguly says

I had read this humongous tome long back. It contains several memorable stories, several unpleasant stories with twist endings, and several duds, as expected. Most of the stories, if tried to be read today, would appear rather unreadable, since they had been written for a readership that doesn't exist any longer. Nevertheless, if you are in suitably dark mood, and looking for some twisted and dark tales laced with crime & human frailty, get hold of this one.

It would take care of your needs for many-many days.

Enough rope, indeed.

Devlocke says

Solid collection of short stories. The lawyer that never wins, and the assassin, were my favorites as far as the series-characters go. I think Block is more into sports than I am; was annoyed by that, in a couple of the one-offs. These were all pretty great. The one-offs that weren't really mysteries at all were the most effective/affecting, I think. I am not a frequent reader of short stories, and bought this collection on the recommendation of a friend, because I wanted to see how good short stories were put together. For my purpose, and as general entertainment, this was great.

Mikel says

Ah, Lawrence Block...

When you've been reading other mystery writers for a while, coming back to Lawrence Block feels a lot like pulling a treasured but scuffed old leather jacket out of your closet, putting it on, and feeling that perfect fit with a very faint lingering scent of old tobacco and ale. He captures time and place so masterfully that you're instantly transported to New York, but his sense of style, turn of the phrase, and ear for dialogue is so idiosyncratic, that you're taken to Block's New York. The New York Block produces doesn't exist anymore, and probably never did, but that doesn't stop you from feeling giddy each time you visit.

This is a tome of near 900 pages and the writing of it must have been a labor of love. Most of it consists of short stories, a form obviously loved by Block. Almost all of them produce that bittersweet short story reaction on finishing: satisfaction of a tale well-told, but disappointed that it was a once-off. You leave each story wishing many of the characters would spawn a series of their own, yet you know in your heart it ain't happening, Ships in the night.

The book also contains two Chip Harrison stories and ten Martin Ehrengraf tales. I find each of these fairly formulaic and I don't really care for the formula, so they left me cold. There are also three Bernie Rhodenbarr stories, who I can take or leave. There are five Keller stories, which is one of the most unique series in literature today, a shocking blend of humor, mystery, and violence. Nine Matthew Scudder stories are also herein, mystery's best alcoholic private detective, which is a bit like saying baseball's best right-handed pitcher.

Great book for both the old lovers of Block and new ones looking for an introduction (albeit a lengthy one) to mystery's great master.

Pat Burns says

I was so glad to find this collection of stories after finishing the Scudder series a while ago (I read them in order.) I never knew the short stories existed so it was a real treat to revisit the drinking days of Scudder after so many books of him on the wagon. They are a perfect read for someone not familiar with the series. After reading one, my guess is you will start on the novels in order.

C.S. says

Make sure you know what you are getting into if you read this book. I would say over half of it was previously printed in other Block short story collections. It was still a good book but it is huge and if you have desire to reread previous stories, then you can skip this book.

The new stuff was good but I am not sure it alone was worth having to deal with this giant book. If you want all of your Block in one spot, then this is the book for you. I gave it 3 stars only because of the amount of reprints. The stories are great, I had just read a lot of them already.

Danny Smith says

Enough Rope is a collection of short stories. I enjoyed all of them, but I couldn't give each five stars, so collectively I think an overall four-star review is appropriate. The one story about the gun is perplexing as it never goes anywhere. I mean, you can read into it, but I just didn't like the way it ended.

Craig Childs says

Lawrence Block has written almost exclusively in the field of crime fiction for sixty years. This collection of

84 stories—comprised of almost his entire output of short fiction from 1960 to 2002—showcases the variety of styles possible within the genre. This may be one of the best short story collections of the last 25 years.

Block can be funny (“One Thousand Dollars a Word”, “Nothing Short of Highway Robbery”). He can write gritty noir (“Looking for David”, “By the Dawn’s Early Light”). His stories can be dry and witty (“The Ehrengraf Nostrum”, “Collecting Ackermans”) or serious and literate (“A Blow for Freedom”, “With a Smile for the Ending”).

He can make you root for the bad guy (“Answers to Soldier”) or shudder at the evil of human nature (“Like a Bug on a Windshield”). He can use crime to offer insightful social commentary (“Batman’s Helper”, “The Merciful Angel of Death”). He even wrote one of the best baseball stories of all time (“Almost Perfect”).

In addition to many previously uncollected pieces, this collection includes the complete contents of several previous short story collections, including:

1. Like a Lamb to Slaughter (1984)
2. Sometimes They Bite (1992)
3. Some Days You Get the Bear (1994)
4. Ehrengraf for the Defense (1994, first edition only)
5. The Collected Mystery Stories (1999, UK publication only)

Nathan Shumate says

Block is possibly more of a master of short fiction than novels. His deceptively simple prose qualifies as "compulsively readable."
