



A Drink Before the War/Darkness, Take My Hand

Dennis Lehane

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Master of new noir Dennis Lehane magnificently evokes the dignity and savagery of working-class Boston in *Darkness, Take My Hand*, a terrifying tale of redemption.

Patrick Kenzie and Angela Gennaro's latest client is a prominent Boston psychiatrist, running scared from a vengeful Irish mob. The private investigators know about cold-blooded retribution. Born and bred on the mean streets of blue-collar Dorchester, they've seen the darkness that lives in the hearts of the unfortunate.

But an evil for which even they are unprepared is about to strike, as secrets that have long lain dormant erupt, setting off a chain of violent murders that will stain everything – including the truth.

With razor-sharp dialogue and penetrating prose, *Darkness, Take My Hand* is another superior crime novel from the author of *Mystic River*; *Gone, Baby, Gone*; and *Shutter Island*.

A Drink Before the War/Darkness, Take My Hand Details

Date : Published January 30th 2007 by William Morrow Paperbacks (first published 2004)

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Author : Dennis Lehane

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From Reader Review A Drink Before the War/Darkness, Take My Hand for online ebook

Cody says

Read the dead tree version.

Drink Before the War:

Loved the dialog and the pacing. Dennis Lehane is one of my favorite authors.

Darkness, Take My Hand:

The title would make an awesome band name. The prologue was depressing as hell! I didn't notice the dialog as much in this one, but I still flew through it, loving every minute.

Aaron says

If you liked the film *Gone Baby Gone*, there's a good chance you'll like the novel series as well. I had a blast. Lehane does an excellent job introducing us to the grimy underside of Boston. I think the stories are a bit over the top, and some of the scenes feel like they were directed by Michael Bay, but the characters are spot on.

Read these two books together or separate, it's all good. I happened to pick up this 2-for-1 deal, but you're neither getting anything extra nor losing anything with this package. Enjoy!

Mark R. says

Whoever made the decision to publish these two novels in one volume--congratulations to you. These two novels make an excellent "double feature", the first two stories in Lehane's five-novel-long private detective series.

"A Drink Before the War" introduces Patrick Kenzie (whose first-person narration tells the story) and Angela Genarro, private eyes whose office is located in a church tower and who have grown up in Boston and seem to know just about everyone in town. In this story, they're hired by a couple of Senators to find some missing documents that were likely stolen by one of the men's assistants, who is herself missing. This sets the detectives on a path that leads to some extremely nasty individuals, culminating in a face-off between two rather large rival gangs. Lehane poses questions on racial and familial relations in ways that do not easily provide answers. The main character's struggle with himself, to do the correct thing, keep his liberal social status in tact, and not allow himself to get swallowed up by the ghost of his father, who is always somewhere towards the front of his mind, takes center stage in the second half of the book. And, as I'd imagine a good detective book is meant to do, the action and violence accelerate right up until the very end, and, at least for this slightly unobservant reader, nothing was predictable.

"Darkness, Take My Hand" is, as its title suggests, very dark, even darker than "A Drink Before the War". When the story picks up, the hero detectives are looking into a case for a friend, a woman who feels that her

son is being stalked, though by who, of course, no one can say. This leads Kenzie and Generro to a plot much more complicated, and even more sinister, than that of the first book. Characters, even those who took up only a few pages in "War", are expanded upon, and the histories of the two leads are developed more, as are themes of family, loneliness, and the acceptability of unnecessary violence in extreme situations.

Kim says

If you liked "Gone, Baby, Gone", you will like this. Even if you only saw the movie and didn't read the book (I read Mystic River, so knew I liked Lehane). The dialogue and narrative has the same wise-cracking, Boston attitude that Casey Affleck did a great job of portraying in "Gone, Baby, Gone". This book is a page turner. Started it last night and will finish before bed tonight. Can't help wondering why it hasn't been turned into a movie also.

Reb says

Couldn't finish the second story. Way too brutal and graphic. Had planned on reading the series but not sure now.

Brian says

These two novels form part of the "Kenzie and Gennaro" saga, and they've cemented my love for these two working class Dorchester kids. Lehane's characters tend to be hard to love, at least on the surface. They come up out of the racism and violence of the urban Boston area, and Lehane's depictions, as Bob Dylan said in his Academy Award acceptance speech, "don't pussy foot around with the human condition." Patrick and Angie have evolved into private detectives, hard-ass sleuths who struggle to keep their humanity and morality. The panoply of characters they interact with--corrupt politicians, cynical cops, angry young gangsters, cold and calculating third generation mobsters, psychotic serial killers (who sometimes turn out to be combinations of the preceding list of characters), and loyal, but crazy friends from childhood and the neighborhood--are often hard to stomach, but usually arrive as authentic representations of American social and cultural realities.

Mike says

Excellent page turners from Lehane, though not as good as the other stuff I've read of his, Mystic River and Gone, Baby Gone. Both of those felt a little more grounded and not as genre driven as these two. However, the best part of both of these is that they were fantastic page turners I couldn't put down. I'll say this for Lehane: He writes a helluva thriller.

Tracy says

as dark as midnight and gave me nightmares but so good.

Jesse Bornemann says

Dennis Lehane is 1) my favorite mystery novelist and 2) considers "Bostonian" a religion - so, I was prepared to cut him some slack on these two novels, if necessary. They're not only the first two in the Kenzie-Gennaro series, but also his first-ever published...i.e. pre-Mystic River, pre-Gone, Baby, Gone. Pre-Affleck.

Of course, Lehane didn't require my charity. "A Drink..." and "Darkness..." establish the theme of "bad good-guys and good bad-guys" that works so well in Lehane's subsequent, blockbuster novels. No matter how many heroic deeds Patrick Kenzie accomplishes in his detective beat, he still battles his own ugly impulses of racism and homophobia, and a self-destructive inability to forgive his abusive father. Meanwhile, the atrocities committed by the novels' "villains" are only trumped by the inhumane actions of their mothers, fathers, neighborhood cops, local politicians, and the societies they inhabit. "

A Drink..." and "Darkness..." only betray Lehane's newbie status in some of their unnecessary details - in particular, more clothing descriptions than a Baby-Sitter's Club book. Don't know about you, but I'm more interested in Kenzie's thoughts and motives than his "pearl gray, unstructured linen jacket."

Aris says

Powerful novels.

Sometimes, you don't have to think really hard in order for you to decipher whether other universes of customs and behaviours really exist. You just have to read because, more often than not, that "mirror of reality" thing is there and ready, always ready, to let you see through.

Matt says

Man, this was a good read! After watching GONE BABY GONE and rewatching MYSTIC RIVER, I was very excited to start reading Lehane and starting here, with his first novel. It introduces Patrick Kenzie and Angela Genarro (from GBG) in a story about poverty, race relations, gang violence, domestic abuse, and political corruption that reads like a dime detective novel. Fast, fun, and simultaneously sympathetic and vicious toward its characters.

Ding says

I think this is the real deal in mystery and suspense. This is a volume of two books. The first two books of a series. I like the second book better as it is more thrilling but they are both good reads. The first book sets the tone of the whole series and establishes characters with enough depth. The real work comes in the second book where the case becomes personal to the main character. The story is gripping. The mystery is mind-boggling and the emotions are so real. I love this book and will follow on it with the 3rd book.

Sigrid Ellis says

I liked this. Nothing about it particularly stood out for me, which I feel is a really weak thing to say about a critically acclaimed novel. But, there you have it. I liked the characters, I thought the writing was tight, I agree Lehane is a talented author, yet I doubt I'll read it again.

If you like gritty urban crime novels with a strong sense of time and place, and that time and place is 1990s Boston, this is THE book for you.

Adrianne Adelle says

Crazy intense. Graphic. Very graphic as always for Lehane. But if you are looking for a detective thrill ride this is it.

Eric Chow says

Both of these books explode with violence and tap into the painful realization that we are all blood, bone and nerve-endings. Lehane's characters come alive like people we grew up with, and their survival through the plot twists keep the reader on his/her toes. Both of these titles are worth reading on their own merit, and can't be compared to each other.
