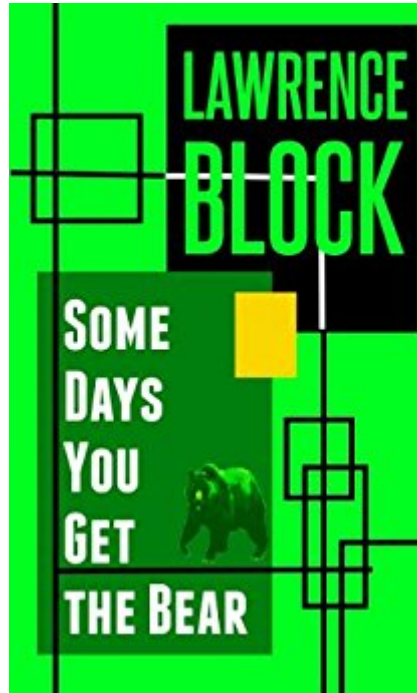




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Some Days You Get The Bear



Synopsis

Some Days You Get the Bear is listed in various bibliographical sources as having first appeared in Penthouse, but I don't believe it did. The story SOLD to Penthouse, and sat in inventory forever, until my agent asked for its return. Then in 1993 It became the title story in my third collection of short fiction, published by William Morrow, and later turned up in my omnibus collection of short fiction, Enough Rope. It's not a crime story, nor is it erotic, so that makes it not what you might expect from me. If I were to categorize it and I'd just as soon not I'd probably call it a story of light urban romance. It's a story about a grown man who sleeps with a teddy bear. Nothing terribly neurotic about him. He just gets a better night's sleep when his bear's in his bed with him, that's all. But it does complicate things...

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is Lawrence Block's 3rd short story collection, published in 1994, an

extremely diverse collection that shows the range of Block's talent and the boundaries of the crime and mystery genres. I downloaded the Kindle edition, even though I know all the stories are also included in *Enough Rope* (2001), which I also own. I cannot say why I did this, except it seems less daunting to begin a book of 21 stories, some of which I'd read before, rather than one with 84 stories. I almost gave it a full 5 stars on the merits of a handful of truly excellent stories, except that 8 of them had twist endings, and after a while that pattern became me just repetitive enough to deduct a half-star. Here are my individual story reviews:

By the Dawn's Early Light -- Won both the Edgar and Shamus awards. Later expanded into the 6th Matthew Scudder novel, *When the Sacred Ginmill Closes*. The story is good in its own right, but the novel is a classic of American crime fiction that belongs on the shelf right next to *Double Indemnity* and *The Maltese Falcon*.

Cleveland in My Dreams -- The rare non-crime short story from Block. A humorous tale about two men who have the same recurring dreams night after night.

Some Things a Man Must Do -- An older story from the mid-1960s about a mob war instigated by a single murder. Less polished than the other stories in this collection, but still enjoyable. Feels like Block was trying to channel his inner Donald Westlake with this comic caper.

Answers to Soldier -- Nominated for an Edgar award. Gun-for-hire Keller is sent across country to perform a job, but he wonders if he should abandon his chosen line of work and settle down in Roseburg, Oregon instead. This was the first of many black comedy short stories featuring this character; it was later incorporated into the novel *Hit Man*.

Good for the Soul -- A nice twist on a real-life theme: the guy who habitually confesses to crimes he did not commit.

The Ehrengraf Alternative -- The diminutive attorney Martin Ehrengraf has never represented a guilty client. They always turn out to be innocent. When one exonerated client does not have the means to pay her legal fees, well, Martin must find an alternative, mustn't he?

Someday I'll Plant More Walnut Trees -- A rich, nuanced tale about different types of domestic abuse. The ending was rather obviously telegraphed, but it is to the author's credit he can twist events to lure the reader to root for the abuser rather than the abused.

The Burglar Who Dropped in on Elvis -- One of my favorite stories in this collection, if only because I used to live in Memphis, and the author captures the spirit of the Graceland experience.

As Good as a Rest -- Two couples decide to engage in wife-swapping while on vacation. The crime aspect of the story is not immediately apparent, but when it comes into focus, it changes the reader's perceptions completely.

Death Wish -- Three people try to assist a depressed and suicidal man, but perhaps this is all a prelude to a murder?

The Merciful

Angel of Death *Œ* Won a Shamus award. A bleak look at New York's response to the AIDS crisis and an exploration of the murky ethics of assisted suicide. Fits into the Matt Scudder series around the same time as the events in the 11th novel, *The Devil Knows You're Dead*. The Tulsa Experience *Œ* • One of my least favorite twist-ending stories. The twist was obvious from the beginning. Some Days You Get the Bear *Œ* • An excellent tale of a man with a bedtime eccentricity, and of how he found his unlikely soulmate. One of the few non-crime stories. Passport in Order *Œ* • Another by-the-numbers murder tale with an obvious twist ending. Something to Remember You By *Œ* • A menacing man gives a ride to a young coed college student. This story is exactly what you expect until it isn't. Memorable and well-written. Hilliard's Ceremony *Œ* • A cultural diplomat goes to an African witch doctor because he feels he has created no lasting mark on the world. An interesting tale of faith and healing. The third and final non-crime story. It felt incomplete to me *Œ* • the diplomat seemed to become more attractive to women because of his experience, but I did not connect the dots to see how or whether this solved his existential crisis. The Ehrengraf Nostrum -- The best of the 12 tales about Martin Ehrengraf. The dapper lawyer frames someone for a crime to get his client off, only to later have to exonerate him. Like a Bug on a Windshield *Œ* • A long-haul truck driver fears he may have given a serial killer the idea to initiate a murder spree. This story features a fun, authentic narrative voice, and the resolution is genuinely creepy. A Blow for Freedom *Œ* • Nominated for an Edgar award. A New Yorker buys a gun, and it changes him subtly. This is a quiet story with little in the way of pyrotechnics, but the author manages to ably and simply explore all the dynamics of the 2nd amendment debate in the US. How Would You Like It? *Œ* • A dark and comedic story of a man who takes animal rights to the extreme. Batman's Helper -- Explores the murky ethics of copyright trademark enforcement. Lacks punch, but very interesting and informative. Fits into the Matt Scudder series after the 7th novel, *Out on the Cutting Edge*.

Lawrence Block writes such good stories. Once I start reading, I have to keep going. So good!!

I love Lawrence Block's writing, but my very favorite character is Matthew Scudder. This book was good but was a collection of short stories.

Enjoyable reading

I love Lawrence Block, his stories are always well written, well thought out, surprising, and just plain good!

LB is the best short story writer today. Well crafted stories with clever plots.

I would read anything that Lawrence Block writes.

I have loved every Lawrence Block book I have ever read. What's not to like in a collection of short stories? "How Would You Like It?" remains one of my favorites!!

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