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City Primeval



Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Absolutely the best book Elmore Leonard ever wrote. The first 2 chapters are the best opening chapters I have ever read and I've read alot. In the matter of Judge Alvin Guy draws you right in. All of the characters are believable. The opening 2 chapters are so true and they show the racism of blacks and whites together. However the story is not about racism. It is about investigating a murder and a scam and how the Detective, in this case Cruz, has a grudge he has been carrying for the criminal for sometime and how that leads to forcing a showdown. Cruz is well developed and the scene where he is being interviewed is so believable it makes you cringe and yet laugh too. Every guy who has been accused of not being sensitive or open and communicative by their wife or girlfriend will recognize it in a minute. The bad guy from Oklahoma is spot on a perfect character developed to the extreme. The opening chapters should be used in every writer's workshop in the USA. -It grabs you with real characters and real true to life scenes. Cruz was introduced before Raylan but they both are very similar. I think Leonard used attributes that Cruz had and carried them over to create Raylan Givens. Cruz was too good of a character to kill off altogether so voila he created Raylan Givens. The dialouge is perfect and the story moves right along. Loved this book. Others that you should read are Split Images, 52 pick up and Swag. All have great characters and stories-but City Primeval is the best ever. Anyone aspiring to be a writer should read this book and especially the opening 2 chapters.

This book came out in 1980, but aside from a few odds and ends (no cell phones or Glocks), it

might as well have been written yesterday (In fact, it may be MORE realistic in some ways than what can make it into print today. Leonard's lowlives use racial epithets casually in their speech, because, surprise, surprise, they're criminal lowlives). The hero, lawman Raymond Cruz, is a little bit of a puzzle, even to himself, but I think his essence is certainly clear by the end of the book. The other star of the novel, arguably stealing the show from Cruz, is Clement Mansell, a moral monster whose natural inclination toward sociopathy has only been reinforced by his previous encounters with the court system. There's also Mansell's girlfriend Sandy, a sort of moral drifter, who, even as she finds herself being squeezed by the police, is still not crazy enough to ever even THINK of testifying against Mansell. And there's an interesting community of Albanian immigrants who apparently aren't people to be trifled with either. I think the subtitle of this book, "High Noon In Detroit," may be slightly misleading, because in High Noon, Gary Cooper had to stand up against Miller and his gang after everybody else in the town basically chickened out, and that's not really the case here. It IS personal between Cruz and Mansell "oh, yeah" but that's because of who they are; the civilian population of Detroit is largely irrelevant. (That's not to say there isn't a strong element of "High Noon" in the book "there absolutely is, in terms of the personal confrontation between two men" just that in terms of the plot, it's not a recapitulation of the classic western.)

What do you say about an Elmore Leonard?? Always great stuff. Super fast-paced, humorous, great plot and wonderful characters. Cover to cover as fast as you can read, and I always want more when I get to the end. Get it, read it, enjoy!!

If you know Leonard then you know whether you like his work. If you don't, well I feel sorry for you. With the success of Justified on tv I expect many are just discovering Leonard. I am envious as you have a plethora of books to choose from and they will all be new to you. Enjoy them all as much as those of us who have known for years that he has never written a bad one.

Before Raylan there was detective Cruz. Great characters, great dialogue, very good story. I have read several of Leonard's stories and this is one of the best.

This is a good book but not Elmore Leonard at his best.

Loved it, but they you have to like Elmore Leonard to read his stuff.

I have never been disappointed with Elmore Leonard and though some books are better than others they are all fives. If one has read any of Leonard's older Westerns you can, in these three books, his morphing over to modern day crime from early westerns, that directly links the good and evil of crime, and the consistency of psychopaths, past and present. Good guy, bad guy, threatened heroine and a plot, that's it. Leonard always creates an original and believable plot. His books are not mystery's they are the development of characters, portrayed in pitch perfect dialogue, that come together in believable random ways. You know roughly how they will end, good wins and bad loses, but the trip, with meandering and fascinating building block incidents, are a pleasure. The psychological depth that he gives his characters always ring true.

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