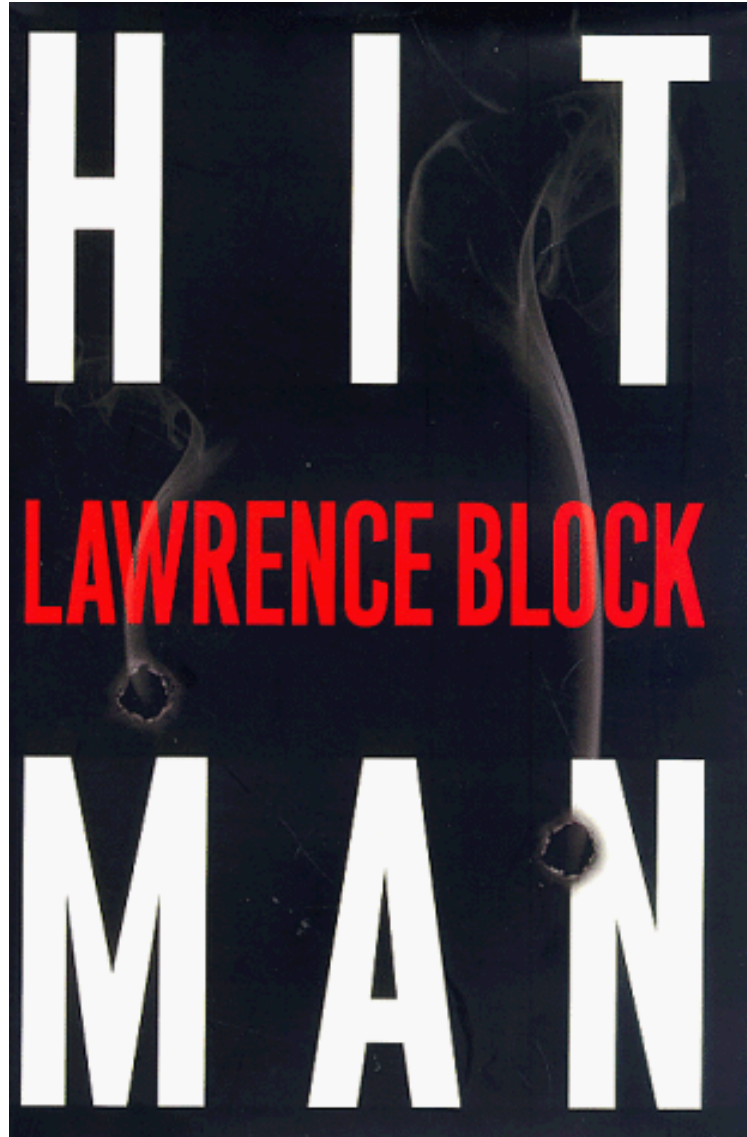


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Hit Man

Lawrence Block

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Lawrence Block : Hit Man before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hit Man:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five stars for another great Lawrence Block bookBy marsha-mellowI'm a huge fan of Lawrence Block, one of the best and most prolific fiction writers of our day. "Hit Man" features one of my favorite of his characters, Keller. Keller is the mild mannered hit man who is good at his job and

between jobs just wants to enjoy his otherwise common and ordinary life. His interactions with his employer, his thought processes as he approaches his assignments, and his non work-related relationships and activities between jobs are all described in hilarious and entertaining style and fashion by master story teller Lawrence Block. I wish I were a better writer if only to give Mr. Block his due in this review. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A laugh a minute!!By J. GabrielsonWhat a great storyteller is Lawrence Block!! Who else could put the fun in assassination, I ask you readers?? Block has a gift for comedy. His delivery is fast paced and non stop. It's very similar to stand up. Keller is a true blue New Yorker, practical and generally unconcerned about ethics. He likes dogs and stamp collecting. He rescues children from danger. He gives money to shelters for homeless animals. The people Keller slays are usually corrupt business types that the world can live without. Wit and deadpan humor are the hallmarks of this very fine writer. Enjoy!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A refreshing change from beat-em-up anti-heroesBy Patrick StirlingI liked this book a lot. It's hardly literature but has no pretention to be. The style is dry humor, which I love, and the author makes the protagonist very sympathetic, quite an achievement considering his job! If you've read and liked Thomas Perry's Butcher's Boy series, you'll like this. Unlike other picaresque modern novels (eg Jack Reacher), Block writes less about the weapons and techniques, and more about the hitman's daily life and interactions.

Keller is a killer. Professional, cool, confident, competent, reliable. The consummate pro. The hit man's hit man. But he is a complex person: understandably guarded and reclusive, icy and ruthlessly efficient, he is also prone to loneliness, self-doubt, and career worries. Indeed, he is going through a full-fledged mid-life crisis. Keller may be a crack assassin, but he is also an all-too-human being. As Keller goes about his rounds, fulfilling his contracts, he learns a few crucial truths about himself and the ways of the normal world and winds up a wiser (if not a better) man.

.com A man known only as Keller is thinking about Samuel Johnson's famous quote that "'patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel'... If you looked at it objectively, he had to admit, then he was probably a scoundrel himself. He didn't feel much like a scoundrel. He felt like your basic New York single guy, living alone, eating out or bringing home takeout, schlepping his wash to the Laundromat, doing the Times crossword with his morning coffee... There were eight million stories in the naked city, most of them not very interesting, and his was one of them. Except that every once in a while he got a phone call from a man in White Plains. And packed a bag and caught a plane and killed somebody. Hard to argue the point. Man behaves like that, he's a scoundrel. Case closed." But Lawrence Block is such a delightfully subtle writer, one of the true masters of the mystery genre, that the case is far from closed. In this beautifully linked collection of short stories, we gradually put together such a complete picture of Keller that we don't so much forgive him his occupation as consider it just one more part of his humanity. After watching Keller take on cases that baffle and anger him into actions that fellow members of his hit-man union might well call unprofessional, we're eager to join him as he goes through a spectacularly unsuccessful analysis and gets fooled by a devious intelligence agent. We miss the dog he acquires and loses, along with its attractive walker. Like Richard Stark's Parker, Keller makes us think the unthinkable about criminals: that they might be the guys next door--or even us, under different pressures. For a small selection of the many Blocks in paperback, try Coward's Kiss, A Long Line of Dead Men, The Sins of the Fathers, Such Men Are Dangerous, and especially When the Sacred Ginmill Closes. From Kirkus sFor some years now, Block's been chronicling the adventures of fatalistic hired assassin J.P. Keller. Now Block (The Burglar in the Library, p. 912, etc.) has revised and collected ten stories showing Keller doing what he does best. As he sallies forth from his First Avenue apartment to one American city after another at the behest of the old man in White Plains, Keller ponders whether he can kill a man he's grown to like, mops up after hitting the wrong target, serves as cat's-paw for killers initially more clever than he is, and agonizes over which of two clients who've paid to have each other killed he's going to have to disappoint. In between his methodical executions, he also checks out real estate in Oregon, consults a therapist, takes up stamp collecting, wonders if learning more about flowers would enrich his life, buys earrings for the woman who walks his dog, and worries how much of a commitment he can make to either the woman or the dog. It's the combination of the many things Keller ruminates about and the many things he tries not to ("This is the wrong business for moral decisions," the old man's secretary admonishes him) that gives him his melancholy fascination. Is the result a novel or a cycle of stories? Block's ravenous fans--delighted to see at least three masterpieces ("Keller on Horseback," "Keller's Therapy," and "Keller in Shining Armor") gathered in one volume--won't care any more than Keller would. -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. By job definition a loner, who can't acquire a girlfriend, a therapist or even a dog without being prepared for the (often dire) consequences, this guy really needs to think and talk. Hence, the ironic tone and confessional content that make these intimate tales so funny and full of rue. -- The New York Times Book , Marilyn Stasio