



Hard Bite

Anonymous-9

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The hit-and-run driver took everything — his wife, child and legs. Now a paraplegic, Dean Drayhart unleashes payback on suspected hit-and-runners in Los Angeles with helper-monkey Sid as his deadly assistant.

Dean's gentle, doting nurse knows nothing about what he's up to. When Sid tears out the throat of a Mexican Mafia member, Marcie gets kidnapped in order to force Dean's surrender.

Armed with nothing but his wits, Sid, and a sympathetic streetwalker named Cinda, Dean manipulates drug-cartel carnals and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department in a David-against-Goliath plot that twists and turns to a heart-pounding showdown.

Hard Bite Details

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Author : Anonymous-9

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From Reader Review **Hard Bite** for online ebook

Rob Kitchin says

Hard Bite was a joy to read. Original, witty, smart, dark, and hard with a soft-centre. Elaine Ash (Anonymous-9) writes in very assured and sparkling prose that is all show and no tell, and which swaps between the first person narrative of Dean and the third person of the other characters, including Sid. I was hooked from the first sentence. The plot is very nicely put together, and whilst it could have twirled off into a screwball noir, it manages to be darkly comic without descending into farce, and wheels an interesting path through a morally fraught landscape. Dean is a remarkable lead character, strong in vision and drive but weak in body, and Ash doesn't fall into the trap of portraying him in an ableist light. Sid is great fun as a helper monkey who was dropped from his training programme for attitude problems, and the other characters are all nicely realised. Along with good contextualisation, there is also a decent sense of place in both LA and Mexico. One of the most original crime and enjoyable novels I've read in a good while and thoroughly recommended.

Stephanie Hughes says

I liked this book it was definitely different but thats how I like them it keeps me reading. Thumbs up to Anonymous-9!

Mysticpt says

i have finished Hard Bite and would give it a solid 3 stars. kind of a Stephen Hawking meets Dexter if you can imagine.....it was fast paced and had enough going on, however i just didn't find myself connecting too much with any of the characters. but maybe that is not such a bad thing. i wasn't sure how it would end, but it was a good ending. i will definitely read another novel from this author tho.

Josh says

HARD BITE is modern pulp with a paraplegic protagonist and a side kick worthy of a cult following, in Sid, a serial killer money. HARD BITE is laced with satire and dark humour likened to other Blasted Heath titles, notably Douglas Lindsay's Barney Thomson series - despite the murderous plot, Anonymous-9 keeps the laughs and lighter moments rolling along. I didn't know whether to cringe when Sid went in for the 'hard bite' or laugh at the overall outlandish concept - great stuff.

Not your typical portrait of a serial killer, Dean Drayhart is wheelchair bound and uses a unique accomplice to carry out his killings. In a twisted way, Dean gets some redemption with every kill of a hit and run driver, slowly accounting for his predicament courtesy of a hit and run which not only caused his loss of movement but also cost him his family.

HARD BITE really comes to the boil when it's discovered one of Drayhart's victims has strong ties to a Mexican drug cartel. Soon he encounters bullets, a scornful mother, and the police in an all out action packed story that's entertaining all the way through.

The characters are superb, from Drayhart and Sid, to Drayhart's nurse Maric Blattlatch and prostitute girlfriend Cinda. Cop Doug provides a glimpse at the police procedural aspect to the hunt while the Mexican drug cartel add an element of noir to this fun pulpy caper.

Anonymous-9, Dave Zeltserman (Julius Katz mystery series), and Duane Swierczynski (Charlie Hardie trilogy) are leading the new era of modern pulp which could well turn into the second coming of the genres golden age. I wonder who's the better sidekick (albeit from opposite sides of the law); Sid from HARD BITE or Archie from JULIUS KATZ AND ARCHIE? Perhaps we need to see more of Sid before deciding.

HARD BITE gets 5 stars for me.

Side note: I love books that have covers relevant to the actual story, not just a cut and pasted images set amongst a generic backdrop. HARD BITE's cover has got to be one of the best this year.

This review also appears on my blog: <http://justaguythatlikes2read.blogspot...>

Les Edgerton says

HARD BITE by Anonymous 9

Absolutely loved this book. I'm a sucker for vigilante tales and this is one of the best I've read in a long time. Plus, it had the bonus of the "crusader" employing a helper monkey to assist him. Unless there's a genre featuring helper monkeys that everyone else knows about and I don't, this is only the second novel I've ever read that featured one. The first was John Vernon's magic realism novel, Peter Doyle in which the protagonist, on the hunt for Napoleon's penis, owned a monkey he'd fashioned from body parts and when he was low on cash, would help fill the coffers by leaping on the backs of sailors, slash their throats and take their purses. Anonymous 9's use of a helper monkey in Hard Bite, while different, was equally delightful and original. Just wondering how the folks at PETA liked it... Since I eat meat as often as I can, I'm without their prohibitions concerning critters and I give it a 5 out of 5 stars... Just a darned good read!

Rebecca Gransden says

Hard Bite kicks off with revenge, like one of those lone wolf retribution thrillers where the main dude's family gets wiped out and he gets all upset about it. But that's exactly what happens here when Dean's life gets smashed to a twisted wreck and he is left to live with the consequences of carnage. What would you do if you had a wild-eyed helper monkey trained to obey every command, a simian companion in your days in oblivion?

Dean wills his plan into action, his restricted mobility focusing his mind, motivated by righteous fury he

takes to the city. With his furry sidekick acting out what he is unable to do physically, they function as a dastardly team and work to clean up the streets. Together they bring vigilante justice to those who have evaded the law, in an attempt to right some wrongs and bring some elusive peace to Dean's battered psyche. It helps to keep busy.

As events unfold their lively spree of violence inevitably gathers unwanted attentions, both from the law and those under the watchful eye of it. Dean and his plucky pal, with the help of a well-drawn supporting cast, are faced with a situation where there may be no ultimate winners but they've given the game all they've got.

This novel is incredibly funny. Pulpy, noirish, and borderline madcap in places, it is short and sharp. Completely enjoyable ride with the humour rich and dry, I was fully entertained. One thing though - I wanted more Sid!

Randy says

Dean Drayhart is an unusual serial killer. A paraplegic, rendered so by a hit and run driver, who also took his daughter's life and eventually killed his marriage. His weapon of choice is a small monkey named Sid, a helper animal trained for work with crippled people. Sid's training goes much further though.

Dean has an obsession to rid the world of hit and run drivers and has a website where he poses as a crime writer looking for paid interviews with hit and run drivers, discretion guaranteed. He has a hooker girl friend who knows what he does and a care nurse that doesn't.

When Sid, with his razor sharp teeth, rips out the throat of a member of a Mexican drug cartel member, Mother gets very angry. She's run the cartel ever since her husband died in prison and with her other two sons, it doesn't take her long to get on Dean's trail.

And the cops start to put things together when they find strange animal hairs at two of the murder scenes, not a canine of any sort, but some sort of exotic.

But when the cartel grab Dean's care nurse, he knows something has to be done.

Quite enjoyed this look at a novel by Anonymous-9, the pseudonym of Elaine Ash, having read a few stories over the last few years.

Werner says

Note, March 13, 2015: I edited this review just now to correct a minor typo.

Although I sometimes say I don't read e-books, a more accurate way of putting that would be that I very, very seldom read them (more on that below), and then only under unusual circumstances. In this case, the author, Elaine Ash, and I are Goodreads friends in her Anonymous-9 incarnation (her real identity isn't secret, and is indeed mentioned in the author info at the end of this book). Awhile back, she wound up giving me quite a bit of computer advice/information, and only asked in return that I'd buy a copy of her book. (She didn't ask me to review it; and when I said I would if I liked it, she replied that she wouldn't be offended by a

honest review even if I didn't.) Since I figured that a gracious favor from a lady deserved one in return, and I'd already heard of the book and found it intriguing, I did buy it (at 99 cents, it won't break anybody!). But her publisher basically only does e-books (as I understand it, the paperback edition in the Goodreads database was a very limited run for review copies, now out of print). So in this case, it was e-book format or nothing.

As the Goodreads description indicates, this book has one of the more original premises ever employed in crime fiction; but the use of helper monkeys to assist the severely disabled is not an invention of the author's. They're very real, and a Google search will generate a lot of information. Being highly intelligent for an animal, dextrous and easy to train, monkeys make wonderful helper pets. However, Sid's training has been taken in directions not anticipated by the helper monkey program. Lacking a moral sense and being trained to be loyal and protective toward his human owner --and being endowed with agility, quickness, problem-solving ability and nasty teeth-- he makes a formidable lethal weapon in the wrong hands. When the owner starts his narration with, "I like to kill people," that's definitely a clue that these are the wrong hands!

Dean Drayhart, though, is no psychotic serial killer who likes homicide for its own sake; as he quickly makes clear, it's not people in general that he likes killing, just "certain" people: those who've taken human life as hit and run drivers and gotten away with it. One of them tragically slaughtered his beloved little daughter and left him with no feet, one hand replaced by a prosthetic hook, and severe damage to his neck and intestines; his wife left him because she couldn't handle his all-consuming obsession with revenge. He's not your average paraplegic; smart, equipped with a specially-fitted van and adaptive technology on his computer, and a burning sense of mission, he's a vigilante to be reckoned with, especially with Sid's help.

While it has some genuinely humorous moments, this isn't a humorous book. Rather, it's a tale very much in the pulp crime-fiction tradition, with a high body count and several characters on the wrong side of the law. But that doesn't mean it lacks a moral sense; on the contrary, the pulp tradition at its best often uses the extreme situations and gray areas of morality that it posits to grapple with serious moral issues. That's definitely the case here; the author doesn't supply any pat answers for the moral issues posed by vigilantism, but she forces you to think about them on your own, and gives you grist for your mind to work on. The author uses present-tense narration throughout (in first person for Dean's sections, third person for those from the viewpoint of other characters), but it flows very easily and naturally, including the few key flashbacks to scenes in the past. There's a really gripping, often edge-of-the-seat quality to the narration; you don't want to stop reading, even if you have to. (Like many Goodreads descriptions, this one is a bit misleading about how the plot actually develops, but that's all I'll say.) All the characters are well-drawn and developed. Dean and his girlfriend Cinda are likable, even if you disapprove of what they do (she's not, to be fair to her, an actual accomplice in the killings, just an accessory who knows about and "respects" Dean's vendetta because he's her lover); and so are the cops investigating the case. (I particularly appreciated the fact that the lead cop is a loving and faithful husband and father; the glimpses of his family life are well-done.) The drug cartel's ruling family, the Malalindas, definitely *aren't* likable (indeed, the deceased's two brothers make up in utter ruthlessness what they totally lack in charm or intelligence), and we get a very dark look at the ugly world of the U.S.-Mexican drug trade. But even these people are fully fleshed-out and realistic; we can understand them, and family matriarch Orella IS a human being (albeit a really misguided and dangerous one who's allowed some very bad choices to define her). L.A. is the author's home town, and she has a thorough command of the geography and local color that only a resident could; and she knows her police procedure and gun specs. She engages your emotions from the beginning, and the ending will stay with you.

So, why four stars instead of five? I had a few nits to pick here. I actually wasn't as put off by the language as I thought I might be at the outset; Dean has something of a potty mouth (including the f-word) especially when he's upset, but most of the characters do not, and his speaking style, I think, reflected the psychological

damage he carries. The author also mostly refrains from explicit sex; when her couples make love, she accords them their privacy, which I appreciated, and we don't actually see Cinda at work. (Contrary to the Goodreads book description, she's a call girl, not a streetwalker --the two are somewhat different. She and Dean represent an unusual case of prostitute and customer who actually connected as people and fell for each other. We don't get inside her head enough to fully understand what got her into "the life" and keeps her in it, but we can probably infer that economic needs had and have a lot to do with it; I wasn't scandalized by her as a character --though I'd certainly have advised her and Dean to get married, and her to find other work!) In one case, though, we get more explicit sexual content (though not as explicit as in a lot of books!), and that's in a context that doesn't ring true; Orella trying to use her sexual favors to bribe someone to do something. Coming from a cartel boss with many other more convenient means of bribery and force at her disposal, and given her cultural background and role assumptions, that struck me as out of character. (Okay, so I don't know her well enough to make that judgment --but the author DID establish that she'd never done anything like that before.) I was also grossed out by one scene in a shower room (though to be fair, I think that was meant as comic relief, and many readers would take it that way). There are a few other plotting and detail quibbles. I had a problem with how improbably loose-lipped certain people were in one instance. Marcie's likeability factor, especially at first, didn't really come across to me. Finally, there's a significant discrepancy: (view spoiler)

None of those points, though, kept me from really liking the book! If gritty crime fiction with a pulp flavor is your thing, this will be a read right up your alley, and this writer is definitely one to watch.

This is the second book I've read on my Kindle PC app, and I have to admit I find it much easier to read this way than I expected. While it doesn't fit my schedule and lifestyle as easily as paper books, working in time to read this way, on an intermittent basis, also has turned out to be doable. I'm still a committed paper books reader; I think that medium serves social purposes that e-books don't, and my choice is to spend my money on the former, and do everything I can to preserve and promote it. That said, I've decided that in some cases, when I can try a book for free as an e-book, I'll do it that way. But if I like it, I'm buying a paper copy --if not for myself, as a gift or as a library donation. (So, Elaine, you have got me to "join the 21st century;" but I'm doing it cautiously, and on MY own terms! :-))

Travis Richardson says

Hard Bite is a dark and twisted crime novella from Anonymous-9 (aka Elaine Ash) about a paraplegic vigilante ridding the streets of hit and run drivers with help of his capuchin monkey, Sid. Dean Drayhart had lost his family, a hand, and the use of his legs trying to cross the street to visit Knott's Berry Farm. In a first person POV, Dean tells us why he's seeking revenge in a bitter and often self-effacing tone. Sid, his living assistance monkey, is more than just a cute, Bonzo-esque prop who sticks out his tongue for cheep laughs. He is a full fanged, unneutered primate with an attitude. Sometimes obedient and other times defiant, Sid even displays PTSD after committing a murder.

While Dean uses Craigslist and his skills as a former insurance actuary to research his next target, the POV shifts to a cop assigned to the murders and a Mexican mafia family who has lost a son/brother to Sid's hard bite. Unbeknownst to Dean, things are going to get really messy for him and almost everybody he knows. The book is an unpredictable, fast read. Dean is one of the more original crime fiction characters in recent memory.

Ctgt says

I read the collection *The 1st Short Story Collection* about a year ago and really enjoyed all the stories but a few stood out and the **Hard Bite** short was one that had a unique premise. I ignored the listing for *Hard Bite* assuming it was for the short. What an idiot! I was very excited to see how my favorite short was fleshed out in this novella. I had some preconceived notions of where this might go but Anonymous-9 really went in a direction I did not expect and what a great ride!

The original idea of hit and run victim turned wheelchair bound vigilante (with help from Sid) remains but instead of multiple uses of the "hard bite" several other methods come into play. He employs several different techniques to pick his targets and up to the final incident in this book, he is utterly convinced of the righteousness of his process and targets.

A much larger cast is introduced and we swing from a Mexican drug family (headed by one bad-ass/pyscho mama), to a call girl/love interest and the local cops trying to piece together the clues concerning the rash of attacks. I'm really looking forward to more exploration of this weird relationship between Dean, Sid and Cinda....can't wait for the next one!

Benoit Lelièvre says

HARD BITE is based on the hilarious, award-winning short story of the same name. Think of the short as the icing on a giant quid pro quo, a french farce that went out of control and you have somewhat an accurate portrait of *HARD BITE*. It's a novel that's running wild into the streets of Los Angeles.

The ultra-charming, serial-killing, monkey-loving, wheelchair-bound narrator Dean Drayhart is still quite the philosopher, but he shares the pages and the point of view with several other characters, including a no-nonsense police investigator and two bad girls blinded by grief. It's both good and bad, because it contributed to the ambient wackiness, but the point of view switches so often it can become confusing.

I liked *HARD BITE*. I thought it was wild and daring. I loved Dean Drayhart's chapters, though. The other characters simply cannot live up to his charisma and that makes the novel derivative at times. Maybe not during the Orella and Maria segments because it's so grandiose in its opulence, but the Doug chapters didn't work as well, I thought. I would have taken a complete novel from his perspective, but I'll take *HARD BITE* as it is. It's a crazy trip into the urban hell L.A. can be sometimes.

Col says

Blurb.....

The hit-and-run driver took everything — his wife, child and legs.

Now a paraplegic, Dean Drayhart unleashes payback on suspected hit-and-runners in Los Angeles with

helper-monkey Sid as his deadly assistant.

Dean's gentle, doting nurse, Marcie, knows nothing about what he's up to. When Sid tears out the throat of a Mexican Mafia member, she gets kidnapped in order to force Dean's surrender.

Armed with nothing but his wits, Sid, and a sympathetic streetwalker named Cinda, Dean manipulates drug-cartel carnals and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department in a David-against-Goliath plot that twists and turns to a heart-pounding showdown.

Hard Bite is outlandish in every way -- a crazed noir excursion into an unprecedented heart of darkness. From the opening line on, it challenges and confronts, attacks and confounds. Violent and sometimes funny, always entertaining."

— T. Jefferson Parker, three-time Edgar Award winner, author of *The Jaguar* and *The Border Lords*

My take.....

I would hazard a guess that I'm unlikely to read about a stranger couple this year than paraplegic Dean and assassin monkey Sid, unless of course Anonymous-9 cranks out another weird blend of pulp-ish noir prose a bit sharp-ish.

Anon-9 has given us a serial killer with a conscience, and a whole host of other engaging, likeable characters, as well as a few Mafiosi of the Mexican variety that you'd do well to steer clear of.

A fast-paced mix of violence, some low-down dirty sex and a bit of animal cruelty, as well as a whole streak of vengeance dished out mainly with a moral compass, but one that eventually stalls.

Enjoyable?

Yes.

Would I want to read more from Anon-9?

Yes, probably not so much about Sid in future. What could you do with him in a follow-up that he hasn't already done? Can you teach an old simian - new tricks?

I'd prefer something with Doug and Leone, the two cops that worked the crimes for the LASD. I'm sure Anon-9's twisted imagination could get some miles from these two. Especially if the author decided to test the strength of Doug's commitment to his family with some interplay with Claire the new medical examiner.

I'm looking forward to the author's next offering.

4 from 5.

I was sent an advanced kindle copy of this from the Publisher Blasted Heath.

<http://col2910.blogspot.co.uk/2012/11...>

John Gaynard says

This novel is perverse and original.

The first-person narrator decides to wage a vigilante campaign against jerks similar to the one who made him a paraplegic. Using social media and legacy 20th century style newspaper ads, he lures his usually guilty victims into his assassin's web. Then, in a truck equipped to house his wheelchair, accompanied by a loyal monkey to change the gears, he kills inventively, wielding the lie of the land as well as he does blunt metal and clever animal instruments, until his conscience rears up when faced with the law of unintended consequences. He fears not the mother-worshipping mafia style family he divested of one of its own, but the dark night in which he asks himself if, by wishing to do right by his own lights, he has not actually perpetrated the crime he set out to condemn and avenge.

As I read the last chapters the question drummed through my mind, "Is this victim turned killer going to be hoist with his own petard?" You'll have to read the novel to find out.

Another question that came to mind during the reading: "Is it possible to hatch a realistic scheme of revenge in LA without a hapless scriptwriter coming along to foul up the best laid plans of monkey and man?"

The LA baroque style of writing provides a throb-veined envelope for some seriously off-the-wall content, typified by a murder weapon that shares 97,6% of its owner's DNA.

Derrick says

Anonymous 9 has crafted a book with one heck of a unique twist. We have a monkey trained to attack with a bite so deadly it can kill a man or woman and a main character who seeks retribution for a hit and run that left him a paraplegic, daughterless, and with a heart burning for revenge. But Dean, the paraplegic, has already extracted justice for his own hit and run, now seeks retribution for the surviving members of victims to other hit and run incidents. He slowly researches incidents of hit and run homicides and makes plans to make the perpetrator suffer the ultimate payback.

But sometimes the best plans can have consequences no one can foresee. And this is where the twists and turns of this book get exciting. We have drug lords, vengeful brothers, hookers that have hearts, and again, we have Sid, the monkey with the attitude. This book was well written and fun to read. It is set up nicely for a sequel and I for one, am looking forward to it.

Chuck Barksdale says

At this point, you're wondering why I do this – eradicate hit-and-run drivers. At first I called myself an assassin but Merriam Webster ruined that idea by defining assassination as "killing for impersonal reasons" and that's incorrect. I kill for extremely personal reasons. Starting with the individual who hit me, shattering my neck, crushing my left arm and feet, and squashing my large intestine to mush. I can't digest much of anything, but my dick still works. Go figger.

After suffering a near fatal hit and run accident that does kills his young daughter and leaves him in a wheel chair, Dean Drayhart decides to become a serial killer to eliminate hit and run drivers that have led to the same type of harm that he has faced. I thought this was an interesting premise, especially since he uses a trained pet monkey Sid to assist in the killings – a monkey that has a “Hard Bite” way of killing. However, I wasn’t really sure how this would hold up over the course of a full book as how many killings by monkey bites would be interesting (not many). Fortunately, Anonymous-9 (please change your name back Elaine, this is hard to type) does not just stay there, but takes the book in a couple of different directions with some interesting and often funny dialogue along the way. The excerpt above is a good one – it tells about why Dean is doing what he is doing and gives some sense of the humor that is present throughout what is otherwise a fairly dark book (with the injuries and killings and everything you know..)

I thought the interactions of Dean and his nurse Marcie Blattlatch were some of my favorites in the book as Dean has no patience for her or her nice and overly-conservative ways. Here’s one of my favorite funny parts when she finds Dean’s girlfriend’s thong in his bed.

Blattlatch looks at the end of her tongs like she’s got a rat by the tail. She actually sniffs at it.

Brings the tongs closer. Sniffs again. Explodes “Used! Worn! Uuuck!”

Sid climbs the headboard, chittering and squeaking. Such a drama monkey, he loves seeing Blattlatch upset. He must get it from me.

“They belong to a friend,” I venture.

“Dis-GUS-ting,” Blattlatch cries. Frog marches the thong to the trash, dumps it with a clatter of tongs and whirls to face me. “Where did you get that? Ordering off the internet? Eh?”

“I wasn’t always in a wheelchair Blattlatch. I used to be a man.”

Unfortunately for Dean, but fortunately for the reader, **Hard Bite** takes a turn when Dean seeks his revenge against the favorite son of Orella Malalinda, the leader of the Mexican-American drug trafficking business started by her father Alejandro. Orella’s son Ambrose was the “good” one that she hoped would stay out of the drug business. She is out to revenge her son’s death and uses all of her resources to track down Dean and his monkey. Dean’s life is also complicated when one of his targets may just be in it for the money and not really a hit and run killer.

The book also presents the police investigation by Detective Doug Coltson who attempts to find out first who he first thinks killed Hector Stamos. He quickly realizes that Hector Stamos is not who died, but Orella Malalinda’s son Ambrose whose real identity she has been hiding. Doug is a good detective and another interesting character that definitely adds to the book.

The book is really a combination of styles with part of the book in first person (of Dean Drayhart) and parts in third person perspective of other major characters. I started reading the book and thought it was going in one direction (just a serial killer) but it went in very different and interesting directions. Part serial killer, part police procedural with some Mexican mafia thrown in. Very dark and very funny in parts. A quick and very enjoyable read. I hope that Anonymous-9 writes more (and hopefully in her real name of Elaine Ash.)

Elaine Ash (Anonymous-9) contacted me after I followed her on Twitter. She saw some of the reviews at Mostlyfiction.com (where I posted many reviews in the past) and asked if I was interested in reading and reviewing her book. I was not really familiar with her writing although I may have read one of her short stories. She wrote in the noir style that I enjoy (I’m a two-time attendee to Noircon after all) so she sent me a copy of the book through Amazon to read on my kindle. This was the first review book I read that way and I actually found that format helpful for highlighting and taking notes. Of course, I still want real books of the

ones I want to keep.

(This is an update of a short observation I had right after reading the book.)
