



The Color of Blood

Declan Hughes

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Still adjusting to being back on Irish soil, PI Ed Loy finds himself caught up in a deadly web of lies, betrayals and shrouded histories. Shane Howard, a respected dentist from the venerable Howard medical family of Dublin, asks Loy to search for his missing daughter. The only information available is a set of pictures portraying nineteen-year-old Emily in a series of very compromising positions.

Seems like a pretty easy case to Loy . . . until people start dying. The very same day that Loy meets Howard, Emily's mother and ex-boyfriend are brutally stabbed to death. But that's only the beginning.

Loy discovers that the Howard family is not all that it seems. For years their name has stood for progress and improvement within Dublin's medical community, but that is only what's on the surface. The true legacy of the Howards is one of scandalous secrets, the type that are best left unearthed. Against his better judgment, Loy is drawn into the very center of the Howards' sordid family history, and what he finds could ruin more than reputations.

In *The Color of Blood*, Declan Hughes once again brings the city of Dublin to life in all its gritty glory. The dark realities of the streets converge with the lethal secrets of the past in a sinister and graphic thriller that will have readers on edge right up to its shocking conclusion.

The Color of Blood Details

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ISBN : 9780060825492

Author : Declan Hughes

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From Reader Review The Color of Blood for online ebook

Karen says

THE COLOUR OF BLOOD is the second Ed Loy novel by Declan Hughes, the first being The Wrong Kind of Blood, published in 2006.

Ed Loy is a Private Investigator in current day Dublin, Ireland - a place that's part gritty, poor, desperate and part rich, privileged, twisted. Shane Howard is a Dublin dentist, and the son of Dr John Howard, a pillar of Dublin Irish Society, famous in the local area, with a legacy that is maintained by his family. Shane's 19 year old daughter Emily has gone missing and now he is getting blackmail threats and sexually explicit photographs of her - Shane is not sure if she's being abused or if she's a willing participant.

What starts off as a fairly straight-forward job locating the missing Emily and tracking down the source of the photographs rapidly gets more and more complicated as digging around in the Howard family starts to reveal a lot of skeletons in everyone's closets.

There are a few reasons why you'd wonder if this was a good book or not. There's the tortured, embittered, lost, hard-drinking PI in Ed but for many reasons he may teeter on the edge of the cliché, but he never quite tips over. There's the wealthy, seemingly successful Howard family, rotten to the core with all sorts of secrets and tacky goings on, but stereotypical in many ways, however there's something engaging, human, interesting in many of the members of that family.

There are a lot of subplots in THE COLOUR OF BLOOD. As Emily is found and the blackmailers are being tracked down, there are events in and surrounding the family from years ago, leading up to current day, that are rapidly revealed. The book roars along at a rapid pace with revelation and resolution overlapping themselves at every twist.

There's also a great sense of irony, of gentle humour, the cast of characters certainly help with that. The dentist Shane, whose Medical Doctor father never quite "approved" of his choice of career. Sandra, the Irish Princess, sister of Shane, family manipulator, she of the vaguely Gothic look, swooping down from the family estates to rescue Emily and her son Jonathan. Jonathan and his purposely put on private school boy touches. None of these humorous touches are overdone but they balance the brutality of many of the other aspects of the novel.

Finally, there's a great sense of place in THE COLOUR OF BLOOD. Current day Dublin with its wealth, opportunity, developers and 21st century values are contrasted brutally against the greed, exploitation, societal manipulation, hypocrisy, criminal gangs, drugs and violence. And ultimately that's the crux of the whole book - if something's rotten at the core, then it doesn't matter a damn where that something is positioned on the social scale - the damage lingers and it will come back to bite you

Janebooks says

The second Dublin thriller featuring Ed Loy, P. I., May 14, 2010

OPENING LINE: The last case I worked, I found a sixteen-year-old girl for her father; when she told me

what he had done to her, I let her stay lost.

Well, I've just finished the second Declan Hughes Ed Loy crime novel and have to disagree with another Amazon reviewer--it's not as good as *THE WRONG KIND OF BLOOD*, the debut novel. Sure, there's that intriguing and clever opening line that ropes you into the book. And there's that shocking conclusion that's really shocking. I was intrigued by the first sentence and shocked by the conclusion in both books!

THE COLOR OF BLOOD is about a hunt for a prominent Dublin dentist's daughter.

I titled my review of the first Ed Loy "An Irish Ross MacDonald" and compared the book to MacDonald's "The Drowning Pool," the second Lew Archer crime novel. Family blood and betrayal in both, I declared. After I finished *THE COLOR OF BLOOD*, I added another word - secrets. Hughes writes about family blood, betrayal and secrets.

Tim Ruttan of the Los Angeles Times quoted an interview with Declan Hughes in his review April 14, 2010 of Ed Loy #5 just published. Hughes talks about the Holy Trinity of hard-boiled crime novelists:

"I think it's Ross Macdonald I'm most influenced by. If Hammett took murder out of the rose garden and put it back in the alley where it belongs, Macdonald told you about the kid who'd been dumped in the alley, found out that he was from a family with more than a little loot, and then took you into their house to leaf through the family album... That `family gothic' spoke to me, because Irish society is still pretty tribal, and because, despite the impression Irish people give that we're open and friendly and candid, there's a lot we don't want to tell you -- a lot of skeletons in our closets."

Don't miss this second Ed Loy! It is a fascinating crime novel amid a Irish "family gothic" tale.

Catherine says

Actually, a 1.5. Not the book for me. The characters were poorly developed and the plot was not very credible. The book was about 100 pages too long with way too many uses of the "C" word, and I don't mean "commitment".

Lukasz Pruski says

"Nothing's ever what it is, it's always bound up with something else, something that happened in the past." This is a quote from Declan Hughes' "The Color of Blood" but it could as well have been a summary of the main theme in novels written by an American mystery writer, Ross Macdonald. When I was reading the first two chapters I felt as if I were reading a new book by the author of "The Chill" and "The Underground Man", one of my most favorite mystery authors. I fell in love with the first half of "The Color of Blood". Reading a Ross Macdonald's novel happening in Dublin, Ireland, in 2006 was an unexpected treat. In addition to interesting plot, the novel invited comparisons between Southern California society of the 1950s and 1960s and that of Ireland of the 2000s.

Ed Loy, a private investigator in Dublin, is hired by Shane Howard, a rich and powerful man, to find his 19-year old daughter whose pornographic pictures are being used as a blackmail tool. The case soon becomes

much more complex; several people are murdered, and connections to the past of the Howard family emerge. Mr. Loy is very much like Lew Archer of Macdonald's novels: a PI with strong moral principles and a heart of gold who is able to respond to violence with violence and who is inclined to take law into his own hands. The case investigated by Mr. Loy, like Lew Archer's cases, is about what powerful people can do to less powerful people; how they can destroy their lives just because they can.

My enthusiasm about "The Color of Blood" gradually decreased as I kept reading. What was a great four-star novel after first few chapters, a good three-star book by about the mid-point, totally collapsed into a ridiculously overblown, overcomplicated, and way overlong mess. The plot became so bizarrely convoluted in the last 80 or so pages that I felt it bordered on the absurd. I had a hard time to force myself to finish reading the novel that began so wonderfully promising.

One of the main differences between a great writer and a not-so-great one is that the former knows when to stop writing.

Two and a quarter stars.

Bookworm with Kids . says

Ed Loy is basically an American PI from noir novels such as those by Ross MacDonald and Dashiell Hammett transplanted to Dublin. Another detective story with a main character, Loy, drinking too much and wrestling with his demons but it was enjoyable nonetheless. At times, it seemed there was a cast of thousands and I kept having to stop to think who somebody was but the dark and twisted ending was good. I will definitely read more by this author.

Tony says

Hughes, Declan. THE COLOR OF BLOOD. (2007). ****. After getting about twenty pages into this second of Hughes' 'Blood' novels, I realized that I had read it before. Shit! I hate when this happens. Of course, I didn't remember how it ended, so I had to read about another fifty pages then skip to the end to see how it all turned out. Once again, Hughes takes his hero Ed Loy on a detecting journey. This time, he has to find the daughter of one of the rich families of Dublin. What makes it even tougher is the presence of a ransom request from a group of unknown kidnapers. To make it more convincing, they sent along video tapes of the daughter engaging in sex in a porno film – along with a set of still shots that left nothing to the imagination – and threatened to release these on the internet if the ransom request was not honored. When Loy meets the family, he finds that sexual promiscuity is a usual thing – especially on the mother's side, since he ends up screwing her on the main stairway at their first meeting. You might be thinking, "Lucky Guy," but the runner would have to be very plush to make it attractive. Turns out that the daughter was in on the 'kidnapping' in order to get money to escape from the clutches of her family, but that's not all. As in Hughes' first novel, the troubles go back in time to earlier deeds in the family that they are trying to keep hidden. I'm detecting a trend here that I won't be able to verify until I read his third book. Still, this is well written and the plot moves along well, but I'd recommend that you do like I do and keep a record of who all the characters are or you will get to the end and wonder who all those people were. Kind of recommended.

Chris says

Another dark and violent tale from Ireland. In this second book in the series Ed Loy is adjusting to life back in Dublin working as a PI but still without his official license. Just like the first book he is involved with lots of sordid characters with even deeper and darker secrets. This time instead of his family he's dealing with a rich family of doctors that is pretty sexually depraved. Lots of action and a climbing body count as Ed crosses back and forth between what's legal and illegal and perhaps damaging his reputation in the process. It was quite confusing keeping track of the many sordid characters in this one family. You needed a genealogy chart as there were half brothers and then names were changed. Ok, who is this guy again and what's his beef? And just when you think you had it figured out more surprises. Multiple murders and multiple killers. Hoping the next one is somewhat different.

Helen says

First line: *The last case I worked, I found a sixteen-year-old girl for her father; when she told me what he had done to her, I let her stay lost.*

After receiving some compromising photos of his missing teenage daughter, Emily, along with a ransom demand, wealthy Shane Howard employs Dublin private investigator Ed Loy to find her. This task is no difficulty for someone with Ed's knowledge of Dublin's darker side. However, disentangling himself from the Howard family proves more difficult.

When Emily's ex-boyfriend is found murdered in his flat things start to get very messy. Ed finds himself enmeshed in a complicated web of pornography, blackmail, gangsters and murder; not to mention a family with some deeply buried secrets that they would very much like to stay buried. The key to the current events lies long in the past, and as Ed starts making the connections that draw all the threads together, the story moves along at a rapid pace until the final dramatic scenes.

The Colour of Blood has an extremely complex plot, and it's a sign of Hughes' skill that he was not only able to keep track of all the various threads, but to untangle them so neatly by the end. The story revolves around the Howards – and a more dysfunctional family you'd never want to meet. On the surface they appear to have everything – money, success and social position, but underneath they're sinking in a veritable cesspool of deceit and secrecy. Ed's involvement in the case is further complicated by his attraction to Shane's sister, the beautiful and sexy Sandra Howard.

Ed is tough and resilient in the noir PI tradition. He has a strong moral core that compels him to search out the truth, even if that truth is sometimes an uncomfortable one. His past, particularly the death of his daughter, and his subsequent broken marriage, continue to haunt him.

The Colour of Blood is a worthy sequel to *The Wrong Kind of Blood*, the first in the Ed Loy series, and I look forward to reading the next book, *The Dying Breed* (*The Price of Blood* in the USA). The fourth in the series, *All the Dead Voices* has just been released in Britain and Australia.

For more information go to Declan Hughes' website.

Karen says

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Colin says

Tight, complicated plotting crossed with a great character in Ed Loy.

Dana King says

Hughes's Ed Loy books are the synthesis of Raymond Chandler and Ross Macdonald. Having heard Hughes speak on the primacy of the PI story in crime fiction, it's easy to see that passion on every page here. Ed Loy gets hired to do a task, follows through to the end because he needs to know. This may not be the way of a real-life PI with bills to pay and a license to maintain, but it makes for intoxicating fiction. In *The Color of Blood*, Loy finds the motivations for murder in events over twenty years' past, and describes them with a kind of prose few other than Chandler have managed. Things get a little convoluted at times and have to be explained in the classic, "I supposed you wonder I called you all together" scene, but even that is less a resolution than the spring that will launch the resolution when it comes.

Dave Riley says

Don't bother. The book needs a darn good editor and at least a re-write. Hughes can write a chapter very well indeed with all the dialogue and blow by blow required but he has no control, no format other than to try to remake Chandler's *The Big Sleep* and update it to 21st century tolerance for incest stories and porn.

I find it amazing that the publisher allowed this mess to go out without some aggressive paring down -- say by 100 pages! -- to make it a half decent novel.

As for the marketing -- *The Color of Blood: An Irish Novel of Suspense* -- come off it. Buzz words for crappy goods.

Grace says

Wow. For starters, I hardly predicted anything. And even better, I didn't want to. This book was full of so many great twists and turns, but it was never confusing or unbelievable. I really liked Ed Loy, and the homage his character pays to Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe. In fact, the sexual disfunction of the characters reminded me of *The Big Sleep*, *Mildred Pierce*, and of course, *Chinatown*. But since Hughes is writing in the 21st century, he can be much more blatant than Chandler or Cain was able to be (not that he is coarse or disrespectful).

I was also really impressed by his courage in pointing the finger at Irish culture when it comes to the generational abuses he writes about. He is willing to (basically) come out and say that a culture that values both denial AND secrets, pride AND shame - in conjunction with poverty and the Church - is going to engender these kind of deep-seated family problems. Lots of Irish writers observe this, but I've never read one who actually pointed out that maybe it is a pattern of behavior that should be changed... not just temporarily forgotten by a trip to the pub. Considering my own family's history, this was a great point of view to come across.

LJ says

First Sentence: The last case I worked, I found a sixteen-year-old girl for her father; when she told me what

he had done to her, I let her stay lost.

PI Ed Loy has been hired to find a dentist's teenaged daughter. The girl's porn filmmaker ex-boyfriend turns up dead and the family seems to no longer care what has happened to the girl. With plenty of suspects from whom to chose, Ed is on his own in sorting this case.

I tried three times to get into this book and just couldn't get past the portents and the stereotypical characters. There were too many characters, none of them likeable or well developed.

The plot was hackneyed and bordered on silly. It just was not interesting to me. I found it a trial to get as far into it as I did.

Mr. Hughes and I are just not made for each other.

THE COLOR OF BLOOD (PI-Ed Loy-Ireland-Cont) – DNF

Hughes, Declan – 2nd in series

William Morrow, 2007, US Hardcover – ISBN: 9780060825492

Benjamin says

This is Raymond Chandler in the 21st century. Everything--the corruption, the perversions, the violence--laid out bare without innuendo or implication. A dark, yet compelling, story but not for the faint of heart.
