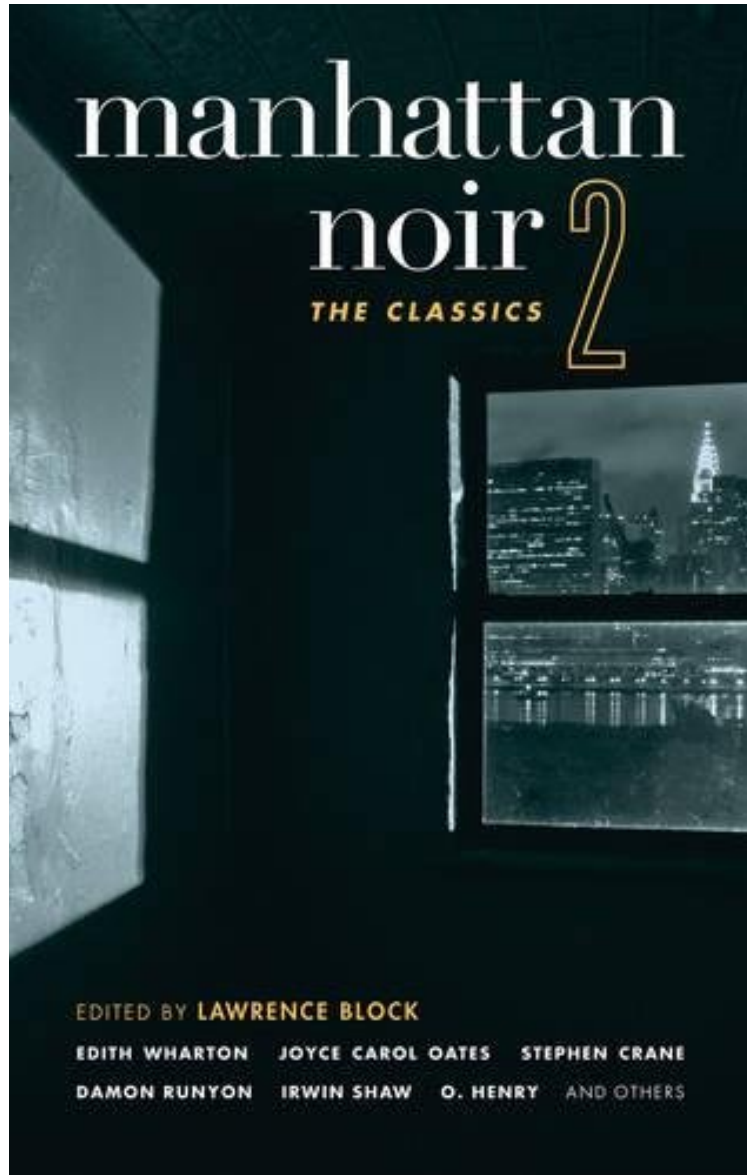


(Library ebook) Manhattan Noir 2: The Classics (Akashic Noir)

## Manhattan Noir 2: The Classics (Akashic Noir)

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**From Brand: Akashic Books : Manhattan Noir 2: The Classics (Akashic Noir)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Manhattan Noir 2: The Classics (Akashic Noir):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Not My Favorite Of The Noir Series By Michael L. Slavin This was my sixth read of the Noir series. It was divided into three sections. The "old school" covered nine stories written between 1891 and 1970. Part two contained the work of three poets and Part three had eight stories composed between

1969 and 2008. Surprisingly, I enjoyed part 1 the most. Edith Wharton's *Mrs. Manstey's View* about an old lady who constantly observed the neighborhood from her window was quite compelling. O. Henry's *The Furnished Room* about a young man searching for his missing love was excellent. Irwin Shaw's *Sailor Off The Bremen* was a fast moving story of revenge. Daman Runyon's *Johnny One-Eye*, the story of a murderer and a one eyed cat was quite good. Evan Hunter's *The Last Spin* about two gang members who were chosen to resolve a dispute between their respective gangs by playing Russian Roulette was moving. I would have rated Part 1 at five stars. However, since I'm not a fan of poetry the inclusion of the poetry section brought down my review. From Part 3 my favorite was Clark Howard's *Crowded Lives* about a former bank embezzler who had hidden his loot while he served time in prison. The building had once been a classy hotel but subsequently had deteriorated to a welfare building. Donald Westlake's *Love In The Lean Years* was an interesting story about a husband and wife taking out insurance policies to benefit from their spouses demise. Lawrence Block's *In For A Penny* about a criminal released from prison who ultimately reverted to his old ways. So all in all this wasn't bad. There were in fact some excellent components. But, for my taste, in total it ended up as an average read.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. *Manhattan Noir 2* exceeds its predecessor in many ways. By Craig This 2008 short story anthology lives up to its predecessor and in some ways surpasses it. The original *Manhattan Noir*, also edited by Lawrence Block, contained previously unpublished stories from contemporary authors. This companion volume dubbed *The Classics* is just the opposite: noir stories from established writers that have stood the test of time (some over 100 years). In both volumes, each story is set in a different Manhattan neighborhood and must contain some element of noir; however the author or anthologist defines it. The results are illuminating. Reading Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* right next to an Evan Hunter street gang story, it took on an entirely different feel and tone than when I studied it high school 25 years ago. Reading *Spanish Blood* right after a Donald Westlake black comedy transforms Langston Hughes from Famous Black Author into something richer, more subversive, and more fun. Here are my individual reviews of each story:

*Mrs. Manstey's View* by Edith Wharton (1891) This was the author's first published short story, long before *Ethan Frome* and *Age of Innocence*. She might have taken a slightly different path and become a crime writer.

*A Poker Game* by Stephen Crane (1902) I struggled with this story about two poker players who both draw a straight flush with only four cards. How can this be? Everybody knows you need 5 cards to make a straight. Either the rules were different in 1902, or I somehow missed the point of the story.

*The Furnished Room* by O. Henry (1906) An overwritten but ultimately effective story about a homeless man searching for a lost love. Dark with the expected ironic ending.

*Spanish Blood* by Langston Hughes (1934) The first great story in the collection. In less than 10 pages, Hughes brings to life a vibrant multicultural Harlem during the Prohibition era.

*Sailor off the Bremen* by Irwin Shaw (West Village, 1939) On the surface this is just a simple revenge tale, but I loved the whole cultural milieu: a group of subversive American Communists protesting the rise of Nazi Fascism.

*My Aunt from Twelfth Street* by Jerome Weidman (Alphabet City, 1939) A haunting tale about immigrant culture that reminded me of Harlan Ellison's *The Whimpering of Whipped Dogs*. This story feels incomplete because it never answers the fundamental question: Why does the Aunt from 12th Street refuse to leave 15th Street to live near her own people?

*Johnny One-Eye* by Damon Runyon (Broadway, 1941) A well-crafted tale of organized crime, domestic abuse, and one very unlucky cat. One of my favorites in this volume.

*The Last Spin* by Evan Hunter (1956) A taut, haunting melodrama about street gang members. The action takes place in a single room and is driven almost entirely through dialogue.

*New York Blues* by Cornell Woolrich (East 37th Street, 1970) Begins with one of the all-time great noir opening sentences: It's six o'clock; my drink is at the three-quarter mark--three-quarters down, not three-quarters up--and the night begins. Atmospheric; deliriously bleak; obsessive attention to detail so that each frame of each scene becomes a tableau of hopelessness.

*The Raven* by Edgar Allan Poe (1845) A classic poem, but I never saw the noir elements until I read it in this context.

*Selections from Chelsea Rooming House* by Horace Gregory (1930) Each poem is narrated by a different tenant at a low-end boarding house.

*Selections from The McSorley Poems* by Geoffrey Bartholomew (East Village, 2001) Each poem concerns a different character tied to the famous New York ale house. Written by the man who tended bar there for over 40 years.

*The Luger Is a 9mm Automatic Handgun with a Parabellum Action* by Jerrold Mundis (Central Park, 1969) An experimental story about a man who has long philosophical conversations with his dog. I think the author was trying to make a point about the perils of trying to repress basic human nature, dark as it is. Much of the dialog seemed to echo rhetoric from the 1960s civil rights movement.

*The Interceptor* by Barry N. Malzberg (Upper West Side, 1972) A non-linear story in which an unreliable narrator comes up with different solutions to the same murder.

*Crowded Lives* by Clark Howard (Sixth Avenue, 1989) An ex-convict takes a maintenance job at a welfare hotel but has ulterior motives. The plot was trite, but I enjoyed the depiction of a once grand hotel fallen on hard times.

*Young Isaac* by Jerome Charyn (Lower East Side, 1990) A prequel to the author's popular series about policeman-turned-mayor Isaac Sidel. This story explores how the young protagonist narrowly avoided a life of crime.

*Love in the Lean Years* by Donald E. Westlake (1992) Black comedy about Wall Street during the bust years. Brings out the humor in drugs, greed, sex, and murder.

*A Manhattan Romance* by Joyce Carol Oates (Central Park South, 1997) An expertly crafted short story about one girl's final day with her father. Another favorite: Haunting and memorable.

*In for a Penny* by Lawrence Block (Eighth Avenue, 1999) An ex-con struggles with addiction and temptation on his nightly walks past an open bar. An ok tale, but not

close to Block's best efforts. *Two Over Easy* by Susan Isaacs (Murray Hill, 2008) A man finds himself in a life-and-death struggle with his wife on his 49th birthday. Funny and dark. I have never read this author, but after this story, I am putting her on my to-read list. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. 24th Book One of Best in Series By Lawrence D. Zeilinger Masterfully edited by Lawrence Block, *Manhattan Noir 2* is a welcome addition to this terrific series. Of its 17 short stories, what may have been Cornell Woolrich's last (first published in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* in 1970) is by itself well worth the price of admission. This anthology features stories which first saw print over more than a 100-year time span, from 1891 to 2008. There also is a very short middle section with works by three poets. Poetry accounts for less than 5 per cent of my reading, but these are great. There is the predictable "Raven" by Poe and it isn't a stretch to include him as (perhaps the first) noir author. (What else but noir could you call say, "A Cask of Amontillado"? For the Love of God, Montressor!). But the two other poets represented are also excellent, especially the selections from Geoffrey Bartholomew's "The McSorley Poems" (2001) which made me want to seek out the entire volume. My favorite stories besides the Woolrich are Stephen Crane's very short "The Poker Game" (1902), Langston Hughes' "Spanish Blood" (1934). Damon Runyon's poignant "One-Eyed Johnny" (1941), and Evan Hunter's (Ed McBain's) gritty "The Last Spin" (1948) all in Part I, "The Old School". The stories in Part III are more modern, grouped under the heading "Darkness Visible". I liked all but one of these eight stories which range from 1969 to 2008. My three favorites were grand master Donald Westlake's "Love in the Lean Years", Joyce Carol Oates' "A Manhattan Romance" (which like two others feature a man running from the mob), and editor Lawrence Block's "In For a Penny". As always, kudos to Tim McLoughlin for creating this internationally acclaimed series. This book was released simultaneously with "D.C. Noir 2: The Classics" which is next on my must read list. Also forthcoming in the series are another 15 books, most of which have noir settings in foreign countries and are so titled.

Classic reprints from: Edith Wharton, Stephen Crane, O. Henry, Irwin Shaw, Jerome Weidman, Damon Runyon, Evan Hunter, Jerrold Mundis, Edgar Allan Poe, Horace Gregory, Geoffrey Bartholomew, Cornell Woolrich, Barry N. Malzberg, Clark Howard, Jerome Charyn, Donald E. Westlake, Joyce Carol Oates, Lawrence Block, Susan Isaacs, and others. Lawrence Block has won most of the major mystery awards and has been called the quintessential New York writer. His series characters Matthew Scudder, Bernie Rhodenbarr, Evan Tanner, Chip Harrison, and Keller all live in Manhattan; like their creator, they would not really be happy anywhere else.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . While Akashic's original city-themed anthologies tend to be hit or miss, its third reprint volume (after *Brooklyn Noir 2* and *D.C. Noir 2*) offers 17 sure winners by such literary heavyweights as Edith Wharton, Stephen Crane, O. Henry, Damon Runyon, Donald E. Westlake and Joyce Carol Oates. The tales range in time from 1891 to 2008, giving the book a variety some others in the series have lacked. Block makes a persuasive case in his introduction for including Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven*, written in 1845 on what would become Manhattan's Upper West Side, as well as poetic selections by Horace Gregory and Geoffrey Bartholomew, whose works are set respectively in a Chelsea rooming house and McSorley's bar in the East Village. If one had to choose the single story that epitomizes noir, the honors would go to Cornell Woolrich's *New York Blues*, a bleak tale of love and loneliness, madness and death. (Sept.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author Lawrence Block has won most of the major mystery awards, and has been called the quintessential New York writer, although he insists the city's far too big to have a quintessential writer. His series characters-Matthew Scudder, Bernie Rhodenbarr, Evan Tanner, Chip Harrison, and Keller-all live in Manhattan; like their creator, they would not really be happy anywhere else.