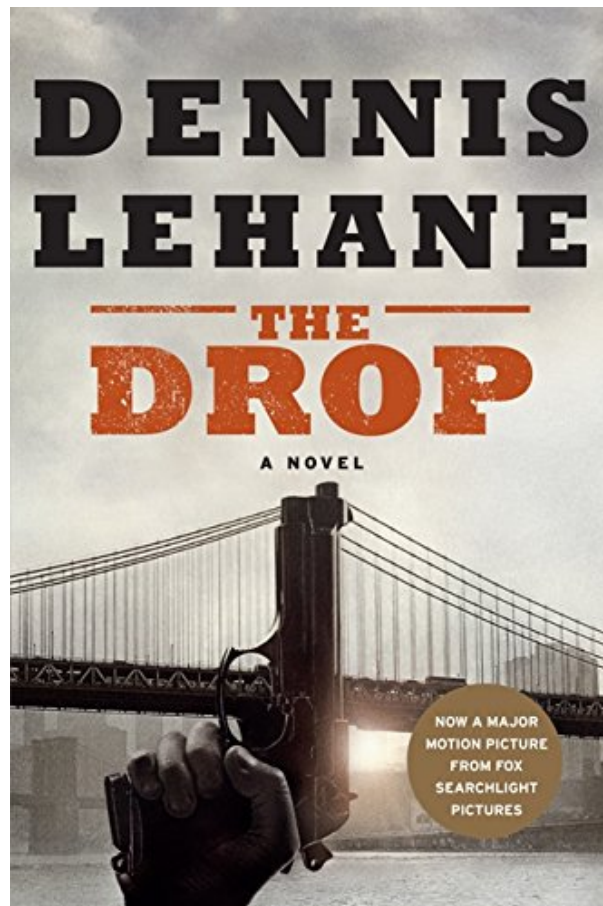
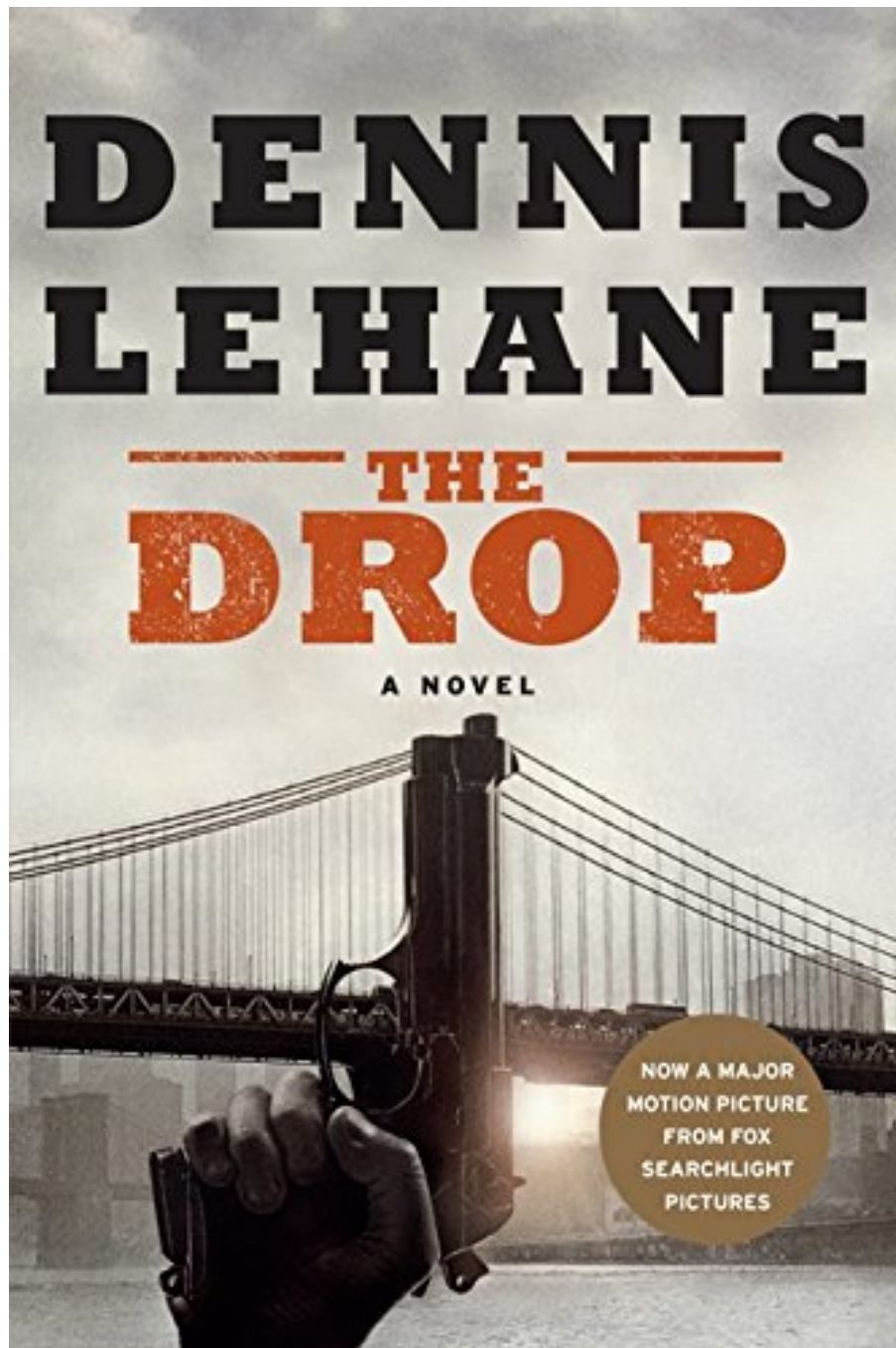


# THE DROP BY DENNIS LEHANE



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Amazon.com Review

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Three days after Christmas, a lonely bartender looking for a reason to live rescues an abused puppy from a trash can and meets a damaged woman looking for something to believe in. As their relationship grows, they cross paths with the Chechen mafia; a man grown dangerous with age and thwarted hopes; two hapless stick-up artists; a very curious cop; and the original owner of the puppy, who wants his dog back. . . .

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#### Most helpful customer reviews

206 of 221 people found the following review helpful.

Fine if you want to read a movie instead of a Lehane novel.

By M Elliott "a reader from TX"

Be forewarned: this is not a new "novel" by Dennis Lehane. It is a novelization of a screenplay developed from a short story, "Animal Rescue," by Lehane which appeared in an anthology, *Boston Noir*, in 2009--according to the flyleaf--and the rights to the "novel" are owned by 20th Century Fox.

I regret to say the writing, except for the first chapter, the aforementioned "Animal Rescue," only marginally resembles Lehane. The tone is the same, many of the words, but the skill, the talent, the depth of Lehane's usual work--the heart and soul--is missing. The paperback, admittedly an Advance Reader's Edition, is short, sketchy, sloppy, filled with typos and errors (toward the end, a main character, Nadia, is referred to as Natalie, and Bob's relationship to Cousin Marv is described one way in the early part of the book, and another at the end); nine-tenths of the book seems lazily written. The film, made from this expanded short story, may be excellent, but the book is misrepresented. As a courtesy to readers, particularly Lehane fans, the publishers and Amazon Vine should make that clear.

Too bad, too, because lonely bartender Bob Saginowski and Rocco, the puppy he rescues, are interesting and appealing, and I cared what happened to them. Rounding out the cast of book and film are Cousin Marv, who "owns" the bar where Bob works, a woman named Nadia, Eric Deeds, a sociopathic ex-con, a Boston detective named Torres, a threatened Catholic parish, and members of the Chechen mob who control the criminal enterprise in Bob's section of Boston. But all the characters, with the possible exception of Bob and Cousin Marv, are so thinly developed that we never get to know them fully or care about them. They are outlines rather than flesh and blood, with dialogue, mannerisms, and behaviors that border on cliché. They read, in effect, like a "treatment." The plot is somewhat suspenseful, but it, too, lacks mood and depth, and the denouement seems a little too contrived and pat. *The Drop* reads like what it is: a book-from-the-movie. It's visual, short, less than typical Lehane--except for the character of Bob and Cousin Marv, perhaps, and not all that satisfying.

41 of 48 people found the following review helpful.

"We don't let ourselves out of our own cages."

By E. Bukowsky

We are back on the mean streets of Boston in "*The Drop*," by Dennis Lehane. Christmas is over and Bob Saginowski, who tends bar for his Cousin Marv, spends his days working, going to church, and looking for a companionable female to alleviate his loneliness. He has little luck with dating, but as fate would have it, Bob comes across a puppy who was abused and subsequently discarded. Bob takes in and cares for the dog,

whom he names Rocco. Unfortunately, nothing ever comes easily for Bob or Marv. Someone gets wind of Bob's new pet and pronounces himself the dog's rightful owner. In addition, members of a ruthless Chechen syndicate, who actually own the bar that Marv manages, are none too pleased when masked gunmen hold up their establishment and abscond with five thousand dollars. There will be consequences.

In this concise and hard-edged novel, Lehane entertains us with punchy, amusing, albeit profane dialogue, and brief sketches of hardened, selfish, and greedy individuals, some of whom are as dim-witted as they are heartless. Although several of the characters are quick to take offense, they fail to realize that they have no monopoly on rage. Blood flows freely in "The Drop" and, as the story progresses, our hero must decide whether it is in his best interests to avoid confrontation at all costs.

"The Drop" is about clueless lowlifes who try to score easy money, put one over on their enemies, and avoid being blown away. In addition, a suspicious detective named Torres takes a dislike to Bob and comes sniffing around, looking to bust him for something. The plot is fast-paced and edgy, and Lehane dishes up some twists that few will see coming. This is a bleak and savage world in which people go to great lengths to maintain a semblance of self-respect, fend off anyone who poses a threat, and in Bob's case, find love. To sum up what seems to be Dennis Lehane's worldview: "The worst in men is commonplace. The best is a far rarer thing."

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Great to have Lehane back in his element...a fun, fast read.

By Larry Hoffer

It all started with a puppy.

Bob Saginowski is a sad-sack bartender, living in the house he grew up in, spending his time shuffling between work, home, and mass at his childhood church. He's a loner; his only real companion (and that's a bit of a stretch) is his cousin Marv, who used to own the bar Bob works at, although the bar is now really owned by Chechen mobsters. Bob spends his days wishing for a way out of his loneliness, and he's hiding a secret or two as well.

One cold winter night while walking home from work, he finds a badly beaten puppy in a trash can. Although the responsibility of caring for something scares him, he rescues the dog and ultimately bringing it home with him. When he finds the dog he also encounters Nadia, a world-weary woman who has seen more than her share of problems. Without expecting it, he finds himself caring for both Nadia and the dog and is utterly unprepared for how it feels.

But all is not rosy for Bob—not only is his church closing, but the bar gets robbed, he catches the eye of a dogged cop determined to make something of himself again, and the dog's original owner, an unstable ex-con with an agenda of his own, returns and wants what he believes is his. It's more than enough to make Bob wonder what path he should follow, and what the consequences of his actions will be.

Dennis Lehane is one of my favorite authors of all time. While this isn't as good as *Mystic River* or a number of his Kenzie and Gennaro novels, I really like Lehane best when his writing leans more toward grittier, violent character studies than some of the historic material he's covered in his last two books. I love his use of language, both in dialogue and description, and while not everything that happens in the book is surprising, he still knows how to create some good tension.

I learned after I read *The Drop* (in a little more than one day) that it is an expansion of a short story Lehane wrote in 2009, which explains why, even at just under 250 pages, I felt the book was a little short, and would

have liked more time with Bob, Marv, Nadia, and even Detective Torres. There was a lot of intriguing material that could have been developed further, although I didn't feel as if the book ended abruptly or was too short.

I forgot that a movie adaptation of this book is due out later this year. While I try not to read books that close to a movie adaptation (especially one with a little suspense in it), I'm looking forward to seeing how the actors bring to life the characters I've pictured in my head. If you're not planning to see the movie, and you enjoy crime novels, this is one to read. It's a fast read, it's well-written, and most importantly, it's good to have Dennis Lehane back in his element. (Of course, now I want another book, Dennis.)

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