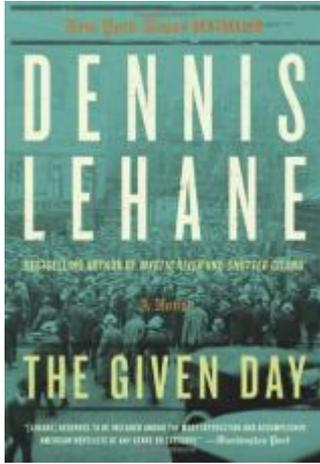


The Given Day

by Dennis Lehane



About the Book

From the *New York Times* bestselling author comes a beautifully written novel set in Boston at the end of the Great War. **The Given Day** is an unflinching, utterly spectacular family epic that captures the political unrest of a nation dangling between a well-patterned past and an unpredictable future.

Discussion Guide

- 1. The Given Day** transports readers to 1918 Boston and touches on the lives of two families --- one black, one white --- as they are swept up in the maelstrom of history. How are their experiences similar? How are they different?
- Dennis Lehane writes **The Given Day** from the perspectives of two very different men. What brings Luther Laurence and Danny Coughlin together? Does their friendship ring true?
- One of the themes of the book is the notion of family—both the blood kind and the kind a person willingly creates on his own. How are these ideas of family manifested? Do you see one as being more important than the other? Can a person belong to two kinds of family at the same time?
- The Given Day** centers on the Boston Police Strike of 1919 at a time when fiercely held convictions about work and freedom underwent enormous change at great cost to human life and relationships. Nearly a century later, what is the role of unions in America today? How do the working conditions for Luther and Danny compare to contemporary conditions? Do you think unions are necessary today?
- How do the themes in the book—race, politics, class, family, immigration, nepotism, corruption—reflect issues facing America today?
- Injustice is another theme that Lehane explores in the novel. How does injustice manifest itself in democratic societies? Can it be redressed? If so, how?
- What role does Babe Ruth play in the narrative? What did the introduction of his character add to your understanding of the novel's main themes?
- Who do you think is the most sympathetic character in the story? Why?
- What is the relationship between Danny Coughlin and his brothers Connor and Joe? What role does Danny play in each character's development? How do they, in turn, influence him?
- Talk about the relationship of Danny and his father. How are they alike? How are they different? How do

their similarities and differences shape their relationship?

11. What role do women play in the novel? How do they impact the men?

12. How are anarchists and immigrants portrayed in the novel? Do you see any echoes of the government's response to events then in the America in which we live today?

13. Consider your own life experiences. How would you have fared in the America of a century ago? If Danny and Luther were transported to 21st-century America, what might they think of our world?

Author Bio

Dennis Lehane grew up in Boston. Since his first novel, *A DRINK BEFORE THE WAR*, won the Shamus Award, he has published 12 more novels that have been translated into more than 30 languages and become international bestsellers: *DARKNESS*, *TAKE MY HAND*; *SACRED*; *GONE, BABY, GONE*; *PRAYERS FOR RAIN*; *MYSTIC RIVER*; *SHUTTER ISLAND*; *THE GIVEN DAY*; *MOONLIGHT MILE*; *LIVE BY NIGHT*; and *WORLD GONE BY*.

Dennis Lehane's novel, *THE DROP*, was inspired by his earlier short story entitled "Animal Rescue." *THE DROP* has also been released as a movie featuring James Gandolfini in his last role, alongside actors Noomi Rapace and Tom Hardy. Lehane was a staff writer on the acclaimed HBO series "The Wire" and a writer-producer on the fourth season of HBO's "Boardwalk Empire." Lehane currently is a writer and producer on the television adaptation of Stephen King's *MR. MERCEDES* and has two dramatic series in development for DirecTV.

Four of his other novels --- *LIVE BY NIGHT*, *MYSTIC RIVER*, *GONE, BABY, GONE*, and *SHUTTER ISLAND* --- have been adapted into films. In addition, *MYSTIC RIVER* was a finalist for the 2001 PEN/Winship Award and won the Anthony Award and the Barry Award for Best Novel, the Dilys Award from the Independent Mystery Booksellers Association and the Massachusetts Book Award in Fiction from the Massachusetts Center for the Book. *LIVE BY NIGHT* was awarded the 2013 Edgar Award for Best Novel of the Year. In addition, *LIVE BY NIGHT* was awarded the gold medal for general fiction in the annual Florida Book Awards, and was in the top 3 of Readers Choice Awards at The House Of Crime and Mystery. In 2017 *LIVE BY NIGHT* was released as a major motion picture directed by and starring Ben Affleck. Dennis Lehane's latest book is a stand-alone novel, *SINCE WE FELL*.

Lehane was born and raised in Dorchester, Massachusetts. Before becoming a full-time writer, he worked as a counselor with mentally handicapped and abused children, waited tables, parked cars, drove limos, worked in bookstores and loaded tractor-trailers. Lehane and his family live in California.

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