



Title: World Gone By

Author: Dennis Lehane

Description:

Ten years have passed since Joe Coughlin's enemies killed his wife and destroyed his empire, and much has changed. Prohibition is dead, the world is at war again, and Joe's son, Tomás, is growing up. Now, the former crime kingpin works as a consigliere to the Bartolo crime family, traveling between Tampa and Cuba, his wife's homeland.

A master who moves in and out of the black, white, and Cuban underworlds, Joe effortlessly mixes with Tampa's social elite, U.S. Naval intelligence, the Lansky-Luciano mob, and the mob-financed government of Fulgencio Batista. He has everything—money, power, a beautiful mistress, and anonymity.

But success cannot protect him from the dark truth of his past and ultimately, the wages of a lifetime of sin will finally be paid in full.

Dennis Lehane vividly recreates the rise of the mob during a world at war, from a masterfully choreographed Ash Wednesday gun battle in the streets of Ybor City to a chilling, heartbreaking climax in a Cuban sugar cane field. Told with verve and skill, *World Gone By* is a superb work of historical fiction from one of the most interesting and accomplished American novelists (*Washington Post*) writing today.

Reviews

[The New York Times](#)

Suspenseful, devious, well-constructed and as filled with ethical questions as it is with gangsters. You've been through a lot by the time you finish it, including a few figurative choruses of Danny Boy.

[The New York Times Book Review](#)

Plot, wit, violence, colorful characters—what more do you want from a genre novel? In Lehane's case, you also expect sympathetic insights into the existential agonies of a moral man working at an immoral profession in a corrupt world.

[The Washington Post](#)

A novel in which all of Lehane's gifts are on full display: the crisp, sharply observed action sequences, the varied and convincing characterizations, the effortless narrative momentum and some of the best, most authentic dialogue this side of the late George V. Higgins.

As in *Live by Night*, the centerpiece of this story—and the heart of Lehane's considerable achievement—is the complex, contradictory character of Joe, who has come a long way from the lonely, neglected adolescent in *The Given Day*. In Lehane's nuanced portrayal, Joe is a natural leader of men with an infinite capacity for both good and

evil who is haunted by images from the past.

[USA Today](#)

Lehane writes convincingly, tensely, tersely, powerfully, about the fatal tensions of daily Mob life without romanticizing it, without judging it. He steers the plot and its characters toward inevitable consequences. The novel's finest distinctions show the moral angst Joe wrestles with despite his deadly decisions. Lehane writes such a morally complex story. He leaves you no alternative but to admire Joe, pull for Joe, plead for Joe, until you can't.

[The Boston Globe](#)

World Gone By is bursting at the seams with great stories. Every character who floats through this saga of mobsters in 1940s Tampa has his or her own astonishing tale to tell. And these yarns aren't just there to keep the reader entertained they illuminate character and foreshadow fate. And they help to create a vivid, beautifully rendered world.

[The Chicago Tribune](#)

Lehane, who has developed into a novelist of seemingly effortless power and command, is missing nothing in his delivery. Few writers can equal his ability to balance dark and light, casual and intense, here and then. More than a sequel, "World Gone By" seems lit by its predecessor and the events of the past as if through a prism or maybe a black light. In the process, Joe Coughlin's story becomes more epic still.

[The Miami Herald](#)

Lehane has Elmore Leonard's ear for dialogue and a masterly touch with description. *World Gone By* offers a frisson like you get from the best gangster sagas from *The Godfather* to *The Sopranos* entry into a world of complex characters who are operating within their highly risky world. And it serves a plot that drives relentlessly forward without ever feeling forced.

[The New York Daily News](#)

Lehane is shaping a tragedy in *World Gone By*, along classic lines set in a seamy underbelly. The novel's plot is as complex as its morality while both are fueled by searing betrayals. If this is Joe Coughlin's final appearance, so be it. But he will be sorely missed.

[Booklist Online](#)

Yes, it's a novel of crime and passion on a grand scale, but it also brilliantly evokes the inevitably heartbreaking arc of living and dying familiar to us all.

[Kirkus Reviews](#) (starred review):

A multilayered, morally ambiguous novel of family, blood and betrayal.

On the surface, this is a crime novel that adheres to convention, but Coughlin has a depth beyond genre fiction, with a sense of morality and a code of ethics that the life he has chosen frequently puts to the test. Its cumulative thematic power and whip-crack narrative propulsion will enrich the reader's appreciation past the last page.

On one level, a very moving meditation on fathers and sons; on another, an illumination of character and fate.

[The Independent](#)

[Lehane's] literary acumen is shared with very few other writers in the genre. Robert Warshaw's essay "The Gangster as Tragic Hero" springs to mind here.

[The Sunday Times](#)

Echoes of *The Godfather* abound, but between the mob showdowns you are reminded, too, of literary novels tracing a man's inexorable advance towards death. An improbable but accomplished blend of mayhem and autumnal melancholy, this is an impressive end to the trilogy.

[The Tampa Bay Times](#)

Lehane's 12th novel is a classic gangster epic, a darkly violent tale enriched by sharp insight into American life and Lehane's beautifully crafted prose.

[The Press and Journal](#)

The plot moves from Florida to Cuba and back again at a fair pace but this is no thoughtless thriller as the author recreates a lost era with great skill and brings his often unlikeable characters to life. Lehane has produced an American epic that begs to be made into a film.

[The New Zealand Herald](#)

A wrenching thriller by one of the best.

[The Financial Times](#)

One of the most skilful of American writers...Lehane is on top form with this one.

Good Book Guide

Lehane's work - as admirers will attest - is never less than excellent, and the author is clearly on *non-pareil* form with *World Gone By*. There are many American crime writers, but the holy trinity of James Lee Burke, James Ellroy, and George Pelecanos clearly has to now be a quartet.

Featured as a Notable Title in [USA Today](#)'s Winter Books Preview.

Early praise from booksellers:

Ellen Meeropol, [Odyssey Bookshop](#), South Hadley, MA:

World Gone By is vintage Lehane. His characters powerful and broken, brutal and surprisingly tender embody the 1940's gangster culture, but reveal the layers underneath of race and class and choices not so different from the bankers and high society. As with *The Given Day* and *Live By Night*, I am both swept into the epic story, and still thinking about the characters and their impossible choices days afterwards.

Michael Herrmann, [Gibsons Bookstore](#), Concord, NH:

Lehane writes the best scenes in gangster fiction since Hammett, and goes further than Hammett did in exploring the moral dilemmas and consequences of the gangster life.

Dave Shallenberger, [Little Shop of Stories](#), Decatur, GA:

I found this to be clearly the most brutal of the Joe Coughlin novels, but also the best written and the most gripping. Joe's relationship with his young son and the men involved in "Our Thing," along with his visions of ghosts told amidst the downward, violent spiral of the Tampa mob in the early 1940s is highly compelling. I loved it.

J.B., [Seattle Mystery Bookshop](#), Seattle, WA:

In the prologue of *World Gone By*, Dennis Lehane writes about his main character but certainly captures his own abilities: *Joe Coughlin had a gift for bringing the beacons of the city into contact with her demons and making it all seem like a lark.* This is Lehane's great gift as well, creating characters with all the human dimensions of you and me our inner angels and devils, our passions and crimes and envelopes them in the timeless trials of our world, even as he disguises his feat as the entertainment of a 'good read'. He's a magician, a maestro, and a master of the written word.

Dana Schulz, [Snowbound Books](#), Marquette, MI:

For me, having an unread Dennis Lehane book in the house is about as distracting as a fifth of whiskey is for an alcoholic. I can't concentrate on anything. I feel it calling to me, I'm here. Pick me up. Just one little chapter. Nothing gets done. So I've learned its best to simply give in, to abandon any pretense of self-control and just leave the dishes in the sink and the laundry in the hamper. And, oh, the relief of freefalling into the arms of his storytelling, and not climbing back out until the last page.

World Gone By reads like Lehane's *Greatest Hits*. It has the suspense and relentless drive of his earlier crime novels, and the complex, historically based characters of his recent work. The result is a wholly satisfying, keep-you-up-all-night novel that ranks among his best.

Jerry Brown, The Bookstore, Radcliff, KY:

Dennis Lehane is the only author I know of who has written two modern classics *Mystic River* and *Shutter Island*. With *World Gone By*, the atmosphere is as thick as Tupelo honey and crackles with the tension and suspense we've come to expect from this master craftsman! After I finished it the first time, I had to start over, just to make sure I had soaked up all nectar from this incomparable writer.

Bill Cusumano, [Square Books](#), Oxford, MS:

Dennis Lehane completes the saga of Joe Coughlin in *World Gone By* in a novel equal parts character study, melodrama and tragedy. Set during the World War II era, Coughlin continues his own war within the netherworld of criminality that so easily reflects society in general. Such powerful plots and characters can only make one hope Mr. Lehane will continue to mine the vast vein of Americana he has tapped in his superb trilogy.

Sue Richardson, [Maine Coast Book Shop](#), Damariscotta, ME:

I loved it. After reading *A Given Day* and *Live By Night*, *World Gone By* filled in so much of the story of the Coughlin family saga. Atmospheric and suspenseful, Lehane is a master of his genre. I'm definitely a fan, this guy doesn't disappoint.