



**Title:** A Drink Before the War

**Author:** Dennis Lehane

**Description:**

Kenzie and Gennaro are private investigators in the blue-collar neighborhoods and ghettos of South Boston they know it as only natives can. Working out of an old church belfry, Kenzie and Gennaro take on a seemingly simple assignment for a prominent politician: to uncover the whereabouts of Jenna Angeline, a black cleaning woman who has allegedly stolen confidential state documents.

Finding Jenna, however, is easy compared to staying alive once they've got her. The investigation escalates, implicating members of Jenna's family and rival gang leaders while uncovering extortion, assassination, and child prostitution extending from bombed-out ghetto streets to the highest levels of government.

*A Drink Before the War*, the first in Lehane's acclaimed series with Boston detectives Patrick Kenzie and Angie Gennaro, is a remarkable debut that is at once a pulsating crime thriller and a mirror of our world, one in which the worst human horrors are found closest to home, and the most vicious obscenities are committed in the name of love.

**Reviews**

**Library Journal:**

In this first novel, set in Boston, violence swirls around narrator Patrick Kenzie and partner Angleo Gennaro. This intrepid investigative duo are hired by two state senators to locate a black cleaning woman who filched several sensitive "documents." They find her easily enough, but the items she took, which point to child prostitution and political corruption, cause gang warfare and murder. Lehane's minimal use of literary references helps establish character, as do his frequent allusions to child abuse and wife battering. Rough and tumble action for a high energy, likable pair.

**Sherman Alexie:**

My favorite novel [this year] is a mystery called *A Drink Before the War* ... Set in Boston, and featuring a wonderful pair of private detectives in Patrick Kenzie and Angela Gennaro, this first novel is a racially charged, violent, humorous, and tragic work. Lehane is not afraid to be nakedly political, didactic even, while offering us a thrilling ride through the mean streets of Boston. Read this guy now and you'll be able to brag about it later when his career really takes off.

**John Dufresne:**

Reading *A Drink Before the War* is like watching Robert B. Parker and John Updike duke it out phrase by phrase on some steamy night in Boston's Combat Zone. Christ, Lehane writes beautiful sentences! With a single stroke, Dennis Lehane has established himself as a player to watch in the business of crime literature.

**Booklist:**

A terrific first novel and, one hopes, the beginning of a superb series.

**Kirkus Reviews:**

A lively debut about residents of the Boston metropolitan area who don't summer in Hyannisport.

**Boston Globe:**

Move over, Spenser ... Score this one a smashing success.

**St. Petersburg Times:**

Explosive ... Spectacular ... Once you begin *A Drink Before the War*, you'll resent every minute you have to spend away from it.

**Boston Sunday Globe:**

Harsh and chilling ... An absolutely terrific story.

**Orlando Sentinel:**

Dennis Lehane sets off some real fireworks ... Old Boston politicians and young Uzi-toting warlords ... Lehane handles it all with a veteran's aplomb. The violence of his story is balanced by the grace of his prose and the morality of his characters.

**James W. Hall:**

What a first novel! Smart, hip and moving ... I'm betting Lehane is going to be a name to reckon with in years to come.

**Mystery News:**

Witty, strong and evocative ... A powerful story and a superbly written one ... Lehane does everything well ... Kenzie and Gennaro are beautifully crafted protagonists ... Some of the best prose I've read this year.