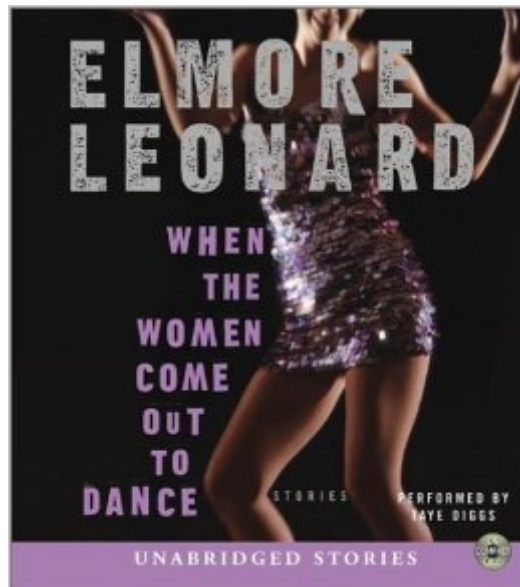


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When The Women Come Out To Dance



Synopsis

In this collection of new and recently published short fiction, Elmore Leonard demonstrates the superb characterizations, dead-on dialogue, vivid atmosphere, and driving plotting that have made him a household name. Federal marshal Karen Sisco, from the bestselling novel *Out of Sight*, returns in "Karen Makes Out," once again inadvertently mixing pleasure with business. In "Fire in the Hole," Raylan Givens, last seen in *Riding the Rap* and *Pronto*, meets up with an old friend, but they're now on different sides of the law. In the title story, "When the Women Come Out to Dance," Mrs. Mahmood gets more than she bargains for when she conspires with her maid to end her unhappy marriage. In all nine stories -- each unique in their own right -- reluctant heroes and laid-back lowlifes struggle for power, survival, and their fifteen minutes of fame. And as always, the stories ring true with Leonard's signature deadpan social observations and diabolical eye for the foibles of the good guys and the bad. Performed by Taye Diggs.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This generally digestible and entertaining Leonard sampler collects two novellas and a seven short stories written over the last decade. For those who've never read any of his many many many books, it's a pretty representative introduction to his range and style. For those who are intimately familiar with his work, there are new sides of a few familiar faces. For those like me, who've read seven or eight of his novels, and found them diverting, this is more of the same, page-turning, if not particularly memorable, genre fiction. The stories can all be readily grouped into pairs. Both the title story and the opening story are a shade under 20 pages and feature attractive rich women who are

running some kind of scam. In "When the Women Come Out to Dance", we meet an exotic dancer who married a wealthy Pakistani doctor. A year later, sitting in the lap of luxury, she professes to be worried that she will meet the gruesome fate of other wives no longer desired by their traditional Pakistani husbands-being burned to death. Her new Colombian maid might be the solution to her problem... In "Sparks", the widow of a famous record producer is grilled by an insurance company adjuster following the suspicious destruction of her house during a California brush fire. The two stories chug along through small intrigues and banter, arriving at satisfying, yet predictable conclusions. Two of the stories are twenty-page vignettes in the lives of characters who are features in full novels. "Chickasaw Charlie Hoke" is a humorous and colorful story about how the title character lands a job as celebrity greeter for a Vegas casino. What happens after this is detailed in Leonard's 2002 book, *Tishomingo Blues*, whose main protagonist Dennis Lenahan is also introduced off-stage in this story.

Elmore Leonard can write circles around most pulp fiction writers, but even the best writers struggle to fill novels successfully. You have to carry narratives for 300 pages, and even Leonard has produced his share of undernourished text. That is why his 2002 short story collection "When The Women Come Out To Dance" is so satisfying. Calling them "short stories" is actually overselling them a bit; some are just sketches where very little of anything happens. A veteran rides into town and gets jawed at by some bigots. Two terminal cancer cases chat their way through what amounts to a first date. A woman answers questions about a house that she may or may not have burned down. What makes these pieces readable and enjoyable is Leonard's way with dialogue, his ear for the clever quip disguised as an observation: "Girls named Kitty don't think much of becoming grandmothers." Two stories stand out; the long ones "Fire In The Hole" and "Tenkiller." They aren't that long, about 60 well-spaced pages each, but they have the most involved plots and feature likeable characters who Leonard takes his time setting up. "Fire In The Hole" especially would make for a good movie, featuring the antics of a moronic gang of white supremacists who are being investigated by U.S. Marshal Raylan Givens, one of several characters from earlier Leonard novels to appear here. Also appearing here is Karen Sisco, previously seen in the book and movie "Out Of Sight," and here as the possibly romantic partner of a bank robber in the funny, touching "Karen Makes Out."

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