



Gumshoe Rock

Rob Leininger

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Rob Leininger's *Gumshoe Rock* is a gritty one-two punch of a PI mystery that tracks Mortimer Angel through a tense, gruesome investigation in Reno.

Mort is everything a private investigator should be: grim, grizzled, old enough to appreciate a good looking lady, and smart enough to keep his mouth shut. He's also a former IRS field agent and "the preeminent locator of famous missing persons."

In short, Mort is the perfect sleuth for a case involving a much-despised IRS agent whose clean-picked skull is dropped through the slashed top of a convertible. The car belongs to Mort's incredibly bendy partner, Lucy Landry, who is also more than what she seems. As Mort works from a high-level embezzlement case to the problem of the skull, he's sucked into a lethal mystery that puts more than his reputation at stake.

Fast moving, wisecracking, and deadly, each chapter features tight beats that build suspense. The landscape is incorporated into scenes with humor and wonderful physicality. Several slapstick moments are laugh-out-loud funny, especially when delivered in Mort's deadpan voice. Quirky characters include a bartender, Ma, who is "an elderly lady who could walk from here to Colorado and back in a day or two and put down more booze than your average college football team."

For all its grisly crime scenes, the novel is also funny, and its humor sets it apart, making its extreme violence more tolerable. Its sex scenes happen off-stage, and while Mort's relationship with Lucy is charged, its depiction leans on mutual playfulness instead of straightforward romance.

Gumshoe Rock is a knock-your-socks-off mystery with a healthy dose of graveyard humor.

CLAIRE FOSTER (July/August 2019)

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