



## His Just Desserts

**John Raymond Williams**

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*His Just Desserts is a page-turner, and no time is wasted in getting to the juicy parts of the story.*

In Canadian author John Raymond Williams's thrilling suspense novel, *His Just Desserts*, a greedy billionaire creates an elaborate plan to avoid paying taxes on his annual gains. His solution is creative, risky, and reliant on the good character of a man he's chosen to carry out the deed.

Despite his wealth, Burt Donaldson can't stand to part with a single penny. He's built an empire of oil investments, a chain of travel agencies, a major food company, and a Las Vegas casino. He lives a luxurious lifestyle, which includes high-end restaurants, a gorgeous wife, a sprawling home, servants, and a staff of fawning executives. Handing over nearly 40 percent of his annual income is a bitter pill for Burt to swallow, so he decides to try a little tax fraud. Though the move is not technically illegal, it's not exactly above board—but Burt's ego and drive to win won't let him see that. It's only a matter of time before the whole affair comes to light, with some extra dirty laundry. Soon, Burt is not only a few million dollars short, but he's also up for embezzlement charges, as well as the murder of one of his casino managers. Stuck in prison, Burt has two choices: change his perspective or serve time for life.

This book focuses on the details that make Burt's plan come to fruition. Making paperwork, IRS tax law, and business meetings exciting is very difficult to do, but Williams injects tension into even mundane moments, continually raising the stakes. Each scene adds to the suspense of *His Just Desserts*, and Williams is careful to add enough detail to keep Burt's scheme plausible.

The characters may seem stereotypical at times, but the story is exciting and fun, and finds new ways of weaving together old favorites, such as the investigator assigned to the casino murder case: "Luger was a typical unhappy cop. His wife had left him after twelve years of wedded bliss. Luger was one of those officers who always had a chip on his shoulder. He likely had forgotten the real reason why the chip was there in the first place." The characters interact in ways that are sometimes surprising, keeping the reader engaged.

Although the scenes are fast-paced, often leaning on dialogue to keep their momentum, the tone is somewhat uneven, especially as the story picks up steam. The plot periodically becomes sidetracked, or hops into different characters' points of view, which can be distracting. Although the novel benefits from an omniscient narrator, the intensity of the plot might have been even greater with a limited perspective, to keep the reader guessing.

However, *His Just Desserts* is a page-turner, and no time is wasted in getting to the juicy parts of the story.

CLAIRE FOSTER (February 12, 2015)

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