

Rough Justice: A Callie and Cash Thriller

Burt Weissbourd

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Rough Justice is a character-driven thriller in which a couple takes great personal risks in order to protect a vulnerable woman.

In Burt Weissbourd's thriller *Rough Justice*, a case of stolen identity prompts investigators to stop a power-hungry enemy.

A year past the harrowing events covered in the series' preceding volume, Callie and Cash are enjoying their blossoming romance. In the background, though, an old Chinese gangster attempts to purchase real estate on the West Coast, and an ambitious immigration lawyer works to amass power. And then Sara, a young Algerian woman who came to the US via a company sponsorship, only to discover that the company stole her identity and plans to kill her, shows up at Callie's Seattle restaurant begging for help. She recounts her story with such pathos that Callie and Cash spring into action. However, their attempts to protect Sara put them in danger too: a ruthless organization needs to keep Sara's story from getting out.

Sara is a fascinating heroine. After being abandoned in an orphanage due to family drama, she learned how to survive horrific situations, including finding her mother only to lose her again. In addition to such hardships, she is also developed as someone who is fond of classic American movies and has an intense love of martial arts—capable enough, and sure enough of herself, to battle for survival and citizenship. At first deliberate, even in her speech, she develops into someone capable of vulnerability: soft in conversation when she needs to be, but also animated and quick at times. As a result, in her presence Callie and Cash fade in prominence; the book's true lead becomes Sara, who is charismatic, passionate, and determined.

Conversations are evocative, revealing elements of each person well. The secondary cast includes a giant with a prosthetic leg and an underworld diamond magnate. Together, they are a quirky group whose particular qualities make the book's interactions all the more more vibrant.

After the lawyer and gangster are introduced, they fade into the story's background; Sara's situation commands the bulk of the attention. Though these threads are indeed connected, their commonalities are revealed in a slow, if consistent, manner in order to maintain tension. Both story lines are resolved by the end, though, which also features light hilarity via Callie's one-liners.

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JOHN M. MURRAY (January 3, 2023)

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