



Boston Blackie

Jack Boyle

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Whether he is fighting the police or the criminal underworld, Boston Blackie always stands up for what's right

Sure, Boston Blackie is a jewel thief and a safecracker, but he's a criminal with code. He ensures that the worst villains get what's coming to them while the honorable ones stay out on the street—where, like Blackie, they do more good than harm.

In this classic collection of adventures, with his dependable wife and getaway driver, Mary, by his side, Blackie gets into and out of a dizzying array of tight spots. He escapes from prison, saves a friend from the gallows, and pulls off the gold bullion heist of a lifetime. Later adapted into serials, movies, and TV shows, Boston Blackie's exploits are some of the most thrilling in all of crime fiction.

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Boston Blackie Details

Date : Published September 23rd 2014 by MysteriousPress.com/Open Road (first published 1919)

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Author : Jack Boyle

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From Reader Review Boston Blackie for online ebook

Melvyn says

Excellent read! Keep in mind vintage 1919 and it will be most enjoyable!

Douglas Boren says

This is a good book in the crime/mystery genre that is also a throwback to the mid to early 20th century. Boston Blackie is a reformed safe-cracker, and jewel thief, who has a strict code of honor. He will not snitch on anyone, even if it means it goes poorly for himself.

This is a very enjoyable read, and it made me look up some of the old movie and TV series from long ago about the famous Boston Blackie. I would recommend this to anyone who has a nostalgia for crime stories the way they used to be, before vulgarity and porn took over.

Robert Morrow says

Boyle is similar to Rosewater's description of Kilgore Trout, "My God, if the man could only write!" That said, he certainly created an intriguing and original character in Blackie, who has a strong sense of morality, even if that morality is out of sync with society. I've found that I remember more about the details of some of the stories in this book than I do about the book I read last week, particularly those of Blackie's stretch in prison and the boat heist. While Boyle will never be confused with Dickens or Flaubert, he certainly achieved something when he created the fascinating persona of Boston Blackie.

Bill Groom says

Boston Blackie is a book, a radio show, movie, and tv show. This book gives you a hint of why they all state that this crook who live by a code " is a enemy to thouse who make him an enemy, and a friend who has no friend." this story written around 1919 is a great example of the values and speech of the time along with being a great read.

Georgia says

Because of naustalia,

I tried this book as I remember seeing a movie of Boston Blackie when I was young. The book, however, is not for me. It's almost like Robin Hood paying retribution upon those breaking the criminal code of ethics. He is a thief no less. The book is like short stories of different instances involving crooks or when Blackie is successful on a heist.

Sue J says

Glad I read it. I remember Boston Blackie from when I was very young. Good to catch up to him.

Ron says

Gave up. Too 19th century ... in writing, plot, attitudes. Boring and semi-offensive. Not that some 19th century authors aren't very readable.

Kathy says

I picked-up this book because I really enjoy the radio show from the 40s of the same name. This book picks-up where the radio show ends (before the TV series, which I had no idea existed until a friend told me). It is really great to see the same characters again as well as have them placed in clever situations that were highly enjoyable to read. I didn't have much hope for this book when I started, but was pleasantly surprised after the first couple of chapters. This is a collection of short stories that are intertwined making me think they were released as a serial in a monthly magazine. Good writing and stories; makes me wish there was more from Jock Boyle, but I haven't been able to find anything else written by him except for this title.

Donna says

loved this tale of post WWI cops and robbers..

Lawrence says

interesting look at the book that led to movies, books and classic radio shows. People who lived in the first half of the Twentieth century will find this book from 1919 interesting reading.

Jerry Chick says

Boston Blackie in this book is certainly different than the movie character. But, still a good read where you keep wondering how Blackie is going to get out of each predicament.

Arthur Tashiro says

Boston Blackie by Jack Boyle (New York: H.K. Fly Co., 1919)

Jack Boyle was an ex-convict who wrote about a master thief.

This book collects seven stories published in magazines from 1914 on. It's available for download from online sources such as Munseys, and used hard copies show up in various places; maybe these versions derive from a 1979 reprint by Gregg Press. There is a website (<http://jackboylefan.wordpress.com>) that goes into the history of the author and his other work.

Boyle wrote in a sentimental vein like O. Henry's, about to be displaced. BOSTON BLACKIE was published the same year as Sherwood Anderson's WINESBURG, OHIO and only a year before Black Mask appeared.

Because it's obsolete, BOSTON BLACKIE is worth a look. It shows what modern realism and hardboiled fantasy worked to escape. Also, Boyle's sort of fiction evolved and persisted. Blackie himself became the radio and movie detective played by Chester Morris in the 1940s and the TV private eye played by Kent Taylor in the 1950s, whose pencil thin moustache Jimmy Buffett admired.

In these later appearances, Boston Blackie was a lighthearted adventurer with a girlfriend named Mary. He was a reformed thief who solved crimes to prove he hadn't committed them.

Boyle's Blackie hasn't reformed. He's a hero of the underworld, a hard man like Donald Westlake's Parker. But in 1919, he had a *wife* named Mary and they had shockingly prim ideas about marriage, motherhood, and duty. The mix of grim crime and greeting-card sentiments comes from 19th-century melodrama.

Melodrama's dogma was that any uncorrupted heart knows a natural code of human decency. Stories traced struggles of spontaneous good against both unjust authority and bestial villainy. The *declaration* of strong feelings was in itself a thrilling spectacle:

“My boy is going to live, live, live!” In a wildly trembling hand she waved the newspaper she held. “It's a miracle—it's the miracle I've prayed for.”

In Boyle's vein of fiction in 1915, such scenes were the turning points and payoffs. For a modern reader, these moments disrupt what seems like normal storytelling. Though to us such fervor seems normal in tweets about the desserts in a restaurant.

So the Boston Blackie stories are valuable samples of history, if you put aside modern priorities to read them.

Then you'll find they're trite.

They contain interesting conflicts in Blackie's “crook-world” and some early portrayals of police corruption and prison brutality. But Boyle's idea of human behavior is one lie after another—it's *inept* sentimentality, tone deaf melodrama.

Blackie is robbing a mansion when a little boy interrupts him:

“Who is you?” lisped the little fellow, smiling confidingly up into Blackie's perplexed face. Then with suddenly increased interest: “You isn't Santy, is you? No, you isn't Santy 'cause that on your face is a hanky, not beards.”

The boy can't sleep unless someone watches over him. Blackie stays with him, saying “I'd do it if the whole house was full of coppers.”

This was written around 1914. O. Henry had already made fun of the situation in 1910, in a story called “Tommy's Burglar.”

Little Tommy says, “I'm sure it's neither agreeable nor usual for a kid of my age to butt in when a full-grown burglar is at work and offer him a red sled and a pair of skates not to awaken his sick mother. And look how they make the burglars act. You'd think editors would know—but what's the use?”

“Well, let's get through with it, “ the burglar says, and promises not to burglarize another house till the June magazines are out.

Michael Mcfarren says

Wrong or right

Honor among thieves. Is it morally right to break the law for good reasons? That's what I kept thinking throughout this book. Yes I routed for the hero, but wondered why he chose this life. Dystopia readers will see many parallels with this story.

Rebecca says

I listened to the Livrovox recording of this book by Winston Tharp. He did a fabulous rendition which harkened back to the old radio shows. I highly recommend both the book and the recording.

Charles H Berlemann Jr says

This is a collection of the short stories that Jack Boyle, himself a crook and who wrote these while in prison in California, wrote of a crook named Boston Blackie. The radio and movies that were using these short stories as basis for a character seem to sell the character of Blackie as a Robin Hood who was turning his life around, a modern day heroes who helped the down trodden. The reality is that these stories were sort of about the crook doing on to other crooks and saving folks that seem to have run afoul of major syndicates, the long arm of the law or those that were just found to be needing some help and somehow turned Blackie's heart.

Most of the stories are from Pre-WW1 and show a pulp feel in both the stilted phrasing and the quick resolutions to a couple of the stories, or the cliff hangers that seem to run from chapter to chapter in the longer stories. In the end, they weren't great, but they weren't totally bad. It just went and showed me that yet again what Hollywood gets their hands on a popular character they totally rearrange that character to help sell the movie, tv or radio version.

This is really for a fan of pulp detective or action stories and those that know what sort of hack like or even trope like writing they are getting into. Anyone who has read modern action or detective stories would find these dull and the language hard to read, to which I would say you aren't missing much if you pass this up.
