



Tanner's Virgin

Lawrence Block

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The CIA, the FBI, the KGB, Interpol—not one of the world's premier intelligence organizations knows quite what to make of Evan Michael Tanner. Is he a spy, a mercenary, a footloose adventurer, or simply a screwball sucker for hopeless causes?

(Actually he's a little bit of all of the above. Plus he never sleeps. *Ever.*)

One thing's for sure: Tanner's a true romantic, which is why he can't refuse a distraught mother who begs him to rescue her lost, pure-as-driven-snow daughter. Phaedra Harrow (nee Deborah Horowitz) once shared Tanner's apartment but not his bed. And now the virginal beauty's been abducted by white slavers in the Afghan wilderness.

Finding Phaedra will be difficult enough. Bringing her back alive and unmolested may be impossible. And first Tanner will have to swim the English Channel, survive trigger-happy Russian terrorists . . . and maybe pull off a timely assassination or two.

Tanner's Virgin Details

Date : Published August 28th 2007 by Harper (first published 1968)

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Author : Lawrence Block

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From Reader Review Tanner's Virgin for online ebook

Joyce McKune says

I liked it, don't know why. The lead is unbelievable and the plots are impossible, but the stories are still fun.

Glenn says

With the completion of this book, I've now read all the "series" books by Block, which includes Evan Tanner (spy who was injured in the Korean war and as a result does not have to sleep, 8 books in the series), Chip Harrison (a young guy just starting out in life working with a detective, 4 books in the series), Matthew Scudder (ex-cop and alcoholic PI, 16 books in series), Bernie Rhodenbarr (sophisticated burglar who owns a used bookstore, 10 books in series) and Keller (likeable hitman who collects stamps, 4 books in series).

I've never rated a Block book less than 3 stars, which to me signifies a worthwhile read. He's a very solid writer.

Ed says

#6 in the Evan Tanner series. This 1968 entry was renamed Tanner's Virgin when reissued in 2005. Tanner is a secret agent in a spoof of the 1960's spy series. He was wounded in the Korean War and has been unable to sleep since. In the afterword to the reprint, Block says "The storylines of Tanner's adventures, as you may have noticed, generally range somewhere between far-fetched and absurd". It's rollicking entertainment and a fun read.

Spy Evan Tanner series - Tanner's a true romantic, which is why he can't refuse a distraught mother who begs him to rescue her lost, pure-as-driven-snow daughter. Phaedra Harrow (nee Deborah Horowitz) once shared Tanner's apartment but not his bed. And now the virginal beauty's been abducted by white slavers in the Afghan wilderness. Finding Phaedra will be difficult enough. Bringing her back alive and unmolested may be impossible. And first Tanner will have to swim the English Channel, survive trigger-happy Russian terrorists . . . and maybe pull off a timely assassination or two.

Greg says

Book six of the world's most unique series of espionage novels starts with our hero, Evan Tanner - ET - dealing (unsuccessfully) with the growing pains of his seven year old angel and unofficially adopted daughter / Princess of Lithuania, Minna. The chapter finishes with ET having to deal with his his own set of sexual and academic frustrations, caused principally by the presence on his sofa of the delightfully cute but delightfully untouched eighteen year old Miss Phaedra Horowitz. And other pressing commitments of course.

Chapter two takes the reader to London and it is not long before we have the hang of the book's plot. Little Miss Horowitz - Tanner's Virgin - is missing, and it is up to ET himself to save the day.

But does he? Read the book to find out! But with Mr Block in charge of writing these classic works of educational entertainment, and given the fact that they are each one individual stories, it is fair to assume we will have a happy ending to look forward to. But you know what happens when you assume?

This time the bad guy (appears to be) convincing his "victims" to partake a working holiday to the middle east from good old London town. No one really knows what they go there for, so a friend of a friend of Evan's signs up for duties and the early stages of the employment gives the good guys a chance to get the low down on the situ, and also try to track down the missing Virgin. The "recruitment centre" is not exactly in the most family friendly part of London, if you get my drift, so the reader's stomach is soon tied in knots with worry about our petite, young, innocent victim.

Tanner's Virgin is another excellent, entertaining, mysterious, fist pumping, adrenalin-rushing reason to splash out the moolah for either your e-or-p-copy of this tome. Will it scale the same literary, entertainment and educational heights of the second volume? That is not for me to say. But each book of this brilliant series has been fantastic reading from several points of view, and TANNER'S VIRGIN is no different. I give it four stars, but you may give it five.

BFN Gregorio

Harding Young says

In Block fashion, this book is fun! A bit of revisionist history regarding the Russian invasion of Afghanistan... but from there comes a hero to make it right. It's white hat cowboy mixed with James Bond and a touch of sixties sexual revolution. It's quick and dirty. And funny. If you can find a copy... read it.

Jim says

Tanner, the spy who can't sleep in an adventure that takes him across Europe to a search throughout Afghanistan. OK, this was written in 1968, an early Block entry before Scudder, Rhodenbarr and Keller took over. It's a fun read and Tanner is sufficiently dry to qualify as a wise-ass, but a likable one. Good supporting characters here. A good, quick fun read.

David Highton says

Another entertaining tale about the man who cannot sleep, chasing across continents to rescue a young friend sold into white slavery. Not dated at all.

Denise M. says

AKA: Sheldon Lord, Jill Emerson, Paul Kavanaugh, Chip Harrison, Lawrence Block

Dominick says

Evan Tanner goes to Afghanistan to rescue a former girlfriend from enslavement as a prostitute. Funnier than that brief summary would suggest, and including Tanner's accidental involvement in a plot to overthrow the Afghan government, which the Russians are apparently behind but which is really a CIA initiative. The ending is actually somewhat anticlimactic, as it shifts gears to make fun of transcendentalism rather than international skulduggery.

Michael Sova says

Lawrence Block has been named a Grand Master by the Mystery Writers of America. He's also won multiple Edgar Awards, Shamus Awards, and the most prestigious Diamond Dagger award. In short, he's good. He's long been near the top of my list of favorite authors and it's odd that, in the roughly one year I've been writing reviews, this is the first time I've selected one of his books. I'm ashamed and I really have no excuse other than to say that I read most of his books long before my review writing began..

Tanner's Virgin is one of eight Lawrence Block novels featuring Evan Michael Tanner, an accidental revolutionary who, as the result of a head injury suffered during the Korean War, has lost the ability to sleep. That is a real albeit uncommon malady. Most of the Tanner novels were written in the late 60's and early 70's. Tanner's Virgin was released in 1968 but it has the same timeless quality of many of Block's other works. According to the author, the Tanner storylines "generally range from farfetched to absurd." However, as unlikely as it may seem, the outlandish tale told in the pages of Tanner's Virgin is strikingly similar to something that actually happened. What do you do if you have a girl who just won't leave you alone? Simple. Arrange to ship her to Afghanistan where she'll be sold into white slavery, which is the polite way of saying prostitution. People, or at least one person made a very successful living doing just that. And when Lawrence Block learned about it, that tragic yet entirely true story morphed into a wonderful, witty, hilarious work of fiction.

Tanner met a beautiful young girl, was immediately attracted to her, and invited her home when he found out she had no place to stay. They lived happily together for a month, at least as happily as could be considering their relationship did not run what many would consider its natural course. She was a virgin and determined to stay that way until the time was right. In their unique cohabitation, sleeping together meant SLEEPING together, except Tanner wasn't even capable of doing that.. She slept while he thought, and stewed, and grew increasingly frustrated. Eventually, she knew it was time to move on. For the next five years, there was no communication whatsoever. Then, the girl's mother called with the disturbing news that her baby had disappeared. Tanner didn't want to go after her yet still ended up chasing her half way around the world. I don't want to give anything away here so let's just say the girl he found was not the same one who'd walked out of his life years before.

Since this is my first review of a Lawrence Block book, I'd like to say a few words about why I enjoy him so

much. Actually, I don't know if I can do it in a few words but I'll give it a try. I'm a sucker for a good hero. I don't mean the carbon copy type that can do no wrong. I like heroes with flaws, and those who've grown and learned from their mistakes. I especially like heroes, protagonists if you will, who do not fit the typical literary mold. Block has made a career of crafting such heroes. You've already met Tanner. There's also Matthew Scudder, a private investigator and recovering alcoholic, Bernie Rhodenbar, a cat burglar and used bookstore owner (his sidekicks include a dirty cop as well as a lesbian dog groomer), and Keller (John Paul Keller), an assassin who also happens to be an avid stamp collector. These are not cookie cutter heroes. They are about as unlikely as an assassin who collects stamps. Still, somehow, Block makes it work. To be honest, I'm not crazy about the Keller stories. The Tanner novels are fun, the Rhodenbar ones are absolutely brilliant, and Matthew Scudder is one of my all-time favorite characters. His character arc, which now spans almost forty years and is perhaps partially autobiographical, is a true masterpiece. Block is a masterpiece as well. Grab a copy of Tanner's *Virgin*, or any of his other books. You won't be disappointed.

Geof says

I guess this is supposed to be a comedy/thriller but it was not funny at all.

BaiLing says

Almost COULDN'T finish this thin book.
Is the same author who wrote "A Drop of Hard Stuff?"

Craig Childs says

I am almost convinced Lawrence Block is clairvoyant. Through the first six novels of this series, it seems the majority of Evan Tanner's silly, hopeless political causes of the 1960's have now become present-day reality. Tanner's *Virgin* involves a significant subplot about Russians trying to take over the Afghanistan government. Keep in mind, this was written in 1968, a full eleven years before the Soviet Union did in fact invade for that very purpose.

Of course, because this is a Tanner novel, nothing is quite as it seems. Evan only wanted to rescue a beautiful 18-year old who had been sold into white slavery. Saving the world from communism and fouling up a secret CIA mission is only a side benefit.

This was one of the best entries of the series. Both darker and funnier than its predecessors, Block amps up the zany fun and again shows wry insight into global politics of the era.

Glenn Younger says

What a satisfying read on a cold rainy day. It was everything you could hope for in an Evan Tanner story as he bumbles his way illegally through England, France, and all the way to Afghanistan of the sixties in the search and rescue of a woman sold into white slavery. In the midst of the oddly moralistic amoral character mix of vivid description, Tanner dodges bullets, bombs, knives, and other assorted attempts on his life from a group of Russian spies intent on overthrowing the Afghanistan government. Or so it seems.

Throughout it all, the irony and absurdity of human foibles, and Evan Tanner's role in it all, ran the gamut from quiet chuckle to shake your head and laugh out loud as the good guys got out unscathed and the bad guys their just rewards.

The ending with the Chief was particularly satisfying as further twists come to light and the facts neatly rearranged to suit his agenda, while transforming Tanner's bumbblings into the stuff that has become Tanner legend. Then, to put the proverbial cherry on an already delightful tort, there was the perfect alpha and omega ending of the phone getting ripped from the wall once again. Loved it all around!

Vikas Datta says

As good as always, especially in its depiction of '60s Afghanistan and the Indian yogu and the famous music band of four in the end was a good touch... and I especially empathise with Tanner's frustration in this book
