



No Turning Back: Six Short Stories

L. L. Thrasher

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In each of these stories, someone sometime somewhere for some reason chooses a course of action from which there can be no turning back.

SACRIFICE

Private detective Zachariah Smith is offered the chance to earn sixty-seven cents for solving a missing person case. How could he say no? "Sacrifice" was originally published in *Murderous Intent Mystery Magazine* in 1999 and was nominated for an Edgar Award for Best Short Story. It was reprinted in *Best American Mystery Stories 1999*, edited by Ed McBain, who also narrated the story for the audiobook version.

THE HAND

It's business as usual in the Homicide Division of a big city police station (a short-short story)

WHAT DEEDEE DOES

Millard needs a little help carrying out his positively brilliant plan to rid himself of some annoyances. Dog groomer DeeDee Dobbs seems to be just what he needs.

ANYTHING FOR MONEY

A private eye has a new client, a man who asks for help in finding his runaway teenage daughter, who he believes is involved in prostitution. The private eye suspects his new client is lying, but he has just been handed a big retainer, so why not take the case?

ONE MAN, ONE VOTE

A short-short story about a felon. Really.

SERVICES RENDERED

When a pregnant woman with a black eye shows up at his office, accompanied by her two children, private detective Zachariah Smith has no doubt she's involved in a bad situation. Just how bad is something he won't know until he's smack-dab in the middle of it. "Services Rendered" was published in *Blondes in Trouble: And Other Tangled Tales*, an anthology of mystery short stories edited by Serita Stevens and dedicated to the memory of Sophie Dunbar.

Total word count: 18,800

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Zachariah Smith appears in two mystery novels by L. L. Thrasher: *Cat's-Paw, Inc.* and *Dogsbody, Inc.* L. L. Thrasher is also the author of *Charlie's Bones* and *Charlie's Web*, mysteries in which a young woman named Lizbet Lange meets Charlie Bilbo, a cop who wants her to solve some mysteries for him, a feat that is a bit complicated by the fact that Charlie died years ago.

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