



LOVE

IS A

RACKET

A NOVEL

JOHN RIDLEY

Love Is a Racket by John Ridley

John Ridley

In his first novel considering *Stray Dogs*, John Ridley deals up an excellent noir farce. Everything's a racket for Jeffty Kittridge, ex-wannabe scriptwriter residing at the skids in Hollywood: the two-bit con he pulls for spending money, the best way he convinces himself he is not drinking, how he attempts to cajole the neighborhood shark that he will repay his 15K debt. yet he isn't excellent at it: he is noticeable detention center twice; the malicious program he simply felt on his neck could be the first installment of the DTs; and he is lately acquired a payment-due reminder of damaged thumbs. In fact, Jeffty is a big-time loser, and getting larger all of the time. Until he stumbles on a street-hardened, exquisitely attractive younger homeless girl who evokes love...and the belief for definitely the right con. it is Jeffty's probability to hit it big, to be set for all times in a brand new existence together with his new love...except -- because the tale speeds him towards what he imagines could be a second of blissed-out consummation, he is truly on his approach to researching that love may be the largest racket of them all. Smart, edgy, caustically funny, *Love is a Racket* places John Ridley in a darkly comedian league of his own.

At numerous issues *Love Is a Racket* is outright offensive in its depiction of Jeffty Kittridge's Hollywood skid-row world. Yet, Jeffty's narrative voice is so compelling, so real, that you really want to understand how he makes out. The novel starts with Ty--a heavy operating for the neighborhood personal loan shark, Dumas--breaking Jeffty's fingers. The arms turn into a logo of Jeffty's relentless undesirable good fortune as he attempts and fails many times to make the \$15,000 he owes Dumas. Years ago, the reader discovers, Jeffty had come to Hollywood as an aspiring scriptwriter (a existence that Jonathan Ridley lived, finally writing episodes of *Martin*, *The Clean Prince of Bel-Air*, and the toilet *Laroquette Show*), yet he now announces himself a grifter, a gambler, and, gradually, a drunk. a number of roads to salvation emerge in Jeffty's nightmare life. At one point, it appears an afternoon on the races simply may perhaps erase his debts. His "friend," Nellis, reappears at one other moment--a junkie and, strangely, a grasp of Zen poker who hopes to win Jeffty's cash for him. And, finally, Mona, an enticing younger homeless woman, retains exhibiting up until eventually Jeffty realizes that she is his final likelihood for escape. Despite its grim topic matter, the e-book is attractive and infrequently outright funny. ("My reliable success used to be LA's an excellent spot to work. apart from the smog and the group violence, the brushfires in summer, the rain and floods within the winter, it is great.") Ridley injects bits of jap mysticism and icy realism to signify a deeper fact in the back of Jeffty's tragicomic façade. whereas it isn't a publication for the overly sensitive, it's a masterpiece of noir black comedy that *Love Is a Racket* remembers Elmore Leonard's most sensible writing. Ridley's moment novel (after *Stray Dogs*, 1997) brings panache and a kooky premise to a well-recognized setting. Jeffty is an African American L.A. grifter whose hustles necessarily fail, whose screenplay every body deems "beautiful" and whose plot to wring funds from old-time motion picture magnate Moe Steinberg is as quintessentially Hollywood-gothic as a mansion on Mulholland Drive. Jeffty concocts the rip-off of an entire life to enact revenge on his bookie, Dumas, whose goon breaks Jeffty's finger. unfortunately for him and for us, Dumas proceeds to bump off Jeffty's most sensible likelihood of constructing the payback funds (and

the story's best character): Nellis, a wife-killing junkie who wins fortunes Love Is a Racket through making use of Zen concepts to poker games. Jeffty is left to run his rip-off utilizing a gorgeous highway girl, Mona, who bears an uncanny resemblance to James Dean's dead, someday girlfriend, the real-life celeb Pier Angeli. It sort of feels Steinberg can have orchestrated Dean's demise on the way to get with regards to Angeli. Jeffty's yes that after he sees this excellent replica, dressed up in Fifties clothes, Steinberg will refuse her nothing. Whereas the swindle performs out, a cop known as Dentphy pressures Jeffty to notify on Dumas. By the point the rip-off and tale succeed in their climax, the characters do not know whom to believe and neither do readers. The preposterous plot is less significant than Jeffty's voice, saturated with vintage noir self-mockery and convincingly compromised morals. Even if Ridley ignores Love Is a Racket such evident questions as why he retains a gun he by no means uses, or why Dumas leaves Jeffty on my own lengthy adequate to hold out his plan, die-hard fanatics of neo-pulp will forgive those slips with infrequently a moment thought. 50,000 first printing.

Love Is A Racket

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