

Hard to Remember and Difficult to Forget

INDIANA RULES OF COURT: STATE AND FEDERAL, 2000
WEST GROUP 2000

Lolabelle

AS A GREAT AND LONGSTANDING FAN of the author, it pains me to condemn “Indiana” as uncharacteristically weak in content, flow and scope. Like the author’s many other works (notably “Illinois” and “Florida”) “Indiana” has as its theme betrayal and forgiveness, and the path that we all must take to reach fulfillment and justice. However, taken as a whole this work reads better as a selection of short vignettes than as a 979-page novel, and the author might better have explored publishing selections in such periodicals as “Esquire,” “The New Yorker” or “Indianapolis Weekly Law Bulletin.”

It’s that lack of flow that leaves one questioning the author’s judgment. While starting out strong with his engaging piece “Trial Procedure,” he reaches “Appellate Procedure” in the very middle of the work and then sends the reader back down to the less fulfilling “Indiana Child Support Rules and Guidelines” and

“Tax Court.” This choice leaves the reader wondering, “where is he taking us? How did we get here?”

The author’s prose is not as poignant or masterly as previous works, such as the brilliant “Michigan.” For instance, the selection “Lake County Rules of Civil Procedure” – promising at first glance – barely conjures up images of the smoulder of the Gary Steelworks, the stillness of downtown Hammond, or the bustle of preparing for a Tom Jones show at the Star Crown Theater in Merrillville. As the protagonist stands on a sand dune with the majestic south shore of Lake Michigan spread out before him, we are treated to his thoughts. Instead of giving an insight into his childhood as an impoverished deputy court clerk in Lake County, however, the protagonist merely informs us “[t]he judge who submitted the panel from which the special judge did not accept the appointment

Lolabelle is from Chicago, Illinois. This review first appeared on Amazon.com, and is reprinted with permission (www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0314243623/%3E/107-2688980-4484546). A year of free Green Bags to the individual who first provides evidence leading to Lolabelle’s identity and contact information.

shall immediately contact the Administrator for the name of the next available person.” Lake Co. R. Civ. Pro. 15(d)(1). Likewise, until his January 1, 2001 amendments to the Appellate Rules went into effect, the author left motion practice at the appellate level entirely up to the reader’s imagination. The only exceptions to this disappointing lack of ambience are the simple but evocative “Admission and Discipline” and “Criminal Procedure,” which the author wisely saves until the end of the work.

All in all, “Indiana” lacks the depth of

“California,” the quiet wisdom of “Wisconsin” and the unfailing honesty of the beautiful and frightening “Illinois” – a work which demonstrates that he has indeed been touched, at times, by the gentle hand of God. But not here. As one reviewer poignantly put it, “The Indiana Rules of Court’ are both difficult to forget and hard to remember.”

It should be noted that the author includes, as an encore, his classic Federal Rules – a moving piece that should be a part of any Rules fan’s library, and which almost makes up for the shortcomings of “Indiana.” *GB*