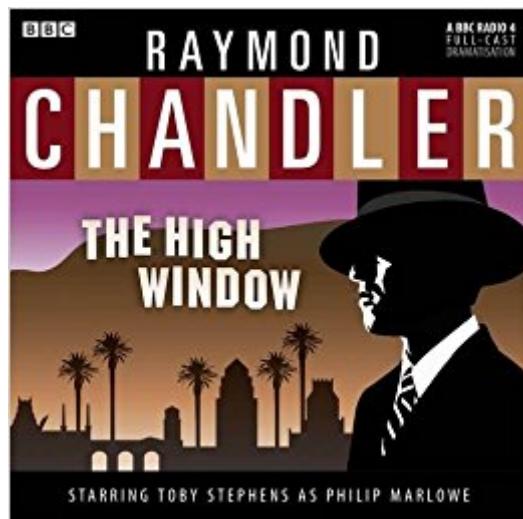


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# The High Window



## Synopsis

Fast-talking, trouble-seeking private eye Philip Marlowe is a different kind of detective: a moral man in an amoral world. California in the 1940s and 1950s is as beautiful as a ripe fruit and rotten to the core, and Marlowe must struggle to retain his integrity amidst the corruption he encounters daily. In *The High Window*, Marlowe starts out on the trail of a single stolen coin and ends up knee-deep in bodies. His client, a dried-up husk of a woman, wants him to recover a rare gold coin called a Brasher Doubloon, missing from her late husband's collection. That's the simple part. But Marlowe finds that everyone who handles the coin suffers a run of very bad luck: they always end up dead. If Marlowe doesn't wrap this one up fast, he's going to end up in jail "or worse, in a box in the ground. Starring Toby Stephens, this thrilling dramatization by Robin Brooks retains all the wry humor of Chandler's serpentine suspense novel. 2 CDs. 1 hr 26 mins.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Chandler is not only the best writer of hardboiled PI stories, he's one of the 20th century's top scribes, period. His full canon of novels and short stories is reprinted in trade paper featuring uniform covers in Black Lizard's signature style. A handsome set for a reasonable price. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Raymond Chandler is a master." --The New York Times' [Chandler] wrote as if pain hurt and life mattered. --The New Yorker' Chandler seems to have created the culminating American hero:

wised up, hopeful, thoughtful, adventurous, sentimental, cynical and rebellious.â • --Robert B. Parker, The New York Times Book Reviewâ œPhilip Marlowe remains the quintessential urban private eye.â • --Los Angeles Timesâ œNobody can write like Chandler on his home turf, not even Faulkner. . . . An original. . . . A great artist.â • â "The Boston Book Reviewâ œRaymond Chandler was one of the finest prose writers of the twentieth century. . . . Age does not wither Chandlerâ ™s prose. . . . He wrote like an angel.â • --Literary Reviewâ œ[T]he prose rises to heights of unselfconscious eloquence, and we realize with a jolt of excitement that we are in the presence of not a mere action tale teller, but a stylist, a writer with a vision.â • --Joyce Carol Oates, The New York Review of Booksâ œChandler wrote like a slumming angel and invested the sun-blinded streets of Los Angeles with a romantic presence.â • â "Ross Macdonaldâ œRaymond Chandler is a star of the first magnitude.â • --Erle Stanley Gardnerâ œRaymond Chandler invented a new way of talking about America, and America has never looked the same to us since.â • --Paul Auster â œ[Chandler]â ™s the perfect novelist for our times. He takes us into a different world, a world thatâ ™s like ours, but isnâ ™t. â • --Carolyn See --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

No one writes as well as Raymond Chandler. He never disappoints. His evocation of the times; descriptions of place and the emotion attached to place; depth of characters and nuanced telling of character, these are what set him apart. The plot of The High Window once again leads Philip Marlowe through the high and low of society, up against gangsters and cops alike. He maintains always his tarnished armor, his hard-boiled defense against an unfair world where he makes a tiny difference in the ongoing struggle against evil...on all sides. Classic. But it is the language and the pure fun of living in this long-lost time and place that set Chandlers work apart. This LA is gone. The one we have now is less interesting; more impersonal; more frenetic and infinitely more crowded. The High Window could be his best work.

Having read a lot of Raymond Chandler through the years and now, finally going back and re-reading everything with a more widened perspective on the genre, The High Window easily stands out as his finest work. The High Window, unlike a lot of genre Private Detective stories, which so many other authors have spent lifetimes struggling to copy and coming up short, keeps you guessing until the very end. Some authors give you a nibble about half way through a story and it falls apart in your lap and you figure it out. The High Window defies that solidly. You will be guessing about this one until the very end. Nothing is done ham-handedly or over-quick just to wrap

it up either. This book could serve as a role model to other authors about how to write an ending, as I'm sure it has -- even if you don't write Detective Noir fiction. If you're reading this review and a certain Humphrey Bogart film brought you here, and you don't know much about Raymond Chandler, just know that he was and is considered one of the greatest writers of the 20th Century. During his lifetime however he was dismissed as just a regular struggling hack novelist, because of the Genre, and not given a lot of attention. A lot of other authors, like Philip K. Dick for instance, another Angelino, suffered greatly under this prejudice during their lifetime because of supposed conventionalities. Sometimes, looking back you just have to wonder if it really was a West Coast prejudice, where anything outside of the New York circle of authors was thought worthless, or the critics just didn't have enough insight into life. Probably both. *The High Window* moves very quickly, very smoothly, never misses a beat or falls flat for a single page. Chandler did drink a lot and it sometimes shows in his other novels, but with this effort you can see a lot of genius, planning and careful, methodic work ... just like the protagonist Philip Marlowe working a case. The dialogue is as witty as *Farewell, My Lovely* and the wisecracks are even sharper than *The Big Sleep*. This book is also absent of the one problem that I have with Chandler and that is his disconnection of information from novel to novel. Some of his stories never mention a single word about anyone or anything from his other books, however, in *The High Window*, I underlined five direct references to his other works. These are nice touches and just things I like, because it's like going to a friend's house and being able to recognize the furniture. The Little Sister does a better job with bringing out a familiar cadre of Policemen, but this book is seriously where it's at. The main thought regarding the story though is all about protection of the client and their anonymity. Marlowe knows that if he has to turn over and talk, he's pretty much out of a job. This is a story about just that and Marlowe goes to great lengths to protect that trust and Chandler does a deft job in making it a subtle undercurrent throughout the book, giving *The High Window* a sort of 'Moralist' back-drop. While he takes on only one paid client, it feels as if he makes an exercise in proving that his word is his bond with just about everyone he meets. Personally, this is easily my favorite Chandler novel to date. There's a few youtube links in the comments regarding some documentary footage concerning Chandler as well a Chandler interview with James Bond author Ian Fleming, where Chandler states that he believes himself to be one of the greatest living American writers -- and Fleming agrees. Fantastic stuff....

In Chandler's third installment in the Marlowe series, *The High Window*, we see our cynical detective given a job by a cranky and boozy widow, Mrs. Murdock, to search for a rare coin that was allegedly swiped by her daughter-in-law. As is the case with many other Marlowe novels, the initial

request to find someone or something is only the appetizer to the full scale mystery that eventually reveals itself before the reader's eyes. Inevitably, Phillip Marlowe, as is the case with many of the other in the series, will at some point realize that he is not being given all the facts, that he is being given the run around, and so, this is when Marlowe is at his best, his clever, witty, terse, best. Things just don't add up. He can size up a situation and figure out people quite well. This includes motives. And when he realizes that this whole search for a precious coin, the Brasher Doubloon, is a case much, much more involved, then things get a little more interesting. More confusing, yes, but more interesting. Still, I think *The High Window*'s plot is fairly linear in many ways (in comparison to say, *The Big Sleep*); there are some convoluted aspects, but these are not too overly confusing. Although I did find the "explanation of everything" at the end a bit much, which is about the only beef I had with this novel. I think that Marlowe is a little bit more restrained at points in this one, as opposed to the other two I've read in the series (*The Lady in the Lake*, *The Big Sleep*). I say this based on his treatments several of the minor characters in *The High Window*. While Marlowe is jaded, and cynical, he seems to have a morality about him on a higher plane in this one. Still, before you think the guy a saint, let's just say he is willing to tell it like it is to anyone anytime. And, Chandler was a pro at his craft. Let's face it: Chandler's prose is something exceptional. He can paint a scene, a mood, with a brush so eloquently that it becomes undeniable noir: "The ringing bell had a sinister sound, for no reason of itself, but because of the ears to which it rang. I stood there braced and tense, lips tightly drawn back in a half grin. Beyond the closed window the neon lights glowed. The dead air didn't move. Outside the corridor was still. The bell rang in darkness, steady and strong." While the ending was a little too pact, this is still a fantastic crime novel. *The High Window* is noir personified.

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