

Introduction to Crime Fiction

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 12–1 p.m. or by appointment

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review

- ▶ the opening: style and stylization
 - ▶ in the character
 - ▶ in the prose
 - ▶ in the...plot?
- ▶ the nature of the quest
 - ▶ “I was calling on four million dollars”
 - ▶ “A lending library of elaborate smut”

Chandler's background: Dulwich College and *Black Mask*

1888	b. Chicago
1895–1905	lives in England, goes to Dulwich College (fancy)
1912	returns to US, becomes accountant in LA
1920–32	works for Dabney Oil Syndicate, becomes VP, fired
1933	“Blackmailers Don’t Shoot,” <i>Black Mask</i> 16, no. 10
1934–37	more pulp publications
1939	<i>The Big Sleep</i> (New York: Knopf)
1940	<i>Farewell, My Lovely</i> (Knopf)
1942	<i>The High Window</i> (Knopf)
1943	<i>The Lady in the Lake</i> (Knopf)
1944	<i>Double Indemnity</i> (dir. Wilder, screenplay)
1944	“Simple Art of Murder,” <i>Atlantic Monthly</i>
1946	<i>The Big Sleep</i> (dir. Hawks)
1959	d.

literature

I do not know what the loftiest level of literary achievement is: neither did Aeschylus or Shakespeare; neither does Miss Sayers....It is always a matter of who writes the stuff, and what he has in him to write it with....

I think that what was really gnawing at Miss Sayers's mind was the slow realization that her kind of detective story was an arid formula which could not even satisfy its own implications.

Chandler, "The Simple Art of Murder," 56–57.

whose bodies?

- ▶ Consider the presentation of Geiger's body (chap. 7).
 - ▶ What's the tone?
 - ▶ Where are the anachronies?

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- ▶ Consider the presentation of Taylor's body (chap. 9).
 - ▶ What's the tone?

bodies (again)

“She has a beautiful little body, hasn’t she?”

“Uh-huh.”

She leaned a little towards me. “You ought to see mine,” she said gravely.
(chap. 11)

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She had a beautiful body, small, lithe, compact, firm, rounded. (chap. 7)

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He turned his head a little to look at the green-eyed blonde. Not now green-eyed and only superficially a blonde. She was as limp as a fresh-killed rabbit. (chap. 14)

motive (again)

- ▶ Why does Marlowe act the way he does with Eddie Mars (chap. 13)?

motive (again)

- ▶ Why does Marlowe act the way he does with Eddie Mars (chap. 13)?

It was a good guess, but I wasn't going to let him know it.

next

- ▶ Finish the novel. Try to make a table of bodies and murderers.