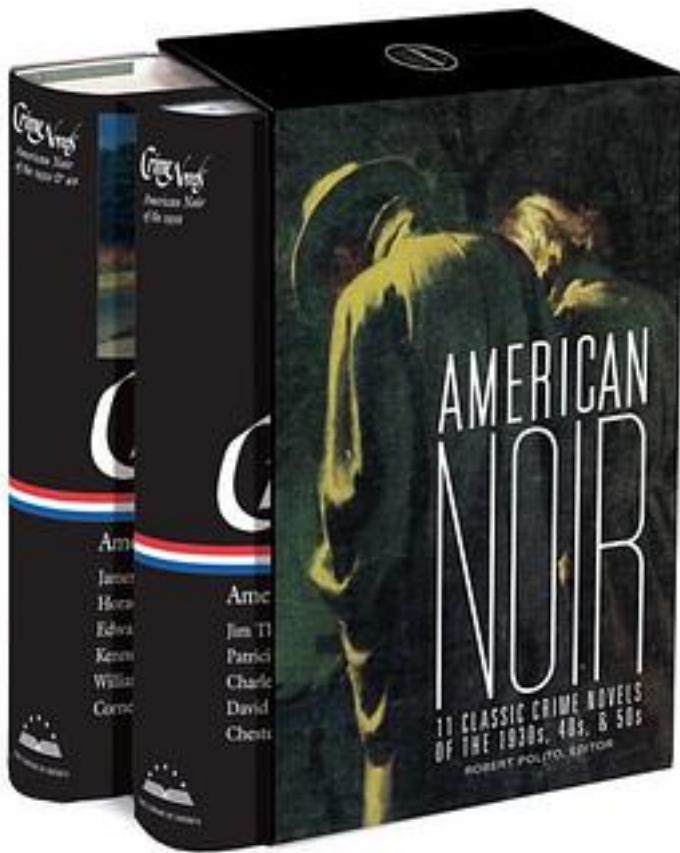


American Noir



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著者:Robert Polito (Editor)

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The eleven novels in The Library of America's adventurous two-volume collection represent a rich vein of modern American writing too often neglected in mainstream literary histories. Tapping deep roots in the American literary imagination, they explore themes of crime, guilt, deception, obsessive passion, murder, and the disintegrating psyche.

James M. Cain's pioneering novel of murder and adultery along the California highway, *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1934), which shocked contemporaries with its laconic toughness and fierce sexuality.

Horace McCoy's *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* (1935) uses truncated rhythms and a unique narrative structure to turn its account of a Hollywood dance marathon into an unforgettable evocation of social chaos and personal desperation.

In Thieves Like Us (1937), Edward Anderson vividly brings to life the dusty roads and back-country hideouts where a fugitive band of Oklahoma outlaws plays out its destiny.

The Big Clock (1946), an ingenious novel of pursuit and evasion by the poet Kenneth Fearing, is set by contrast in the dense and neurotic inner world of a giant publishing corporation under the thumb of a warped and murderous chief executive.

William Lindsay Gresham's controversial *Nightmare Alley* (1946), a ferocious psychological portrait of a charismatic carnival hustler, creates an unforgettable atmosphere of duplicity, corruption, and self-destruction.

I Married a Dead Man (1948), a tale of switched identity set in the anxious suburbs, is perhaps the most striking novel of Cornell Woolrich, who found in the techniques of the gothic thriller the means to express an overpowering sense of personal doom.

Published as a paperback original in 1952, Jim Thompson's *The Killer Inside Me*, is one of the most blistering and uncompromising crime novels ever written. Written from the point of view of an outwardly genial, privately murderous Texas sheriff, it explores the inner hell of a psychotic in daring and experimental style.

Patricia Highsmith's *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1955) likewise adopts a killer's perspective as she traces the European journey of an American con man with a taste for fine living and no conscience about how to attain it. Highsmith's gift for diabolical plotting is matched only by the cool irony of her characterizations.

In his nihilistic early novel *Pick-Up* (1955), Charles Willeford follows the pilgrimage of two lost and self-destructive lovers through the depths of San Francisco, from cheap bars and rooming houses to psychiatric clinics and police stations.

David Goodis's *Down There* (1956) is a moody, intensely lyrical novel of a musician fallen on hard times and caught up in his family's criminal activities; it was adapted by François Truffaut into the film *Shoot the Piano Player*.

With its gritty realism, unrestrained violence and frequently outrageous humor, *The Real Cool Killers* (1959) is among the most powerful of Chester Himes's series of novels about the Harlem detectives Coffin Ed Johnson and Grave Digger Jones.

作者介绍:

Robert Polito, editor, is a poet and the author of *Savage Art: A Biography of Jim Thompson*, which won a National Book Critics Circle Award and an Edgar Award from the Mystery Writers of America. He directs the writing program at The New School for Social Research in New York City.

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