



Dashiell Hammett and the Movies

William H. Mooney

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As the father of the hardboiled detective genre, Dashiell Hammett had a huge influence on Hollywood. Yet, it is easy to forget how adaptable Hammett's work was, fitting into a variety of genres and inspiring generations of filmmakers.

Dashiell Hammett and the Movies offers the first comprehensive look at Hammett's broad oeuvre and how it was adapted into films from the 1930s all the way into the 1990s. Film scholar William H. Mooney reveals the wide range of films crafted from the same Hammett novels, as when *The Maltese Falcon* was filmed first as a pre-Code sexploitation movie, then as a Bette Davis screwball comedy, and finally as the Humphrey Bogart classic. He also considers how Hammett rose to Hollywood fame not through the genre most associated with him, but through a much fizzier concoction, the witty murder mystery *The Thin Man*. To demonstrate the hold Hammett still has over contemporary filmmakers, the book culminates in an examination of the Coen brothers' pastiche *Miller's Crossing*.

Mooney not only provides us with an in-depth analysis of Hammett adaptations, he also chronicles how Hollywood enabled the author's own rise to stardom, complete with a celebrity romance and a carefully crafted public persona. Giving us a behind-the-scenes look at the complex power relationships, cultural contexts, and production concerns involved in bringing Hammett's work from the page to the screen, *Dashiell Hammett and the Movies* offers a fresh take on a literary titan.

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