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Dashiell Hammett

*The
Maltese
Falcon*

Read by **Eric Meyers**

**CLASSIC
CRIME**



CD 1

- | | | |
|-----------|---|------|
| 1 | The Maltese Falcon by Dashiell Hammett: Chapter 1 – Spade and Archer | 5:00 |
| 2 | ‘That was in New York.’ | 5:13 |
| 3 | Spade winked at his partner. | 6:31 |
| 4 | Chapter 2 – Death in the Fog | 4:49 |
| 5 | Spade turned from the parapet... | 6:02 |
| 6 | Tom, scowling, opened his mouth... | 4:44 |
| 7 | The Lieutenant put his hands on his knees... | 5:26 |
| 8 | Spade spoke, taking equal pains with his words... | 6:02 |
| 9 | Chapter 3 – Three Women | 6:05 |
| 10 | Effie Perine opened the door and came in. | 4:32 |
| 11 | ‘Look at me, Sam.’ He looked at her and laughed... | 5:14 |
| 12 | Chapter 4 – The Black Bird | 6:12 |
| 13 | She went down on her knees at his knees. | 5:08 |
| 14 | She smiled contritely, returned the hat to the table... | 3:59 |
| 15 | She hung her head and wept. | 4:03 |

Total time on CD 1: 79:09

CD 2

1	The small man flourished a cold cigar-stub at Spade...	4:05
2	Spade inclined his head at his visitor...	4:10
3	Chapter 5 – The Levantine	5:09
4	Besides the wallet and its contents...	4:56
5	Spade shrugged. ‘Where are they?’ he asked.	5:18
6	Chapter 6 – The Undersized Shadow	5:15
7	The eagerness with which Brigid O’Shaughnessy welcomed Spade...	6:16
8	Spade smiled gently into her troubled eyes.	7:26
9	Chapter 7 – G in the Air	6:09
10	Flitcraft had been a good citizen...	6:44
11	She sat in the padded rocker she had occupied before...	7:10
12	Cairo’s eyes jerked into focus on the passageway...	7:06
13	Chapter 8 – Horse Feathers	4:04
14	Tom Polhaus lowered his head...	5:04

Total time on CD 2: 79:01

CD 3

1	Cairo had nothing to say for nearly a minute...	4:32
2	Dundy put his back to Spade and gripped Cairo...	5:03
3	Chapter 9 – Brigid	6:30
4	Post Street was empty when Spade issued into it.	5:37
5	She lifted her cup to her lips again.	4:44
6	Chapter 10 – The Belvedere Divan	5:48
7	The youth who had shadowed Spade...	5:07
8	Spade dropped his cigarette into a tall stone jar...	6:19
9	Effie Perine was saying 'No, not yet' into the telephone...	6:53
10	Chapter 11 – The Fat Man	6:53
11	The mahogany door of suite 12C at the Alexandria Hotel...	5:43
12	Spade blew smoke above the fat man's head...	7:32
13	Spade was immobile in his chair...	5:41
14	Chapter 12 – Merry-Go-Round	2:44

Total time on CD 3: 79:13

CD 4

1	Wise made a weary grimace.	5:25
2	Effie Perine was standing in the centre...	5:15
3	Spade bought a copy of the Call...	5:18
4	Chapter 13 – The Emperor’s Gift	5:45
5	The fat man smiled complacently...	4:39
6	The fat man paused to smile...	6:05
7	The fat man pursed his lips...	5:51
8	Chapter 14 – La Paloma	6:50
9	After a leisurely breakfast at the Palace...	7:04
10	Spade went to the Business Office of the Call...	4:34
11	Chapter 15 – Every Crackpot	5:05
12	Polhaus’s shrewd small brown eyes...	6:16
13	The District Attorney looked down at his desk...	5:21
14	Spade stretched out his hand and dropped the stub...	5:42

Total time on CD 4: 79:18

CD 5

1	Chapter 16 – The Third Murder	7:51
2	Spade went back to his office.	6:14
3	While Effie Perine, her teeth chattering...	4:26
4	Effie Perine made a horrified face and screamed...	4:15
5	Chapter 17 – Saturday Night	6:16
6	When she saw the pin she whimpered...	6:52
7	At a drug-store in Burlingame...	5:30
8	Saying, 'Thanks, that's all,' Spade left the sedan...	6:23
9	Chapter 18 – The Fall-Guy	7:03
10	While Gutman talked Spade had tapped the edges...	7:05
11	A forked vein began to swell in Spade's forehead.	5:25
12	The fat man puckered up his facial bulbs.	5:34
13	Spade looked from one of them to the other.	5:55

Total time on CD 5: 78:57

CD 6

1	Spade turned to the boy...	5:21
2	Chapter 19 – The Russian’s Hand	6:29
3	Gutman leaned forward and wagged a fat finger...	6:34
4	Spade looked at the girl.	5:45
5	Cairo had an arm around the boy’s shoulders...	7:34
6	Brigid O’Shaughnessy, dressed again except for coat and hat...	5:56
7	The boy would not eat.	5:54
8	Spade’s face had become somber.	7:00
9	Chapter 20 – If They Hang You	6:58
10	Spade smiled wolfishly with his lips...	6:01
11	In an instant she was out of his arms...	5:48
12	She put a hand on his hand...	4:36
13	She put her hands up to his cheeks...	5:10

Total time on CD 6: 79:14

Total time on CDs 1–6: 7:54:52

Dashiell Hammett

(1894–1961)

The Maltese Falcon

Dashiell Hammett created a style that has become the template of its genre to an extent hardly matched by any other writer. It is Sam Spade who comes to mind when imagining a private detective, with his dry, darkly witty and unsentimental rejoinders in conversation (such as his response when a beautiful woman offers him her body: 'I'll think it over'); and a world of greedy, unscrupulous crooks, matched by a tenebrous urban atmosphere, is part of the code, too. Hammett did not create all these elements, but he took what could easily have become merely pulp-fiction conventions and made them into novels – and one novel in particular: *The Maltese Falcon*.

Among the reasons why he could give these conventions depth and convincing morality was that he knew what he was

talking about. Hammett had actually worked as a private detective, had seen large-scale corruption at first hand, understood hard drinking, womanising and extra-marital affairs; but he was also faithful and principled. The world he created is believable because it was real.

He was born Samuel Dashiell Hammett in Maryland and grew up in Philadelphia and Baltimore. His formal education finished in his early teens, when he took on the usual roster of short-term jobs to help the family's finances before joining the Pinkerton National Detective Agency. He worked with them until 1922 (with a year off to serve in the First World War), and naturally there were experiences that made their way into his fiction. He seems to have been good at the job, on one occasion being so discreet a tail that

when the man he was following got lost he asked Hammett for directions. It is not clear what his actual case-load involved, and it seems certain that he embellished the details of his career to make for better stories. But they did not need much embellishment.

Pinkerton's was a huge network operating throughout the USA, but it was not merely involved in tracking down errant spouses or taking fugitive criminals to court. Industrialists used the services of Pinkerton's to observe, report on, infiltrate and disrupt the activities of unions, and sometimes to go well beyond that and actively break strikes. And sometimes to go well beyond *that*: Hammett claimed he was personally approached and offered money to kill one of the more influential unionists of the time, Frank Little. Hammett refused, but even without his involvement the suspicion remains that Pinkerton's was behind Little's death. Little was beaten, abducted, dragged behind a car and lynched in August 1917, with no significant attempt made by the police to find the perpetrators. Whatever the extent of Hammett's personal involvement, the

fact that a national organisation could be expected to undertake – and perhaps did undertake – such an action is at the very least an insight into a murky world that was known to Hammett and must have contributed to his growing political radicalism.

He joined the Army in 1917, but caught the Spanish flu and then tuberculosis, several effects of which lasted the rest of his life. One was the ill-health that never really left him; the other was his nurse, Josephine Dolan, whom he married and by whom he had two daughters. The family moved to San Francisco and while employed in writing advertising copy (one of the many jobs he had done before the War) he began to write short fiction for magazines. These stories featured a detective, one based on his mentor at Pinkerton's, James Wright, and became popular. But his personal life was deteriorating. Health authorities told his wife that she and her children should not live in the same house as the tubercular Hammett, so they moved out; and despite regular visits, the marriage failed. Hammett continued to support his

children, and although he sought refuge from the end of the marriage in the bottle, he focussed on writing as well. He had already established something of a name for himself in the pulp magazine world when in 1929 he published his first novel, *Red Harvest*, followed six months later by *The Dain Curse*. Less than a year after that came *The Maltese Falcon*.

What sets Hammett's work apart is not merely the darkly realistic underworld he presents, but the complex moral standing of the hero. His detectives work in a believably violent and self-serving world. The criminals mean what they say, for all their exotic appearance. Trust is a commodity no-one can trade in. Meanwhile, Spade is no-one's knight on a white charger (affairs, casual sex, drink, physical brutality), yet he is the moral centre of the story, whose opaque code of honour manages to be part cynicism, part ideology – and entirely convincing. This is not a literary post-hoc rationalisation. Hammett takes the time to insert discussions and conversations that examine Sam Spade's underlying philosophy. These are never

straightforward, either; and even when Spade is explicit, the conventions of the world in which he is operating mean we have to treat what he says with an element of suspicion. The omniscient narrator never tells us anything about the interior lives of the protagonists: it's all in the dialogue, and this is another factor of Hammett's books that makes them punchier and more satisfying.

But there weren't to be many more of them. Despite success, more short stories, film offers and associated piece-work, two more novels, some radio work and a comic book, Hammett's literary life was essentially over by 1934. He had by this time met Lillian Hellman, the left-leaning writer and critic. They were both already married when they met and, although both subsequently divorced, they never married each other; but they were together for the rest of Hammett's life. By the outbreak of the Second World War Hammett was as involved in leftwing causes as his de facto wife, but he decided to join up again (despite his appalling health record and the fact that he was 48) and spent three years living and editing

newspapers for the troops on the remote and freezing Aleutian Islands.

In post-War America he was openly sympathetic to Communist causes and dedicated much time and effort to them, becoming a prominent member of the Civil Rights Congress, a group that was placed on the official list of subversive organisations. But when he was called to give evidence either about the Congress, or the works and beliefs of friends or colleagues, he simply refused. He eventually served five months in jail and was blacklisted as a result. This intriguing dichotomy – a man who had served in two world wars, yet was a target for official sanctions – meant that when he died in 1961, J. Edgar Hoover, the then FBI director, objected to a Commie such as Hammett having a place in the National Cemetery in Arlington. Hoover lost the argument. But as Hammett would have understood only too well, choosing your heroes is never straightforward.

Notes by Roy McMillan



Eric Meyers is a well-known character actor and voice artist. Originally from New York he now lives in London. His film credits include *Entrapment*, *Snatch* and *1408*. He has created many voices for animation including 'Henry the Lizard' on the hit television series *Amazing Animals*. He is often heard narrating documentary films on The Discovery Channel and National Geographic.

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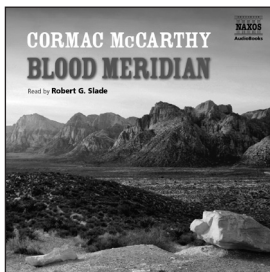
Produced by Roy McMillan
Recorded at Motivation Sound Studios, London
Edited by Chris Goldsmith

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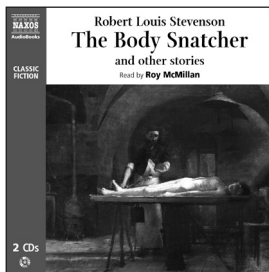
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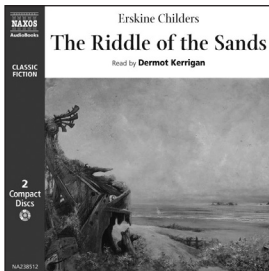
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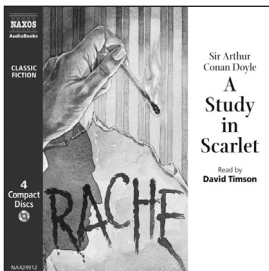


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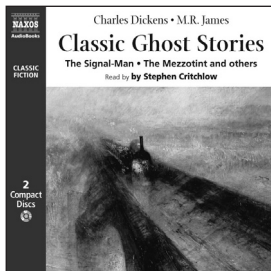
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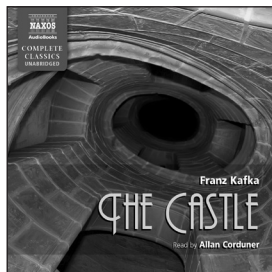
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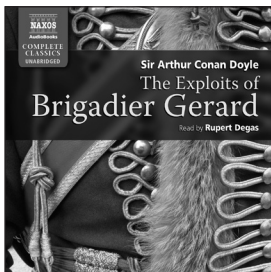
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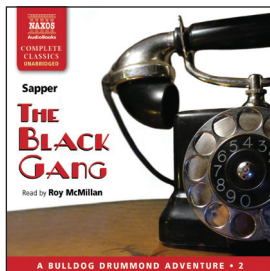
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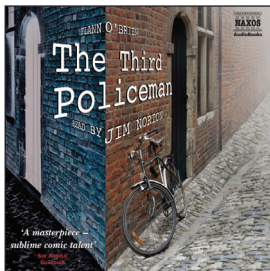
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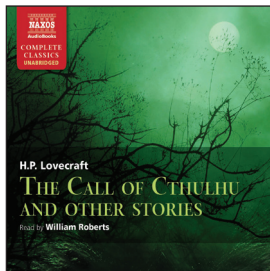
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Dashiell Hammett

The Maltese Falcon

Read by **Eric Meyers**

A beautiful woman asks private eye Sam Spade for his help. Spade doesn't believe her story, and when his partner gets murdered it soon becomes clear that he's right. As he digs deeper, he realises everyone is chasing the enigmatic falcon and is willing to kill for it. He also realises there is no-one he can trust – not the unctuous Fat Man, not the shrill Joel Cairo, not the suspicious police, and especially not the bewitching Brigid O'Shaughnessy.

The Maltese Falcon – dry, uncluttered, witty and darkly unsentimental – is the finest book of its kind ever written.



Eric Meyers is a well-known character actor and voice artist. His film credits include *Entrapment*, *Snatch* and *1408*. He is often heard narrating documentary films on The Discovery Channel and National Geographic.

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