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Horror and Mystery Photoplay Editions and Magazine Fictionizations: The Catalog of a Collection

Thomas Mann

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Thomas Mann : Horror and Mystery Photoplay Editions and Magazine Fictionizations: The Catalog of a Collection before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Horror and Mystery Photoplay Editions and Magazine Fictionizations: The Catalog of a Collection:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An invaluable contribution to understanding movie tie-in publications By Brian Taves Books published to tie-in with movie releases are a staple of the most sprawling Borders to

the airport bookstall. This is no new phenomenon; similar publications were already flourishing by 1914 at the beginning of feature-length and serial productions. Whether reissues of existing novels brought to the screen, or original stories based on a movie, both publishers and the film industry mutually benefitted from capitalizing on each other's product. The plentiful supply of such books over so many decades attests to their rapport with the audiences of both readers and filmgoers. Despite their endurance, there is little scholarship on movie tie-in books and magazines. In *Horror and Mystery Photoplay Editions and Magazine Fictionizations*, Thomas Mann provides a major contribution of lasting significance. His investigative skills illuminate the publication, exploitation, and distribution of these tie-ins, even to how they were purchased, read, and sometimes saved by readers. Mann examines not only book tie-ins, especially the venerable "photoplay editions" of the late 1910s through the 1930s, but also various short story "fictionizations" of the movies, written in popular film magazines at the time of the films' release. These journals were never indexed in their own time, and almost never saved by institutions, who regarded them as ephemeral by comparison with the industry trade journals. Hence the value in Mann's pioneering effort in exploring this untapped resource. These story magazines, though more apt today to be privately collected than found in library collections, are deeply reflective of film culture. In examining these published versions, Mann offers a fruitful comparison of the surprising fact that often the same movie, such as *THE MUMMY* (1932), would be retold in a number of different magazines. Moreover, their staff writers came up with strikingly dissimilar narratives, sometimes diverging far from the original screen source. Mann's choice of numerous illustrations from these magazines and photoplay editions help the modern reader to better understand these publishing phenomenon, and how they could lure audiences to the movie theater. Included as an appendix is a reprint of a complete magazine fictionization of the lost 1927 film *THE GORILLA*. Not only in his examination of different types of publications has Mann provided a unique contribution, but his focus on specific related genres, mystery and horror, enriches the grounding and insight. The benefits are clear when comparing this volume with other checklists that have appeared, all now outdated save for Arnie Davis's encyclopedic and highly recommended *Photoplay Editions and Other Movie Tie-in Books*. However, Mann's genre emphasis and his inclusion of magazine stories as well as book tie-ins makes his volume an essential companion piece to Davis's book, for both the collector and bibliographer. Further, Mann's volume is also an essential standalone for the scholar investigating aspects of media reception. For libraries, both public and academic, boasting any significant collection of books on film, Mann's book is indispensable. Following the 67 page introduction, the catalog of the author's collection spans 100 pages, with over 500 annotated bibliographical listings of photoplay books and magazine fictionizations from the 1910s through 1970. Whatever one's interest within the horror and mystery genres, whether Sherlock Holmes tales, H.G. Wells adaptations, or Lon Chaney films, entries can all be readily located through the comprehensive index. Thomas Mann (PhD, Loyola University of Chicago) is author of such other publications as *The Oxford Guide to Library Research*, now in its 3rd edition.² of 2 people found the following review helpful. much more than a catalog

By A Customer

Though the main purpose of the book is to list and describe the author's large collection of photoplay books and magazine fictionalizations from the beginning of the movie industry to 1970, there is also a substantial and entertaining introduction that explains what a photoplay edition is - a novel illustrated with stills from a movie version, either a work the movie was based on or a novelization of a story first on film - as well as reasons to care about them, some of which were a surprise to me. One, they're a useful record of films because in some cases they are the only record of films that are otherwise lost. They become an important record of vanished culture. Two, they're an invaluable primary source for getting a sense of attitudes, anxieties, interests, language, and in general the historical milieu in which they were produced. Mann offers samples of texts that give the reader (particularly the non-collector) a nice sense of what these publications are like and provides several versions of the opening of different books based on *The Mummy* to show how differently they sometimes treated the same material. And he even describes and analyzes some of the markings people made in the books - the author's training as a private investigator and document examiner coming into play. As a bonus in an appendix, there's a novelization of a very silly 1927 movie, "The Gorilla" that is now lost except for this textual version and a few stills. All in all, this book offers a lovely sense of these popular culture artifacts being lovingly preserved by someone who knows how to read them contextually and enjoys the heck out of them. For someone who is a collector, this is a treasure. For someone who never really thought about photoplay editions, this is a real eye-opener. And how can you resist that cover?

Photoplay editions were usually hardcover reprints of novels that had been made into movies, illustrated with photographs from the film productions. Sometimes, instead, they were fictionized versions of film scripts, rewritten in narrative form. Here is an annotated checklist of more than 500 horror and mystery photoplay novels and magazine fictionizations, collected over a period of four decades. Photo-illustrated stories that are not strictly in the horror or mystery genres are included if they are linked to films with such stars as Lon Chaney, Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, or other genre figures. Mysteries are generally defined as novels or stories featuring a detective as the central character, although in some cases melodramas, thrillers, and film noir books having crime as a plot element are included. Science fiction and fantasy works, and others having outr aspects, are also within scope. With a few exceptions, the cut-off date for inclusion in the catalog is the year 1970. In an entertaining introductory essay the author reflects on the

attractions of assembling such a collection, analyzes aspects of the social significance and aesthetic content of its books, and draws many surprising inferences from their advertisements, illustrations, and marks of previous ownership. The subsequent catalog is the first survey in the field to extend bibliographical coverage beyond books to movie tie-in magazine stories. Included in an appendix is the complete text of *The Gorilla*, a short story version of a lost First National Film, reprinted from a rare issue of *Moving Picture Stories* from 1927.

"striking...pure vintage horror...an invaluable book for collectors or the film student...very well done...an excellent resource"--*Classic Images*; "appealing"--*Communication Booknotes Quarterly*. About the Author Thomas Mann, a former private investigator, is a reference librarian at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.