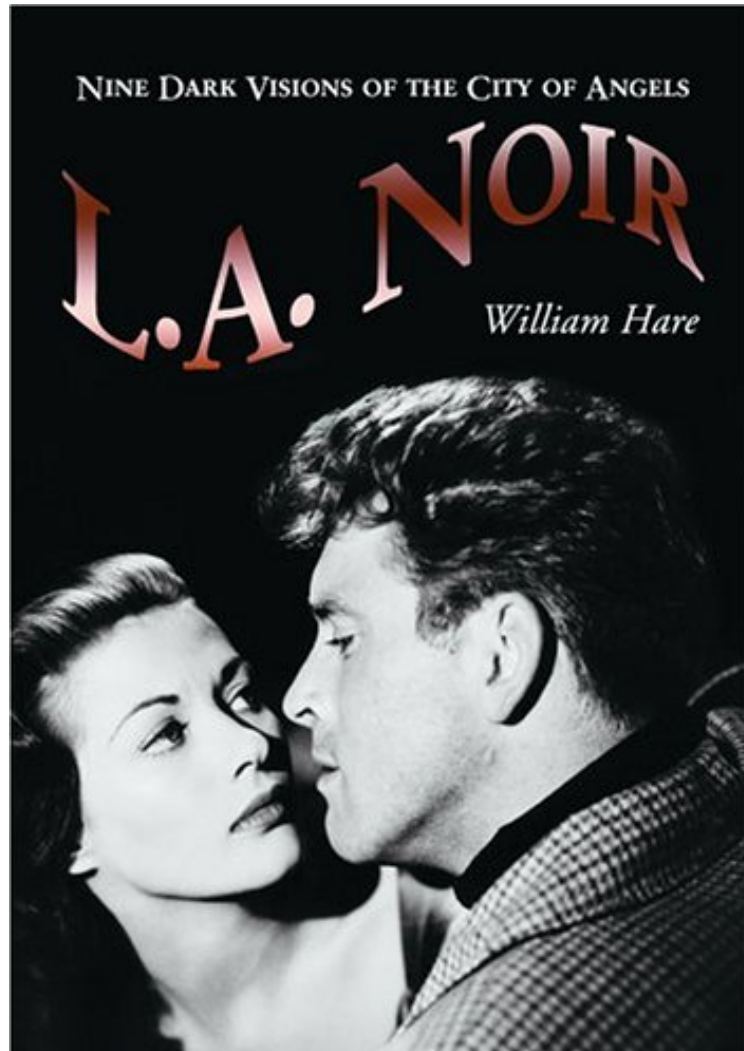


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L.A. Noir: Nine Dark Visions of the City of Angels

William Hare

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William Hare : L.A. Noir: Nine Dark Visions of the City of Angels before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised L.A. Noir: Nine Dark Visions of the City of Angels:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Exploration of 9 Classic and Neo-Noir Films and Their Creators.By mirasreviews"L.A. Noir" discusses 9 film noirs that take place in the city of Los Angeles and the people who created them. Each of the nine chapters is devoted to a different L.A. film, seven classic film noirs and two neo-noirs. The chapters variably include detailed analysis of the film, comparisons and discussion of related films, and accounts of the careers of actors or directors involved. All analysis focuses on story and characters, never style or technique. There are spoilers, so you may want to make sure you've seen the films first. I can't say that there is anything new or

revelatory in "L.A. Noir", but if you are interested in these particular films and your reading about film noir has not yet reached the saturation point, you might enjoy William Hare's tour of these "Nine Dark Visions of the City of Angels". This is what's included: The first chapter is dedicated to the people behind "The Big Sleep" (1946): Howard Hawks, Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, and Raymond Chandler, with some information about their work on the film. I have to fault this chapter, because "The Big Sleep" was completed in 1945, tested on audiences, had extensive reshoots, and a major reedit undertaken to change the narrative emphasis before its eventual release in 1946. The film we see today is very different than its first incarnation, but Hare mentions none of that. The second chapter is a tour of noir films starring Burt Lancaster, with a focus on "Criss Cross" (1948), a comparison to "The Killers" (1946), and some discussion of "The Sweet Smell of Success" (1957) and "Atlantic City" (1980). Chapter Three focuses on "D.O.A." (1950), with detailed analysis of this great film. The fourth chapter explores the noir career of director Nicholas Ray, with analysis of "In a Lonely Place" (1950) and "They Live By Night" (1948), as well as some discussion of Humphrey Bogart's real persona as compared to that of Dixon Steele of "In a Lonely Place", the character some say resembled Bogart the most of all his roles. Chapter Five is about the noir films of director Fritz Lang, including detailed analysis of "The Blue Gardenia" (1953) and "While the City Sleeps" (1956), along with some exposition of "The Woman in the Window" (1944) and "Scarlet Street" (1945). The sixth chapter analyzes "Kiss Me Deadly" (1955) with discussion of director Robert Aldrich and actors Ralph Meeker and Albert Dekker. Chapter Seven discusses "The Killing" (1956), director Stanley Kubrick, actors Sterling Hayden and Marie Windsor, and compares "The Killing" to the other classic noir heist film, "The Asphalt Jungle" (1950). Chapter Eight is all about the brilliant "Chinatown" (1974), with detailed analysis and discussion of the historical basis for the film: L.A.'s Mulholland Aqueduct, built several decades before "Chinatown" takes place. Chapter Nine talks about "L.A. Confidential" (1997) and novelist James Ellroy. There is a brief synopsis of each film in the back of the book.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. "Characters become pawns of fate." By Folantin Delighted by author, William Hare's book, "Early Film Noir", I turned to "LA Noir: Nine Dark Visions of the City of Angels." The book covers the films: "The Big Sleep" "Criss Cross" "D.O.A." "In a Lonely Place" "The Blue Gardenia" "Kiss Me Deadly" "The Killing" "Chinatown" and "L.A. Confidential." Each one of these noir films is centered in the city of Los Angeles, and the author argues that Los Angeles is a "city created by a never-ending migration"--a place that is pivotal to the genre of film noir. Indeed, film noir giant, writer Raymond Chandler "loved the spirited anarchy of the city." The book examines the plots of the nine films and the relationship between the plots and the all-important setting of Los Angeles. For example, the author argues that "In a Lonely Place" "reveals the pervasive uncertainties of the Hollywood film industry." In "The Blue Gardenia" an innocent girl (Anne Baxter) recently relocated from Bakersfield to Los Angeles, is pegged as a soft touch by practiced playboy Harry Prebble (Raymond Burr). "LA Noir" is comprised of nine chapters--one covering each film. Each chapter is loaded with details--including plot synopsis, the careers of various cast members, and problems both on and off the set. For example, the chapter "Lancaster Noir" covers the film "Criss Cross" and includes details of how Burt Lancaster was spotted by a talent scout, other noir films in Lancaster's career, and the comparison of the femme fatales from "Criss Cross" (Yvonne de Carlo), "The Killers" (Ava Gardner), and "Out of the Past" (Jane Greer). The chapter covering "In a Lonely Place" explores the idea of Bogart's tremendous appeal, and author Hare argues that Bogart "thrived on playing characters from stories containing brooding darkness and moral ambiguity." The author also analyzes Gloria Grahame's stage presence. As Grahame is a great favourite of mine, I was particularly delighted to read details of her much underappreciated contribution to film noir. A large portion of the chapter is given to details of director, Nicholas Ray. "LA Noir" is not for those merely casually interested in film noir or for those desiring an overview of the genre. This book is for the true aficionado who already has grounding in the subject and yearns for an integrative approach, or for fans of any of the nine films. For those addicted to film noir, "LA Noir" offers a remarkable feast of details, and it's clear the book is written by someone passionate about the genre. This is a book I shall return to many times--displaced human

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommended. By Chris Flick Essential reading for noir aficionados, five stars. The films discussed here are not obscure but the writing is as engaging as the films themselves. If you are familiar with these titles you will see them in a fresh light and be combing through your dvd source to watch them again. There are plot spoilers within the chapters, so bear that in mind. Highly recommended.

Los Angeles is an ideal city for film noir for both economic and aesthetic reasons. The largest metropolitan area in the country, home to an ever-changing population of the disillusioned and in close proximity to city, mountains, ocean, and desert, the City of Angels became a center of American film noir. This work discusses nine films, each analyzed in detail, with explanations of why certain settings are appropriate for film noir, why L.A. has been a favorite of authors such as Raymond Chandler, and relevant political developments in the area. The films are also examined in terms of story content as well as how they developed in the project stage. Utilizing a number of quotes from interviews, the work examines actors, directors, and others involved with the films, touching on their careers and details of their time in L.A. The major films covered are The Big Sleep, Criss Cross, D.O.A., In A Lonely Place, The Blue Gardenia, Kiss Me Deadly, The Killing, Chinatown, and L.A. Confidential.

"Entertaining." --Choice"Offers a detailed analysis." --CRL News"Los Angeles is an ideal city for film noir...this detailed discussion of nine films explores such topics as why certain settings are appropriate for film noir, why L.A. has been a favorite of authors such as Raymond Chandler, and relevant political developments in the area...the work examines actors, directors, and others involved with the films, touching on their careers and details of their time in L.A...great cover shot of Yvonne DeCarlo and Burt Lancaster" --Classic ImagesAbout the AuthorMovie historian and writer William Hare is a contributor to Films of the Golden Age. He is also the author of Early Film Noir: Greed, Lust and Murder Hollywood Style (2003). He lives in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.