

COLLECTABLES

It is approaching 50 years since the death of one of the most famous crime thriller writers of the twentieth century – the American Raymond Chandler, who created the detective Philip Marlowe.

Marlowe was the hero of a series of crime thrillers published between 1939 and 1959, and who was also

He worked as a newspaper reporter but eventually took a management job in the oil industry.

Short of money during the American depression, he returned to writing crime stories for pulp magazines and his first novel in 1939, when he was over 50, marked the start of a great literary career.

It was called *The Big Sleep*, and

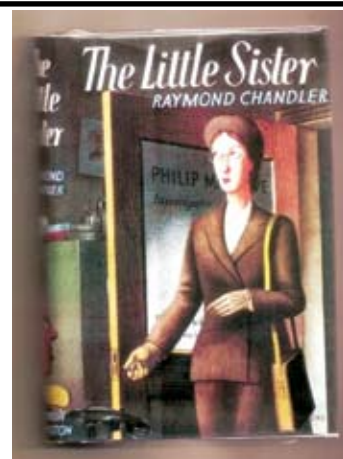
The Big Sleep by the American Publisher Knopf will fetch around £7000, and by the London publisher Hamilton about £1500.

The follow-ups, *Farewell My Lovely*, *The High Window*, *The Lady In The Lake* and *The Little Sister*, published up until 1949, all fetch £1000 to £3000 in first edition form.

His later 1950s novels typically fetch £150-£300 in first edition form.

Chandler was an eccentric character who suffered from depression and alcoholism. His character Philip Marlowe was cynical and hard-bitten, but was essentially a knight in shining armour with a strong moral code.

Chandler's writing technique was to put in plenty of action scenes to avoid the reader getting bored. On one occasion a film director making a version of *The Big Sleep* rang Chandler saying he didn't understand why a particular



A classic from Chandler

character had been killed, or who had killed him.

'How the hell should I know?' retorted Chandler. He had merely put the scene in for more action!

Never a dull moment

Action all the way from crime writer Chandler

featured on the cinema screen – played by Humphrey Bogart, Robert Mitchum and James Garner.

Chandler still retains a huge fan-base almost half a century after his death, and first editions of his books – there were only seven Chandler novels – can fetch substantial sums.

Chandler was born in America, but his family emigrated to England and he was educated in London and became a British citizen in 1907.

as well as being a best-seller it has been made into cinema films and TV shows on several occasions.

Unusually for a pulp fiction writer Chandler won great literary acclaim. The critic Dilys Powell described his writing as 'a peculiar mixture of harshness, sensuality, high polish and back street poetry'.

Today, first editions of his novels are very popular with collectors. A first edition with dust jacket of

SESAW CHRISTMAS FAIR on Sunday 18th November, 10-3pm at The Old School, Long Melford, CO10 9DX. Seasonal gifts and decorations, crafts, jewellery, glass, games and lots more. Big raffle and tombola. Snacks, refreshments, free parking. 50p adult entry. All proceeds to Suffolk & Essex Small Animal Welfare, Reg.Charity No.1124029. Tables available, phone 01206 263269 to book

Solar Society Meetings, your local adult educational learning group in The Memorial Hall, Castle Hedingham. On Monday 1st October the talk will be 'I am Dracula-Welcome to my House' given by Roger Johnson. On Monday 5th November the talk will be 'The History of the Cottage Garden' given by Andrew Sankey. The talks start at 2.30pm and lasts for about 2 hours including a break for refreshments. Refreshments are free. All welcome. No membership fee. Entrance: £4.00. For more details contact Miles Scrivens 01787-469766 or Wanda Sellar 01787- 463459

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