

STARK HOUSE PRESS

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2016

As announced in the last newsletter, “March is Fletcher Flora month.” But it’s also Algernon Blackwood month, and James Hadley Chase month as well. It’s just crazy time here at Stark House, with new books coming out right and left.

We’ll start with Fletcher Flora. Like so many writers during his time, the 1950s and 60s, he wrote a variety of fiction to keep himself publishable. However, Flora was quirkier than most, turning out very personalized crime and social drama tales that were much stronger on character than plot. His first published novel, in fact, was *Strange Sisters* in 1954, the story of a conflicted lesbian who ends up killing a man she goes home with. The character is interesting, but the story itself is pretty damn depressing.

By the mid-1950s, Flora was hitting his stride with a series of murder mysteries, two of which we publish here: *Leave Her to Hell* and *Let Me Kill You, Sweetheart*. The first one concerns a private detective who is hired to find a missing woman, the second concerns a small town killer who is only known as “Curly” but who could be any one of several suspects. The third novel here, *Take Me Home*, returns to the lesbian theme for a story of two mismatched people who, in spite of their differences, find each other.

**Fletcher Flora****Leave Her to Hell / Let Me Kill You Sweetheart / Take Me Home****978-1-933586-95-3 \$21.95**

Bill Pronzini is a big fan of Fletcher Flora and graciously contributed an introduction to the book. As he points out in the very first sentence, “Fletcher Flora was a talented writer whose work received regrettably little attention during his lifetime.” Too literate for the hardboiled market, too satiric perhaps for the tastes of the average paperback reader, he succeeded best at

writing zinger short stories. Which is just to say, Fletcher Flora has a very distinctive voice, and a very interesting and off-beat point of view.

Flora died way too young, in his mid-50s. But we still have his 21 one-of-a-kind novels and all those clever short stories to enjoy today. And we've packaged what we feel are three of his best in one trade paperback for you in March.

Also in March we have a bonus book of two ultra-violent James Hadley Chase gangster novels from the early 1940s — his classic, *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*, the book that put Chase on the literary map; and a second novel featuring detective Dave Fenner, *Twelve Chinamen and a Woman*. Originally published as *Twelve Chinks and a Woman*, then softened up and reprinted as *The Doll's Bad News* in 1970, *Twelve Chinamen* takes the character of Fenner — who enters halfway into *No Orchids* when the police can't find the kidnapped heiress — and gives him his own proper mystery to solve.

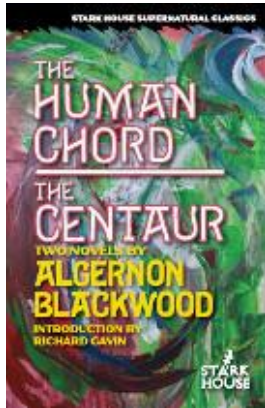
Both books are filled with moments of sadistic violence, and Chase and his publisher were eventually sued over the content of these novels. John Fraser contributes an extensive afterword which discusses all the trials and tribulations of these early Chase thrillers. We decided to track down the original editions for reprint, so all the gory details are intact. This is what vintage gangster fiction is all about.

James Hadley Chase
No Orchids for Miss Blandish / Twelve Chinamen and a Woman
978-1-944520-06-9 \$19.95



And finally, we have a new Algernon Blackwood supernatural two-fer to offer: *The Human Chord* and *The Centaur*, two of his early novels originally published in 1910 and 1911. *The Human Chord* concerns the quest by a small group for the perfect blend of voices to achieve the ultimate in power and become as gods on Earth. *The Centaur* takes this theme of the quest for the absolute to the next level, into the very heart of Nature itself. These are two beatific novels, the latter being Blackwood's own favorite, and comes with a new introduction by Canadian horror author, Richard Gavin.

As Blackwood biographer, Mike Ashley, writes in *Starlight Man*, *The Centaur* "is unlike any other work in the field of supernatural or mystical fiction." We have been reprinting the works of Algernon Blackwood since the beginning of Stark House, and we are particularly proud to present these two novels in a new edition, with original cover art by C. B. Williams.



Algernon Blackwood

The Human Chord / The Centaur

978-1-944520-01-4 \$19.95

And this concludes the new titles for the month of March. In April, we have a new Charlie Stella novel to present, cause for keen anticipation and much celebrating in general. He and Rick Ollerman represent the new crime fiction side of Stark House Press. And yes, there will be another Ollerman thriller later this year. Plus, we just bought a novel from fan-favorite, Doug Allyn, which will make its world premier in early 2017. Exciting times at Stark House, to be sure.

In the meantime, we have these few novels to offer at **\$5 each plus media mail shipping** from our shelf of “slightly damaged returns,” while supplies last:

- 📖 Night of the Horns/Cry Wolfram – Douglas Sanderson
- 📖 Lust Queen/Lust Victim – Don Elliott
- 📖 Snowblind/Games – Bill Pronzini
- 📖 The Name of the Game/One Endless Hour – Dan J. Marlowe
- 📖 Look Behind You, Lady/The Venetian Blonde – A.S. Fleischman
- 📖 The Trees Beneath Us – Darren R. Leo
- 📖 Spouses & Other Crimes – Andrew Coburn
- 📖 Kitten With a Whip/Kiss Her Goodbye—Wade Miller
- 📖 My Lovely Executioner/Agreement to Kill—Peter Rabe

Just let us know what you want via griffinskye3@sbcglobal.net, and you will be billed via paypal and shipped immediately.

Thanks again for your interest in Stark House Press. If you would like to inquire about joining the Stark House Crime Club and receiving these books automatically each month, just write to the above email address. We'd love to hear from you.

Cheers,
Greg Shepard, publisher
Stark House Press

Bring back the mystery!

