

Newsletter, Volume 7, Number 1
January 2018

We hope you all had a delightful holiday season. Seems like it came and went so fast. It's challenging to keep up with the swift passage of time. We were only just starting out on 2017, and here it is 2018 already. It'll be Christmas again before you know it.

But before we get too far ahead of ourselves, let's return to January 2018, and our lead title, *The Body Looks Familiar / The Late Mrs. Five* by Richard Wormser. Here we have two very clever mysteries by a writer who is almost forgotten outside of the realms of paperback collectors. Wormser began his career writing "Nick Carter" thrillers for Street & Smith— 17 of them, in fact. He published the first novel under his own name in 1934 with the intriguing title of *The Man With the Wax Face*. Soon after that, Hollywood came calling, and he turned to writing screenplays, script novelizations and TV adaptations.

In the late 1950s, Wormser returned to novel writing again, and it is from this period that we pulled our two novels. *The Body Looks Familiar* was originally published in an abridged version in *Cosmopolitan* as "The Frame," before Dell published it in 1958, and it is as clever a mystery as they come. It starts with a murder— the shooting of a beautiful woman— but you know exactly who did it because the man doing the killing is the assistant DA, trying to set up a frame for his hated rival, the chief of police.

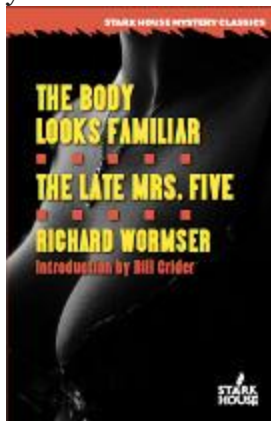
This all happens within the first few pages. He kills the man's mistress with the chief's own gun, and leaves him to deal with the consequences. But the chief isn't going down without a fight. The story quickly becomes a battle of wits between the two, with the reader kept guessing how this cat-and-mouse will play out.

In his introduction to the book, Bill Crider states that "Wormser was nothing if not versatile," and the second book is indeed completely different. *The Late Mrs. Five* is a twisty/turny story of a farm equipment salesman accused of murdering his ex-wife in a small town where he knows no one and has almost no where to turn. This is the book

that asks the interesting question, how do you prove your innocence when you were the last person seen leaving the house of the murder victim, and no one in town knows you except as the ex-husband of the deceased? Who do you trust, and why should anyway trust you?

The Late Mrs. Five is filled with interesting characters and intelligent dialog set against a background of small town politics. Someone needs to film this one. It's that good.

Wormser went on to write *The Invader*, which won the Edgar Award in 1972, plus a spate of westerns, for which he won two Spur Awards in his lifetime. Each book is characterized by clever plot twists that still make his books stand out after all these years.



Richard Wormser

The Body Looks Familiar / The Late Mrs. Five

978-1-944520-42-7 \$19.95

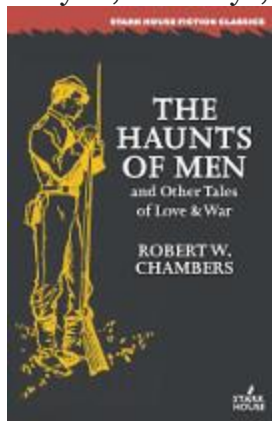
This book will be automatically shipped to Stark House Crime Club members. The next book will not— unless you ask for it. We have one more Robert W. Chambers collection to offer: *The Haunts of Men and Other Tales of Love & War*. This time we've shifted the emphasis from the author's weird fiction to his more mainstream writing. *The Haunts of Men* is a collection of stories originally published in 1898 that were set against the backdrop of the Revolutionary War as well as the Latin Quarter of Paris, where Chambers studied art in his early 20s. You might say that this is his last great short story collection since most of his future collections were comprised of inter-connected stories patched together to form episodic novels.

But *Haunts* is a true collection, each story standing on its own. A woman watches a regiment of soldiers trample her garden as war comes to her front door in "The God of Battles." Three soldiers trade shots across the river and discover a common bond in "Pickets." A Union officer finds unexpected aid and unintentional betrayal in "Smith's

Battery.” A forgotten lover in disguise is a witness to tragedy in “Collector of the Port.” A timid art student has his horizons broadened when he seeks a bit of experience in the Latin Quarter in “Another Good Man.” *The Haunts of Men* offers you tales of love and loss, of sacrifice and madness; comic tales of the Bohemian art world and grim stories of life during wartime.

In addition to these stories, we have also included the three stories from each volume of *The King in Yellow* and *The Maker of Moons* that were removed due to their non-weird nature. We have also added a bonus, a small section from *Barbarians*, set during World War I, that stands nicely on its own, to finish the collection.

And if this sounds like your kind of book, let us know and we will send you a copy and bill you, as always, via [Paypal](#).



Robert W. Chambers

The Haunts of Men & Other Tales of Love and War

978-1-944520-59-5 \$17.95

Robert W. Chambers was known primarily for one book, *The King in Yellow*. But he published over 85 novels and story collections in his lifetime, including a book of poetry and some children’s books. These days it’s easy to ignore his greater body of work published from the late 1800s to his last novel in 1938, and concentrate on the on the weird fiction that still captivates readers today. But Chambers was one hell of a story teller. If you want to read a good rousing pirate story, check out *The Happy Parrot* or *The Man They Hanged*. If your tastes run toward a good old fashioned treasure-hunting thriller, get yourself a copy of *The Mystery Lady* or *The Flaming Jewels*. Chambers books are still fun to read today. Like so many authors we publish, he is ripe for rediscovery.

We always enjoy sharing critical quotes with you, and we’ve got a couple here that we pulled from recent reviews of our December book, *The Perfect Victim / Winner Take*

All by James McKimmey...

“These slim stories are packed to the gills with thrills and suspense. This is how sleek crime fiction is written.”—Kristofer Upjohn, *Noir Journal*

“Reading like Jim Thompson filtered through the lens of James M. Cain, David Goodis, and John D. MacDonald, McKimmey deserves to be rediscovered and have a much higher profile with fans of compulsively readable tight, nasty, and twisted noirs.”—Paul Bishop, *Bibliorati*

If you aren't a member of the Crime Club and missed this one, contact your local bookstore or check out Amazon.com—or order it direct from us at www.starkhousepress.com.

And that brings us to the end of the January Stark House Crime Club Newsletter. But what newsletter would be complete without a few Sale Books. As always, these are copies which have been returned to us in slightly less than perfect condition. We don't charge full price for books with dented corners and creased edges. They may be unread and in near mint condition, but they're not perfect. So, we offer these copies to you....

Dogtown/Soultown by Mercedes Lambert -- \$3

She Got What She Wanted by Orrie Hitt -- \$3

Gang Girl/Sex Bum by Don Elliott/Robert Silverberg -- \$4

A Trio of Gold Medals by Dan Marlowe. Fletcher Flora & Charles Runyon -- \$5

Liz/Syndicate Girl by Frank Kane -- \$6

Shanghai Flame/Counterspy Express by A. S. Fleischman -- \$6

Cornered/The Long Ride by James McKimmey -- \$6

He Won't Need it Now/The Dead Stay Dumb by James Hadley Chase -- \$6

The Red Hot Typewriter: John D. MacDonald by Hugh Merrill -- \$6

The Bleeding Scissors/The Evil Days by Bruno Fischer - \$6

The Jukebox Kings by Doug Allyn -- \$6

Cry Blood/Killer in Silk by H. Vernor Dixon -- \$6

Nothing in Her Way/River Girl by Charles Williams -- \$7

The Erotics/Gun the Dame Down/Angry Arnold by Gil Brewer -- \$7

Girl in a Big Brass Bed/Spy Who Was 3 Feet Tall/Code Name Gadget by Peter Rabe -- \$7

Trouble Rides Tall/Cross the Red Creek/Desert Stake-Out by Harry Whittington - \$7

Little Men, Big World/Vanity Row by W. R. Burnett -- \$7
Sleep With the Devil/Wake Up to Murder/Joy House by Day Keene -- \$7
The Empty House/The Listener by Algernon Blackwood -- \$7
Ten Minute Stories/Day & Night Stories by Algernon Blackwood -- \$7

Most of these books are available in only one copy each, so if you're interested, get your order in soon to griffinskye3@sbcglobal.net, and you will be charged for the books plus media mail postage via **Paypal**.

Until next month...

Cheers,
Greg Shepard, publisher
Stark House Press



Bring back the mystery!