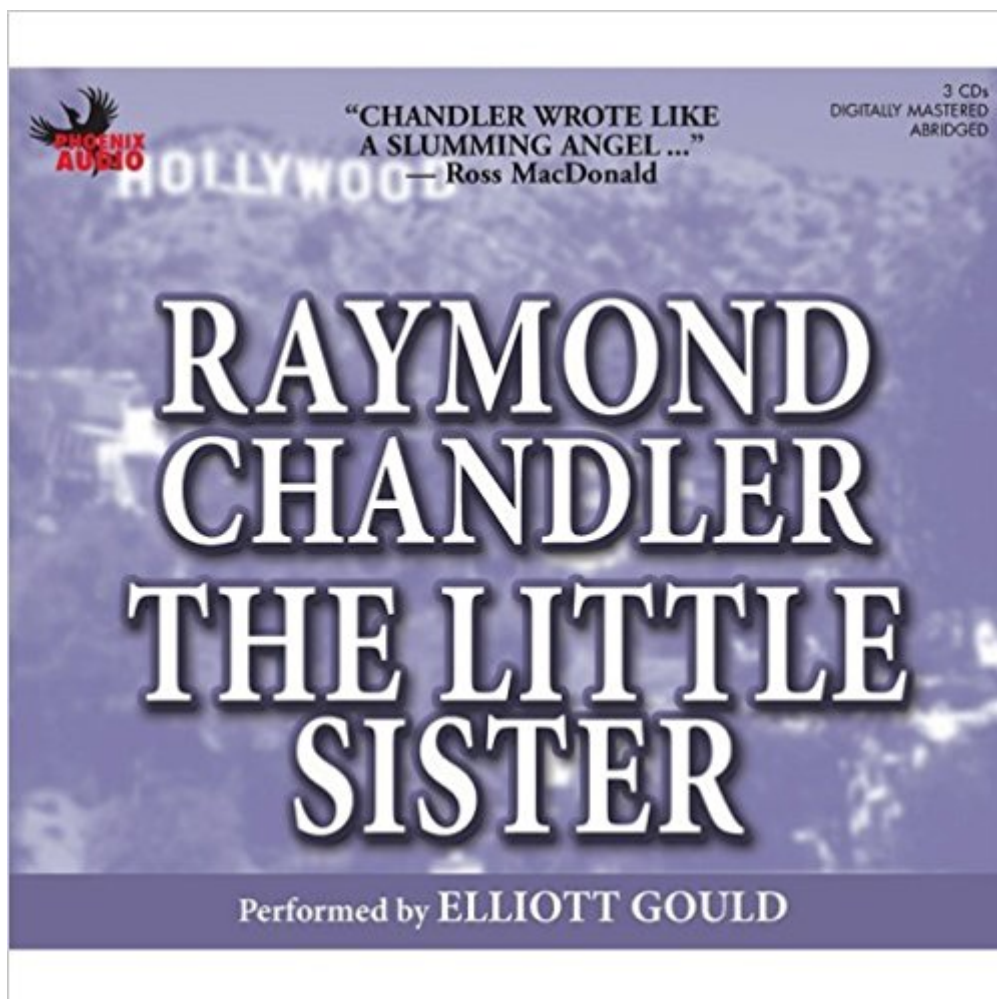


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# The Little Sister



## Synopsis

Her name is Orfamay Quest and she's come all the way from Manhattan, Kansas, to find her missing brother Orrin. Or least ways that's what she tells PI Philip Marlowe, offering him a measly twenty bucks for the privilege. But Marlowe's feeling charitable though it's not long before he wishes he wasn't so sweet. You see, Orrin's trail leads Marlowe to luscious movie starlets, uppity gangsters, suspicious cops and corpses with ice picks jammed in their necks. When trouble comes calling, sometimes it's best to pretend to be out.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Remember those great film adaptations of Raymond Chandler's work? Who could forget Humphrey Bogart as Philip Marlowe in *The Big Sleep* or Dick Powell playing the same character in *Farewell, My Lovely*? In Raymond Chandler's *Philip Marlowe: The Little Sister*, illustrator Michael Lark has given us a brand-new incarnation of Chandler's famous fictional detective, a "comic book" version of Chandler's 1949 mystery. When Orfamay Quest hires Marlowe to find her missing brother, the case at first seems pretty straightforward, but--beset by mobsters, blackmailers, and murder--Marlowe soon discovers that a missing person is the least of his troubles. *The Little Sister* was not one of Raymond Chandler's best efforts, but Michael Lark has effectively tailored the text to clarify the original story, emphasizing through his "comic noir" artwork the dark, dangerous environs, both physical and psychological, in which Philip Marlowe still moves. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A great deal of Chandler's work has been transposed to films, and now we're seeing the first graphic novel adaptation of his 1949 mystery novel, *The Little Sister*. Illustrator/adaptor Lark, who has authored various comic-book series, has done a credible job translating Chandler's story from one medium to another. Large chunks of Chandler's original text complement the pleasant and eerie illustrations, which succeed in giving the book a 1930s cinematic look. It's questionable whether the graphic-novel version has the impact of Chandler's original, and it's not clear whether graphic-novel readers enjoy the mystery genre. Still, this book is a good companion to the adaptation, Paul Auster's *City of Glass* (Avon, 1994) and will be useful where similar books are popular. For public libraries.

Stephen Weiner, Maynard P.L., Mass. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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Chandler never wrote frothy stuff, but this one is grim. "You're not human tonight, Marlowe" our hero tells himself as he deals with an unpleasant client, an unappealing victim, and (God help him) the Bay City Police Department. Chandler fans will remember the BCPD from *FAREWELL, MY LOVELY*. At the end of that book, Bay City is purged. A new mayor and police chief are installed and honest cops are rehired. It didn't last, of course. The culture of corruption runs deep in places like Bay City and it takes more than cosmetic changes to make a difference. Phillip Marlowe is the natural heir to the crown of Sherlock Holmes. Like Holmes, he's usually found poking his nose into places without much prospect of being paid. He grouses about being broke, but you wonder how the hell he stays afloat at all. Even the measly twenty bucks that Orfamay Quest is prepared (reluctantly) to hand over for his services doesn't end up in his wallet. How DOES he live? Orfamay is a mousy, dowdy girl from Manhattan, Kansas who's blown into town to try to find her missing brother Orrin. She's prim and stingy and sexless and about as far from being Marlowe's kind of woman as she can get. She doesn't think much of him either, but her brother has dropped out of sight and she wants to find him. After all, a little sister would be worried about her older brother who moved to the big, bad city and then stopped writing, wouldn't she? The whole Quest clan could rightly be called odd. Marlowe tags them as "sanctimonious" and that hits the nail on the head. A meaningless reference to Salt Lake City seems to have been thrown in to hint that they are Mormons. It's unlikely that the British-raised Chandler would have been a fan of the Latter Day Saints. They are a strictly American phenomenon and an acquired taste. There's a doctor with a mysterious past and some strange patients. There are two beautiful actresses. Marlowe likes beautiful dames and they like him, but he isn't sure exactly how they fit in to this crime. In Orfamay, he has a client who seems to be working against him as often as not. Anyone but Marlowe would

throw up his hands and pack it in, but he has to keep going to see what's around the next curve. Poor Marlowe. He's not human tonight. Chandler was a superb writer and Phillip Marlowe is a fascinating character, but steel yourself for some dark stuff before you start this one. Marlowe's California wasn't beach boys and sunshine, but a land of transients who have brought their troubles with them. And not even Marlowe can make things right.

The Little Sister is the fifth entry in Chandler's Philip Marlowe series. This is a good read and recommended for fans of the genre, I will warn you that it is no Farewell, My Lovely or The Big Sleep. There is an overall tone of loneliness in The Little Sister as Marlowe crosses paths with gangsters, blackmailers, hop heads, and starlets all for an eccentric young girl looking for her brother. The dialogue and stream of consciousness style are well done and as usual very witty. Chandler also delivers a scathing critique on the film industry which is not to be missed. Yet, there is something missing when one compares this to his other works. The level of suspense does not seem to be quite there as it was in previous entries. Marlowe seems a bit tired. However, this is worth a read, especially if you have read previous entries. If you enjoy this I would recommend the illustrated edition, and the film adaptation from 1969 (called "Marlowe") starring James Garner.

This was sixty years ago. And already Marlowe is grieving for a Los Angeles only twenty years earlier than that one. The signs of the one to come were all there. But oh, what we would give to have back the L.A. of 1949. The whole United States of 1949. Except of course for some of us. Still, even for those for whom one might say it is better now, it is still really not nearly good enough. This book is a sad book, but a very good one. Marlowe is a beautiful and perfect example of exactly what a good person is in a very confusing and corrupt environment, which makes it a helpful read for anyone running around today. Sort of what Kipling was talking about in his poem "If." And Marlowe does mourn the passing of all that is good about our society and our country. He sees the good parts that are going away and the bad that is yet to come. He is a man in mourning, a man in grief, seemingly much older than the character is supposed to be in years. But in those days people did not expect to be running in marathons in their sixties. Life was seen as short. Something which passes. Youth was seen as something which passes. Very quickly. Middle age was defined differently then. We cannot run and run forever. And there can be no such thing as unlimited growth. Marlowe was a painting of a person living generously. An ideal.

The Little Sister is wonderful. It's o old time California, a great mystery, plenty of grit, and absolute

poetry at the same time. Never pass up a Raymond Chandler!

The writings of Raymond Chandler are among America's true cultural treasures. His well sculpted characters and twisting plots are what we have come to expect from him. However, it is Chandler's superb prose and wit that sets him apart and puts sparks on the page.. The dialog in a Chandler novel or short story is some of the best ever written by an American author. "The Little Sister " is excellent. There is no room for nitpicking here. The man is a master. Paul Sullivan

Great story by one of the master's of the Crime Noir genre. Nice plot twist at the end that you just don't see coming.

They say that Phillip Kerr, author of the Bernie Gunther series, got his inspiration from Chandler. He did, plus. Why plus? The ice pick! You'll have to read them both to find out what I mean. I started reading Chandler out of curiosity because of the comparisons reviewers of Kerr's books have made to Chandler's; simply put Chandler's books are wonderful, easy reading, very humorous at times and very suspenseful, as are Kerr's (with the possible exception of mass murder)! And Marlowe will always be Humphrey Bogart, a role he did in fact play in the original, 1946, The Big Sleep! And in fact, Bogey played very much the same character, but as Sam Spade, in Dashiell Hammett's The Maltese Falcon!

Raymond Chandler is one of the greats and although it's dated, still fun to read. I highly recommend

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