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Dashiell Hammett was a crime writer who elevated the genre to true literature, and *The Thin Man* was Hammett's last--and most successful--novel. Following the enormous success of "The Thin Man" movie in 1934, Hammett was commissioned to write stories for additional films. He wrote two full-length novellas, for the films that became "After the Thin Man" and "Another Thin Man". Bringing back his classic characters, retired private investigator Nick Charles and his former debutante wife Nora, who return home to find Nora's family gardener murdered, pulling the couple back into another deadly game of cat and mouse. Hammett has written two fully satisfying "Thin Man" stories, with classic, barbed Hammett dialogue and fully developed characters.

Neither of these stories has been previously published (except for a partial in a small magazine 25 years ago). *The Return of the Thin Man* is a hugely entertaining read that brings back two classic characters from one of the greatest of mystery writers who ever lived. This book is destined to become essential reading for Hammett's millions of fans and a new generation of mystery readers the world over.

## **Return of the Thin Man Details**

Date : Published October 8th 2013 by Mysterious Press (first published October 31st 2012)

ISBN : 9780802121561

Author : Dashiell Hammett , Richard Layman (Editor)

Format : Paperback 256 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Crime, Classics, Noir, Detective, Short Stories, Anthologies, Audiobook, Literature, American

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# From Reader Review Return of the Thin Man for online ebook

## **Maria says**

Freeing

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## **Pete says**

It's usually no fun to read something when the author didn't want to write it, as that tends to come across (see: Mostly Harmless). Return of the Thin Man begins with the backstory of these two script treatments, and how Dashiell Hammett came to write them, then leave the franchise behind after Another Thin Man, apparently sick of Nick and Nora.

The consequence is that the first half, After the Thin Man, is enjoyable, and displays the wit the films are known for, and the second half, Another Thin Man, is a bit of a slog, too hard-boiled for its own good.

This audio version is done as a multi-voice recording, which mostly works, though Nick's voice takes some getting used to. (There are some problem areas. One of the characters is Chinese, and his pidgin English is presented in all its lack of glory. Another is a whiny old man, who is grating--by design, certainly, but still grating.)

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## **Franky says**

Unfortunately, Hammett's lost treasures didn't turn out as good as expected. The two "never published" installments of The Thin Man series—After the Thin Man and Another Thin Man—are billed as "novellas" in the blurb on the cover, yet in truth are screen play adaptations.

The unfortunate aspect is that much of the power of The Thin Man—the mystery, the humor, the suspense—is really stripped away in this format. Gone is the feel of a true noir one might get while reading. The wit and charm between Nora and Charles doesn't ring forth and the character interaction seems a little forced and flat (in contrast to the film version of After the Thin Man, for example).

A typical example of this format:

Nick, to Selma: "Where's Robert?"

Selma is about to speak, but, Aunt Katherine hastily intervenes.

Aunt Katherine: "Robert telephoned that he was unavoidably detained. So we'll start without him."

Perhaps one plus of the book is simply the introduction, which sheds some light on how Hollywood produced the film versions, and gives some insight into Hammett's close work with the studios. Fascinating to see how Hammett's vision came to life on the big screen.

Over all, though, the book feels like false advertisement and is disappointing.

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## Jan C says

I listened to this one. The back story for The Thin Man sequels is narrated. But After the Thin Man and Another Thin Man are read as screenplays with different readers doing Nick and Nora. Not sure if there were other cast members, too, or not. But you do get to see how much was changed after Dashiell Hammett's story. There was also another story, Return of the Thin Man which brought back a number of characters from The Thin Man but had them all moved out to San Francisco.

This is really for Hammett/Thin Man aficionados. I found it enjoyable but I regularly watch the movies, either on dvd or on Turner Classic Movies.

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## Aditya says

*Return of the Thin Man* comprises of two sorta screenplays (proffered as novellas) and one plot outline written as sequels for the original The Thin Man movie. The stories are entertaining mysteries that might be called reductive by its critics but never fall as low as to become parodies. They embody the golden rule of diminishing return of movie sequels. The style is reminiscent of the cash cow that generated the sequels but everything the scripts do, The Thin Man did it first and better. I did not mind it; many crime series follow the same formula throughout their life span, so it seems churlish to call out movie sequels on repetition which were marketed as more of the same.

Hammett has never been big on characterization, his selling point being bullet speed banter and puzzling plots. Hence the screenplay format does not bother him as much as it would other more descriptive authors. There are forewords and afterwords providing a lot of backstory on what went on behind making the movies. It might be insightful to the interested but the average reader would give it nothing but a quick once-over. Hammett had to include some of the credited scriptwriter's ideas and they are the most forced parts in the book. But when he is left to do his own thing, the dialogue displays the chutzpah that is Hammett's calling card.

The Thin Man is my favorite Hammett book, if it the same with you, dive in without a second thought. These might not be original but they retain the spirit of outlandish fun that makes the original so beloved. Rating - 4/5

PS. It stands so heavily on its predecessor's shoulders that instead of writing a bigger review a link to my The Thin Man review seems more practical - <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

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## Grady Ormsby says

I enjoy old movies from Turner Classic Movies, especially film noir, crime and suspense. Some of my favorite films are the comedy/mystery movies from **The Thin Man** series with William Powell and Myrna Loy as Nick and Nora Charles. The movies are based on Dashiell Hammett's novel **The Thin Man** written in 1934. I just finished a volume entitled **Return of the Thin Man**. It is actually two novellas written as screen stories: **After the Thin Man** and **Another Thin Man**. They are written from an interesting point of

view: third person, present tense. The action is described as if it is happening as you are reading. It's like having a movie described to you as it is being watched by someone else. The dialogue is presented in the classic play style with the speaker's name in all caps and a colon, followed by the speech. The action is exciting and suspenseful. The plots are sometimes a bit torturous and not always clear. The dialog is snappy, sassy and a tad racy. And, of course, Asta, the Charles' wire-haired fox terrier has a prominent role in both stories. There were five Thin Man movies from 1936 to 1947 though Hammett was not directly involved in the writing of all of them. If I was going to have a fantasy dinner party, I would have to ask Nick and Nora Charles.

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### **Amy says**

I haven't been able to track down a copy of *The Thin Man* movie so I decided to assuage my sudden obsession with Nick and Nora by listening to *Return of the Thin Man*. It isn't really a sequel so much as the rough screen play for the second and third Thin Man movies. Before each story there is an essay of sorts about the movie production and the difficulties between the movie studios and Dashiell Hammett. While this made a wonderful audio book, this separation of story and essay was hard to picture, since it felt repetitive and jarring sometimes.

I really enjoyed the first of the two screen plays (*After the Thin Man*). It involves Nora's relatives and gives a fascinating glimpse into their relationship. It lacked some of the darker elements of *The Thin Man* and replaced it with more humor. I didn't care as much for *Another Thin Man*. While *Baby Nicky* had great promise and the story occasionally felt charming, the overall presentation felt less pulled together and it had more gruesome elements.

Throughout, I often struggled with remembering who was who as a host of young men dot the pages only to fade into obscurity and then come bursting forth as relevant to later plot points.

Overall, though, engaging and satisfying enough to fill my cravings for more of this delightful detective duo. I wish there were more. (But from the way Hammett behaved towards his characters and in his personal life, it probably is a good thing there were not.)

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### **Fredrick Danysh says**

Contains two novellas, *After the Thin Man* and *Another Thin Man* in which Nick Charles and his wife Nora solve crimes. These novellas were written for the movies.

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### **Michael says**

*Return of the Thin Man* contains two previously unpublished film treatments of the first two Thin Man sequels (plus on brief synopsis of an unfilmed sequel) with additional notes about both films. The stories are enjoyable enough, although all of the Thin Man stories use the same basic setup, which can get boring after a while (Dashiell Hammett stopped writing Thin Man stories after the second sequel since he too was sick of the series). If you've never read or watched a Thin Man book or movie before, the main characters are Nick Charles, an ex-detective, and Nora Charles, his upper-crust wife who angered her family by marrying below her station. Nick is typically called out of retirement to help clear a family member or old friend of a murder rap, doing so while drinking heavily and engaging in witty banter with his wife.

The problem with *Return of the Thin Man*, though, is not in its story; it's in its format. These stories, as written by Hammett, were never meant to be read as a book. As film treatments, they were meant to provide a script, along with some basic directions as to how sets should look and very basic character movements. Everything between the dialogue is written with an eye towards helping the director successfully film the story, not to help the reader enjoy it.

If you are interested in what happens after the first *Thin Man*, you would be better off just watching the movie sequels, which is how these stories were intended to be consumed.

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## **Jason Pettus says**

(Reprinted from the Chicago Center for Literature and Photography [cclapcenter.com]. I am the original author of this review, as well as the owner of CCLaP; it is not being reprinted illegally.)

It's "Thin Man" week here at CCLaP! And in fact, it was pure but lucky coincidence that the original 1934 novel came up in my "CCLaP 100" reading queue this month, which I then followed up with a screening of the equally famous 1934 movie; because it just so happens that a brand-new contemporary book on the subject came to the top of my reading queue this month as well, the fascinating *Return of the Thin Man* edited by Richard Layman and Julie M. Rivett. See, even though *The Thin Man* would be the last novel Dashiell Hammett ever wrote, the resulting film version turned out so popular that movie studio MGM hired Hammett to write "treatments" for the next two sequels (*After the Thin Man* and *Another Thin Man*), not exactly stories and not exactly scripts, but rather if someone was describing a script in story form, neither of which have ever been published until this book this year. And so of course that makes this a must-read for Hammett fans, because it's not going to be very often anymore that they're going to come across unpublished work by him\*; but of equal interest to history buffs are the lengthy contemporary essays that appear before and after each treatment, in which film scholars Layman and Rivett detail all the steps that went into making these films, their ultimate fates with both the studio and the public, and the cantankerous relationship the runaway alcoholic Hammett had with his MGM bosses, leading them to unceremoniously dump him after *Another Thin Man* and to hire journeyman writers to pen the last three scripts in the series. A fast, punchy and entertaining read, just like all of Hammett's work, this comes recommended to both hardboiled detective fans and those interested in the history of early cinema.

Out of 10: **9.0**

\*Although of course I shouldn't speak too soon; just last year, for example, a Hammett scholar unearthed a dozen unpublished short stories of his in the Hammett Archives at the University of Texas-Austin, which I believe are in the process of being turned into a brand-new book as we speak.

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## **Erik says**

Not really "never before published novellas" but story treatments for the first two *Thin Man* movie sequels fleshed out with other material so they make logical sense

Finds Hammett working not in his usual hard-boiled style or even the breezier writing of the *Thin Man* novel, but in the cutesy martinis-murder-and-wisecracks style of the film.

Not a literary find on par with the work discovered and published in "The Lost Stories" or "The Hunter" but well worth it for the Hammett completist.

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### **Michael says**

Dashiell Hammett is often referred to as one of the 'Big Three' when it comes to pulp fiction along with Raymond Chandler and James M. Cain. He is known for his hard-boiled novels turned film noir classics including *The Maltese Falcon* and *The Thin Man*. *Return of the Thin Man* is a collection of two previously unreleased novellas featuring Nick & Nora Charles from *The Thin Man*.

While "After the Thin Man" and "Another Thin Man" have been promoted as two never before published novellas, these are basically glorified screen plays by the pulp legend. The cynical ex-detective is back along with his very clever wife for some more drinking, flirting and crimes. But you really need to have read or seen *The Thin Man* before reading this because they are sequels that rely heavily on the character development that has already taken place.

The main problem is there are no stories here; nothing to demonstrate the power of Hammett's pulp styles. These are just scripts for cashing in on the success of *The Thin Man* film adaptation. I think they would have worked a lot better if they were made into movies in the 1930's. It reminds me of the recent movie release of *Taken 2*; all the plot and character development was in its predecessor, it is just cashing in on the success by trying to continue the story.

As a pulp fan I was looking forward to reading this and I really wanted to love it, but I was very disappointed. This is a gimmick release, not recommended for people new to Dashiell Hammett and Nick & Nora Charles. But if you loved *The Thin Man* there is a slight pleasure in seeing what Hammett had planned for these characters. *The Thin Man* was never a favourite of mine, I do really like Nora but for someone interested in trying the author I would recommend *The Maltese Falcon* or my personal favourite, *Red Harvest*.

This review originally appeared on my blog; <http://literary-exploration.com/2012/...>

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### **Softail says**

This is more great "Thin Man" stuff. If you liked the originals, you won't be disappointed in these two. Same great sense of humor and ironic sarcasm that put Hammett at the top of his trade. There are two "Nick and Nora Charles" (and Asta) novellas in this book.

Both stories are actually screenplays now reprinted pretty much with out change resulting in a slightly quirky style that's kind of fun to read. Occasional stage directions are simply written as prose. As in this description of an action by Nick Charles: "He sits down on the floor and begins to screw sections of pipe together. [This is actually a ladder, but he keeps the rungs sticking out in all directions and keeps it from being recognizable until suddenly when he puts the last piece on and turns it around.]"

This is a fun, light-weight read . . . pure Dashiell Hammett.

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## **Margaret Sankey says**

Under contract to the studio after the unexpected success of *The Thin Man*, and momentarily behaving in between bouts of alcoholic and gonorrhea, Hammett cranked out two novella-length story treatments on which the studio's screenwriters based the first two sequels. Hammett, although delivering to the letter of his contract, was clearly having a good time skating as close to the censor's line as possible with innuendo, dark motives and sight gags. For anyone familiar with the movies, these never-before published narrative versions are fascinating to compare with the finished product--what flew in 1934 and 1937 (casual racism, slapping women, epic drinking) and what didn't (implications of adultery, a boarding house full of party girls, former gardeners who now owned real estate).

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## **Jill says**

I actually think the movies are both better and more fun, but I still really enjoyed these. This is a compilation of a couple *Thin Man* Stories.

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