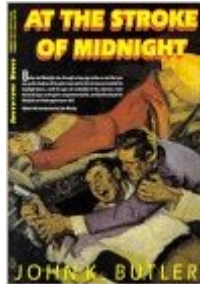




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At The Stroke Of Midnight



Synopsis

In the 1930s and '40s, he wrote about the otherworldly landscape of Southern California with a tough elegance themes bordered on poetry, driving his tarnished but noble knight through a neon-lit neverland. After a few years, a call from Hollywood sprung him from the pulpwood pages of the detective-fiction magazines and onto a movie lot, where he began crafting features that would light up the screens during Tinsletown's golden age. It wasn't Raymond Chandler. It was Chandler's compadre from the pages of Black Mask and Dime Detective magazines, John K. Butler, whose star shone as brightly as Chandler's in the pages of the pulps. Chandler went on to movies and best-selling novels; Butler stayed in the picture business, his work never reaching book form. Until now.

Book Information

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Adventure House; 1 edition (October 1, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1886937257

ISBN-13: 978-1886937253

Product Dimensions: 9.9 x 7 x 0.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

The stories in *At the Stroke of Midnight* feature Steve Midnight, a cab-driver working in the LA suburbs in the early 1940s who is constantly getting caught between criminals and the law. In just about every story he has to play private detective to get himself out of trouble with the crooks and the cops. Writer John K. Butler, who went on to a career writing screenplays for Republic Pictures and early television, was an adept plotter, pretty good at characterization and atmosphere. The stories are violent -- Midnight gets concussed so often he ought to wear a football helmet instead of his cabby cap -- but that is par for the course in pulp detective fiction of that era. I read the Steve Midnight stories one after another and enjoyed them all, although none of them stood out as

particularly memorable. Unfortunately, the Midnight stories kept bringing to mind the work of Raymond Chandler, who was writing his detective fiction during the same period and in the same milieu. Chandler was a great writer; Butler was merely a good one.

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