



The Goodbye Look

Ross Macdonald

Download now

Read Online ➔

The Goodbye Look

Ross Macdonald

The Goodbye Look Ross Macdonald

In **The Goodbye Look**, Lew Archer is hired to investigate a burglary at the mission-style mansion of Irene and Larry Chalmers. The prime suspect, their son Nick, has a talent for disappearing, and the Chalmerses are a family with money and memories to burn. As Archer zeros in on Nick, he discovers a troubled blonde, a stash of wartime letters, a mysterious hobo. Then a stiff turns up in a car on an empty beach. And Nick turns up with a Colt .45. In **The Goodbye Look**, Ross Macdonald delves into the world of the rich and the troubled and reveals that the past has a deadly way of catching up to the present.

If any writer can be said to have inherited the mantle of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, it is Ross Macdonald. Between the late 1940s and his death in 1983, he gave the American crime novel a psychological depth and moral complexity that his pre-decessors had only hinted at. And in the character of Lew Archer, Macdonald redefined the private eye as a roving conscience who walks the treacherous frontier between criminal guilt and human sin.

The Goodbye Look Details

Date : Published December 5th 2000 by Vintage Crime/Black Lizard (first published 1969)

ISBN : 9780375708657

Author : Ross Macdonald

Format : Paperback 256 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Crime, Noir, Thriller, Mystery Thriller

 [Download The Goodbye Look ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Goodbye Look ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Goodbye Look Ross Macdonald

From Reader Review The Goodbye Look for online ebook

Bill Kerwin says

The classic Ross MacDonald plot: a revolver used in a recent murder is found to be connected to a fifteen-year old homicide, and suspicions swirl around a young person so emotionally scarred by the past that he is convinced he must be guilty of something. (As one of the characters says, "My whole time here, it's been like living in a haunted house." In the Ross McDonald world, she could be speaking about all of us, every single human life.)

Once again the sins of the fathers are visited upon the sons, and detective Lew Archer is there not only to unravel the intricate tangle of facts that binds the characters together but also to serve as a laconic Greek chorus for the modern tragedy that his unraveling will inevitably reveal.

This time the cast of characters is a little too large and the skein of facts a little too tangled, but the resolution is both surprising and plausible, the conclusion both haunting and satisfying.

Bob says

All of the Lew Archer mysteries by Ross Macdonald are very good, and all but two or three are excellent. This one is in the top three of four, which means it is one of the best mystery novels ever written, and beyond that, it is an excellent novel, period.

As always with Lew Archer, there is practically no violence, no gore, nothing lurid, no sensationalism. Instead it is well plotted, tight, and plausible. (I didn't say probable.) This one is quite complex, and probably not the first Lew Archer mystery to read if one is new to the series.

The characterizations are excellent. It flows smoothly, a real page turner, hard to put down. The reader would be rewarded by keeping a note pad and jotting down the first time and place a character is mentioned, and other key points, such as who is related to whom. I did and it really helps. But beyond the mystery story aspects, no other mystery novelist that I am aware of has so many insightful observations, compelling similes, and such deep observations on the human condition.

I have read all of the Lew Archer novels at least twice over a period of thirty years. This is one of my personal favorites, even though it may not be the absolute best, if there is such a thing. Others on my list of favorites are *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Wycherly Woman*, and *The Zebra-Striped Hearse*.

The year is 1969 and the plot starts with Archer being called to the home of a wealthy family, the Chalmers. They were away for a weekend and a valuable gold jewel case has been stolen. It soon becomes apparent that it was an inside job, and suspicion quickly falls on their only child, Nick, now 23 and trying to finish college. He has an apartment at the nearby college. We soon learn that Nick had a troubled childhood, and just what the trouble was might be relevant to the current theft. Across the street lives lawyer John Truttwell and daughter Betty, who is in love with Nick.

Gradually a complicated story develops involving four families who have known each other since the mid

1940s. They were linked then by an embezzlement followed quickly by flight into Mexico by more than one person. About the same time, someone was mysteriously run down by a car. As the years pass, four murders occur.

Recurring themes: private mental hospital, wealthy families, college setting, navy in WWII.

As often happens in a Lew Archer novel, some people are not what they seem, and the deep secrets of 20 years ago come back to haunt the young people of today. It doesn't get any better than this, folks.

Important Characters, alive, dead, and missing:

John Truttwell, lawyer whose wife was run down by a car 24 years ago.

Betty Truttwell, daughter of John, serious young woman.

Larry Chalmers, wealthy father of Nick.

Irene Chalmers, still beautiful wife and mother.

Nick Chalmers, troubled young man.

Judge Chalmers, deceased father of Larry and still important local icon.

Estelle Chalmers, deceased wife of Judge Chalmers, mother of Larry.

Eldon Swain, embezzler of 24 years ago who was last seen 15 years ago.

Mrs. Eldon Swain, who never saw a dime of the money.

Jean (Swain) Trask, daughter who pines for her missing father.

Sidney Harrow, amateur detective, trying to find Eldon Swain.

George Trask, ineffective husband of Jean.

Dr. Smitheram, psychiatrist who knows a lot about Nick.

Moira Smitheram, wife who knows some things too.

Samuel Rawlinson, now elderly, president of the bank that was ruined by the embezzlement.

Mrs. Shepherd, housekeeper for Samuel Rawlinson, ex-wife of Randy, mother of Rita.

Randy Shepherd, ex-husband of Mrs. Shepherd, gardener with other interests.

Rita Shepherd, mysteriously missing woman who was a teenager when Eldon Swain embezzled.

Stephen says

If you want to talk about pure story telling, Ross MacDonald is the man. I hadn't read any early MacDonald, only his later works. [Book: The Goodbye Look] was a revelation to me. For the first time in my reading of mysteries, and that includes old 1920s up to the present day, did a book resolve itself strictly by the reasoning skill, and investigative talents of the main character.

Lew Archer is a wonderful character who not only is a Private Investigator, he is humane, intelligent, compassionate, and motivated by justice, not money. It is such a delight to read a book where forensics plays no part, and the story is pure story, not a dependence upon the "ins and outs" of police work. Granted, some

of the actions Archer takes would put him in prison today, but the book was written in 1969.

While he may be too dated for some readers, and not violent enough for others, if mystery stories that are solved by the story itself, and not the current selection of "deus ex machina," i.e., forensics, torturous police interrogations, etc., then this is a book for you.

I love it and recommend to anyone who likes a who-done-it, and does not want the blood and gore that has taken over the genre.

Bert says

This felt more complex, more evolved, more psychologically perceptive than any other hardboiled detective fiction I've ever read. I guess it didn't feel like a detective novel at all, a realisation that's easy to get confused with a sense of something lacking, if you're waiting for the usual genre furniture, the wise-cracking PI, the femme fatale, the gaudy poetic narrative voice, I guess all these things are present to a certain extent, it's just that they're not what this novel is about. It is a novel about sorrow, sorrow that runs deep, suburban complacency, and shame. What Macdonald does with Lew Archer is fascinating, he is, as Macdonald himself described him "so narrow that when he turns sideways he almost disappears" He doesn't suffocate the story, but he acts as a kind of filter for us, making sense of all the damaged lives he observes in that stark California sunshine.

Jessica says

Picture Chandler built with much rougher gin, and not one drop of a vermouth -- not even a vapor.

And no ice.

Picture a room temperature glass of middling gin when what you're after's a martini, and that's sort of what reading this book was like for me.

I don't know, if I could give it an extra half-star I would. MAN, I hate the star system! It just makes me NUTS! To be fair, I'll disclose, I did tear through this book all in a day. I spent an hour with it last night in the heat on my fire escape, which invested *The Goodbye Look* with a certain romance I found lacking from the book itself. I just didn't experience that cool smoothness or style I feel makes this genre slide down so nicely at its best; I did like MacDonald's descriptions of the Southern California landscape, and I almost gave it an extra star for having a character who's A PSYCHIATRIC SOCIAL WORKER, and for its surprisingly (and relatively) decent portrayal of mental illness and mental health treatment -- very notable for this genre.

Aw, hell, maybe I'll give it three stars. I did enjoy it, I just found the characters, including the detective, so flat and bland, and mostly interchangeable. I didn't want to slap, sleep with, or kill anyone in this novel, which I feel is a failing in this type of story. I felt like he was very consciously being all Moody and Very Psychological, which was fine, and I got it, but not in my bones. Also, it was so plot-driven -- which was why I read it so fast -- but the plot was simultaneously predictable and confusing, confusing because there were so many characters and not quite enough to distinguish them, so I kept having to stop and remind myself which name went with who.

OH! I just remembered the most annoying thing about this book, which is that while Lew Archer's going around talking to people to try to find out secret information to solve the crime, that thing **KEEPS** happening where he'll be all, "Do you know a woman named Susan Chambers?" and the person will be like, "Oh yes me and Sue go way b -- er, I mean, NO! Susan who? I have no idea what you're talking about!!! None! Who is that person??" This seriously happened in this book like seven or eight times, that he'd ask someone something, and then instead of just flinching or looking suspicious or whatever, which is fine, they would **ACTUALLY START ANSWERING HIS QUESTION**, and then suddenly realize they were inadvertently revealing one of their deepest, darkest secrets and would clam up and deny whatever it was that they'd just given away. **THIS IS NOT A REAL PHENOMENON FROM ACTUAL LIFE**, and it is **NOT A FAIR WAY** for the detective to collect information. **TWO STARS FOR YOU**, Ross MacDonald!

Okay, so I'm a tough grader, but I do think this guy's got potential and I'm not going to give up on him just yet. I have another MacDonald coming at me from the library, so I'll hold off for now and hopefully I'll like that one better.

George K. says

Μετ' απ' ακριβ'ς δυο χρ'νια, ξαναδιαβ'ζω επιτ'λους βιβλ'ο του Ρος Μακντ'ναλντ. Τα αδι'βαστα βιβλ'α του που 'χω στη βιβλιοθ'κη μου λιγοστε'ουν επικ'νδυνα και επειδ' δεν θ'λω να ξεμε'νω τ'σο γρ'γορα, αναγκ'ζομαι να διαβ'ζω κ'ποιο βιβλ'ο του μια στο τ'σο. Κ'ποια στιγμ' θα μου τελει'σουν, β'βαια, αλλ' ελπ'ζω μ'χρι τ'τε να μεταφραστο'ν και 'λλα βιβλ'α του, ειδ'λλως θα τον δοκιμ'σω και στο πρωτ'τυπο.

Τ'λος π'ντων, η αναμον' δυο χρ'νων 'ξιζε τον κ'πο. Μιλ'με για 'να πραγματικ' πολ' καλ' αστυνομικ' νου'ρ, στο γνωστ' επ'πεδο ποι'τητας που μας 'χει συνηθ'σει ο συγγραφ'ας. Η 'λη ιστορ'α ξεκιν'ει απλ', με τον Λιου 'ρτσερ να καλε'ται απ' 'ναν δικηγ'ρο, που εκπροσωπε' μια πλο'σια οικογ'νεια, να αναζητ'σει 'να χρυσαφ'νιο κουτ' γεμ'το γρ'μματα, που κ'ποιοι 'γνωστοι 'κλεψαν απ' το χρηματοκιβ'τιο του σπιτιο' της οικογ'νειας. 'μως, κατ' την 'ρευνα, ο 'ρτσερ θα βρεθε' μπροστ' σε πολλ', μα π'ρα πολλ' οικογενειακ' μυστικ' απ' το μακριν' και το πρ'σφατο παρελθ'ν, με την υπ'θεση να μην αφορ' τελικ' απλ' κ'ποια κλεμμ'να γρ'μματα, αλλ' πολλ' παραπ'νω...

Κλασικ', 'χουμε οικογενειακ' μυστικ', προδοσ'ες, φ'νους, μπερδ'ματα και μπλεξ'ματα, με τον αναγ'στη να προσπαθε' παρ'λληλα με τον φοβερ' Λιου 'ρτσερ να λ'σει 'λους τους γρ'φους, να ανακαλ'ψει τα κ'νητρα, να κατανο'σει τις πρ'ξεις των χαρακτ'ρων. Προσωπικ', δεν μπ'κα στη διαδικασ'α να λ'σω μ'νος μου την υπ'θεση ('λλωστε κ'θε τ'σο 'βγαιναν και καινο'ργια στοιχε'α στην επιφ'νεια), απλ'ς 'κατσα και απ'λαυσα τη συναρπαστικ' εξ'λιξη των γεγον'των, καθ'ς και τον τρ'πο λειτουργ'ας του Λιου 'ρτσερ. Η γραφ' ε'ναι πραγματικ' πολ' καλ', στιβαρ' και σ'γουρη, με φυσικ'τατους διαλ'γους και καλ'ς αλλ' συν'μα λιτ'ς περιγραφ'ς τοπ'ων, ανθρ'πων και καταστ'σεων, εν' η ατμ'σφαιρα ε'ναι σαφ'ς εξαιρετικ'. Γενικ' μιλ'με για εγγυημ'νη αναγνωστικ' απ'λαυση.

F.R. says

Until now I've only read two Archer novels (curiously, and coincidentally, the two Paul Newman turned into

films) and though I enjoyed them, they didn't make me whoop with joy. I liked them, thought they had good points, but haven't rushed on to check out the others.

Having read 'The Goodbye Look' I now understand why his fans hold him such high regard. MacDonald's brilliance – certainly in this novel – lies in taking that Tolstoy maxim that "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way" and turning into detective fiction. What starts out as seemingly a minor case (the theft of a gold box) unearths long lost family secrets and brings out the after effects of forgotten crimes. I'd been told how fantastic MacDonald was on psychology, and that is indeed the case. All crime fiction characters need to have strange and unusual motivations, it's what red herrings are based upon, but in this book they're not just a contrivance of the plot. Everything that the characters do and say feels real and not just there for the sake of misdirection.

The prose is great as well, with many pithy phrases and wonderful descriptions, and in short I found the whole thing a treat. Without a doubt MacDonald moved into space created by Chandler, but I think he goes in a different direction with it. Rather than the gallant knight walking mean streets because somebody has to, Archer is almost a cipher just trying to make his way through in the world. That vagueness of character can be somewhat frustrating to readers, but I think that blankness explains why people do open up so easily to him. It also helps justify why he gets up the next morning and does it all again, it's not through Marlowe's noble calling, but just because – what else does he have?

I won't delay so long before my next Archer novel.

Carla Remy says

I didn't love this as much as I love the other Ross Macdonald books I've read, which is utterly and completely. I found this harder to follow, but it could well have been me. The writing was still perfect.

Bobby Underwood says

"The Archer novels are about various kinds of brokenness. I wanted to write as well as I possibly could to deal with life-and-death problems in contemporary society. And the form of Wilkie Collins and Graham Greene, of Hammett and Chandler, seemed to offer me all the rope I would ever need."

Returning to this book after many years, the reader can clearly see Macdonald has become a novelist simply using the genre as a means to an end. He wrote about broken people in need of mending, and perhaps mercy. But as he once wrote:

"I have a secret passion for mercy...but justice is what keeps happening to people."

That is certainly true of *The Goodbye Look*, a novel released a year before the tragic death of his daughter, whose troubled life is well documented. Young people were often troubled or in trouble in a Lew Archer novel, and that's the case here. But it is the more mature adults who before all is said and done, appear to have lived their entire lives in interconnected lies and half-truths, with a kidnapping, and at least three

murders connecting several families.

If it sounds complicated for a detective novel, it is. About a third of the way through, Macdonald has Archer sit down and write some case notes to help him get a bead on how what he knows ties together. It doesn't help Archer, and it doesn't help the reader. And then it becomes even more a labyrinth of old crimes somehow connected to a tiny Florentine box which has been stolen. The theft is simply a trigger, but unfortunately the trigger brings about more death, as Archer weaves his way through pain and regret to get at the truth. Archer has compassion for Betty, and the very damaged young man she loves, Nick, but in order to get to the bottom of the trouble, he'll have to look at a crime which took place in 1945. What happened then may be the key to everything.

The case begins when lawyer John Truttwell hires Archer, in behalf of the Chalmers, to find a Florentine box which has been stolen. Archer learns that Truttwell is hiring him in behalf of Irene Chalmers only, but the reasons are as yet unclear. So is the reason why the letters inside the box are so important. Later in the case, Archer will get hold of them, and discover the reason. Perhaps this passage as Archer meets the very lovely Irene Chalmers for the first time, says it best:

"Her tone was both assertive and lacking in self-assurance. It was the tone of a handsome woman who had married money and social standing and never could forget that she might just as easily lose these things."

But if the reader believes he understands things up to this early point in the mystery, they'd be wrong, because nothing is quite as it seems; not Larry and Irene Chalmers' emotionally troubled and mentally unstable son, Nick; not an old kidnapping; not the murder of an old man decades before; not a missing fortune; not a doctor and his wife, with whom Archer will have an affair; not even the history of the people involved in the case, because it's all a lie more complicated and far reaching than the reader, or Archer, can get a handle on. Some might wonder why Archer is even bothering, because few of these people are truly likable.

But then Archer meets John Truttwell's young daughter, who loves the deeply troubled Nick. Already hurting because she's been thrown over for an older woman, she might be the only innocent person here, and Archer likes her. Though Archer has compassion, and desires, as is proven by his affair with Moira, the wife of the doctor treating Nick, it is obvious that once Archer meets young Betty, his involvement in the case is assured. More murders, more secrets, and a bullet in the shoulder await Archer, and the story hasn't yet come near to reaching a conclusion. The last third of the book makes the frustration of not understanding what's going on any more than Archer does worth the literary ride.

This is a terrific novel, but Macdonald isn't for every taste. He had his own literate approach to the form, using it as a platform to write about broken people, shattered dreams, and familial betrayal. Archer is at the center, yet Macdonald writes him almost as an observer, trying to help without letting the ugliness change him. Archer often feels a quiet, unspoken compassion for someone in the case, trying to facilitate some kind of emotional peace for them. The catalyst for Archer's interest is often a young person, as is the case here. It was a mirror to Kenneth Millar himself. A fixture in Santa Barbara in the '70s, singer Warren Zevon made no distinctions between the fictional Archer and the flesh and blood Macdonald. He credited Macdonald for saving his life when he had a physical and emotional breakdown, and dedicated an album to him. To quote Zevon about his neighbor:

"At the lowest point in my life, the doorbell rang. And there, quite literally, was Lew Archer, on a compassionate mission, come to save my life."

This certainly coincides with something Macdonald himself wrote about the craft:

“We writers, as we work our way deeper into our craft, learn to drop more and more personal clues. Like burglars who secretly wish to be caught, we leave our fingerprints on broken locks, our voiceprints in bugged rooms, our footprints in the wet concrete.”

Yes, the clues to the man are all here, left by the writer of the stories. Macdonald was very much the detective in his stories, if we are to believe Zevon and others.

Macdonald's early work when he was closer in style to Chandler is very entertaining, but it's his later work that is his best, once he'd moved away from Chandler and Hammett. Macdonald's approach isn't better than their approach, it is simply different. A marvelous, literate read in a genre too often substituting gore and violence and unpleasantness, for understanding and story. Macdonald isn't everyone's cup of tea, but for those who like the human equation in their detective fiction, he's unbeatable. This one, *The Chill*, *The Drowning Pool*, *The Underground Man*, and *Sleeping Beauty* are some of the best in the genre.

On a technical note, I read this on Kindle downloaded from Amazon Australia this time, and I was truly disappointed in Penguin. At the back, there is a whole section about the quality of the modern classics series of which Macdonald's books are a part. Any yet, the text was unjustified, leaving a ragged, annoying right-hand margin. Shame on Penguin...

Jim says

Another in the superb series of detective stories by Ross Macdonald, and another in his endless yet endlessly entertaining and inventive looks at the dark secrets that tear families apart. Macdonald's P.I. Lew Archer in this one investigates the case of a troubled young man who may be linked to a murder which occurred when he was a little boy. Macdonald has a pragmatic yet quietly melancholic view of family, and in a sense most of his novels examine the same question: can the sins of the father ever be erased? Not that it's always the father at fault. Archer seems less sentimental than Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe, who isn't very overtly sentimental himself. In this novel, we get a slight hint more than usual of Archer's background and a good feel for his place on the graph of morality. Although the plethora of characters and their intertwining relationships, familial and otherwise, can be a bit confusing, this is still one of Macdonald's most vigorous and enjoyable books.

Evgeny says

Lew Archer was hired to investigate a burglary at a house of a rich family. Rich people always avoid bad publicity like plague, so he was supposed to be very discreet in his investigation. To give you an idea about the level of discretion he was hired by a wife through the family lawyer with the husband having no clue about this and Archer was to keep him this way. A dead body showed up soon with the murder weapon being the same gun as the one used fifteen years ago in another unsolved murder.

Dead bodies from the past and the present keep showing up.

The common theme for most of the novels of the series is children who pay for sins of the fathers (and

mothers). The dirty past when disturbed results in yet more dirt and its cover-up by all means possible. I think Macdonald has perfected this particular trope; if anybody does it better I have not read such books yet.

This book features another teen girl in love who behaves like a normal human being and not like a spoiled retarded selfish brat typical for modern YA literature. Please read this not just for a good mystery, but also to learn how to write good characters most people can relate to.

Taken along with other books of the series this one is fairly average: there are better ones and there are worse ones. This means **4 stars** rating from me.

Tim Orfanos says

Το συγκεκριμένο μυθιστορημα του ΜακΝτ'ναλντ με τον ντιτ'κτιβ Λου 'ρτσερ μπορε' να θεωρε'ται απ' τα κλασικ' 'νου'ρ' της αστυνομικ'ς λογοτεχν'ας, ωστ'σο, αυτ' που εντυπωσι'ζουν τον αναγν'στη ε'ναι τα 'ντονα δραματουργικ' στοιχε'α και οι 'εσωτερικ'ς' συγκρο'σεις των ηρ'ων που 'χουν τις ρ'ζες τους σε μυστικ' και αναπ'ντητα ερωτ'ματα του παρελθ'ντος.

Στον 'πυρ'να' των γεγον'των, βρ'σκεται ο γιος των Τσ'λμερς, Νικ, ο οπο'ος, μετ' την απαγωγ' του, πριν απ' πολλ' χρ'νια, 'ρχισε να εμφαν'ζει συχν'ς μεταπτ'σεις στη δι'θεση και κυκλοθυμικ'τητα, εν' παλε'ει με τις 'διες του τις ενοχ'ς και τις αμφιβολ'ες για την δολοφον'α εν'ς 'γνωστου σε εκε'νον 'ντρα - 'λα αυτ' 'ρχονται στην επιφ'νεια με τη δι'ρρηξη μιας χρυσ'ς κασ'λας με γρ'μματα (οικογενειακ' κειμ'λιο) απ' τον Β' Παγκ'σμιο Π'λεμο στην 'παυλη των γονι'ν του.

Π'ρα απ' αυτ', να αναφ'ρω 'τι υπ'ρχουν κ'ποιες ομοι'τητες στην ιστορ'α με το 'Ρ'γος' ('The Chill') του 'διου συγγραφ'α, αν και, ευτυχ'ς, αυτ' φ'ανεται σε κ'ποιες συγκεκριμ'νες λεπτομ'ρειες και 'χι στο μεγαλ'τερο μ'ρος του βιβλ'ου. Π'ντως, στα θετικ' του μυθιστορ'ματος ε'ναι το γεγον'ς 'τι ο ΜακΝτ'ναλντ καταφ'ρνει να προσδ'σει στους χαρακτ'ρες των ηρ'ων του ψυχολογικ' β'θος, τ'τοιο 'στε να μπορε' να θεωρηθε' ως το πιο ψυχογραφικ' μυθιστορ'ημ' του με αρκετ' στοιχε'α ψυχολογικ' θρ'λερ.

Επιπρ'σθετα, το 1ο μ'ρος του βιβλ'ου ε'ναι αρκετ' 'χαοτικ' χωρ'ς ιδια'τερη δομ' στη πλοκ' και με πλ'θος πληροφορι'ν, τις οπο'ες προσπαθε' ο αναγν'στης να αποκρυπτογραφ'σει, εν', απ' τη μ'ση και μετ', υπ'ρχει μεγαλ'τερη οργ'νωση στην αν'πτυξη της ιστορ'ας και πιο συγκεκριμ'νος ρυθμ'ς στη πλοκ'.

Απ' τα πιο 'δια'τερα' μυθιστορ'ματα του ΜακΝτ'ναλντ, αν και 'νισο στη δομ' και στον ρυθμ' της πλοκ'ς.

Βαθμολογ'α: 4,2/5 ? 8,4/10.

Linwood Barclay says

This was the first Ross Macdonald novel I ever read, and it hooked me. I was 15 or 16, I think, when I found the Bantam paperback edition on the twirling paperback rack at the IGA grocery store in Bobcaygeon,

Ontario. It was the blurb at the top, from William Goldman's NYTBR, that grabbed me: "The finest series of detective novels ever written by an American." I still think that's true.

Evi says

Πρ?κειται για ?να κλασικ? noir του 1969. ?να αστυνομικ? που αποτ?λεσε μ?ρος της απαρχ?ς του ε?δους. ?να hardboiled μυθιστ?ρημα με πρωταγωνιστ? τον ιδιωτικ? ντετ?κτιβ Λιου ?ρτσερ.

Η ιστορ?α ξεκιν? με την κλοπ? μια χρυσ?ς κασ?λας με επιστολ?ς που χρονολογο?νται απ? τον Β' Παγκ?σμιο Π?λεμο ως περιεχ?μενο. Η δι?ρρηξη αποκαλ?πτει τα ?νοχα μυστικ? μιας οικογ?νειας. Πλαν?ται η υποψ?α πως εμπλ?κεται ο Νικ, ο γιος της οικογ?νειας Τσ?λμερς, απ' την οπο?α και κλ?πηκε η κασ?λα. Ο ?ρτσερ ?ρχεται αντιμ?τωπος με τη δολοφον?α του συνεργ?τη του Νικ. Παρ?λληλα, αντιλαμβάνεται πως η δι?ρρηξη της κασ?λας συνδ?εται με μια απαγωγ? και με τη ληστε?α μιας τρ?πεζας που συν?βησαν πριν χρ?νια. Επιπλ?ον σ?νδεσμο αποτελε? η χρ?ση του περιστρ?φου σε τρεις δολοφον?ες.

Διαδραματ?ζεται σε ?να μισοσκ?τεινο τοπ?ο. Οι χαρακτ?ρες του βιβλ?ου ε?ναι με τ?ση πληρ?τητα σχηματισμ?νοι, που βλ?πεις βαθι? μ?σα τους. Μοι?ζει να ?χουν ξεπεταχτε? απ? μια noir ταιν?α εκε?νης της περι?δου. Σαν να τους βλ?πεις μπροστ? σου, φιγο?ρες με καπ?λο, καμπαρντ?να, να καπν?ζουν ?να τσιγ?ρο στο σκοτ?δι.

Το συγκεκριμ?νο βιβλ?ο του Ross Macdonald στ?κεται απ?ναντι απ? τους αναγν?στες και εγκωμ?ζει με μελαγχολικ? τρ?πο το κακ? που ενεδρε?ει στις ψυχ?ς των ανθρ?πων. Η ιστορ?α του ε?ναι πολ?πλοκη και ευρηματικ? σαν ?να τρ?τομο βικτοριαν? μυθιστ?ρημα.

Εν ολ?γοις, το βλ?μμα του αποχαιρετισμο? στρ?φεται προς ?να θλιβερ? παρελθ?ν ? ?να παγερ? μ?λλον. Δειν? και τα δ?ο.. Βγανουν στην επιφ?νεια κρυμμ?να μυστικ?, αποκαλ?ψεις και λ?για που δεν πα?ρνονται π?σω, γιαν? ?χουν ?δη ειπωθε?..

Εμ?να με συνεπ?ρε η εποχ?!! Εσε?ς, οι λ?τρεις της αστυνομικ?ς λογοτεχν?ας νομ?ζω πως θα το αγαπ?σετε!

Corey says

"I know your type. You have a secret passion for justice. Why don't you admit it?"

"I have a secret passion for mercy," I said. "But justice is what keeps happening to people."
