



The Best American Noir of the Century

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“Well worth its impressive weight in gold, it would be a crime not to have this seminal masterpiece in your collection.”—*New York Journal of Books*

In his introduction to *The Best American Noir of the Century*, James Ellroy writes, “Noir is the most scrutinized offshoot of the hard-boiled school of fiction. It’s the long drop off the short pier and the wrong man and the wrong woman in perfect misalliance. It’s the nightmare of flawed souls with big dreams and the precise how and why of the all-time sure thing that goes bad.” Offering the best examples of literary sure things gone bad, this collection ensures that nowhere else can readers find a darker, more thorough distillation of American noir fiction.

James Ellroy and Otto Penzler mined writings of the past century to find this treasure trove of thirty-nine stories. From noir’s twenties-era infancy come gems like James M. Cain’s “Pastorale,” and its postwar heyday boasts giants like Mickey Spillane and Evan Hunter. Packing an undeniable punch, diverse contemporary incarnations include Elmore Leonard, Patricia Highsmith, Joyce Carol Oates, Dennis Lehane, and William Gay, with many page-turners appearing from the past decade.

“Delightfully devilish . . . A strange trek through the years that includes stories from household names in the hard-boiled genre to lesser-known authors who nonetheless can hold their own with the legends.”—Associated Press

James Ellroy is the author of the Underworld U.S.A. trilogy—*American Tabloid*, *The Cold Six Thousand*, and *Blood’s a Rover*—and the L.A. Quartet novels, *The Black Dahlia*, *The Big Nowhere*, *L.A. Confidential*, and *White Jazz*. His most recent book is *The Hillicker Curse*, a memoir.

Otto Penzler is the founder of the Mysterious Bookshop and Mysterious Press, has won two Edgar Allan Poe Awards (most recently for *The Lineup*), and is series editor of *The Best American Mystery Stories*.

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