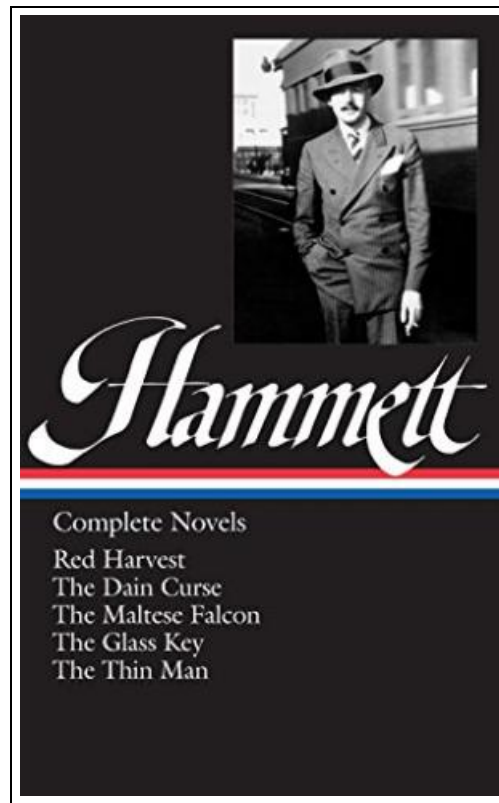


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The Library of America, United States, 1999. Hardback. Condition: New. New. Language: English . Brand New Book. In a few years of extraordinary creative energy, Dashiell Hammett invented the modern American crime novel. In the words of Raymond Chandler, Hammett gave murder back to the kind of people that commit it for reasons, not just to provide a corpse. . . . He put these people down on paper as they were, and he made them talk and think in the language they customarily used for these purposes. Beginning as a prolific contributor to the pulp magazines of the 1920s, he succeeded during his brief career in making his kind of crime fiction a crucial part of the fabric of American writing: a genre that did not evade reality but rather embodied the grittiness and harshness of modern urban life. The five novels that Hammett published between 1929 and 1934, collected here in one Library of America volume, have become part of modern American culture, creating archetypal characters and establishing the ground rules and characteristic tone for a whole tradition of hardboiled writing. Drawing on his own experiences as a Pinkerton detective, Hammett gave a harshly realistic edge to novels that were at the same time infused with a spirit of romantic adventure. His lean and deliberately simplified prose won admiration from such contemporaries as Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, and William Faulkner. Each novel is distinct in mood and structure. Red Harvest (1929) epitomizes the violence and momentum of his Black Mask stories about the anonymous detective the Continental Op. In this raucous and nightmarish evocation of political corruption and gang warfare in a western mining town (modeled on Butte, Montana) nicknamed Poisonville, the Op takes Machiavellian pleasure in pitting one faction against another to bring about their mutual destruction....



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