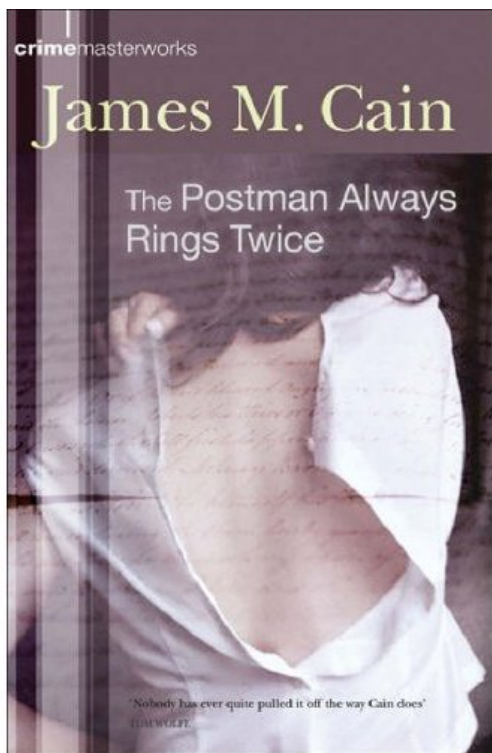


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The Postman Always Rings Twice (English Edition)



Par James M. Cain
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[Read now] The Postman Always Rings Twice (English Edition)

Par James M. Cain : The Postman Always Rings Twice (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Postman Always Rings Twice (English Edition):

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Description : Description du produitCain's first novel, banned in Boston, was an instant sensation and established him as a master of the mystery/suspense genre.

Prsentation de l'diteur'Nobody has ever quite pulled it off the way Cain does, not Hemingway, and not even Raymond Chandler' Tom WolfeThe torrid story of Frank Chambers, the amoral drifter, Cora, the sullen and brooding wife, and Nick Papadakis, the amiable but inconvenient husband, has become a classic of its kind, and established Cain as a major novelist with a spare and vital prose style and a bleak vision of America..comPenzler Pick, April 2000: It is sometimes easy to trace a literary genre to its source, and James M. Cain's first novel, The Postman Always Rings Twice, is the noir novel that paved the way for all the noir fiction that followed. The famous film starring Lana Turner and John Garfield is notoriously dark, but the novel is even more full of despair and devoid of hope. It is a short book--little more than a novella--but its searing characterization and depiction of tawdry greed and lust is branded into every reader's memory. Frank Chambers, a drifter, is dropped from the back of a truck at a rundown rural diner. When he spots Cora, the owner's wife, he instantly decides to stay. The sexy young woman, married to Nick, a violent and thuggish boor, is equally attracted to the younger man and sees him as her way out of her hopeless, boring life. They begin a clandestine affair and plot to kill Nick, beginning their own journey toward destruction. Horace McCoy, David Goodis, Jim Thompson, and the other notable noir writers never achieved Cain's spare brilliance. Virtually all of his major works have been filmed, though several Hollywood studios refused to make the films, directors refused to be involved, and actors turned down roles because of their repugnance at

the lack of morality inherent in all Cain's characters. Reading him may not be fit for a Sunday school class, but once you begin you will be unable to resist continuing, like picking at a painful scab or watching a tarantula inside a glass dome. --Otto Penzler

Extrait They threw me off the hay truck about noon. I had swung on the night before, down at the border, and as soon as I got up there under the canvas, I went to sleep. I needed plenty of that, after three weeks in Tia Juana, and I was still getting it when they pulled off to one side to let the engine cool. Then they saw a foot sticking out and threw me off. I tried some comical stuff, but all I got was a dead pan, so that gag was out. They gave me a cigarette, though, and I hiked down the road to find something to eat. That was when I hit this Twin Oaks Tavern. It was nothing but a roadside sandwich joint, like a million others in California. There was a lunchroom part, and over that a house part, where they lived, and off to one side a filling station, and out back a half dozen shacks that they called an auto court. I blew in there in a hurry and began looking down the road. When the Greek showed, I asked if a guy had been by in a Cadillac. He was to pick me up here, I said, and we were to have lunch. Not today, said the Greek. He layed a place at one of the tables and asked me what I was going to have. I said orange juice, corn flakes, fried eggs and bacon, enchilada, flapjacks, and coffee. Pretty soon he came out with the orange juice and the corn flakes. "Hold on, now. One thing I got to tell you. If this guy don't show up, you'll have to trust me for it. This was to be on him, and I'm kind of short, myself." "Hokay, fill'm up." "I saw he was on, and quit talking about the guy in the Cadillac. Pretty soon I saw he wanted something." "What you do, what kind of work, hey?" "Oh, one thing and another, one thing and another. Why?" "How old you?" "Twenty-four." "Young fellow, hey? I could use young fellow right now. In my business." "Nice place you got here." "Air. Is a nice. No fog, like in a Los Angeles. No fog at all. Nice, a clear, all a time nice a clear." "Must be swell at night. I can smell it now." "Sleep fine. You understand automobile? Fix'm up?" "Sure. I'm a born mechanic." He gave me some more about the air, and how healthy he's been since he bought this place, and how he can't figure it out, why his help won't stay with him. I can figure it out, but I stay with the grub. "Hey? You think you like it here?" By that time I had put down the rest of the coffee, and lit the cigar he gave me. "I tell you how it is. I got a couple of other propositions, that's my trouble. But I'll think about it. I sure will do that all right." Then I saw her. She had been out back, in the kitchen, but she came in to gather up my dishes. Except for the shape, she really wasn't any raving beauty, but she had a sulky look to her, and her lips stuck out in a way that made me want to mash them in for her. "Meet my wife." She didn't look at me. I nodded at the Greek, gave my cigar a kind of wave, and that was all. She went out with the dishes, and so far as he and I were concerned, she hadn't even been there. I left, then, but in five minutes I was back, to leave a message for the guy in the Cadillac. It took me a half hour to get sold on the job, but at the end of it I was in the filling station, fixing flats. "What's your name, hey?" "Frank Chambers." "Nick Papadakis, mine." We shook hands, and he went. In a minute I heard him singing. He had a swell voice. From the filling station I could just get a good view of the kitchen. About three o'clock a guy came along that was all burned up because somebody had pasted a sticker on his wind wing. I had to go in the kitchen to steam it off for him. "Enchiladas? Well, you people sure know how to make them." "What do you mean, you people?" "Why, you and Mr. Papadakis. You and Nick. That one I had for lunch, it was a peach." "Oh." "You got a cloth? That I can hold on to this thing with?" "That's not what you meant." "Sure it is." "You think I'm Mex." "Nothing like it." "Yes, you do. You're not the first one. Well, get this. I'm just as white as you are, see? I may have dark hair and look a little that way, but I'm just as white as you are. You want to get along good around here, you won't forget that." "Why, you don't look Mex." "I'm telling you. I'm just as white as you are." "No, you don't look even a little bit Mex. Those Mexican women, they all got big hips and bum legs and breasts up under their chin and yellow skin and hair that looks like it had bacon fat on it. You don't look like that. You're small, and got nice white skin, and your hair is soft and curly, even if it is black. Only thing you've got that's Mex is your teeth. They all got white teeth, you've got to hand that to them." "My name was Smith before I was married. That don't sound much like a Mex, does it?" "Not much." "What's more, I don't even come from around here. I come from Iowa." "Smith, hey. What's your first name?" "Cora. You can call me that, if you want to." I knew for certain, then, what I had just taken a chance on when I went in there. It wasn't those enchiladas that she had to cook, and it wasn't having black hair. It was being married to that Greek that made her feel she wasn't white, and she was even afraid I would begin calling her Mrs. Papadakis. "Cora. Sure. And how about calling me Frank?" She came over and began helping me with the wind wing. She was so close I could smell her. I shot it right close to her ear, almost in a whisper. "How come you married this Greek, anyway?" She jumped like I had cut her with a whip. "Is that any of your business?" "Yeah. Plenty." "Here's your wind wing." "Thanks." I went out. I had what I wanted. I had socked

one in under her guard, and socked it in deep, so it hurt. From now on, it would be business between her and me. She might not say yes, but she wouldn't stall me. She knew what I meant, and she knew I had her number. That night at supper, the Greek got sore at her for not giving me more fried potatoes. He wanted me to like it there, and not walk out on him like the others had. "Give a man something to eat." "They're right on the stove. Can't he help himself?" "It's all right. I'm not ready yet." He kept at it. If he had had any brains, he would have known there was something back of it, because she wasn't one to let a guy help himself, I'll say that for her. But he was dumb, and kept crabbing. It was just the kitchen table, he at one end, she at the other, and me in the middle. I didn't look at her. But I could see her dress. It was one of these white nurse uniforms, like they all wear, whether they work in a dentist's office or a bakeshop. It had been clean in the morning, but it was a little bit rumpled now, and mussed. I could smell her. "Well for heaven's sake." She got up to get the potatoes. Her dress fell open for a second, so I could see her leg. When she gave me the potatoes, I couldn't eat. "Well there now. After all that, and now he doesn't want them." "Hokay. But he have 'm, if he want 'm." "I'm not hungry. I ate a big lunch." He acted like he had won a great victory, and now he would forgive her, like the big guy he was. "She is a all right. She is my little white bird. She is my little white dove." He winked and went upstairs. She and I sat there, and didn't say a word. When he came down he had a big bottle and a guitar. He poured some out of the bottle, but it was sweet Creek wine, and made me sick to my stomach. He started to sing. He had a tenor voice, not one of these little tenors like you hear on the radio, but a big tenor, and on the high notes he would put in a sob like on a Caruso record. But I couldn't listen to him now. I was feeling worse by the minute. He saw my face and took me outside. "Out in a air, you feel better." "S all right. I'll be all right." "Sit down. Keep quiet." "Go ahead in. I just, ate too much lunch. I'll be all right." He went in, and I let everything come up. It was like hell the lunch, or the potatoes, or the wine. I wanted that woman so bad I couldn't even keep anything on my stomach. Next morning the sign was blown down. About the middle of the night it had started to blow, and by morning it was a wind-storm that took the sign with it. "It's awful. Look at that." "Was a very big wind. I could no sleep. No sleep all night." "Big wind all right. But look at the sign." "Is busted." "I kept tinkering with the sign, and he would come out and watch me. "How did you get this sign anyway?" "Was here when I buy the place. Why?" "It's lousy all right. I wonder you do any business at all." "I went to gas up a car, and left him to think that over. When I got back he was still blinking at it, where it was leaning against the front of the lunchroom. Three of the lights were busted. I plugged in the wire, and half of the others didn't light." "Put in new lights, hang 'm up, will be all right." "You're the boss." "What's a matter with it?" "Well, it's out of date. Nobody has bulb signs any more. They got Neon signs. They show up better, and they don't burn as much juice. Then, what does it say? Twin Oaks, that's all. The Tavern part, it's not in lights. Well, Twin Oaks don't make me hungry. It don't make me want to stop and get something to eat. It's costing you money, that sign, only you don't know it." "Fix 'm up, will be okay." "Why don't you get a new sign?" "I'm busy." But pretty soon he was back, with a piece of paper. He had drew a new sign for himself, and colored it up with red, white, and blue crayon. It said Twin Oaks Tavern, and Eat, and Bar-B-Q, and Sanitary Rest Rooms, and N. Papadakis, Prop. "Swell. That'll knock them for a loop." "I fixed up the words, so they were spelled right, and he put some more curly cues on the letters." "Nick, why do we hang up the old sign at all? Why don't you go to the city today and get this new sign made? It's a beauty, believe me it is. And it's important. A place is no better than it's sign, is it?" "I do it. By golly, I go." Los Angeles wasn't but twenty miles away, but he shined him-self up like he was going to Paris, and right after lunch, he went. Soon as he was gone, I locked the front door. I picked up a plate that a guy had left, and went on back in the kitchen with it. She was there. "Here's a plate that was out there. "Oh, thanks." "I set it down. The fork was rattling like a tambourine." "I was going to go, but I started some things cooking and I thought I better not." "I got plenty to do, myself." "You feeling better?" "I'm all right." "Sometimes just some little thing will do it. Like a change of water, something like that." "Probably too much lunch." "What's that?" "Somebody was out front, rattling the door. "Sounds like somebody trying to get in." "Is the door locked, Frank?" "I must have locked it." She looked at me, and got pale. She went to the swinging door, and peeped through. Then she went into the lunchroom, but in a minute she was back. "They went away." "I don't know why I locked it." "I forgot to unlock it." She started for the lunchroom again, but I stopped her. "Let's--leave it locked." "Nobody can get in if it's locked. I got some cooking to do. I'll wash up this plate." "I took her in my arms and mashed my mouth up against hers.... "Bite me! Bite me!" "I bit her. I sunk my teeth into her lips so deep I could feel the blood spurt into my mouth. It was running down her neck

when I carried her upstairs.