

# THE DARK PAGE II

BOOKS THAT INSPIRED AMERICAN FILM NOIR  
[1950-1965]

# THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN ARM

NELSON ALGREN

**Publisher** Garden City: Doubleday, 1949

An American writer born in Detroit, MI, in 1909, Nelson Algren is best remembered for articulating the world of the American underbelly, which he famously described as being the world of “drunks, pimps, prostitutes, freaks, drug addicts, prize fighters, corrupt politicians, and hoodlums.” His passion for that subculture was ignited in 1933, when he was jailed for five months in Texas for stealing a typewriter from an abandoned classroom. He made Chicago his home after service in World War II, and nearly all of his subsequent fiction and nonfiction work is centered there. *The Man with the Golden Arm* won the first National Book Award in 1950.

Taupe cloth, with titles and rule in green and red on the spine, dark green topstain. Title page shows a date of 1949, and “FIRST EDITION” is stated on the copyright page. Front flap indicates price as “T.M.W.T.G.A. / Price, \$3.00,” followed by a plot summary that continues to the end of the rear flap. Rear panel begins with an author photo at the top left, with a photo credit for Robert McCullough, then the author's name in red below the photo, and three review blurbs to the right of the photo, beginning with the *Chicago Sun* and ending with the *Chicago Tribune*.

# THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN ARM

OTTO PREMINGER

**Producer** Otto Preminger  
**Screenwriter** Walter Newman, Lewis Meltzer, Ben Hecht (uncredited)  
**Cinematographer** Sam Leavitt  
**Composer** Elmer Bernstein  
**Cast** Frank Sinatra, Eleanor Parker, Kim Novak, Arnold Stang, Darren McGavin, Robert Strauss  
**Studio** United Artists, 1955  
**Runtime** 119 minutes

Otto Preminger acquired *The Man with the Golden Arm* as a literary property with the intention to wrestle a standard sensational melodrama out of Nelson Algren's literary web. In the late summer of 1954, Preminger brought Algren to Hollywood from Chicago to talk about the film and possibly to collaborate on the script. A complete lack of rapport was immediately apparent—Preminger arranged for Algren to stay in a cottage at the Beverly Hills Hotel, but when he called to schedule a meeting he discovered that the novelist had checked out. Later in the day Algren telephoned to inform Preminger that the hotel had been too “fancy” and that he had relocated to a dump on skid row. After a few days of working with Algren, Preminger claimed the novelist “couldn't write dialogue or visualize scenes.” The author made a hasty departure, convinced that a director who only knew “life at the top” had no chance of making an authentic film about human wreckage in the urban wasteland. Preminger's response: “The property rights are transferred. I have no obligation, nor do I try, to be ‘faithful’ to the book.” (Hirsch)

**Reference** Selby

A NOVEL  
BY THE AUTHOR OF 'NEVER COME MORNING'

NELSON ALGREN

~~THE~~  
MAN  
WITH THE  
GOLDEN  
ARM



the  
MAN  
WITH THE  
GOLDEN  
ARM



NELSON  
ALGREN

DOUBLEDAY



KAROV

# MISCHIEF

CHARLOTTE ARMSTRONG

**Publisher** New York: Coward-McCann, 1950

After a laudable introduction to the film noir cycle in the 1940s with *The Unsuspected* (a Haycraft Queen cornerstone, and one of the best film noir adaptations of that decade), author Charlotte Armstrong's work was brought to the screen twice more in the 1950s. The first of these was an adaptation of her sixth novel, *Mischief*, originally serialized in the April and May 1950 issues of *Good Housekeeping*.

Black cloth with titles in mustard yellow on the front board and spine. Endpapers illustrated with sketches of the faces belonging to the novel's three principal characters, with their respective first names noted. No topstain. No statement of edition or later printings on the copyright page. Front flap shows a price of \$2.50 at the top right corner, followed by a plot summary. Rear flap begins with a sketch of the author, followed by a list of the author's first six titles published by Coward-McCann, beginning with *Lay On, Mac Duff!* and ending with *Mischief*. Rear panel repeats the illustration used on the endpapers, with no other text.

# DON'T BOTHER TO KNOCK

ROY WARD BAKER AS ROY BAKER

**Producer** Julian Blaustein  
**Screenwriter** Daniel Taradash  
**Cinematographer** Lucien Ballard  
**Composer** Jerry Goldsmith (uncredited)  
**Cast** Richard Widmark, Marilyn Monroe, Anne Bancroft, Donna Corcoran, Jeanne Cagney, Lurene Tuttle, Elisha Cook Jr., Jim Backus, Verna Felton, Willis Bouchey, Don Beddoe, Gloria Blondell  
**Studio** Twentieth Century-Fox, 1952  
**Alternate Titles** *Mischief*, *Night Without Sleep* (working titles)  
**Runtime** 76 minutes

Dorothy McGuire was originally cast to be the star of *Don't Bother to Knock*, with Jules Dassin set to direct; but ultimately the film would mark the debut of Anne Bancroft, the American film debut of British director Roy Ward Baker (best known for *A Night to Remember* and *Quatermass and the Pit*), and the first leading dramatic role for Marilyn Monroe. Baker would return to direct one other American film noir the same year, *Night Without Sleep*.

The action in *Don't Bother to Knock* takes place in real time, making subtle use of clocks and dialogue to mark its passage. While not the first attempt to use this technique, it was one of the earliest, following its first use in *The Set-Up* (1949). (AFI)

**Reference** Selby

MISCHIEF

CHARLOTTE  
ARMSTRONG

EDWARD  
MCCANN

# MISCHIEF



*by*  
**CHARLOTTE ARMSTRONG**  
*author of* **THE UNSUSPECTED**

# THE ALBATROSS

CHARLOTTE ARMSTRONG

**Publisher** New York: Coward-McCann, 1957

*The Albatross*, a collection of stories, was American author Charlotte Armstrong thirteenth book for her longtime publisher Coward-McCann. One of those stories, "The Enemy," first appeared six years before, in the May 1951 issue of *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*.

Queen's Quorum selection.

Black cloth with titles in metallic red and gilt on the spine, no topstain. No statement of edition or later printings on the copyright page. Front flap indicates price as "T.A. / \$3.50" at the top right corner, followed by a summary of the ten stories in the book, ending with a jacket design credit for Rus Anderson. Rear panel shows three reviews for the author's previous book, *A Dram of Poison*, beginning with Anthony Boucher of *The New York Times Book Review* and ending with the *Oregon Journal*, then the publisher's name and address. Rear panel shows a photo of the author at her typewriter, followed by a short biography.

# TALK ABOUT A STRANGER

DAVID BRADLEY

**Producer** Richard Goldstone  
**Screenwriter** Margaret Fitts  
**Cinematographer** John Alton  
**Composer** David Buttolph  
**Cast** George Murphy, Nancy Davis, Billy Gray, Lewis Stone, Kurt Kaszner, Anna Glomb  
**Studio** MGM, 1952  
**Alternate Titles** *The Enemy*, *Stranger in the House* (working titles)  
**Runtime** 65 minutes

Portions of *Talk About a Stranger* were shot on location in Redlands, CA, and the "citrus districts" of the San Fernando Valley in Southern California. The film also marked the directorial debut of David Bradley, who gained Hollywood's attention with his first film—a student effort—an adaptation of *Peer Gynt*, made while Bradley and the film's star, Charlton Heston, were students at Northwestern University. He would direct only three more films, all low-budget efforts: *Dragstrip Riot* (1958), *12 to the Moon* (1960), and *They Saved Hitler's Brain* (1963).

*Talk About a Stranger* begins as a fairly routine thriller based on a caution against McCarthyist hysteria of the day, but evolves into something more complex and memorable. When the young boy at the center of the story sets off to find incriminating evidence to prove who is responsible for having poisoned his dog, the tone and the images grow more gothic and evocative. John Alton's superb cinematography conjures up masterful effects from the smoke rising from the smudge-pots, twisted branches, dark foliage, and cloud-obscured moonlight. The script resolutely retains the young boy's point of view while never stooping to condescend. (Brennan)

**Reference** Selby, Silver and Ward, Lyons