



Mildred Pierce

By James M. Cain

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In *Mildred Pierce*, noir master James M. Cain creates a novel of acute social observation and devastating emotional violence, with a heroine whose ambitions and sufferings are never less than recognizable.

Mildred Pierce had gorgeous legs, a way with a skillet, and a bone-deep core of toughness. She used those attributes to survive a divorce and poverty and to claw her way out of the lower middle class. But Mildred also had two weaknesses: a yen for shiftless men, and an unreasoning devotion to a monstrous daughter.

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Mildred Pierce By James M. Cain Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #81968 in Books
- Brand: Vintage
- Published on: 1989-05-14
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- Binding: Paperback
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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Cain's classic novel, and the source for the 1945 film starring Joan Crawford, makes its way onto audio with this reading by actor and singer Williams. Cain's purple prose and then-scandalous dialogue take on new life under Williams's direction, her assured tone underscoring the legendary noir writer's rip-roaring tale of a woman scorned who survives no-good men and a hateful daughter to make it in 1930s Los Angeles.

Williams is out of her depth encountering tense or high-pitched dialogue, reading it in a clipped monotone that does little for Cain's drama, but is on far stronger ground with the rest of the book, which flourishes under her steady, patient, ever-so-slightly melancholic gaze. Williams's reading lacks the rage that moved Crawford's Mildred, but her version of the now-familiar story amplifies our sense of Cain's heroine as an abandoned woman who finds her own way, on her own terms. (Apr.)

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Review

"[James M. Cain is] the poet of the hard-boiled school of the American novel." --*The Washington Post*

"Nobody has quite pulled it off the way Cain does, not Hemmingway, and not even Raymond Chandler." --
Tom Wolfe

"Cain can get down to the primary impulses of greed and sex in fewer words than any writer we know of."
--*The New York Times*

"A novel that, once begun, will almost surely be read to the end . . . it reflects no codes, no restrictions, and none but the primordial necessities. It is a bath in sensation." --*New York Times Book Review*

"[Mildred Pierce] take[s] on new life under Williams's direction . . . [the story] flourishes under her steady, patient, ever-so-slightly melancholic gaze. Williams's reading . . . amplifies our sense of Cain's heroine as an abandoned woman who finds her own way, on her own terms." --*Publishers Weekly*

From the Inside Flap

Mildred Pierce had gorgeous legs, a way with a skillet, and a bone-deep core of toughness. She used those attributes to survive a divorce and poverty and to claw her way out of the lower middle class. But Mildred also had two weaknesses: a yen for shiftless men, and an unreasoning devotion to a monstrous daughter. Out of these elements, Cain creates a novel of acute social observation and devastating emotional violence, with a heroine whose ambitions and sufferings are never less than recognizable.

Users Review

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Pamela Dodge:

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