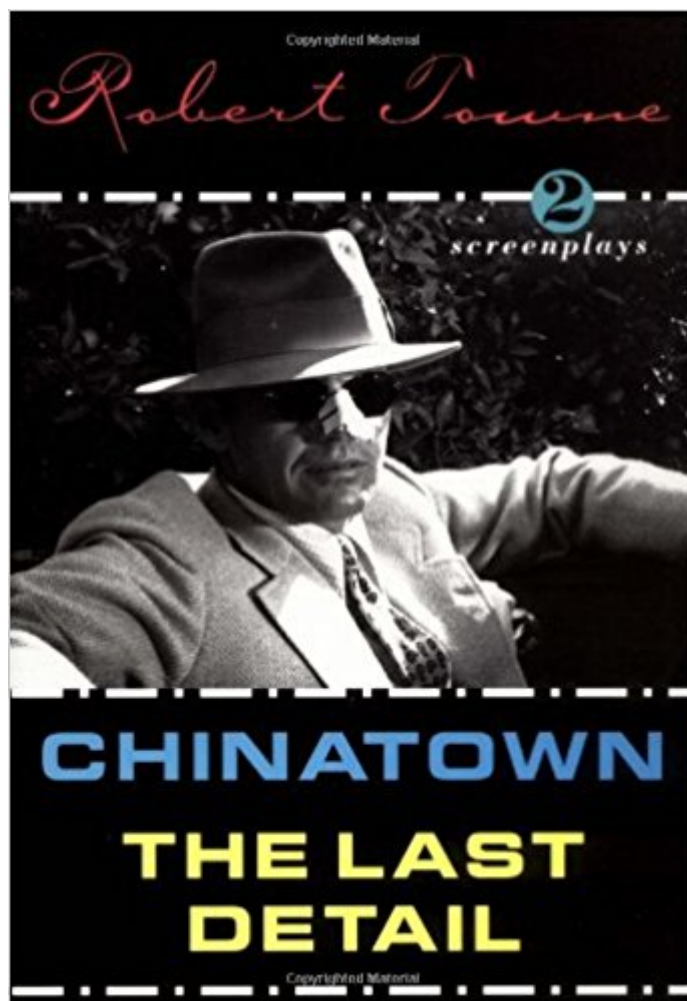


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Chinatown And The Last Detail: Two Screenplays



Synopsis

"Chinatown," generally regarded as the Great American Screenplay, follows a seedy private investigator, Jake Gittes, as he becomes involved in a case far more complicated than he ever imagined. Instead of adultery and divorce, he uncovers a conspiracy reaching to the economic foundations of Los Angeles. Set in the 1930s, the film was directed by Roman Polanski and stars Jack Nicholson, Faye Dunaway, and John Huston.

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Customer Reviews

I saw the film on cable tv back in the late '90's, read the original novel by Darryl Ponicsan and bought the screenplay by Robert Towne, Found the screenplay more interesting than the novel

One of the best screenplays ever. A good reference for me as a writer.

When Francis Ford Coppola accepted his OSCAR for screenwriting 'THE GODFATHER' ... he did something not many people do in this industry -- he thanked ROBERT TOWNE for his uncredited work on the screenplay. My respect for both men grew even more that night ... and I was only about 14 at the time.SIDE NOTE: Six years later, I was fortunate to work on my first film, HAMMETT, (Wim Wenders - dir.) that Mr. Coppola produced as a lowly casting coordinator for extras in the San Francisco location scenes. When he said hello to me for the first time on the first day of filming, I was speechless.In a sense, the writings of Mr. Towne & Mr. Coppola (and others) have been my own 'Godfathers' for my journey as a writer too.D.A.

Perhaps one of the finest screenplays ever written, Robert Towne's "Chinatown" may take place in the 1930s and have been written in the 1970s, but it is more relevant today than ever. For fans of the film, I cannot recommend the screenplay highly enough. There is so much nuance to the film, but reading the screenplay adds another layer to the complex story, allowing the reader to go through Towne's story moment by moment, savoring it. For screenwriters, it is a brilliant example of just how much can be done in those 110 pages.

Chinatown is one of my favorite films and one of the best films of all time. The screenplay allowed me to look at how the film might have been made with some of the omitted scenes and dialog. I have read it and re-read it.

Robert Towne is easily one of the best screenwriters whose words have ever graced the silver screen. In these two screenplays, Towne displays his mesmerizing talent by fusing all of the integral elements that make a film not only brilliant but fun as well. With his mixture of memorable and unique characters, cutting-edge dialogue and nuanced styles, Towne is able to craft films that play out in the mind as well as they do on the screen. In the mystery thriller "Chinatown" that starred Jack Nicholson, Towne takes us on a nostalgia trip to a thinly disguised water war in 1930s-era Los Angeles. The characters leap off the page as well as they did off the screen in the film. Towne's words build momentum, snowballing through the heavily stylized locales and situations to a climactic sequence. Even without the support of Nicholson, Faye Dunaway and John Huston the screenplay is extremely readable and enjoyable. "The Last Detail", also starring Nicholson in the film, tells the story of two Navy lifers who are assigned to transport a buffoonish young recruit cross-country where he will spend the next eight years imprisoned - and the wild "Odyssey"-inspired events that unfold when the two lifers attempt to show the young prisoner a good time before he goes under. Not as intricate as "Chinatown" but the dialogue here is way before it's time and would fit right in with even the more unconventional of 90s movies. The heartfelt emotion needs no musical score or fancy camera movements to show up, and Towne invokes all the feelings by simply putting words into a character's mouth. These films were released in the mid-70s and he won Oscars for both of them, and they have definitely stood the test of time. Reading this volume is almost as fun as watching the films, and in these days of reckless abandonment when it comes to screenwriting and throwing formula and paradigm out the window - Towne makes it look all too easy, but his scripts are perfectly layered and unravel before our eyes both in the viewing of the films and in the reading

of the scripts. This is a true testament to the fact that screenwriting, while often scoffed as the lowest form of writing, second only to television, is transcending itself as a true and beautiful art form.

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