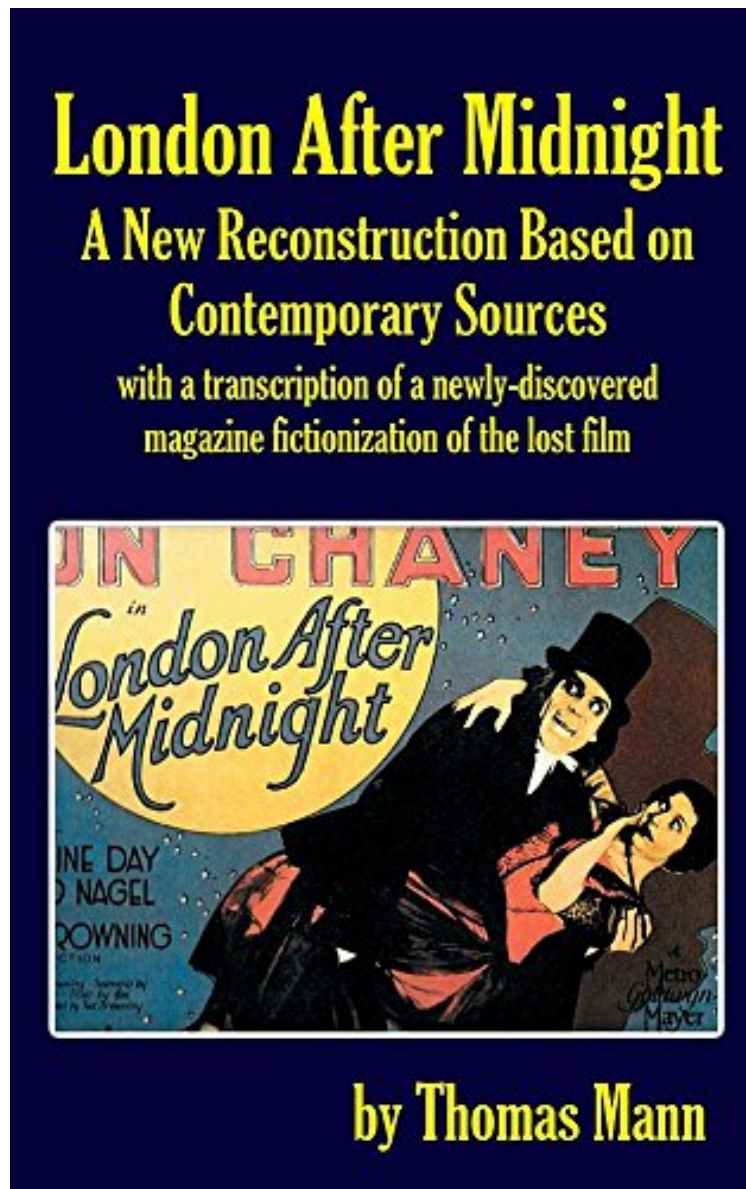


(Download ebook) London After Midnight: A New Reconstruction Based on Contemporary Sources  
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## London After Midnight: A New Reconstruction Based on Contemporary Sources (Hardback)

Thomas Mann

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Thomas Mann : London After Midnight: A New Reconstruction Based on Contemporary Sources (Hardback)  
before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised London After  
Midnight: A New Reconstruction Based on Contemporary Sources (Hardback):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. How written sources may reconstruct a lost film  
By Brian Taves  
How may the plot of a lost film be ascertained, when the existing written sources conflict? That's the conundrum addressed in *London After Midnight: A New Reconstruction Based on Contemporary Sources* focusing on the much sought-after Lon Chaney vehicle directed by Tod Browning. No one could be more qualified to explore this question than Library of Congress scholar Thomas Mann, author of two volumes studying tie-in books and magazine fictionizations in the horror and mystery genre, *Horror Mystery Photoplay Editions and Magazine Fictionizations*, Vol. 1 (2004), Vol. II (2016) and also *The Oxford Guide to Library Research*, now in its fourth edition. The last print of *London After Midnight* was destroyed in the early 1960s. The interest in *London After Midnight* remains so great, over fifty years after it was last seen, that TCM even attempted a reconstruction using creatively photographed stills. The core of the problem, as Mann delineates, is that surviving scripts, reviews, summaries of the plot—even published versions—all not only differ, but are incompatible. The TCM reconstruction of *London After Midnight* used one version, and almost certainly differed substantially in its outline from the original. What makes this volume essential for any Chaney, Browning, genre enthusiast, or student of silent film, is that Mann introduces into new evidence: a magazine fictionization of *London After Midnight* hitherto buried in the pages of unindexed magazines. This fictionization (itself some twenty pages of this book) was in a regular magazine that provided the stories of movies for fans of the day, and provides the most coherent outline of the plot that has survived. Placing the magazine versions along with the plot outlines from other sources provides an important example of how lost films may be studied. *London After Midnight* will likely remain a lost film, but with this book the reader is closer than ever before to the experience of seeing the film, and Mann has provided a model of scholarship in using such primary materials, often contradictory, to reconstruct a major instance of movie going from long ago. The concept of silent film restorations has hitherto focused on visual materials; in this volume, Mann enlarges the scope of that endeavor to written materials and, most importantly, how they may be utilized even when they are problematic and conflicting.

Tod Browning's silent movie horror film, *London After Midnight* (1927) starring Lon Chaney, Marceline Day, Conrad Nagel, Henry B. Walthall, and Polly Moran, has intrigued silent movie fans for decades. Now considered a lost film, surviving production stills, a Photoplay Edition novel, scripts, and other memorabilia give some feel for the actual film, but their varying plot gaps, anomalies, and inconsistencies leave viewers wondering how the actual film unfolded . . . until now. Author Thomas Mann offers a fascinating reconstruction based on his transcription of a rediscovered 11,000-word fictionization first published in *Boy's Cinema* (1928) that may resolve the conflicts between previous versions. His detailed comparison of all surviving sources sheds new light on the discovery of a second murder victim, a plot element not in the final film; Lon Chaney's two different makeups in playing detective Edward C. Burke; Henry Walthall as Sir James Hamlin holding two guns rather than one in the scene in which his character, under hypnosis, re-enacts a crime. The last known film print is believed to have been destroyed in a 1967 MGM vault fire, but you can now take a front row seat into the haunted mansion filled with vampires, cobwebs, bats, and "The Man of a Thousand Faces." About the author: Thomas Mann is an independent scholar living in Washington, DC. He spent more than three decades as a general reference librarian at the Library of Congress. He is the author of *The Oxford Guide to Library Research* (Oxford University Press, 2015) and of *Horror Mystery Photoplay Editions and Magazine Fictionizations* (McFarland, 2004; vol. II, BearManor Media, 2016).