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The Charlie Chan Film Encyclopedia



Synopsis

The first film featuring Charlie Chan, *The House Without a Key*, appeared in 1925. Forty-seven films and six Charlies later, the series still delights audiences. Charlie Chan connoisseurs cite a variety of reasons for the honorable detective's longevity and appeal, ranging from his wit and personality to the films' fascinating casts that often included future celebrities. This encyclopedia contains over 1,900 entries for characters, actors, crew members, plot devices, and facts, as well as film summaries and Charlie's famous aphorisms. Photographs accompany the text and the entries are arranged alphabetically for easy reference and access. Practically anything a fan of these films might want to know is thoroughly analyzed here.

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Customer Reviews

The author Howard Berlin previously wrote an interesting small book of quotations from Charlie Chan, taken from the films. It was a good book. There seems to be some type of war between reviewers of Berlin's "Encyclopedia" and Ken Hanke's "Charlie Chan At the Movies", and I wasn't sure which one to go for. Both seemed overpriced. After reading the glowing recommendations by several other reviewers, I decided to take the plunge and spend \$55 for the Berlin book, "Charlie Chan Film Encyclopedia" from .com, which was the price for the original library binding. I was disappointed. I'm going to try to describe what I felt was lacking here. First, this is a film book, and the entries within it need some corresponding reference photos from the films. Howard Berlin evidently did not have access to more than a handful of promotional pictures to accompany the individual

Chan films, and that's a problem with this book. Lobby cards for "The Trap" and "Charlie Chan in Shanghai" are disappointing examples of few photos shown for specific films. Toler's picture under the listing for his name is at least in character as Chan, but not for Oland or Winters. Most of the other actors' photos used are not even from Chan films. For example, the only photo of Mantan Moreland is from a 1955 non-Chan film; there's no picture for the Victor Sen Yung entry, even though the author says appeared in 18 Chan films; two Benson Fong pictures for his listing, neither from a Chan film; two non-Chan Keye Luke pictures for his listing. The photos of other actors in the Charlie Chan films likewise are not from Chan films. It would be helpful to see them in character as portrayed in the Chan films. Or, isn't the encyclopedia supposed to be focusing on the Charlie Chan films?

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