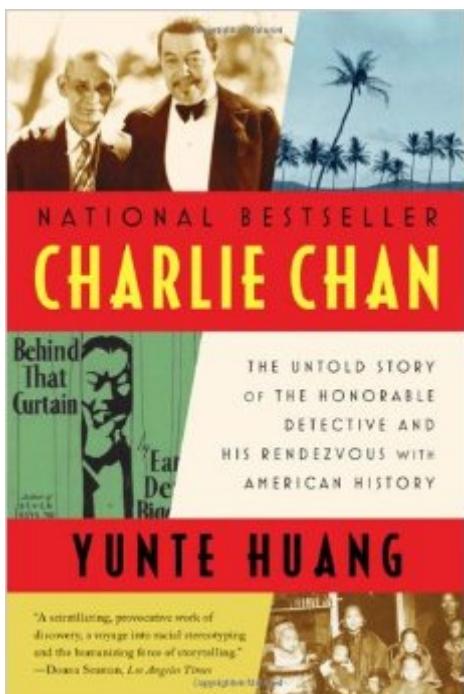


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# Charlie Chan: The Untold Story Of The Honorable Detective And His Rendezvous With American History



## Synopsis

Winner of the 2011 Edgar Award for Best Critical/Biographical Book and Shortlisted for the 2010 National Book Critics Circle Award in Biography: "An ingenious and absorbing bookâ It will permanently change the way we tell this troubled yet gripping story." • Jonathan Spence Hailed as "irrepressibly spirited and entertaining" • (Pico Iyer, *Time*) and "a fascinating cultural survey" • (Paul Devlin, *Daily Beast*), this provocative first biography of Charlie Chan presents American history in a way that it has never been told before. Yunte Huang ingeniously traces Charlie Chan from his real beginnings as a bullwhip-wielding detective in territorial Hawaii to his reinvention as a literary sleuth and Hollywood film icon. Huang finally resurrects the "honorable detective" • from the graveyard of detested postmodern symbols and reclaims him as the embodiment of America's rich cultural diversity. The result is one of the most critically acclaimed books of the year and a "deeply personal . . . voyage into racial stereotyping and the humanizing force of story telling" • (Donna Seaman, *Los Angeles Times*). 35 black-and-white illustrations

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sherlock Holmes, Sam Spade, Lord Peter Wimsey, and Hercule Poirot are among the most famous of literary characters. They may have had their eccentricities, but being of an exotic or foreign racial extraction was not among them. It's different for another famous shamus, Charlie Chan; I know detective fiction fans might be able to think of some other non-white gumshoe, but he's the only one who comes to my mind. Chan did all the detective work those other sleuths did but in an honorable

and modest way that was quite different, and all the while he mouthed amusing aphorisms that would have fit well inside a fortune cookie ("The wise elephant does not seek to ape the butterfly."). It says something that while none of those other detectives is at all controversial, Charlie Chan has at times been at the center of controversy, racial controversy. Chan's controversies, his origins, his portrayals in film, and his continuing appeal are the themes within *Charlie Chan: The Untold Story of the Honorable Detective and His Rendezvous with American History* (Norton) by Yunte Huang. Huang is from China, but is an American citizen and professor of English. In his graduate student days, he came upon Charlie Chan books at a garage sale and became a fan. He has turned his literary skills, as well as big dollops of history, onto the Chan case, and obviously enjoys letting us know about the often surprising facts he has uncovered. His book is a cheerful and insightful appreciation that will help anyone more deeply understand Chan's illustrious career. Chan was the brainchild of Earl Derr Biggers, who grew up in Ohio and in 1925 wrote *The House Without a Key*, the book in which Charlie Chan first appeared.

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