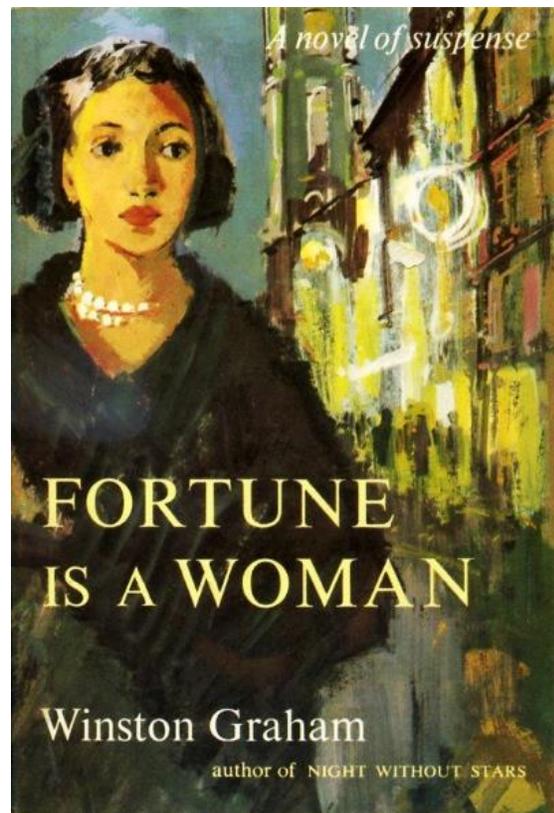
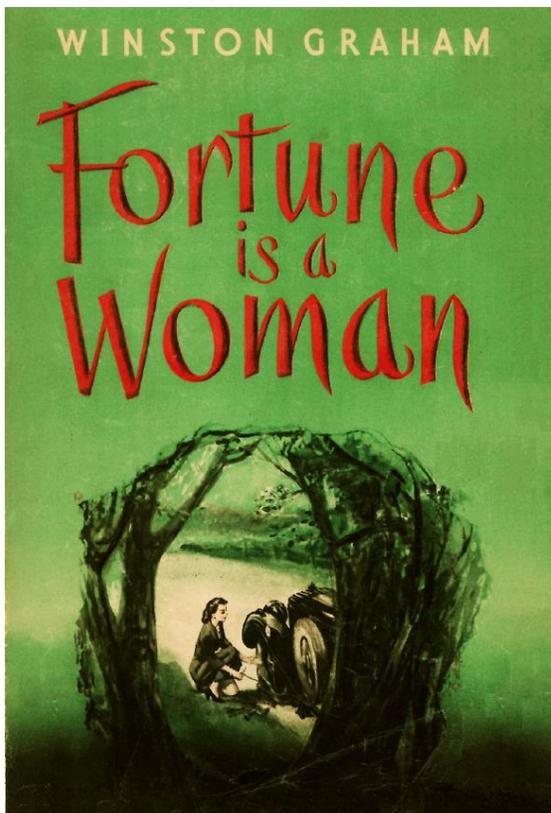


Fortune is a Woman

The second of nine WG novels published by Hodder and Stoughton, *Fortune is a Woman* went on sale in the UK in December 1952. In addition to this first hardback edition, condensed versions of the novel appeared in *The Ladies' Home Journal* of November 1952, *John Bull* magazine (seven editions, 31 January to 14 March 1953), Icelandic daily newspaper *Morgunblaðið* (twenty-eight parts from 19 December 1952 to 25 January 1953) and *The Farmer & Settler* (a New South Wales weekly; twelve instalments from 8 January to 26 March 1954). The novel was published in the United States by Doubleday as a Book of the Month in 1953 and by Germany's Gutenberg Book Guild in 1958. Other foreign language translations surfaced in the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Spain and Croatia. Since 1957, several paperback editions have appeared from Hodder, Fontana, Pan etc. Lastly, the book was filmed at Shepperton Studios, Surrey in 1956 with premieres following in the UK on 13 March 1957 and the US (as "She Played with Fire") on 8 July 1958.



Hodder and Stoughton, 1952 / Doubleday, 1953

Inside: 8-page
Supplement }

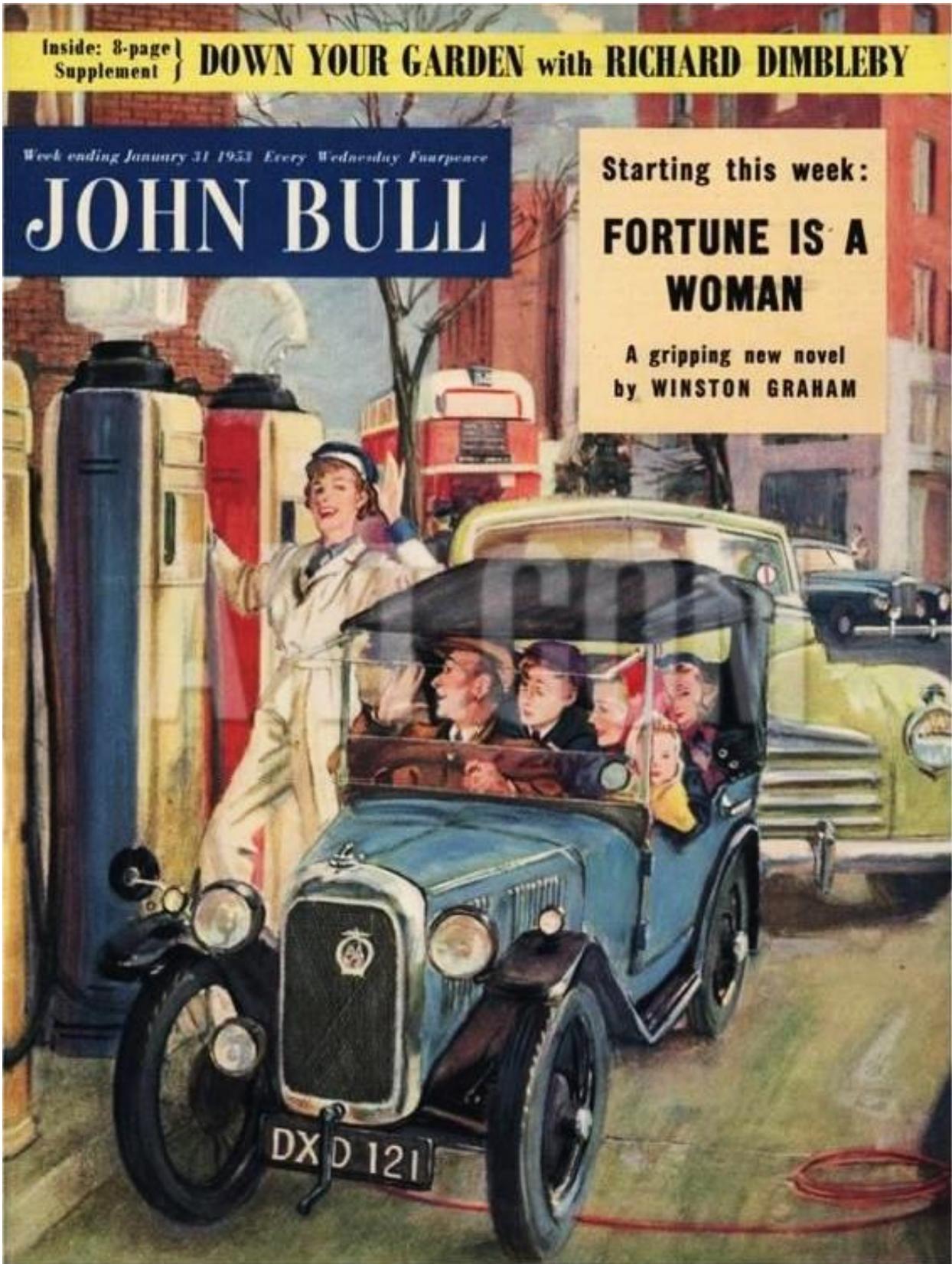
DOWN YOUR GARDEN with **RICHARD DIMBLEBY**

Week ending January 31 1953 Every Wednesday Fourpence

JOHN BULL

Starting this week:
**FORTUNE IS A
WOMAN**

A gripping new novel
by **WINSTON GRAHAM**



John Bull, 31 January 1953, including part one (of seven) of *Fortune* ...



Fortune is a Woman

by WINSTON GRAHAM

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

I was past caring about the police. I would make Jerome talk if I had to beat the truth out of him

16

I WAS WAITING in a London hotel lounge to meet a blackmailer, a crooked solicitor named Jerome. Sarah, my wife, had had some of him already. An unknown "client" of his claimed to have proof that Tracey Moreton, Sarah's first husband, had committed arson and fraud to the tune of £28,000. The "client" demanded half the money to keep his mouth shut.

I'm Oliver Branwell. My firm of insurance adjusters, Abercrombies, had handled Tracey's business, and I knew that the charge was at least half true. Tracey had deliberately set fire to his house, Lewis Manor. I knew that, because I was in the house that night—a fact I had kept secret.

I'd been suspicious of Tracey for some time: I'd said as much, without mentioning his name, to Henry Dane, one of my oldest friends in the insurance world. And I'd gone down to Lewis to do some checking up, thinking that Tracey was away on holiday.

I'd found Tracey's dead body—amid all the standard preparations for fire raising. Realizing that part of the house was already ablaze, I went to investigate. To my horror, I fancied I heard

Tracey's asthmatic breathing near in darkness: he was a martyr to the disease; the flames drove me out of the house.

Tracey had always been friendly to I'd liked him well enough, though so friends in the art world—notably Clive a pompous and pontifical connoisseur sister Ambrosine—rather irritated me.

As for Sarah, I'd been in love with years. I asked her to marry me as decently could after Tracey's death.

If Tracey was dead, . . . I was to lose my nerve. On our honeymoon, I had an appalling shock when an a packet arrived containing Tracey's si The insurance world was gossiping th had been seen near the burning hou had been a bad patch when I had even Sarah of complicity in Tracey's we were through that wood long ago, this little rat Jerome. . . .

A man in a dirty raincoat came hotel lounge to meet me. He answer description of the solicitor pretty w Jerome?" I asked coldly.

"I'm afraid not, sir." He growl



This issue of *Ladies' Home Journal* from November 1952 includes a complete condensed *Fortune is a Woman* over 26 pages (including ads). Below, the story's opening page



She was beautiful, mysterious. He was in love with her... and he suspected her of fraud.

THE ROMAN COMPLETE PLAIN DRESS CHRISTMAS GIFT

By WINSTON GRHAM

Hamingjan í hendi mér

Skáldsaga eftir Winston Graham

Framhaldssagan 1

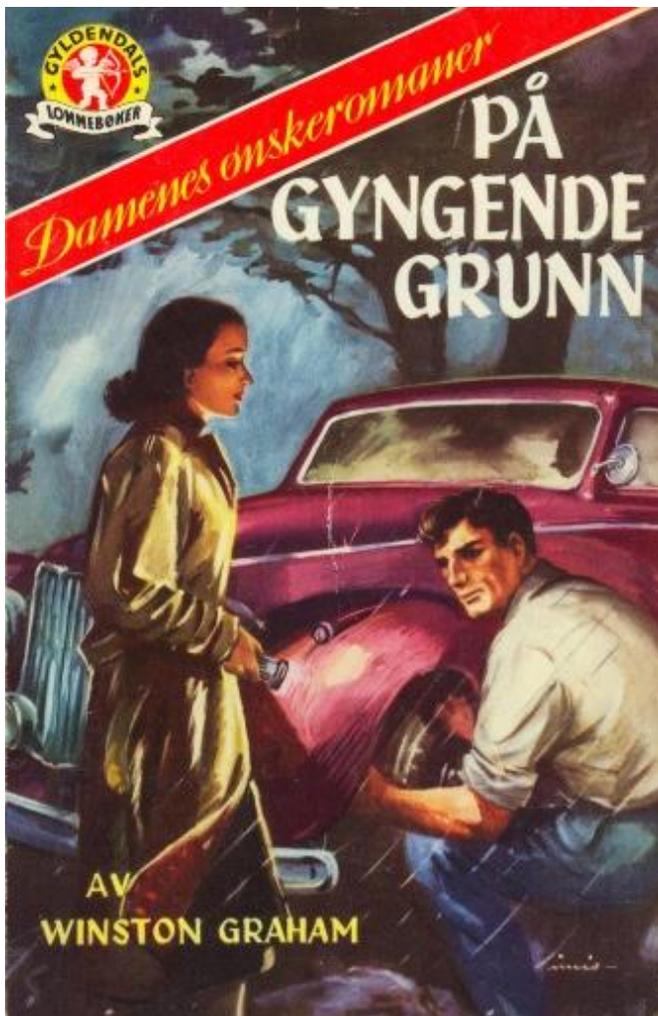
EF TIL vill kann fólk að segja, að ekki sé það í frásögur fær- andi, þegar ég hitti hana fyrst. En því meir sem ég hugsa um það, þeim mun táknrænna finnst mér það. Það var skömmu áður en stríðið brauzt út. Ég var hálf- gerður umrenningur, tók vinnu þar sem ég fékk hana og vann hvaða vinnu sem ég fékk. Það sprakk hjá henni hjólbarðinn,

næsta morgun um ellefu leytið. Var það ég, sem hafði skipt um hjólbarða fyrir ungrú Darnley? Einmitt. Þá átti ég að gera svo vel að koma með þeim á stöðina. Ungfrú Darnley hafði týnt arm- bandi með gimsteinum og það átti að yfirheyra mig.

Mér gramdist stórlega, og mér datt í hug að hún væri ef til vill á stöðinni til að ákæra mig um þjófnað. En þegar þangað kom, var þar enginn nema lögreglu-

bauð mér stöðu í tryggingarfélagi föður síns.

Ég man eftir því, þegar ég tal- aði við hann í fyrsta sinn. Við fórum út á veitingahús á eftir og spjölluðum saman yfir kaffi- bolla. Hann reyndi að útskýra það fyrir mér, í hverju starf mitt væri fólgið: Þegar fyrirtæki eða einstaklingur varð fyrir tapi eða tjóni, var ráðinn tryggingarsér- fræðingur til að rannsaka og meta tjónið og semja um þá upp-



Above: from the 19 December 1952 issue of Icelandic daily newspaper *Morgunblaðið*, the opening of the first instalment of its twenty-eight-part serialisation of *Fortune is a Woman* (*Hamingjan í hendi mér* = *Happiness in my hand*)

Left: a smart Norwegian pocket-book edition from Gyldendals, 1955, as *On Shaky Ground*.



When *The Farmer & Settler* began its serialisation of *Fortune is a Woman* on 8 January 1954 (front page excerpt above), it told its readers that

Winston Graham ... got the idea for this story after helping a girl to change a wheel on the London-Cornwall road and hearing about the insurance world's new specialist – the adjuster – and the tricky inquiries he has to make

but there's more to it than that:

*All my books have some point of view to put over, although sometimes it may have been so disguised that nobody discovered it except myself. In *Fortune is a Woman*, for instance, although ostensibly it was a novel about an insurance agent who got involved in a fraud and involved with a woman whom he thought was in the fraud, it was also to me an attempt to contrast two men, one who before the war had been a down-and-out and whom the war had made, given him*

self-respect, given him a position, given him something to live for, and one who before the war was one of the landed gentry and whom the war had broken physically, financially and, in the end, morally. Mind you, I disguised the thing so well that probably nobody notices what I'm about, but I like to have something to say. To me it makes the novel doubly worth writing.

(WG in *Books and Bookmen*, October 1959 and on *The Art of Suspense*, The BBC Home Service, 25 May 1961)

He had gained knowledge of loss adjusting through the good offices of a friend:

When WG needed to know about the insurance world for Fortune is a Woman he went to see an old tennis-playing friend from Cornwall who was also a member of Lloyds. "My friend said, 'Of course, come up,' and he put a director of his firm at my disposal, who took me round all the loss-adjuster firms. They all greeted him, obviously anxious to oblige. I picked on one, and with the right sympathetic approach I managed to stay in their office and even go out on jobs with them for a few days."

(WG to Arthur Pottersman in *Argosy*, December 1967)

As was customary in the period 1936-1955, WG showed the pre-publication manuscript of his novel to trusted mentor Tom Attlee (1880-1960) who, after reading it, provided his usual meticulous feedback – particularly helpful in this instance since Attlee, a trained architect, was able to appraise WG's *Lewis Manor* with professional disinterest:

Could you take us round the old place at greater length and in more penetrating appreciation of detail? That would be in character for Oliver – his work necessitated that particularity.

C.f. those masterly descriptions in Dickens of Todgers' (in Martin Chuzzlewit) and Bleak House when shrewdly selected detail gives the character. I should cut out the diamond panes – not because they are out of character, but because they have been put into so many Old Cottage Tea Rooms that they suggest fake old not real old (in the same way you can't sheet walls with marble as the Byzantines did because Lyons does – and the association is café not church) ... Wouldn't you have a great solid bannister that looks as safe as anything; but the wood worm has reduced it to a shell? That is what actually happens – unless you have observed the little holes, you may lean on it comfortably, and it suddenly gives a crunch and a cloud of dust and your nose hits the floor. Your introduction of lath and plaster suggests that sham-old character which we want to avoid in Lowis manor house. It was genuine all right – but decayed.

WG took the comments to heart: neither "diamond panes" nor "lath and plaster" feature in the published novel. Tom also observed that "the plump girl in a black dress suggests to me a Lyons waitress – a nice girl but not Sarah" – and that description too is gone (when Oliver first meets her, Sarah is "tallish and fairly plump" and wears a coat). Tom objects to the notion of black hair shining "brunzy ... when the sun hits it"; again, the book offers "curly dark hair with a touch of bronze" (page 79) and the sun turning "all (her hair's) darkness into copper" (page 122) – but there is no juxtaposition anywhere of "black" and "bronze". Attlee points WG towards a then-recently published book about art forger Han van Meegeren, to whom WG lightly alludes on page 87 as "that Dutchman".

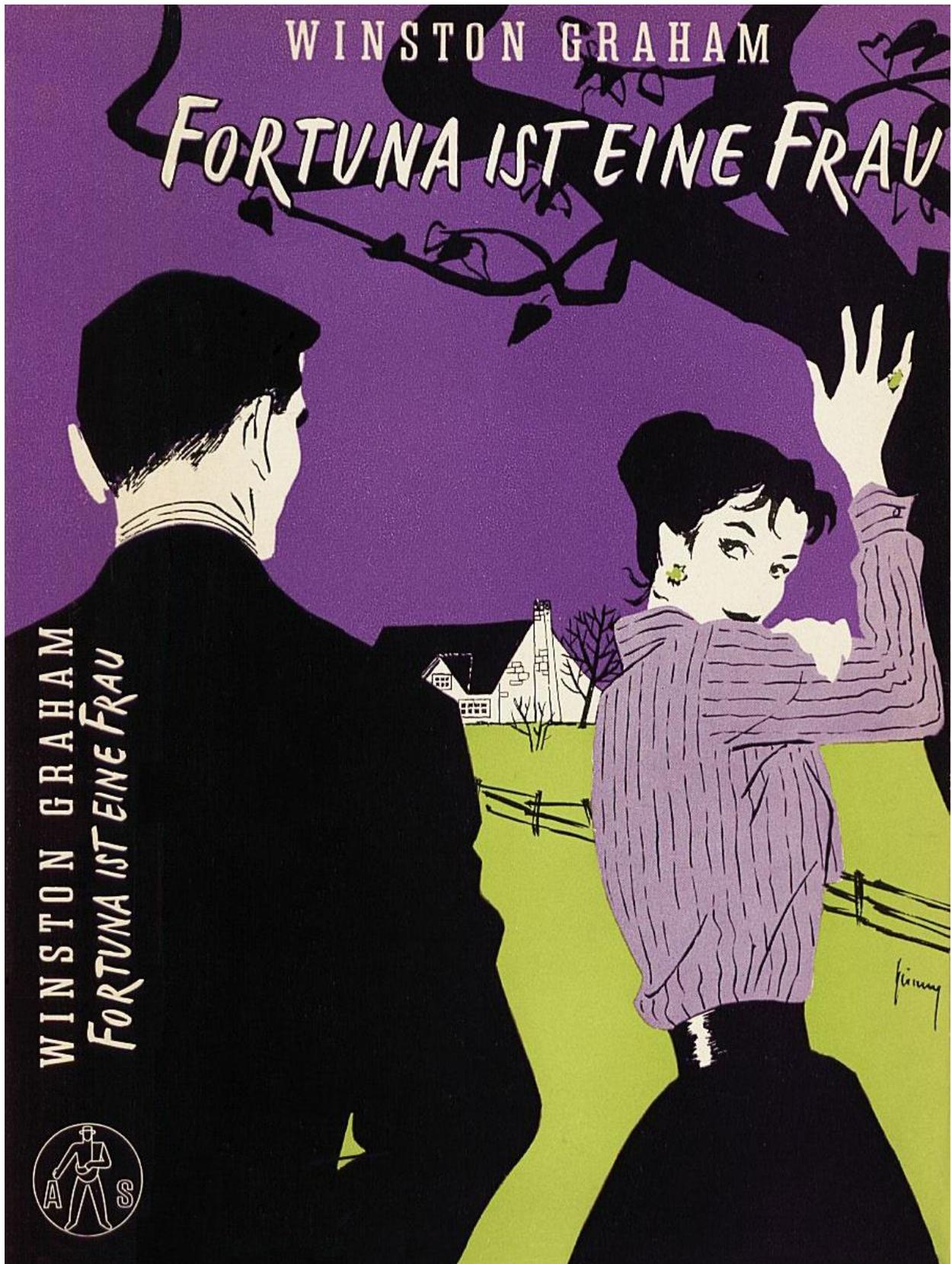
The novel was well-received:

One must congratulate Winston Graham on constructing a plot so good. (Francis Iles, The Sunday Times)

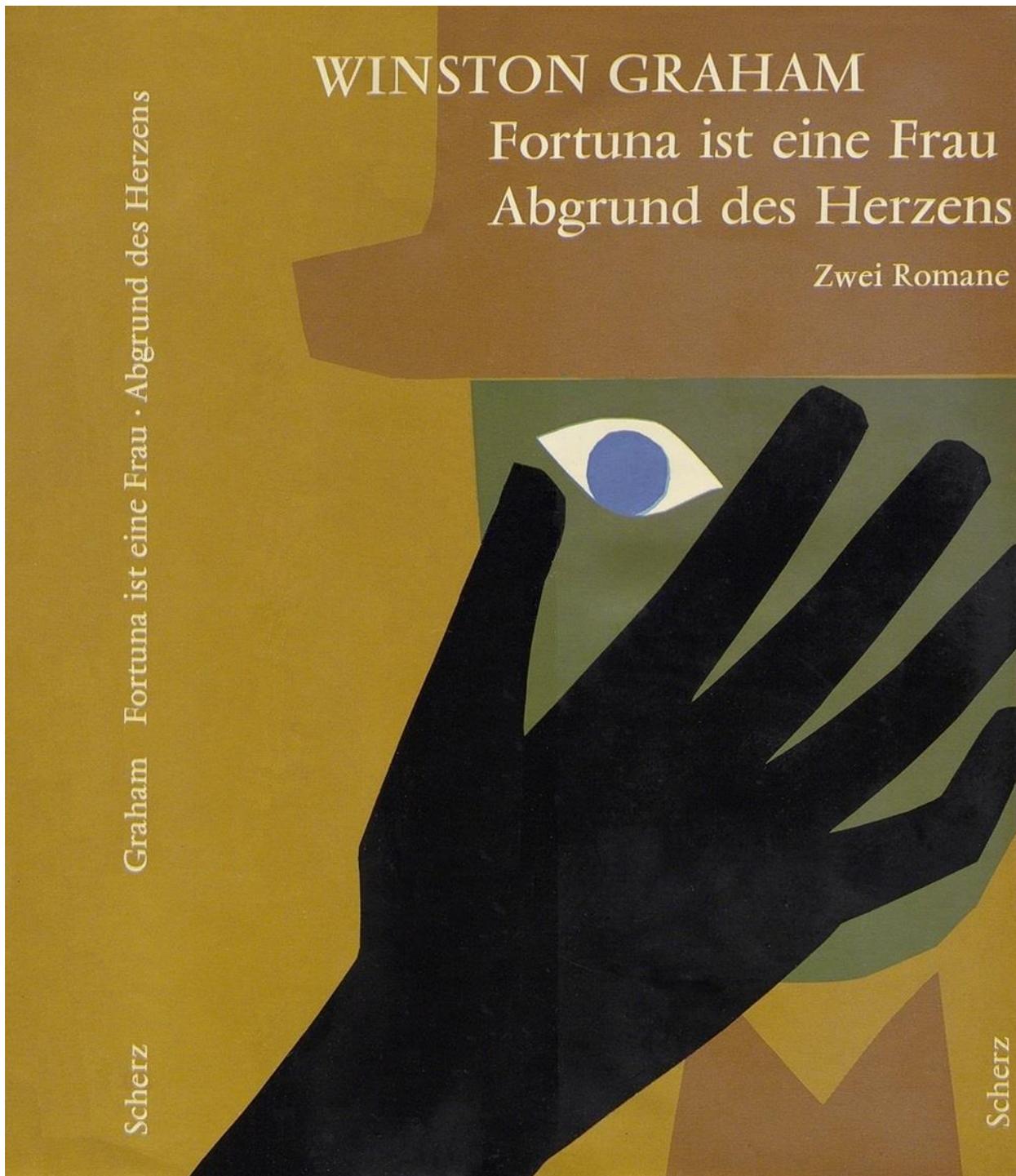
Exceptionally readable ... We are kept at the pitch of mystery and suspense. (The Scotsman)



Swedish, Wahlströms, 1954

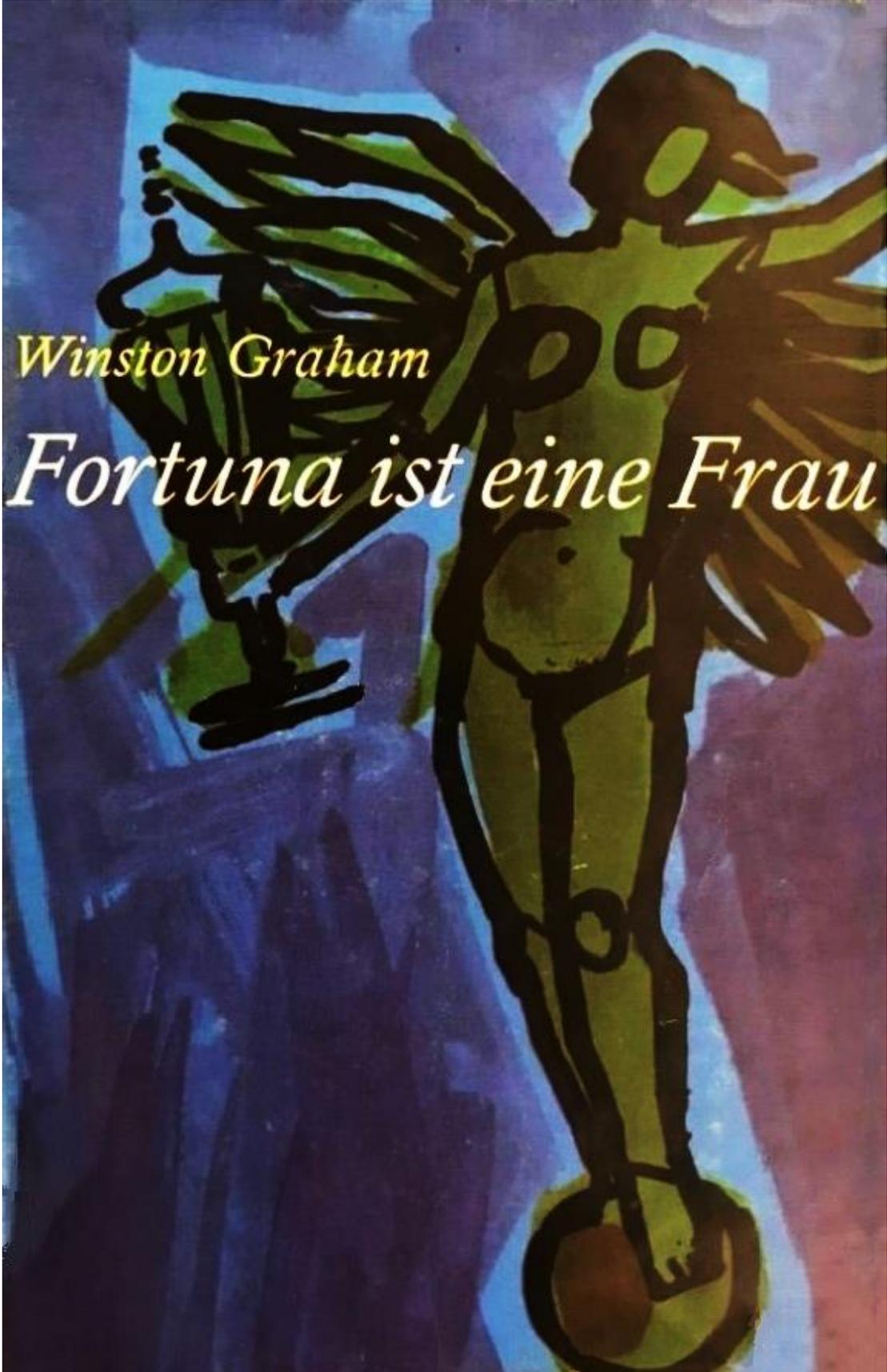


German, Scherz, 1958



Scherz published *Fortune* twice – first as per the previous page and then, in 1962, paired in this compendium with *The Little Walls*

Below: German again, this time a Book Club edition from Bertelsmann, 1958

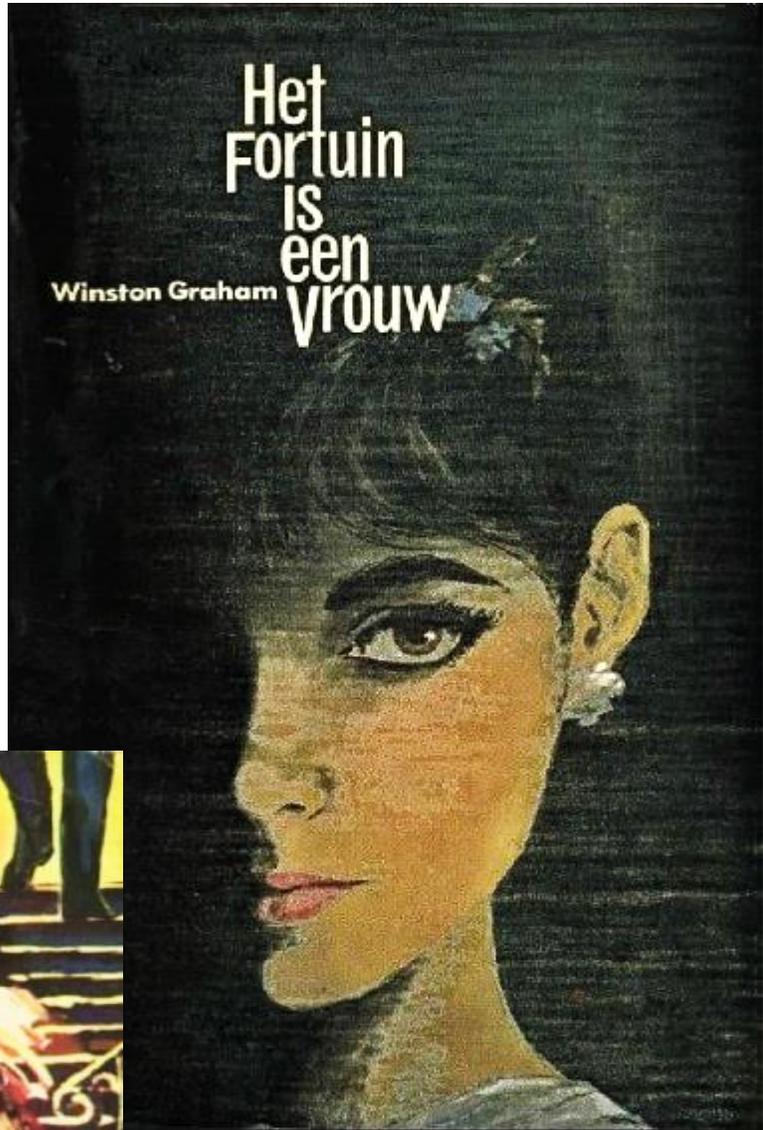


Winston Graham
Fortuna ist eine Frau

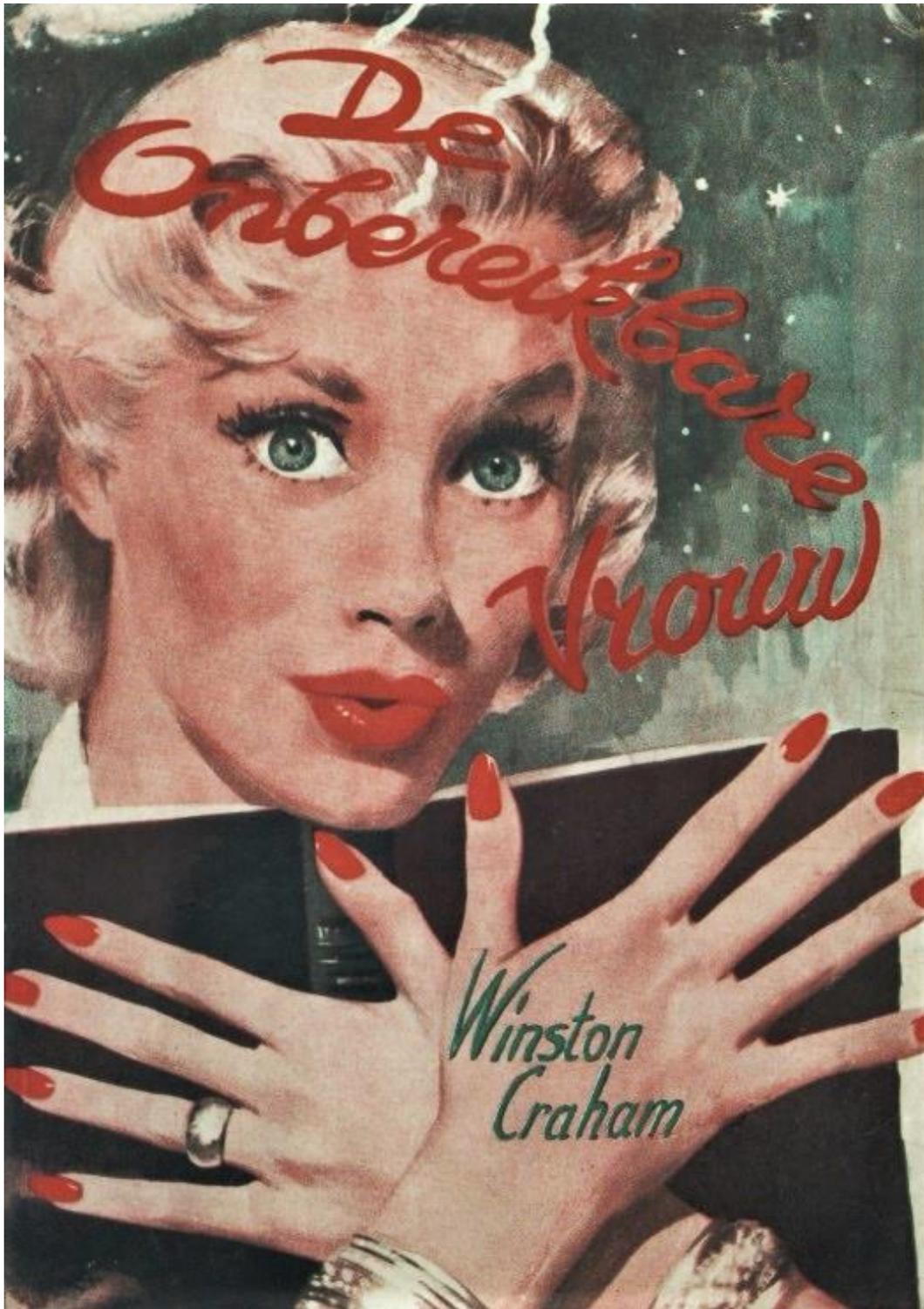


Spanish, Jano, 1957

Dutch, De Fontein, 1963



Croatian, Rijeka, 1966



This Dutch translation of *Fortune is a Woman* by H. Wegener was published probably circa 1953 (date not stated) by A. G. Schoonderbeek – Laren N. H. as *De Onbereikbare Vrouw* or *The Unattainable Woman*.¹



Winston Graham

**Fortuna
ist eine Frau**

LICHTENBERG



German, Lichtenberg, 1963

WINSTON GRAHAM

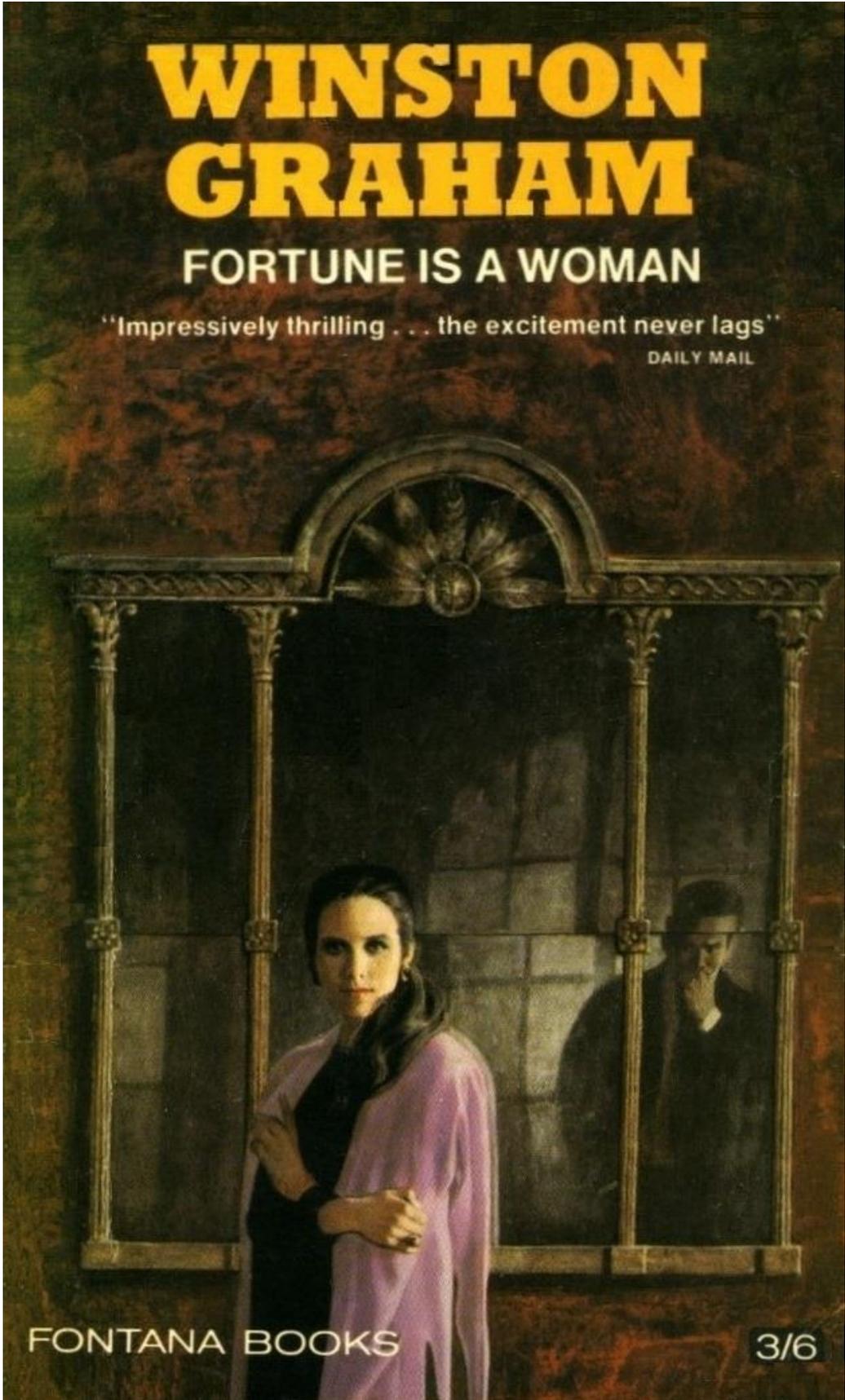
FORTUNE IS A WOMAN

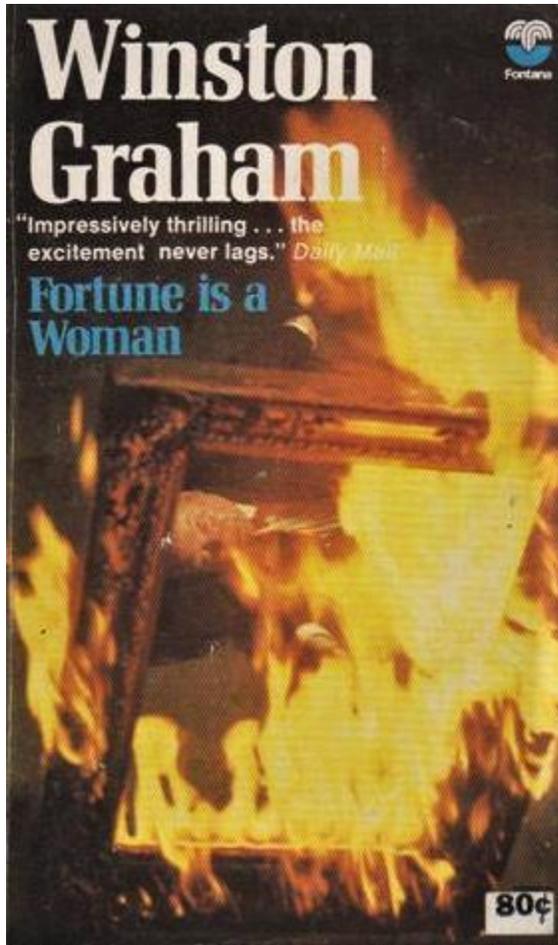
"Impressively thrilling . . . the excitement never lags"

DAILY MAIL

FONTANA BOOKS

3/6





Previous page and left: both Fontana 1967; below: Russian, Art Design, *Blue Moon* series, 1994



Impressively thrilling ... highly polished and distinguished by a rare suavity. (The Continental Daily Mail)

A sound, cleverly constructed story ... most enjoyable. (The Daily Telegraph)

This book is miles out of the ordinary. I lost one copy on a 'bus and could not be content until I had acquired another, in order to read the dénouement. (The Church Times)

Graham ... has peopled his book with lifelike men and women and positioned them on an unusual chessboard; a reader could hardly wish for a tenser, more compact psycho-thriller. (Rex Lardner, The New York Times Book Review)

[This] modern drama has the clean story line of [the author's] earlier Night Without Stars and manages some superior suspense as well as an attractive romance ... An exciting entertainment ... (Kirkus)

Graham is a writer concerned as much with character as with crime. Fortune is a Woman must take a high place among English thrillers. (The Adelaide News)

In 1967, WG acknowledged to Arthur Pottersman that he often revised the text of his novels – "not much ... just where necessary" – between editions, citing three examples, including *Fortune is a Woman*. So to what extent did he rework this text? A comparative reading of the 1952 first H&S edition and a Fontana paperback edition first published in 1967 reveals circa 134 textual variations, made for a variety of reasons:

(1) Name /detail changes

- A watercolour called "The Mill and Spinney" which is central to the story is a "Birket Foster" in the original text but a "Bonington" in the revised.

Both Myles Birket Foster (1825-1899) and Richard Parkes Bonington (1802-1828) were acclaimed watercolourists, thus equally plausible choices on WG's part. So why the change? Since Bonington died young and spent most of his short adult life in France, an English scene painted by him would perhaps be worth more than a comparable work by Birket Foster – but it seems a rather hair-splitting distinction.

- The above painting was commissioned by Moreton's "grandfather" in the original text but his "great-grandfather" in the revised.
- Highbury's producer Victor Dorrington is renamed Foster.
- The *Daily Sketch* (1952 ed., page 126) becomes after revision the *Daily Mirror* and a recently withdrawn Boots Library book (pp 194 and 219) becomes "a book ... only ... published two weeks."
- Oliver owns two cars in the course of the novel: in the original text, these are "a fifteen-year-old two-seater M.G." and "a black ... Standard 16 ... just pre-war"; in the revised text, these become "a ten-year-old two-seater Riley" and "a grey Wolseley saloon ... three years old".
- Jerome is struck off in "March 1931" in the original text but in "March 1937" in the revised.
- In Chapter 8, Oliver turns down the chance to attend a performance of *Sylphides* in the original text but of *Sylphide* in the revised. *Les Sylphides* and *La Sylphide* are both ballets, with music by Chopin and Løvenskiold respectively – but Tracey Moreton's slighting reference to Chopin (in both texts) makes it clear which one WG had in mind. Thus in this instance his revision serves only to introduce an error.
- Moreton spent "twelve months" laying the ground for his fraud in the original text, but "three years" in the revised.

(2) Updating monetary values *et al.*

- Croft buys "The Mill and Spinney" for "fifteen hundred dollars" in the original text but for "twenty-five hundred dollars" in the revised.
- Moreton increases the contents cover of Lowis Manor "from £25,000 to £30,000" in the original text but "from £30,000 to £40,000" in the revised and insures the building itself for £12,000 in the original text but for £25,000 in the revised. After his death he leaves "about four thou-

sand in cash" in the original text but "about fourteen thousand in cash in the bank" in the revised.

- The fraud pays out £28,000 in the original text, but £40,000 in the revised, with Jerome's demand rising accordingly from £14,000 to £20,000 (i.e. half in each case).
- In the original text (page 199), Sarah seems surprised to "find you can go by air" from London to Madeira – in the revised, the fact is assumed to be common knowledge.

(3) Increasing precision (1952 ed. page numbers in brackets)

- "a child murderer or something" (13) becomes "a child murderer"
- "a bit angular" (35) becomes "angular"
- "a sort of hobby" (42) becomes "a hobby"
- "a bit flattered" (46) becomes "flattered"
- "gone further overboard" (59) becomes "gone overboard"
- "a rather exciting sound" (65) becomes "an exciting sound"
- "'Partly. Mostly.'" (65) becomes "'Yes.'"
- "the neighbourhood of Boston" (75) becomes "Boston"
- "a bit troubled" (76) becomes "troubled"
- "a bit hard to believe" (137) becomes "hard to believe"
- "almost as happy" (148) becomes "as happy"
- etc etc

(4) Making Oliver and Sarah's early relationship a little less intense

In the original text only:

- Oliver notes on re-meeting Sarah "that lovely mouth" (25).
- Similarly, on a hillside together overlooking the Manor, he notes her "suddenly young gesture" (59).
- Sarah tells Oliver he is "possibly rather nice" (66).
- Sarah says of her reasons for agreeing to go out with Oliver: "Perhaps it's because I'm a bitch." (77)

- Oliver meets Sarah after four months apart and finds her unchanged "except that she was so much more lovely than my dead memory of her." (122)
- Oliver finds himself "overwhelmed with a feeling of tenderness towards her." (154)

(5) Tautening the text

(a) Several of Oliver's superfluous observations are cut:

- Things look more faded when there is something like her to compare them with. (70)
- Perhaps it was the wine I'd drunk. (71)
- Then the step that couldn't be taken was taken. (72)
- It was as easy as that. (91)
- It was hard now – it had become easier with the anger. (130)
- I groped through the rest of it, ashamed for the wrong reasons. (131)
- It didn't do to give Sarah a lead. (152)
- etc etc

(b) So too a number of inconsequential bits of dialogue:

- I said: This is giving me hell."
"It needn't. No one would expect such rain." (70)
- "I wouldn't want to – for that." (71)
- "We'd better go." (72)
- "I guess I'm very proud of it." (78)
- "I'm pretty certain of it." (87)
- "To think about it makes one ..." (131)
- "I don't see how."
"I do." (134)
- "It's one that could be pretty easily mistaken by anyone with any belief in himself at all."
"D'you think," she said, "that anyone with any belief in himself at all would be likely to *mistake* it?" (141)

- "Does it mean so much to you?"
"What can I say? It couldn't mean any more."
"It's impossible. Crazy." (143)
- "There's nothing I wouldn't have taken to get you. And there's nothing I won't take to keep you." (166)
- etc etc

(6) Corrections / improvements

- "the Second of May" (85) becomes "the second of May"
- "the press" (87) becomes "the Press"
- "the direct line of fire" (the last word ill-chosen) (109) becomes "the direct line of sight"
- "opposite side of the brain" (110) becomes "*opposite* side of the brain"
- "Did she." (113) becomes "Did she?"
- "if it was set" (136) becomes "if it were set"
- "are they." (183) becomes "are they?"
- "would there." (184) becomes "would there?"
- "his trousers were too narrow and a bit too long" (185) becomes "were shabby and too long"
- "out of Town" (215) becomes "out of town"
- "the hedge" (228) is corrected to "the wall"
- "her Owner" (229) becomes "her owner"
- etc

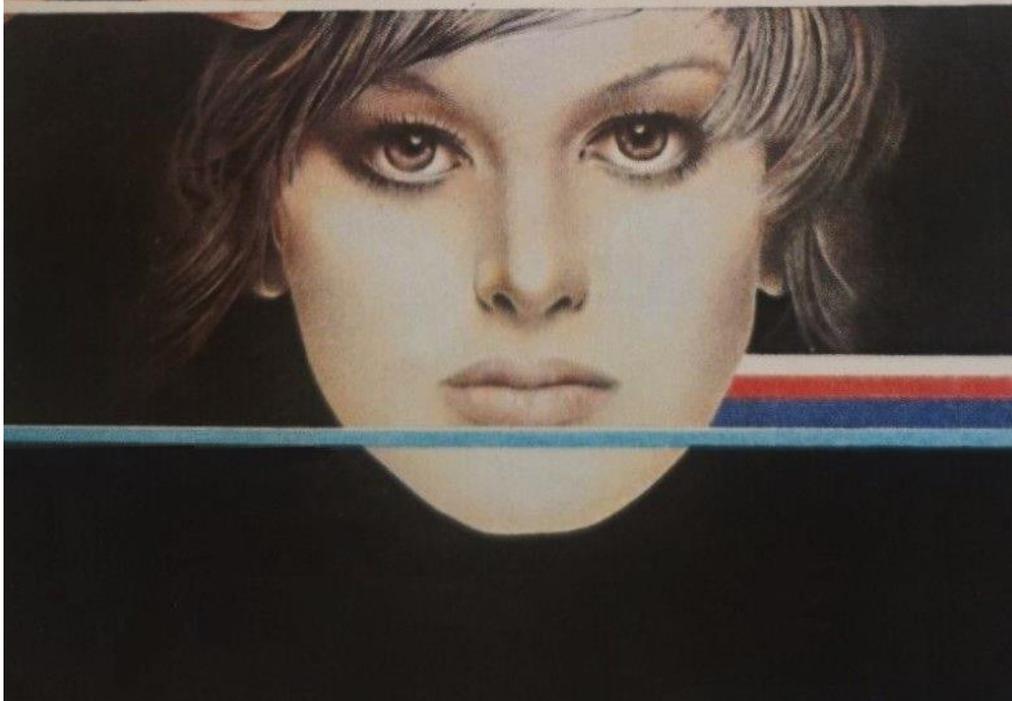
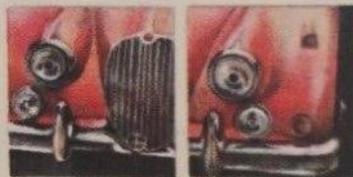
(7) Additions

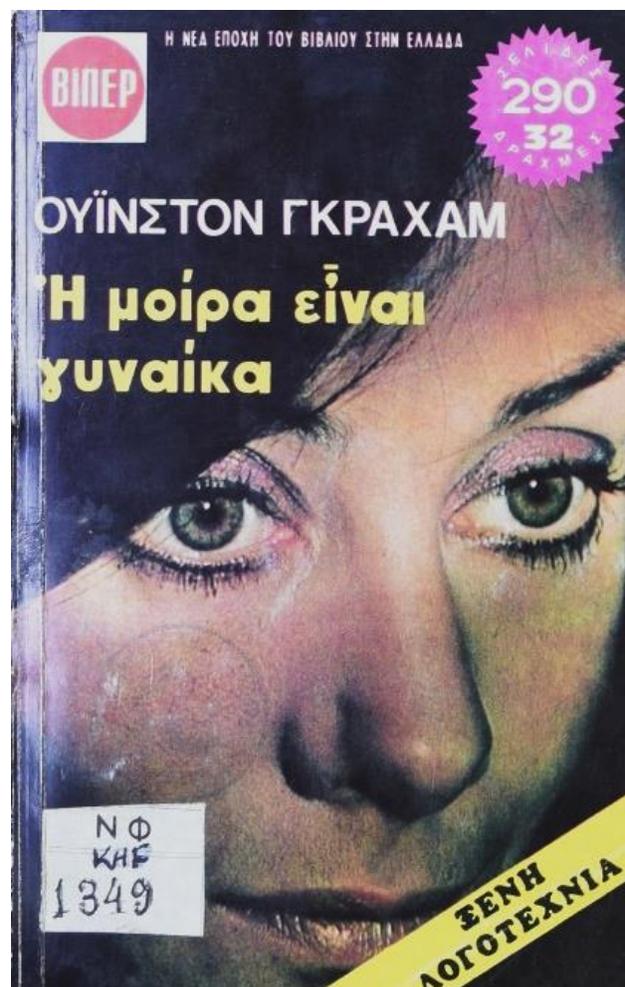
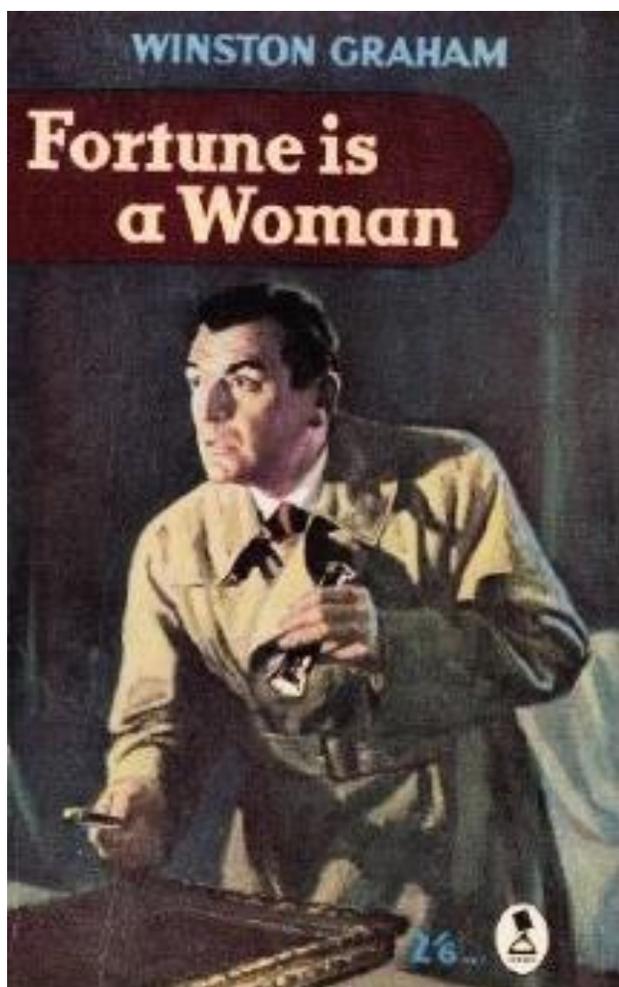
Though almost all changes involve either like-for-like substitution or polishing by cutting, "generous" (132) becomes "extravagant and generous" and "the person" who posts the ring to Paris (150) becomes "the swine".

Below: Fontana, 1979. Page 25: Hodder, 1957; Greek, Papyrus, 1974. The 1957 film tie-in cover shows Jack Hawkins as Oliver Branwell in a colour promo still (see also page 34 below) even though the film itself is monochrome.



FORTUNE IS A WOMAN
**WINSTON
GRAHAM**
AUTHOR OF 'POLDARK'





(8) Typos

- On page 97 of the 1952 text, the sentence beginning "(Tracey was dead" has no closing bracket. This error is corrected.
- The first words on page 130 of the 1952 text are "think she felt faint." with an initial "I" clearly missing. This sentence is cut.
- The sentence "But I didn't care more." on page 244 of the 1952 text has its missing "any" restored.

* * * * *

Despite the surprising number of revisions, which certainly amount to more than WG's "not much", the story remains unchanged and is told with equal conviction by all print editions – which is more than can be said of the 1957

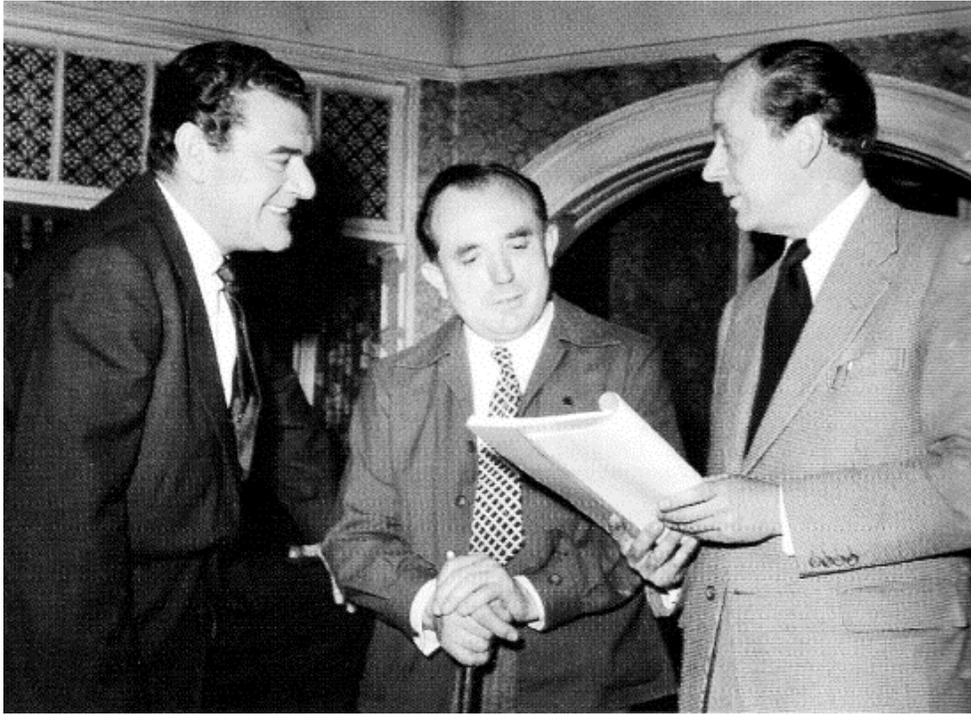
film. As is so often the way – look no further than *Marnie* for another example, and there will be hundreds more – cinema takes a nuanced, cohesive, carefully worked out novel and turns it into a trite, dumbed down, anaemic shadow of its former self. In this case, key characters – Dr. Darnley, Victor Moreton, Henry Dane – are dispensed with wholesale, as are Oliver and Sarah's back-stories. Clive Fisher is given so little screen presence that his production at film's end as villain of the piece is decidedly *deus ex machina*. Yes, we are faithfully served up the book's central fraud, but precious little else – like a Sunday lunch of roast beef and *none of* the trimmings: deficient, disappointing, unsatisfactory.

Fortune is a Woman was the third film (after 1947's *Take My Life* and 1951's *Night Without Stars*) to be based on a WG story. The author claimed in *Memoirs* that the unsympathetic rewriting of his *Night Without Stars* script during his absence finished him with the film industry – but did it? In the 10 December 1977 issue of *Woman* he wrote:

Six films have been made ... from my books ... and I have been variously involved in the production of them

which is not quite the same thing. Certainly the only *Fortune* screen credit he receives is as writer of the source novel – the named screenwriters are Sidney Gilliat (who also directed), Frank Launder and Val Valentine. But in 1948 WG wrote a screen adaptation of his 1944 novel *The Merciless Ladies* which opens with the camera looking out through the windscreen of a car driving through rain – which is just how *Fortune is a Woman* starts too. Coincidence? Perhaps. Or maybe WG mentioned his idea to *Fortune's* scriptwriters, who elected to use it – or maybe he was involved in the writing, albeit uncredited, along with the other three. There are a couple of tenuous reasons for believing this might be so: first, a photo published in *Memoirs* of WG with the film's male lead Jack Hawkins and director Sidney Gilliat shows (see below) the three standing together with, in WG's hands, what appears to be a script. If he had no personal involvement, why so? Second, a formally-attired WG attended the film's UK premiere at The Odeon, Leicester Square on 13 March 1957 (second image below): again, if he made no contribution (beyond writing the source

novel) to the film's production, why so? After all, even though he exchanged correspondence with Hitchcock concerning the screen development of *Marnie*, he was not invited to that film's premiere – indeed, was eventually obliged to see it along with his son Andrew as a paying customer.²





Fortune is a Woman : UK and US film posters



UK and US poster variants

Contemporary reviews of the film were equivocal:

In Fortune is a Woman ... the reality of the chief character is firmly established in Mr. Jack Hawkins's performance. By contrast with it, the long-drawn-out plot soon appears flimsy and is discredited before the end.

With every few minutes there is a new twist to it, but the regularity of the process is in itself monotonous since no corresponding development takes place in the characterization. To the hero, the other people in the story are all the more interesting the more mysterious they become; but that is because one of them (Miss Arlene Dahl) is a girl he once loved and then lost sight of, another (Mr. Dennis Price) is the man she has married, and so on.

On top of this, the hero is an insurance assessor and it is his job to take an interest in this particular chain of incidents. Without such an incentive it is harder to do so, although the visual presentation and to a less extent the dialogue are resourceful.

It is a pity that the narrative, considered pictorially, should lose its momentum and attack after a promising start. The dispersal of interest has the effect of leaving Mr. Hawkins's performance somewhat solitary and uncovered. He has to tell us that this particular insurance assessor, having made a late start, feels like a new boy at a very old school; and he convinces us of this. But the school is not there to lend point to what he says. Or if it is there, it seems to be on the point of breaking up for the holidays. Everyone is going his or her separate way, having done what was possible (Mr. Bernard Miles and Mr. Michael Goodliffe very useful in small parts), but without having much cause to feel grateful for their opportunities. (The Times, 14 March 1957)

The suspense is occasionally bogged down by intricate plot development. (Variety, 20 March 1957)



TO mention wit and a light touch in connection with what is essentially an atmospheric suspense piece about crime, almost a whodunit, is probably to suggest something on the lines of that often pleasing but comparatively undistinguished form the comedy-thriller. This specification applied to *Fortune is a Woman* (Director: Sidney Gilliat) would be quite misleading; and yet it is a most absorbing suspense piece about crime, and the investigation of crime, and it is, unexpectedly and very agreeably, full of lightness, brightness and wit. I found it very enjoyable.

The story—from the novel by Winston Graham—has been criticized as “confusing”; when I say that this did not worry me I’m not necessarily saying that I followed at the time all the ramifications of the plot (though I think I did), but simply that if there were any incomprehensible moments they didn’t in the least interfere with my pleasure. I don’t think this kind of thing does interfere with the average filmgoer’s pleasure; I think those who complain about it are, most of them, hypnotizing themselves into believing it did because that strikes them as the correct, conventional reaction. When a film is as well written and made as this, with the kind of skill that keeps one watching with a sort of eager concentration even so simple a shot as that of a man opening a door, the fact that one doesn’t at the moment grasp the

precise reason for his opening the door is irrelevant and doesn’t come into one’s head anyway.

The central character (Jack Hawkins) is an insurance assessor—but he might just as well be called a detective—and the film follows the course of his investigations into a country-house fire and claims for damage after it. It gradually emerges (the very gradualness, the step-by-step progress of his inquiry is a powerful factor in keeping us interested) that the claims are fraudulent and the fire probably, like a later one, deliberately started; and he is emotionally involved because he once knew and still loves the beautiful wife (Arlene Dahl) of the claimant (Dennis Price). This is the basis of the story—it is, admittedly, far too complicated for a full outline here; what I’m concerned to emphasize is that this is not the slightest handicap to enjoyment of the film. It is gripping, well acted (the many excellent small-part players include Bernard Miles and Greta Gynt), with passages of very strong suspense, and much intelligently amusing dialogue. Moreover the story does hold water when examined afterwards; but I’m not one of the few people who would feel guilty at having enjoyed the film even if it didn’t.

(*Punch*, 27 March 1957)



Fortune is a Woman: (1) Arlene Dahl as Sarah Moreton and Jack Hawkins as Oliver Branwell (2) Greta Gynt (who also starred in 1947's *Take My Life*) as Vere Litchen



(3) Bernard Miles as Jerome (4) Christopher Lee as Charles Highbury; Lee's next film, *The Curse of Frankenstein*, his Hammer debut, made him a star



Lobby card promo stills – in colour, though the film is not

Picture Show

THE PAPER FOR PEOPLE WHO GO TO THE PICTURES

March 23rd, 1957
Vol. 22 No. 1773 Every Tuesday 4^{D.}
& FILM PICTORIAL

INSIDE

PICTORIAL SOUVENIRS

"Kismet"

starring
HOWARD KEEL
ANN BLYTH
DOLORES GRAY
and
VIC DAMONE

"The Wrong Man"

starring
HENRY FONDA
and
VERA MILES

Full-page signed portrait
TERRY MOORE

Postcard-sized Portrait
and Life Story
TOM EWELL

ANN BLYTH'S
Earrings

(Below)

CAN BE YOURS!



(See page 13)



JACK HAWKINS
& ARLENE DAHL
in
"FORTUNE IS A WOMAN"

Picture Show, 23 March 1957 – i.e. ten days after *Fortune's* UK premiere.
The magazine includes a short review of the film

The story ... is too patly contrived to be entirely believable. On the whole, however, it keeps one intrigued and offers more than a modicum of suspense. The direction and acting are competent. The photography is good, but much of it is in a low key. (Harrison's Reports, 1958)

and so they remain today:

Fortune is a Woman ... is another stab at a Hitchcockian thriller, based on a novel by Winston Graham, whose Marnie would be filmed by the Master in 1964. Beginning with another of Gilliat's stunning dream sequences (a ticking metronome transforms into a windscreen wiper as we roar down a country lane at night ...) the film quickly declines into torpor due to miscasting (the excellent Jack Hawkins is no Cary Grant) and too much ordinary stuff between the highlights ... As always with [director and producer] Gilliat and Launder, amusing cameos boost the entertainment value and prevent the thing from completely flagging. (David Cairns, britmovie.co.uk)

Columbia Pictures made some fine thrillers in the UK in the 1950s with Hollywood stars at the helm – Faith Domergue in Spin A Dark Web, Victor Mature in The Long Haul and, here, Arlene Dahl in ... Fortune is a Woman. Ms Dahl is very good in her usual "Is she or isn't she a femme fatale" mode. (Gregory Meshman, dvdbeaver.com)

In short: fine book, mediocre film. What else is new?

* * * * *

NOTES AND SOURCES

¹ In the November 1952 issue of *Ladies' Home Journal* (see page four), WG's abridged *Fortune is a Woman* began on page 38. On page 40, Gladys Taber's short story *The Twelve-Hour*

Magic opened beside this striking image by Oklahoma-born illustrator Jon Whitcomb (1906-1988); it, suitably adapted, then resurfaced on the cover of the Dutch translation of WG's novel. This suggests that whoever commissioned the translation first read the work in *LHJ*.



² *Hitchcock and the Making of Marnie*, Tony Lee Moral, The Scarecrow Press, 2013



This page and next: Danish, German and three French film posters. (*Hun Legede med Ilden* = *She Played with Fire*, *Am seidenen Faden* = *Hanging by a Thread* and *Le Manoir du Mystère* = *Manor of Mystery*)



