

## Unknown Reasons

*The Big Sleep* by Raymond Chandler, “Murder is My Business” by Lynette Prucha, and *Devil in a Blue Dress* by Walter Mosley are all examples of detective fiction stories. These three detective fiction stories are very alike but also different in the ways they describe the people and areas, the moods they create, and their attitudes toward women. Chandler’s story takes place at the Sternwood place, Prucha’s takes place at Marino Inc., and Mosley’s at Daphne’s house, in the car, and Richard’s house.

The way in which Chandler, Prucha, and Mosley all view Los Angeles is very different from each other. Chandler describes Los Angeles in *The Big Sleep* as he views it from the Sternwood place. Chandler sees Los Angeles as very green with a lot of foothills. He views Los Angeles as very pretty with wonderful scenery. Prucha, on the other hand, sees downtown Los Angeles from Marino Inc. Prucha describes Los Angeles to be a big city with storefronts and fancy restaurants. Mosley views Los Angeles from a worn down neighborhood in his car. Mosley sees Los Angeles as a bunch of lights and palm trees. Even though these writers all describe Los Angeles as very different, they all describe the women in the stories alike. Marlowe, Marino, and Rawlins all see the women that they are involved with as very pretty but sneaky. Carmen Sternwood is sneaky in the way that she does not want the butler or her father to find out that she is flirting with Marlowe. Mrs. Hunnicut does not want to get the police involved in her husband trying to murder her. Daphne has a sneaky way about her because she wants Rawlins to take her to Richard’s house so she can give him a suitcase. The women are all also very outgoing with strangers. Miss Sternwood just starts flirting with Marlowe by telling him how handsome and tall he is. Mrs. Hunnicut is willing and outgoing with

letting Ms. Marino know everything, but she knows nothing about Marino. Daphne has never met Rawlins before and is willing to get in the car with him and then to give him a kiss before they go their separate ways. Marlowe, Marino, and Rawlins are also very alike in the way they describe the areas in which they are. Marlowe is very descriptive in how the Sternwood place is decorated with chairs and portraits. Marino describes how the Marino Inc. is decorated in a minimalist chic style. Rawlins describes how Daphne's house is decorated with brown carpet, brown sofa, and brown walls. Marlowe, Marino, and Rawlins are all very aware of their environment around them at all times.

Not only are the detective fiction stories different in the way they describe but also the types of moods that are created. The mood in *The Big Sleep* is awkward for Marlowe because of how Mr. Sternwood's daughter is acting towards him. In "Murder is My Business," the mood starts off very slow but livens up when Mrs. Hunnicut enters the room. Marino does not know what to expect from Mrs. Hunnicut, whether she is telling the truth or not. The mood created in *Devil in a Blue Dress* is scary because Rawlins, a black man, does not want to be blamed for killing Richard. Rawlins is put into bad situations and knows he will get the blame. The moods are very different within these stories.

All of the detective stories are alike in the attitudes they have towards women. Marlowe, Marino, and Rawlins all do things for the women that put themselves at risk. Marlowe was flirting back with Ms. Sternwood and thought she was pretty. Marino knew she should not get involved with Mrs. Hunnicut's case, that she should turn it over to the police. Rawlins should not have put himself at risk by driving Daphne to Richard's

house. Marlowe, Marino, and Rawlins all feel pressured by the women they are getting involved with.

Marlowe, Marino, and Rawlins all have a way of learning their surroundings in every situation. The three characters also feel as if they are unable to say “no.” On the other hand, the three characters are all put in different situations in different parts of Los Angeles. The moods created from within the characters are very much different in each detective story. These differences and similarities explain how *The Big Sleep*, “Murder is My Business,” and *Devil in a Blue Dress* are very much alike, but also different from one another.