a thief in the night series

A Thief in the Night Series: Exploring the Impact and Legacy of a Classic Christian Film Series

a thief in the night series is one of the most influential and enduring Christian film series ever produced. First released in the 1970s, this collection of films has left a lasting impression on evangelical audiences worldwide, particularly for its vivid portrayal of the Rapture and end-times prophecy. Whether you've heard about it through church screenings, Christian bookstores, or online forums, understanding the significance of this series is key to appreciating its impact on Christian media and eschatological discussions.

The Origins and Background of A Thief in the Night Series

The series was created by filmmaker Donald W. Thompson and first premiered in 1972. It consists of four main films: *A Thief in the Night* (1972), *A Distant Thunder* (1978), *Image of the Beast* (1980), and *The Prodigal Planet* (1983). These movies were groundbreaking for their time, primarily because they brought the concept of the Rapture—based on a premillennial, pre-tribulation interpretation of biblical prophecy—into a visual and dramatic format accessible to a broad audience.

The title itself, "A Thief in the Night," is a reference to 1 Thessalonians 5:2, which says, "For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night." This verse captures the sudden and unexpected nature of the Rapture, a theme central to the series.

Why the Series Gained Popularity

The series resonated deeply with evangelical Christians during the 1970s and 1980s, a period when interest in end-times prophecy was growing rapidly. The films' straightforward storytelling, combined with their urgent warning about spiritual preparedness, made them effective tools for evangelism. Churches often used them during youth group meetings, revivals, and outreach events.

Moreover, the modest production budget and relatively simple special effects added a sense of realism and relatability, making the narrative feel more immediate and personal for viewers. The series didn't just entertain—it challenged viewers to consider their own faith and readiness for Christ's return.

Plot Overview and Themes of the Series

At its core, the *A Thief in the Night* series dramatizes the events following the Rapture—the sudden disappearance of millions of Christians from the earth—and the subsequent Tribulation period, a time of intense suffering and persecution for those left behind.

Key Plot Points Across the Films

- **A Thief in the Night (1972):** Introduces the protagonist, Patty Myers, who struggles to understand the sudden disappearance of her family and friends after the Rapture.
- **A Distant Thunder (1978):** Continues Patty's story as she deals with the rise of the Antichrist and the implementation of the Mark of the Beast.
- **Image of the Beast (1980):** Explores the underground Christian resistance and the growing global control of the Antichrist.
- **The Prodigal Planet (1983):** Concludes the saga with a post-apocalyptic setting, highlighting the final battles and Christ's ultimate return.

The series explores themes such as faith under persecution, the urgency of salvation, and the moral choices individuals must make in the face of a world gone astray. The presence of the Mark of the Beast, a prophetic symbol from the Book of Revelation, adds a layer of suspense and theological depth that has fascinated viewers for decades.

Significance in Christian Media and Eschatology

The *A Thief in the Night* series holds a unique position in Christian media history. It was among the first to dramatize biblical prophecy in a way that was accessible, understandable, and emotionally engaging. This helped popularize premillennial dispensationalism, a theological framework emphasizing a literal interpretation of biblical prophecy and a sudden Rapture.

Influence on Later Christian Films and Literature

Many contemporary Christian films and novels dealing with end-times themes owe a debt to the groundwork laid by this series. For instance, the well-known *Left Behind* book and movie series, which also centers on the Rapture and Tribulation, drew inspiration from the storytelling and thematic elements introduced by *A Thief in the Night*.

Furthermore, the series helped spark an entire genre of Christian apocalyptic media, encouraging filmmakers, authors, and artists to explore eschatological subjects in creative ways. This trend continues today with numerous films, podcasts, and books dedicated to exploring prophetic themes.

Theological Discussions and Debates

While the series has been praised for its evangelistic zeal, it has also generated discussion within Christian circles about the nuances of end-times theology. Some critics argue that it presents a

somewhat simplistic or fear-based view of eschatology. Others appreciate its clear call to repentance and readiness, emphasizing the need for a personal relationship with Christ.

Regardless of theological differences, *A Thief in the Night* has undoubtedly played a role in encouraging believers to study biblical prophecy and consider the implications of the Rapture in their daily lives.

Tips for Watching and Understanding the Series Today

If you’re new to the *A Thief in the Night* series or revisiting it after many years, here are some helpful tips to enhance your viewing experience and grasp its message more fully:

1. Watch with Context in Mind

Remember that the series was produced in the 1970s and 1980s. Cultural references, filmmaking techniques, and theological emphases reflect that era. Watching with an understanding of its historical context will deepen your appreciation.

2. Explore Related Biblical Passages

To better understand the series’ themes, it’s helpful to read related scriptures such as 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Revelation chapters 13 and 20, and Daniel 9. These passages serve as the foundation for much of the storyline.

3. Discuss with a Group or Church

The films can spark meaningful conversations about faith, prophecy, and personal readiness. Watching with a small group or church community allows for shared insights and questions.

4. Consider Different End-Times Perspectives

While the series presents a premillennial, pre-tribulation viewpoint, other Christian traditions interpret prophecy differently. Exploring these various perspectives can provide a well-rounded understanding of biblical eschatology.

Where to Find the A Thief in the Night Series

Thanks to its lasting popularity, the *A Thief in the Night* series remains accessible today through various platforms:

- **DVD and Blu-ray Collections:** Many Christian bookstores and online retailers offer complete sets of the series.
- **Streaming Services:** Some Christian streaming platforms host the films, making them easy to watch on-demand.
- **YouTube:** Portions or full versions of the films are sometimes available for free viewing.

For those interested in Christian cinema history or eschatological storytelling, revisiting the series offers a unique glimpse into how prophecy was communicated to generations past.

Reflecting on the Cultural Impact of A Thief in the Night Series

Beyond its immediate religious message, the series has become a cultural touchstone in evangelical circles. It influenced how many believers understood the urgency of faith and the reality of biblical prophecy. Its memorable tagline—“Are you ready?”—continues to resonate, encouraging viewers to contemplate their spiritual standing.

The simple yet powerful narrative structure, combined with real human struggles depicted onscreen, helped the films transcend mere doctrine and become personal stories of hope, fear, and redemption.

In many ways, the *A Thief in the Night* series set a precedent for how Christian media could engage audiences emotionally while educating them on complex theological issues, a balance that many contemporary Christian filmmakers still strive to achieve.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the 'A Thief in the Night' series about?

'A Thief in the Night' series is a Christian film series that focuses on the end times and the rapture, depicting the tribulations faced by believers and non-believers after the sudden disappearance of Christians from the earth.

Who created the 'A Thief in the Night' series?

The 'A Thief in the Night' series was created by Donald W. Thompson and produced by Mark IV Pictures.

How many films are in the 'A Thief in the Night' series?

The original 'A Thief in the Night' series consists of four films released between 1972 and 1983.

What is the significance of the title 'A Thief in the Night'?

The title 'A Thief in the Night' refers to a biblical metaphor from 1 Thessalonians 5:2, symbolizing the sudden and unexpected return of Jesus Christ.

Are the 'A Thief in the Night' films based on the Bible?

Yes, the series is based on biblical prophecy, particularly focusing on the Book of Revelation and the concept of the rapture.

What impact did the 'A Thief in the Night' series have on Christian media?

'A Thief in the Night' is considered a pioneering Christian film series that popularized the depiction of end times in evangelical media and influenced many subsequent Christian films.

Where can I watch the 'A Thief in the Night' series?

The series is available on various streaming platforms, Christian media websites, and sometimes on DVD through Christian bookstores.

Is the 'A Thief in the Night' series suitable for all audiences?

While the series is intended for a Christian audience, it contains themes about the apocalypse and persecution that may be intense for younger viewers.

Has there been any recent sequel or remake of the 'A Thief in the Night' series?

As of 2024, there has not been an official remake, but the original films continue to be influential and sometimes discussed in Christian film circles.

Additional Resources

A Thief in the Night Series: An In-Depth Exploration of Its Legacy and Impact

a thief in the night series has long held a distinctive place in Christian media, particularly within the realm of eschatological storytelling. Originating in the 1970s, this film series has become a touchstone for many seeking a cinematic portrayal of the Rapture and end-times prophecy from a biblical perspective. Its influence extends beyond mere entertainment—it serves as a theological conversation starter and a cultural artifact reflecting evangelical concerns at the time of its inception.

The series, produced by Mark IV Pictures, consists of four films: "A Thief in the Night" (1972), "A Distant Thunder" (1978), "Image of the Beast" (1980), and "The Prodigal Planet" (1983). Collectively, these films offer a narrative arc centered on the sudden disappearance of millions of believers (the Rapture), the subsequent rise of a totalitarian Antichrist figure, and the tribulations facing those left behind. Its blend of suspense, drama, and doctrinal messaging has made it a subject of both admiration and critique within religious and cinematic circles.

Historical Context and Origins

The release of the first film, "A Thief in the Night," coincided with a period of heightened evangelical interest in apocalyptic literature and prophecy interpretation. The 1970s saw a resurgence in premillennial dispensationalism, popularized by authors such as Hal Lindsey and the growing influence of the Left Behind series decades later. Against this backdrop, the film sought to visualize the theological concepts that were often confined to text, particularly the idea of the Rapture occurring unexpectedly "like a thief in the night," as referenced in 1 Thessalonians 5:2.

By dramatizing this event, the series provided an accessible entry point into complex eschatological themes. It also mirrored Cold War anxieties and societal uncertainties, tapping into fears of political oppression and moral decline, which are recurrent motifs in the narrative.

Thematic Elements and Narrative Structure

At its core, the "a thief in the night series" is structured around a suspenseful, almost thriller-like portrayal of end-times prophecy. The films follow the experiences of characters caught in the upheaval of the Rapture and the rise of the Antichrist-controlled global government. This narrative device effectively demonstrates the theological concept of "being left behind" as a dire predicament.

Key themes include:

- **Suddenness and Uncertainty:** The Rapture’s unexpected nature is a central tension point, underscoring the biblical warning to always be prepared.
- **Faith and Salvation:** The protagonist’s journey reflects the struggle between belief and skepticism, emphasizing repentance and acceptance of Christ.
- **Persecution and Moral Choices:** The series depicts the coerced allegiance to the Antichrist figure, symbolizing the conflict between spiritual integrity and worldly survival.

These thematic elements resonate with viewers familiar with evangelical teachings, while also inviting broader reflections on faith under pressure.

Production Quality and Cinematic Impact

From a cinematic standpoint, the "a thief in the night series" represents the challenges and limitations of low-budget Christian filmmaking in the 1970s and 1980s. The films' production values are modest, with straightforward direction, limited special effects, and acting performances that vary in polish. However, these constraints have not prevented the series from achieving a cult following within Christian communities.

The use of documentary-style narration and realistic depictions of societal collapse contributes to a sense of urgency and plausibility. The films rely heavily on dialogue and script to convey theological points, occasionally at the expense of more nuanced character development or cinematic artistry.

Comparatively, when positioned against contemporary Christian films, the series appears dated; yet its pioneering role in faith-based apocalyptic cinema is significant. It paved the way for later productions that would blend theological messaging with higher production quality and broader appeal.

Audience Reception and Cultural Significance

The reception of the "a thief in the night series" has been mixed but largely positive within its target demographic. For many evangelical viewers, the films offered a rare visual representation of their eschatological beliefs, reinforcing doctrinal teachings and encouraging spiritual vigilance.

Outside of this niche, the series has attracted curiosity for its earnestness and as a cultural artifact emblematic of a particular religious movement. It has been referenced and parodied in various media, reflecting its penetration into wider cultural awareness.

The series' influence can also be seen in how it shaped the genre of Christian end-times media, inspiring numerous films, books, and sermons that adopt similar themes and imagery.

Strengths and Limitations of the Series

Analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the "a thief in the night series" helps contextualize its enduring legacy.

Strengths:

- **Theological Clarity:** The films communicate their eschatological message with clarity and conviction, making complex doctrines accessible.
- **Emotional Engagement:** By personalizing the Rapture through relatable characters, the series evokes empathy and reflection.
- **Cultural Relevance:** It captures the zeitgeist of its era, reflecting both religious and societal concerns.

Limitations:

- **Production Constraints:** Limited budgets result in basic special effects and sometimes stilted performances.
- **Narrow Appeal:** The strongly doctrinal focus may alienate viewers unfamiliar or unsympathetic to premillennial dispensationalism.
- **Didactic Tone:** At times, the films prioritize message over storytelling finesse, which can affect engagement for secular audiences.

These factors combine to define the series' niche appeal and its role more as a tool for religious instruction than mainstream entertainment.

Legacy and Continuing Influence

Decades after its release, the "a thief in the night series" remains a reference point in discussions of Christian apocalyptic media. Its pioneering portrayal of the Rapture scenario influenced subsequent filmmakers and authors, including the widely known Left Behind franchise.

The series' availability on DVD and various digital platforms has introduced it to new generations, ensuring its themes continue to spark dialogue. Furthermore, it stands as a historical document illustrating how evangelical beliefs were visually interpreted during a key period of American religious history.

For scholars and enthusiasts of religious cinema, the series offers valuable insight into the intersection of faith, culture, and media production.

In tracing the contours of the "a thief in the night series," one observes a work deeply embedded in its theological and cultural milieu. Its earnest storytelling and doctrinal focus have secured it a lasting place within Christian media, serving both as a warning and an invitation to spiritual preparedness. While its cinematic craftsmanship may not rival mainstream productions, its impact within its intended community remains unmistakable.

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a thief in the night series: The Night Series Boxed Set: Night Walker / Night Demon / Night Thief / Night Angel / Night Child Lisa Kessler, 2021-03-31 Sink your teeth into this award-winning darkly romantic vampire series! Love that spans lifetimes Praise for the Night Series: Kessler's Night Series brings new life to the vampire genre. Move over vampires, the Night Walkers have come to town. - RhiReading Reviews The chemistry between the Night Walkers and the ladies who love them will leave you breathless and begging for more. - Sabrina's Paranormal Palace 5 Stars - If you love dark, sexual, fast-paced vampiric love stories, I highly suggest you pick up this book. -- DarkMedia.com reviews Set includes: Night Walker Night Demon Night Thief Night Angel Night Child San Diego Book Award Winner Best Published Fantasy-SciFi-Horror Romance Through the Ages Winner Best Paranormal & Best First Book Book Seller's Best Double Finalist for Best Paranormal Romance & Best First Book Hot romance and cool characters make Night Walker an all-night read. - Kelley Armstrong, #1 NYT Best-Selling Author Lisa Kessler is an up and coming author to remember! Sherrilyn Kenyon #1 NYT Bestselling Author of the Dark-Hunter Series A stellar first novel with heart-stopping suspense and a hero to die for. -- Angie Fox, New York Times bestselling author

a thief in the night series: FREE SERIES STARTER Set The Night On Fire: A 1960s Crime Thriller Libby Fischer Hellmann, 2009-12-31 A woman discovers her parents were not the people she thought they were. Why is someone trying to kill her? FREE FOR A LIMITED TIME! Lila Hilliard returns home to Chicago for the holidays only to find someone is stalking her. Her father and brother are trapped in a fire, and she senses someone is following her. As she desperately tries to figure out who is after her and why, she uncovers information about her father’s past that ties him to the volatile movement of young activists during the late Sixties. Which means her parents were not the people she was told they were. A tremendous book—sweeping but intimate, elegiac but urgent, subtle but intense. This story really does set the night on fire... Lee Child Who were Lila's parents? And why was the secret kept from her? As Lila looks for answers, a man on a motorcycle slows, pulls out a a semi-automatic, and aims it at her. Suddenly a stranger darts out, pulls her to safety, then disappears. Who is this stranger? Is he Lila's stalker? The story then takes us back to the late Sixties in Chicago where 6 young people gathered during the Democratic Convention. Through their stories, the truth about Lila's family is gradually revealed, and the threat to Lila in the present becomes clear. A top-rate thriller that taps into the antiwar protests of the 1960s... A jazzy fusion of past and present, Hellman’s insightful, politically charged whodunit explores a fascinating period in American history. Publishers Weekly Part thriller, part historical novel, part love story, Set The Night on Fire reveals the resolution to Lila's family secrets. It also tells an extraordinary tale about the stormy Chicago 1968 Democratic convention, SDS, the Black Panthers, women's issues, and a group of idealists who were sure they would change the world. If you like the historical novels of Ken Follett, Kristin Hannah, and Kat Quinn, you'll love the Compulsively Readable Thrillers by Libby Hellmann.

a thief in the night series: The sanctus bell, a series of devotions and special intentions for the use of communicants, by the author of 'Supplications, prayers, and intercessions', ed., with a preface, by N. Keymer Sanctus bell, 1898

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a thief in the night series: *Armageddon Films FAQ* Dale Sherman, 2000-01-01 Mankind has been predicting its own demise through various methods, from fables and religious scriptures to hard-core scientific studies since the dawn of time. And if there is one thing Hollywood knows how to exploit, it is the fears of Things to Come. Movies about the end of the world have been around since the early days of cinema, and Armageddon Film FAQ is a look into the various methods we have

destroyed ourselves over the years: zombies, mad computers, uptight aliens, plunging objects from space, crazed animals, Satan, God, Contagions, the ever-popular atomic bomb, sometimes even a combination of these in the same movie! Armageddon Films FAQ goes from the silent days of filmmaking to the most recent (literally) earth-shattering epics, from cinema to television and even the novels, from comedies to dramas, from supernatural to scientific. It also explores other aspects of the genre, such as iconic but unfilmable apocalyptic novels, postnuclear car-racing flicks, domestic dramas disguised as end-of-the-world actioners, and more – from the most depressing to the happiest Armageddons ever!

a thief in the night series: The Complete Bastable Family Series (Illustrated Edition) Edith Nesbit, 2017-10-16 The Story of the Treasure Seekers tells the story of Dora, Oswald, Dicky, Alice, Noel, and Horace Octavius (H. O.) Bastable, and their attempts to assist their widowed father and recover the fortunes of their family. In 'The Wouldbegoods', Dora, Oswald, Alice, Dicky, Noel and H.O. are going to the countryside with Daisy and Denny to live with their Indian uncle. Instead of looking for treasure to restore their family's fortunes they are trying to become good. The girls form a society and call it 'The Society of The Wouldbegoods'. The boys aren't too keen on the idea. The New Treasure Seekers starts with the Christmas celebration and children's memories of the first Christmas after Mrs. Bastable died. After that the Bastable children start their journey to Miss Sandal's house by the seaside. The fun begins as the kids innocently get themselves into one adventure after another. Oswald Bastable and Others is a collection of short stories. It contains four stories which complete the history of the Bastable family: An Object of Value and Virtue The Runaways The Arsenicators The Enchanceried House Edith Nesbit (1858-1924) was an English author of world famous books for children (including novels, collections of stories, poems and picture books). Nesbit also wrote for adults, including novels, short stories and four collections of horror stories.

a thief in the night series: *THE BASTABLE FAMILY – Complete Series (Illustrated)* Edith Nesbit, 2024-01-14 In The Bastable Family 'Äì Complete Series (Illustrated), Edith Nesbit artfully chronicles the adventures of the lovable Bastable children, infusing her narrative with a delightful blend of humor and poignant social commentary. Written in her signature style, characterized by vivid descriptions and engaging dialogue, the series captures the essence of childhood during the late Victorian era. Nesbit employs a rich tapestry of imaginative scenarios that reflect both the realities and dreams of urban life, illustrating the dynamism of family bonds amidst prevailing societal changes. The illustrations enrich the text, enhancing the whimsical tone while grounding the stories in a visually stimulating context. Edith Nesbit, a groundbreaking figure in children's literature, was profoundly influenced by her own experiences of poverty and social reform. Her advocacy for children's rights and her feminist beliefs permeate her storytelling, making her works resonate with the realities of the age. Nesbit's ability to craft narratives that appeal to both children and adults stems from her own childhood experiences and her understanding of the complexities of family life in a rapidly evolving society. This complete illustrated series is highly recommended for readers of all ages seeking to explore the richness of familial relationships and childhood adventures. Nesbit'Äôs unique voice and insightful observations provide invaluable perspectives on both the joys and challenges of growing up, making this volume a timeless addition to any literary collection.

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terrible creature--the Night Demon--that threatens the world as she knows it. Though her scientific mind tells her it's impossible, she's beginning to believe the ancient Mayan tales as the sinister jungle comes alive around her. Lukas Smith has spent hundreds of years searching for answers to his immortal Night Walker nature. As a series of ancient glyphs become clear, he's about to find out more than he'd ever hoped, but the more he learns, the more his fate intertwines with the Night Demon, and the harder it becomes to hide his immortal secret from the beautiful, intelligent Gretchen. Gretchen holds the key to saving Lukas, the Night Walkers, and mankind from the Night Demon's violence surging across the earth. But his feelings for her cloud his judgement, and if he's forced to choose between Gretchen and the world, he might let it all burn...

a thief in the night series: Nox: Night Cursed Bundle: Books 1 - 4 J.C. Diem, This bundle contains books 1 – 4 of the Nox: Night Cursed Series. Hexed On Halloween: On Halloween, a powerful spell is cast and black magic sweeps across the US. Everyone wearing a costume is turned into the person or creature they're pretending to be. Evil clowns, pirates, shifters, zombies and many other monsters run amok, preying on the weak. Xiara Evora was just a normal girl with a normal name before the curse struck. Now she is a hunter of evil monsters and bad guys. She has a trusty staff called Wrath who can kill anything, whether it's alive, dead or undead. Xiara and the rest of the cursed are drawn to Nox, the City of Night where the Immortal Triumvirate rule. The unholy trinity created the Night Cursed, but it's unclear why, or what their intentions are. The only thing Xiara is sure of is that they are all trapped in this city with no way out. Tricks And Treats: Xiara's job as the Guardian of Nox is more complex than she'd ever anticipated. Nox is a hodgepodge of human magic users, vampires, shifters, fae beings and various other types of monsters. The city is divided into five different Districts. Xiara patrols them all in her effort to keep the peace, except for the Demon District in the catacombs beneath Nox. Only someone with a death wish would enter their domain without an invitation. When a new type of being enters Nox, things soon begin to change. Although there are a lot of Night Cursed deities, they aren't real. They're just pale imitations with little power. Xiara has a feeling that the minor god is going to become far more of a pest than he first appears. The delicate balance between the Districts is already unstable. The last thing the City of Night needs is for a trickster to shake things up. If he breaks too many laws, the Immortal Triumvirate will order her to use her trusty staff to end his existence. Not even a true deity can survive Wrath's deathly power. All Hallows' Apocalypse: As time wears on in Nox, the Night Cursed beings are becoming shunned by the uncursed population. Mistrust is rising in all of the Districts and Xiara is right in the middle of it. It's her job to keep the peace, but her task is getting harder with each passing year. Crowmon, the trickster god, and Raum, the leader of the demons, have gained a lot of power over the years. Xiara suspects they are searching for a way to increase their standing even more, but she isn't sure what their plans are. They'll do anything to increase their influence and they don't care who will get hurt in the process. Xiara and her team make new friends and allies who will help them with their quest to save the Night Cursed from the Immortal Triumvirate. The unholy trinity fears treachery and they're aware that someone will eventually try to topple them from their reign. Their solution to avoid their unwanted fate will have consequences that no one could have foreseen. Trickster's Treachery: Xiara is asked to look for a missing witch who just happens to be one of Crowmon's priestesses. It's news to Xiara that the trickster god has holy folk worshipping him, but she has little choice but to help. During her search, she uncovers a conspiracy that goes deeper than she'd realized. The unrest in Nox has grown worse and all of the Districts are becoming unstable. It won't take much to tip the balance and for an all-out war to begin. Xiara and her team know that rebels will rise to stand against the Immortal Triumvirate. Quilla has foreseen that their hated rulers can be beaten, but there's no guarantee that they'll fall. Any chance is better than none, so the motley team of Night Cursed beings vow to assist these insurgents any way they can. Paranormal romance, urban fantasy, dark fantasy, shifters, shapeshifters, werewolves, vampires, witches, wizards, warlocks, magic, fae, fairies

a thief in the night series: A Thief in the Night (1905). By: E. W. Hornung E. W. Hornung, 2017-05-12 A Thief in the Night is the third book in the series, and the final collection of short

stories. In it, Raffles, a gentleman thief, commits a number of burglaries in late Victorian England. Chronicler and accomplice Bunny Manders narrates additional adventures which he had previously omitted, from various points in their criminal careers... Ernest William Hornung (7 June 1866 - 22 March 1921) was an English author and poet known for writing the A. J. Raffles series of stories about a gentleman thief in late 19th-century London. Hornung was educated at Uppingham School; as a result of poor health he left the school in December 1883 to travel to Sydney, where he stayed for two years. He drew on his Australian experiences as a background when he began writing, initially short stories and later novels. In 1898 he wrote In the Chains of Crime, which introduced Raffles and his sidekick, Bunny Manders; the characters were based partly on his friends Oscar Wilde and his lover, Lord Alfred Douglas, and also on the characters of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, created by his brother-in-law, Arthur Conan Doyle. The series of Raffles short stories were collected for sale in book form in 1899, and two further books of Raffles short stories followed, as well as a poorly received novel. Aside from his Raffles stories, Hornung was a prodigious writer of fiction, publishing numerous books from 1890, with A Bride from the Bush to his 1914 novel The Crime Doctor. The First World War brought an end to Hornung's fictional output. His son, Oscar, was killed at the Second Battle of Ypres in July 1915. Hornung joined the YMCA, initially in England, then in France, where he helped run a canteen and library. He published two collections of poetry during the war, and then, afterwards, one further volume of verse and an account of his time spent in France, Notes of a Camp-Follower on the Western Front. Hornung's fragile constitution was further weakened by the stress of his war work. To aid his recuperation, he and his wife visited the south of France in 1921. He fell ill from influenza on the journey, and died on 22 March 1921, aged 54. Although much of Hornung's work has fallen into obscurity, his Raffles stories continued to be popular, and have formed numerous film and television adaptations. Hornung's stories dealt with a wider range of themes than crime: he examined scientific and medical developments, guilt, class and the unequal role played by women in society. Two threads that run through a sizeable proportion of his books are Australia and cricket; the latter was also a lifelong passion.

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