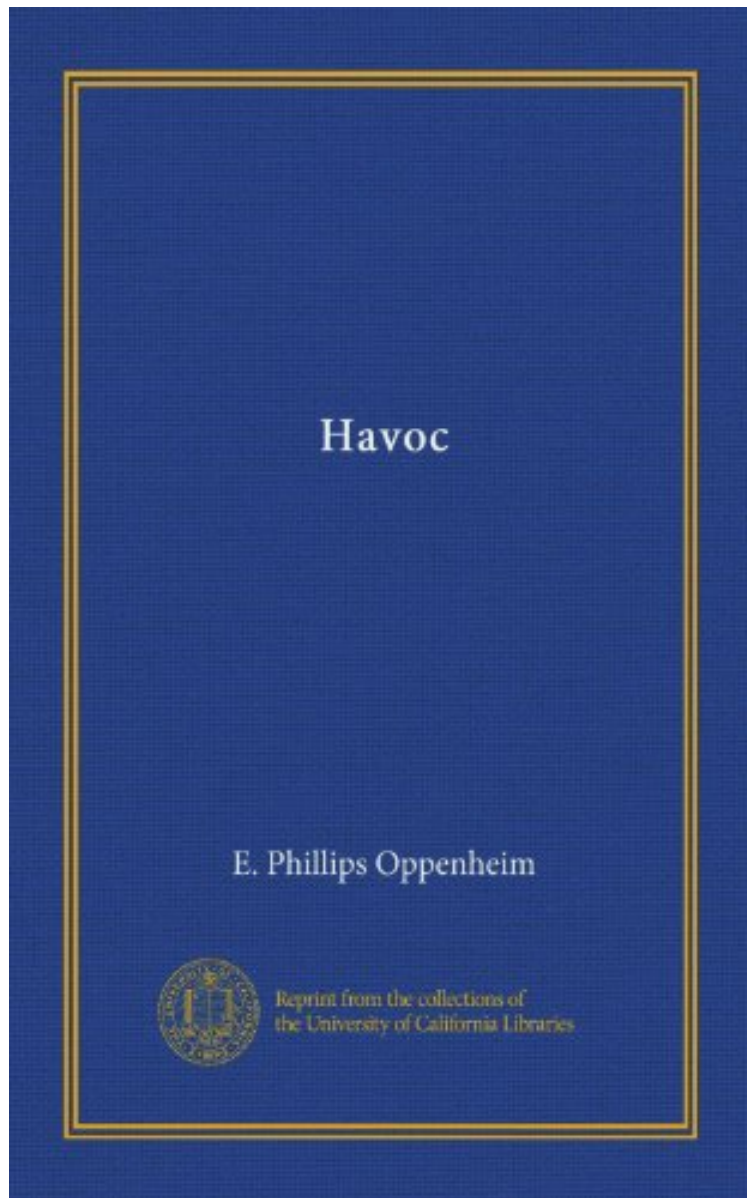


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Havoc

E. Phillips Oppenheim

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E. Phillips Oppenheim : Havoc before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Havoc:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Origins of World War OneBy DharmaFrom the perspective of today (2014) it is hard to understand how a war as devastating as the First World War could arise from the assassination of an Archduke in the small city of Sarajevo. Writing four years before the start of hostilities in World

War 1, Oppenheim gives an excellent account of the passions and politics which emboiled the continent. The beautiful Serbian Diva Mademoiselle Idiale is in Vienna for a grand performance, as is her lover, the British spy Bellamy. Louise Idiale is devoted to the cause of her people, the Serbs, giving them money and supporting their ambition to be free from Austro-Hungarian domination. Also meeting in Vienna are the Emperor of Germany, the Emperor of Austria, and the Czar of Russia to discuss a secret military alliance. By chance an American newspaperman comes into possession of a memorandum from the meeting. Before the novel ends it will change hands and bring many deaths. Into this political background Oppenheim weaves a story of speculation, financial ruin, murder and theft in The City of London. Stephan Laverick is an investment banker who has taken Arthur Morrison, a Jew, as his partner. Speculation on Morrison's part has brought the firm near ruin. Seeking to flee the country, Morrison leaves the firm and disappears into the night. Shortly afterwards, by chance, Laverick comes upon a murdered man who has 20,000 pounds in a wallet in his coat. Weaving these various strands of finance and intrigue, along with romance and violence, into a web of suspicion, is classic Oppenheim fare. A subplot concerning Laverick provides a curious window on social views toward Jews in England at the time. Oppenheim describes the two partners: "Stephen Laverick, senior member of the firm, although an air of steadfast gloom had settled upon his clean-cut, powerful countenance, retained even in despair something of that dogged composure, temperamental and wholly British, which had served him well along the road to fortune. Arthur Morrison, the man who sat on the other side of the table, a Jew to his finger-tips notwithstanding his altered name, sat like a broken thing, with tears in his terrified eyes, disordered hair, and parchment-pale face. Words had flown from his lips in a continual stream. He floundered in his misery, sobbed about it like a child. The hand of misfortune had stripped him naked, and one man, at least, saw him as he really was." Later Laverick comes to meet Morrison's stepsister Zoe Leneveu who is described: "She smiled for the first time, and Laverick thought that he had never seen anything so wonderful as the change in her features. The strained rigidity passed away. An altogether softer light gleamed in her wonderful eyes. She was certainly by far the prettiest child he had ever seen. As yet he could not take her altogether seriously..... Somehow or other, he had never associated Morrison with relations. Besides, this meant that she must be of his race. There was nothing in her face to denote it except the darkness of her eyes, and that nameless charm of manner, a sort of ultra-sensitiveness, which belongs sometimes to the highest type of Jews. It was not a quality, Laverick thought, which he should have associated with Morrison's sister." What a startling example of paternalistic racism!

19102 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Good ReadBy CustomerI have spent many enjoyable hours reading E. Phillips' novels. As in any good novel, the reader wants to get to the end and see what happens, resulting in some late nights. These novels are for the period of the late 19th century and on up to the 1930's. Most are set in England with travel to the Continent. I remember one that was set in the US. Somewhere I read that E. Phillips wrote 146 novels. I have probably read 30 and will be interested in finding more. A frequent theme is about England not being prepared either for WW I or WW II. These novels are probably not for everybody, but I have found them interesting in looking at the culture of the times. It also is a look at the politics of the times when "the sun never sets on the British Empire". The Kindle dictionary is helpful as some of the vocabulary is out of date. The fact that they are free is icing on the cake!

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Cross and Double-CrossBy A CustomerIt's good to see another of E Phillips Oppenheims books reprinted. I first read "The Great Impersonation" as a teen, and later started looking for other titles. Oppenheim was a prolific author; over the years I have accumulated nearly 100 of his titles from various used bookstores. Something about his writing style seems to set him a notch above the other suspense and intrigue writers of his era. There are a few clunkers in the bunch, but "Havoc" isn't one of them. Havoc is set (and written) in 1910, when the countries of Europe were in a thicket of plots and alliances. All the pressures that lead to WWI are there, but the intrigues and secret treaties create an interesting background to the twists and turns of the plot. The story revolves around the creation of a secret alliance between Germany, Russia, and Austria. The English hope to split Russia away by holding the Czar to his previous public commitments, but they need proof of what was done to create the pressure.

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About the Author Edward Phillips Oppenheim (1866-1946), an English novelist, was a major and successful writer of genre fiction, particularly thrillers. Among his books are *The Betrayal*, *The Avenger*, *The Double Life of Mr. Alfred Burton*, *The Devil's Paw*, and *The Evil Shepherd*.