



# **The Poisoner's Handbook: Murder and the Birth of Forensic Medicine in Jazz Age New York**

*Deborah Blum*

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**\*\*\*PBS's AMERICAN EXPERIENCE released a film based on *The Poisoner's Handbook* in January 2014\*\*\***

Equal parts true crime, twentieth-century history, and science thriller, *The Poisoner's Handbook* is "a vicious, page-turning story that reads more like Raymond Chandler than Madame Curie" (*The New York Observer*)

A fascinating Jazz Age tale of chemistry and detection, poison and murder, *The Poisoner's Handbook* is a page-turning account of a forgotten era. In early twentieth-century New York, poisons offered an easy path to the perfect crime. Science had no place in the Tammany Hall-controlled coroner's office, and corruption ran rampant. However, with the appointment of chief medical examiner Charles Norris in 1918, the poison game changed forever. Together with toxicologist Alexander Gettler, the duo set the justice system on fire with their trailblazing scientific detective work, triumphing over seemingly unbeatable odds to become the pioneers of forensic chemistry and the gatekeepers of justice.

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