



The Big Kill

Mickey Spillane

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The rain clawed at the windows of the bar. Hammer was angry and wanted to be left alone. But when he sees a desperate guy abandon his kid in a bar just to step outside and get blown away, Hammer's mood switches from bad to worse. By the time he reaches the dead body, he knows he will have to pound his way through a world of thugs and wiseguys to find out how a reformed ex-con got desperate enough to die like that. What Hammer doesn't know is how a beautiful woman will figure in--and how many bullets justice will take.

The Big Kill Details

Date : Published December 1st 1951 by Signet (first published 1951)

ISBN : 9780451093837

Author : Mickey Spillane

Format : Paperback 168 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Crime, Noir, Thriller, Hard Boiled, Literature, 20th Century, Mystery Thriller, Detective, Action



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From Reader Review The Big Kill for online ebook

George Henry says

This was #3 on my list of Mike Hammer novels to read. It may be possible to write the same review for every one of them since it's always Mike attracting every woman he meets, getting beat up without having to have his head and body in a sling for a month or two, killing bad guys (and women) and unexpected endings. This ending is weird. Not for lovers of sweet romances.

Holger Haase says

The one where Mike Hammer fosters a baby that develops a strange fascination with his gun which was probably already pretty uncomfortable to read in the 50s but these days just feels so wrong. But then again, it also feels so damn right. Said it before and will say it until I pop this mortal coil: Spillane in his novels represents pretty much everything I usually despise but he writes so well and effective that I can't help but love the Hammer novels warts and all.

Frank Thirdeyed says

My 5th Mike Hammer and it's getting a bit stale. I'm sure that's not about to change further on in the series either. But I don't mind, cause it's a lot of fun. This 5th book was way better than the 4th anyway, which was way too angry and anti-communist.

basically, all you have to know is:

- Mike Hammer likes dames and will describe their bodies for you every chance he gets. He says his view on beauty is pretty sophisticated and he tries to talk about inner beauty as well. But don't be fooled, he doesn't like ugly looking dames.
- He drinks a lot. Drunkness can get him in trouble, but he is seldom too far gone to handle himself.
- his gun is always quicker than the bad guy's. Kinda like Lucky Luke, I wonder if he read those. I see Luke is from '46, so it is certainly possible. His fists are quicker too.
- if he makes a mistake it's always because he has a dame on his mind and is not paying attention. Otherwise the bad guys don't have a chance, DUH!
- all bad guys deserve to be killed, no exception. Prison just isn't enough for justice.
- Police Detective Pat Chambers is his friend and will help him. He will however not hesitate to frame him for murder and arrest him, in every book.
- the most important one: after reading a few in the series you will most certainly pick out the killer before Hammer does. It's not that hard. Though, the plot devices for coming to the conclusion are incredibly far fetched, insane and semi-complicated.

So why is this fun? Cause his incredibly bleak, mostly rainy and dark as the night noir setting is spot on, the

violence is awesome and the ladies are beautiful. That's all.

John says

This is my first Spillane now novel. I did enjoy it and thought the ending the most hilarious and implausible one I have read. I literally laughed out loud. The plot was generic but the characterizations by Spillane were excellent. Mike Hammer an alcoholic chain smoking private eye is an angry man. He gets angrier and survived getting the shit kicked out of him. He also appears a bad judge of women. I have read some reviews that he is formulaic but I have to say it was a unique ending.

Calvin Daniels says

3.5 if you like Mike Hammer , you will like this one.

Adele says

Hammer is old school. A hard core vigilante with a do or die attitude. Not especially nice to know if you're a bad guy or a particularly curvaceous broad. He's violent, racist, homophobic and chauvinistic - so take your chance - you have been warned.

Richard says

Mike Hammer is an angry man. Mike Hammer is also stubborn. Oh, and if you cross him, he is one bad dude.

This was a departure from what a normally read and it didn't really leave much of an impression. From all of the things I had heard about Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer series my expectations were higher than they should have been.

My only regret is that I didn't keep track of how much money he spent throughout the story. For a guy working pro bono he spent quite a bit of money for that time period. I learned what a 'fin' is. Also it would have been fun keeping track of how many cigarettes he smoked or offered to others. Whew! Lucky Strikes too.

Robert says

Spillane opens with an oddly gentle scene, but roars into his trademark action and romance, building to a finish that doesn't disappoint.

Chuck says

I have a bias, I love the "noir" mysteries of the thirties, forties and early fifties and although Mickey Spillane may not measure up to some, his dialogue of the time brings back fond memories. This story is a typical Mike Hammer mystery overflowing with male hormones and macho cleverness that comes from some kind of séance. So if you would rather read Chris Matthews or Glen Beck don't even look at this one.

Dave says

"The Big Kill" is the fifth Mike Hammer novel and in it Spillane returns to a smaller scale story than Hammer's battle against the Communist Party which was featured in "One Lonely Night," the fourth book. Hammer is having a drink on a rundown ginmill when a character with a bundle drops in. Spillane describes this joint with incredible prose; "The place reeked of stale beer and soggy men with enough cheap perfume thrown in to make you sick. Two drunks with a nickel between them were arguing over what to play on the jukebox until a tomato in a dress that was too tight a year ago pushed the key that started off something noisy and hot. One of the drunks wanted to dance and she gave him a shove. So he danced with the other drunk." Wow! Spillane tells a whole story about a place in just a few sentences and his writing is as hardboiled as it can get.

The bundle turns out to be a one-year old and, after dropping off the bundle, the guy runs outside and is gunned down. Hammer is angry that someone went and left this kid an orphan and took the kid into his custody to be cared for by the retired nurse who lives downstairs. Meanwhile, Hammer tracks down the web of bad guys who contributed to the infant's father being shot down. As in the previous novels, you wonder how Hammer ever makes a living without a paying client, but he's busy being like a superhero fighting for truth and justice, not just earning a buck and not just doing what he's supposed to. "There's plenty who need killing bad and if I'm electing myself to do the job, you shouldn't kick."

This novel features the kind of sudden and devastating action Spillane is famous for: "My hand kept squeezing the trigger until there were only the flat echoes of the blasts that were drowned out by the noise of the Carr's exhaust and the futile gesture as the gun held opened, empty."

It barely features Hammer's new fiancé, Velda, who is sent off on a business trip while Hammer stays in town and beds the luscious babes that he comes across. For instance, "Ellen was beautiful as only a mature woman could be beautiful. She was lustful as only a mature woman could be lustful." He admits he is acting like a heel, but what of it.

With Spillane's incredible writing, you can't go wrong. However, this story is a bit more disjointed than some of the earlier Hammers.

The book repeats a number of themes found in the earlier Hammer novels such as Hammer's ongoing confrontations with the DA who wants to finally put Hammer behind bars, Pat's telling Hammer again that he can't always back Hammer's play, and the many tentacles of evil that Hammer does battle with.

Yaroslava Yakovenko says

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Good one! As always.

I've read a decent amount of private-eye-too-tough-to-give-up stories, but somehow Mike Hammer just doesn't resonate with me.

I'm reading the Mike Hammer novels in the order in which they were written. I'm starting to detect a pattern. Sadly, it's beginning to feel like the same book over and over but with the names / location changed as I'm reading through the novels. Still, Mike Hammer is an amusing tough guy who fights for the underdog.

It's very easy to argue that Spillane is an intensely conservative writer. Mike Hammer looks at modern life in a big city and feels nothing but rage for the brutality, dishonour and lack of values he sees around him. It's his duty to clean it up by taking down the scum. But then Spillane is an incredibly misanthropic writer as well. There are rarely decent people whose values have to be upheld, just criminals and those guilty of stupidity and incompetence – which in Hammer's world seem to be crimes as well. There is no idyll awaiting the virtuous, no changes to the system that will solve its ills, all we have is just the vicious law of the street and Hammer is its finest exponent. These books are angry about the world around them, though I'm not sure that's actually the fault of the world around them, this narrative voice can do nothing but anger.

Once again Hammer goes on a kill quest. It's the same formula as usual but one that works.