



Nocturne

Ed McBain

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Once she had filled the concert halls of Europe with beautiful music. Once her name had been in headlines, her performances heralded in newspapers around the world. Now she lay dead on the cold floor of a cold apartment on the coldest night of the year: a little old woman with a shattered bottle of cheap liquor by her body and two fatal gunshot wounds to her chest. Svetlana Dyalovich, found dead at midnight, was one more homicide in one more endless night in the city. For detectives Carella and Hawes, no murder is ever routine, and while this one looks at first like a robbery, the evidence doesn't add up. And when Carella and Hawes interview Svetlana's hard-edged, lounge-singing granddaughter - a woman accompanied by two armed bodyguards - they start looking for a missing envelope full of money and for a killer who had more than robbery on his mind.

Nocturne Details

Date : Published April 1st 1998 by Warner Books (NY) (first published May 1st 1997)

ISBN : 9780446605380

Author : Ed McBain

Format : Paperback 352 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Crime

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From Reader Review Nocturne for online ebook

Jim says

A exciting book of the 87th Precinct series. A great plot, probably more down to earth investigating and thinking than what we normally see, and a unique blend of action. In one murder there are a set of subsequent murders that involve a different type criminal. As a result of the multiple murders we have members of the 88th Precinct also chasing murderers. This is the first I have read of this series but I shall definitely check out a few more. Well written, exciting plots.

Don says

A fantastic book! A true police procedural, in that it focuses on the procedure of solving a crime.

There is no hero with a drinking problem, or a past best forgotten, or atoning for past sins.

This is not a buddy-cop drama.

There is no overdrawn chase scene.

There is no unlikely love interest.

The dialogue is dialogue and not verbal winks and nods leaving the reader having to guess what the characters intended to say.

"Nocturne" avoids all these pitfalls so common to hard-boiled detective novels and in so doing succeeds tremendously. McBain focuses on the dogged pursuit of evidence and follow-up on leads, building the case nicely on the police side of the story, while simultaneously providing the reader with the story of what has occurred, and does so effectively and intelligently.

This is my first Ed McBain book, chosen pretty much at random. Hopefully "Nocturne" is representative of his work; if so, I'll be reading his novels for many years to come.

David Highton says

Another good outing for the team from the 87th, investigating the murder of an old woman, a lonely ex-concert pianist, as the various shifts work together to follow the trail of the gun which killed her. Carella and Hawes also attend the scene of a murdered prostitute but the case passes to Fat Ollie Weeks at the 86th, as he investigates two linked killings involving some young men, a drug dealer and a pimp. This book is the usual high standard of police procedural that this series has demonstrated over more than 40 years.

Tony Gleeson says

Coming on the heels of "Mischief" and "Romance," this was the 48th entry in McBain's 87th Precinct series

and so far is one of my favorites. The action centers on the shooting murder of a woman in her mid-80s who had once been a celebrated concert pianist. This marvelous procedural then expands outward to encompass characters and subplots of the sort that any McBain fan would have come to expect. The final twist might be a bit contrived, but I was willing to accept it as part of the ride. Particularly amusing to me is the recurring theme involving various characters who refer to "The Birds, that movie that Alfred Hitchcock wrote." Detective Steve Carella finds himself constantly correcting these people: "I don't think Hitchcock actually WROTE that..." The joke, of course, is that Ed McBain-- aka Evan Hunter-- actually did write the script for that movie, and in fact followed "Nocturne" up with a small paperback about his experiences on that film, "Me and Hitch."

Skip says

Steve Carella and Cotton Hawes are working the graveyard shift when they catch two squeals: one is the murder of a poor elderly citizen (and her cat), which seems to be a botched robbery, but nothing is missing. The victim turns out to be a once renowned classical pianist, but is complicated when the detectives discover she had withdrawn \$125,000 from her bank on the day she was murdered. And, the money is missing. Her estranged granddaughter gets a note to look in a locker, where her guys report there is only \$5,000 and a note that this money is to help her career. Steve and Cotton follow a twisted path of the murder weapon to find the killer. At the end of their shift, a murdered prostitute is found in an alley. Eventually, ace detective "Fat Ollie" Weeks links her death to the killing of a pimp and drug dealer. Despite his feeling that the world is a better place without the two, Ollie tracks down the perpetrators to their unusual lair. I liked some of the imagery of Isola in this one.

Jens says

Thoroughly enjoyed it! Boy can he write.

Isn't he the guy who wrote the screenplay for that Hitchcock movie?

Jill Hutchinson says

I guess I have read too many British police procedurals to appreciate the 87th Precinct series, set in an unidentified large American city. I thought the writing was choppy and all over the place and I never got a feel for the detectives' personalities or attitudes. The plot was fairly interesting but some questions were not answered. I realize that Ed McBain has been a best selling author with this series but it just wasn't for me.

Ron Hefner says

McBain was in his prime at this time. He was, without doubt, the boss of crime fiction. But he was also an incredibly skillful, nuanced writer. It doesn't get any better.

Truehobbit says

I read the German translation of this (German title: Long Dark Night) a long time ago, for reviewing in a students' magazine - now adding it here because I've decided to give it to a Public Bookcase (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_b...). With the popularity of violent crime novels, I'm sure other readers find it perfectly digestible.

It's not a bad book, it's just not my kind of thing. In fact, it's probably the most traumatising thing I've ever read, which is why I've decided I don't want it around anymore. This probably speaks for the quality of the writing, though. The depravity and violence in the lives of the characters is made so lively as to make reading physically repulsive to me. The detectives themselves being fairly good guys struggling to maintain some semblance of dignity in the world they are forced to inhabit isn't enough to make the whole thing more palatable to me.

Aileen Bernadette Urquhart says

Best McBain so far. Intricate plot and everything links up at the end. Quite a violent storyline, relieved by McBain's sense of humour. First time I've actually cried over one of his books. This was at the end, where Carella is home with his family. Such a lovely normal scene after all the evil.

Rose says

The audio version I listened to is notable for its rather bizarre soundtrack. It's rather like a small child ran amok in HMV, grabbing CDs at random, although I will admit there is no Prince or Def Leppard.

James Thane says

This entry in the 87th Precinct series takes place during a week in which the main characters of the series are working the graveyard shift. Just as they come on duty at 11:45 p.m., detectives Steve Carella and Cotton Hawes catch the murder of an elderly woman who has been shot to death along with her cat. A bedroom window is open and it appears at first glance that the woman was shot by a burglar who surprised her when she returned home from the liquor store.

The detectives quickly discover that in her younger years the victim was a world-renowned concert pianist. But in her old age, she had become extremely arthritic, could no longer play, and was reduced to listening to recordings of her glory days. She was living in poverty, apparently scraping by with just enough to afford fresh fish for her beloved cat every day.

Meanwhile in another part of town three prep school football players are loose in the Big City, looking for action. They find it with a twenty-year-old prostitute and a crack dealer who cross their path in the wee hours of the morning. Nothing good can come of this, and nothing will. This case falls to detective Fat Ollie Weeks, who will investigate the crimes involved as only he can.

The investigations proceed through the next several days and nights. The parallel stories are intricately plotted with lots of twists and turns, and this winds up being one of the better books in the series. At one point, Carella and Hawes wind up investigating a clue that involves a Cadillac that contains a number of bird feathers and more than a little bird poop. This leads to a running joke about Alfred Hitchcock's famous film, "The Birds," in which none of the characters can remember who wrote the screenplay for the movie. The inside joke is, of course, that the screenwriter was Ed McBain, writing under his real name, Evan Hunter. All in all, a very good read.

Cathy says

"Nocturne" tells the stories of two murder investigations during the "morning" shift (midnight-8am). Fat Ollie Weeks's case, the dead prostitute, we know what happened, but watch as he puts it all together. We don't know what happened in the murder of an elderly former concert pianist; it unfolds to us as Detectives Carella and Hawes work the case. Very interesting in the contrast of the cases; I really enjoyed it.

Ed says

#48 in the 87th Precinct mystery series.

An 87th Precinct mystery - Carella and Hawes catch the case of Svetlana Dyalovich Helder, an elderly Russian woman shot to death at her modest apartment. In her youth an acclaimed pianist who played the great concert halls of America and Europe, Svetlana, at the time of her death, lived on welfare, drank too much and listened to old 78 rpm recordings of her glory days. The murder motive looks like burglary until Carella and Hawes learn that Svetlana had withdrawn \$125,000 from her bank hours earlier. A neighbor reports having seen a tall blond man at Svetlana's door shortly before the murder. After the shooting, a blond man delivered a package to the hotel where Svetlana's granddaughter, Priscilla, stayed. Meantime, over in the 88th, "Fat Ollie" Weeks investigates the deaths of a pimp and a drug dealer. That leads to a sexually mutilated hooker, also killed the night before, and a bookie who remembers a tall, blond bettor looking for a gun.

Anne says

My first experience of Ed McBain, and I found Nocturne so engrossing. It began with a bang, literally and figuratively with the murder of an elderly lady, her body discovered in her apartment. This lady had been a world class concert, Svetlana Dyalovich, known as Mrs Helder by her neighbours.

This lady had fallen on hard times and was living an impoverished and lonely life. There are mysteries surrounding her life and her death. But meantime another body is discovered, a young woman horribly killed, left lying in a gutter. She is a sex worker, and has a pimp, who sent her out to work that night and was expecting her home.

We soon discover that three young students, all called Richard are responsible for this misdeed.

But there are still more murders, more mysteries to unfold, more bodies for the police to discover and the

mystery of the gun that killed Svetlana.

Detectives Carella and Hawes are kept busy, arresting, questioning and bringing their suspects to court to face the consequences of their misdeeds. The characters are well written, well rounded and sympathetic, there is insight into the behaviours and misbehaviours of suspects, its not hard to see what led them into their life of crime. There is sympathy for the victims of crime and also many laugh aloud moments, a lot of black and irreverent humour, all of which made this an intriguing and exciting read. I am now an Ed McBain fan, on the strength of this novel and I would recommend it to anyone who needs a diverting and exciting read.
