



# The Removers

*Donald Hamilton*

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**Length: 5 hrs and 1 min**

Matt Helm, one-time special agent for the American government during the Second World War, has left behind his violent past to raise a family in Santa Fe, New Mexico. When a former colleague turns rogue and kidnaps his daughter, Helm is forced to return to his former life as a deadly and relentless assassin.

Originally released in the era of the James Bond novels, the Matt Helm novels were considered grittier and more realistic than Bond, garnering them critical praise and an ardent audience.

## The Removers Details

Date : Published October 12th 1961 by Fawcett (first published 1961)

ISBN : 9780449130377

Author : Donald Hamilton

Format : Mass Market Paperback 176 pages

Genre : Thriller, Fiction, Action, Mystery, Spy Thriller, Espionage

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## From Reader Review The Removers for online ebook

### Jim says

**April 2018** Helm certainly isn't much of a father, but he does take some of his responsibilities seriously. Hamilton did a great job portraying him as a cold, pragmatic guy.

**July 2015** Matt Helm isn't a Superman & he's kind of a curmudgeon - certainly opinionated - without much in the way of scruples. Very real & gritty, brought into focus by Stefan Rudnicki even better than in print. Several times during the book, Rudnicki's sarcastic highlighted the text perfectly, especially at the end.

One of the best scenes was the description of an Afghan hound going after a jackrabbit. Obviously Hamilton not only watched such a scene, but knew such a dog & appreciated it. The dog was very, very well done. That's always a real plus. He's not much on horses, but I suppose there wasn't much to say.

The plot was believable, especially back in 1961, but isn't out of place today. The characters were well done, too. Excellent read.

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### John says

This is the third in Hamilton's Matt Helm series. The books--the first three, anyway--are nothing like the goofy Dean Martin movies of the 70s. These are hard-boiled spy/crime novels--a mixture of John D. MacDonald and Ian Fleming without the Blofeldian bad guys. The first three books make an effective trilogy as Helm (1) leaves home to reenter the spy game overseas, (2) brings the spy game back home to his wife, and then (3) tries to help her out of a dangerous situation with the mob. (Put them together and they're still fewer pages than most bestselling thrillers today.) I've heard that the later books in the series get too elaborate, but I love the first three books.

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### Jeff says

Excellent Matt Helm. Helm gets a letter from his ex-wife asking for help. To his surprise he finds that her current husband is in the same business that he is, which was the very reason his wife left him.

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### Beauregard Shagnasty says

A tightly written thriller. I enjoy the no-nonsense attitude of Matt Helm, a much more realistic spy than Nick Carter or James Bond. As the blurb on the back of the book says, "Matt Helm is as tough an operative as ever crushed a Russian spy's kidney with a crowbar." My kind of espionage fiction: tough and unsentimental.

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### B.E. says

That was awesome.

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## Raegan Butcher says

I can't believe I've never read any of these before. Quite enjoyable. I like the unsentimental attitude of Mr Helm.

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## Monnie says

Any time I come off of reading a particularly intense, or intensely disappointing, book, my inclination is to reach for something that doesn't require lots of concentration and is dependably good. Now that they're available in Kindle format, Donald Hamilton's Matt Helm series fills both of those requirements admirably (this being the third of 27).

Those not familiar with the books may remember the motion pictures starring the late, great Dean Martin; four of them, I believe, were released from 1966 to 1969. The first book, for the record, was published in 1960 (*Death of a Citizen*), and Hamilton passed away in 2006. Reading the books now (or re-reading, since I read a couple way back when but have long since forgotten which ones) is interesting for two reasons: First and foremost, they're just plain good "secret agent" novels. The other is the time frame; it's fun to see what's changed over the years since 1960 (when I was a college freshman, BTW) as well as what hasn't. Hearing a woman called "baby" or noting Helm's preference for those who wear skirts- ideally with nylon stockings covering their legs - is reminiscent of the old gumshoe books of the '40s and '50s. The espionage game, on the other hand, is pretty much same old, same old.

And Helm is right in the middle of that game here. After enjoying a few years' respite making a living mostly as a photographer to support a wife and children, his wife Beth became quite unhappy to learn what he really did for a living in all those years before she came on the scene and realized he had a heart behind his shoulder holster. Unable to come to terms with that, she divorced him six months ago; and now, looking for something to bring meaning to his life once again, he's been reactivated.

So has Beth, in a way; she's remarried, this time to an English gentleman who owns a large ranch somewhere outside of Reno, Nevada. Helm's kids live with their mother, as does her new husband's grown son. But now, she's reaching out - sending a note to Helm's boss, Mac, to say she needs her ex-husband's help. Mac passes along the message with one of his own: As long as Helm (code name: Eric) is going to be in the area, how about checking out a young, inexperienced agent? As they discuss the assignment, they agree that Helm and his ilk are not considered "enforcers," but rather "removers" - from hence cometh, I smartly perceive, the title of the book.

The young agent, alas, doesn't have much to offer about his assignment except that he was tracking an enemy agent named Martell, who's now working for a local mobster under an assumed name. And wonder of wonders, the mobster just happens to be the man for whom Beth's husband used to work (most likely as - you guessed it - a remover just like Helm).

The plot gets thicker and the action picks up as the book moves along - coming to an end that signals a major change in the direction of Helm's life going forward. That, in fact, is one of the most enjoyable parts of this series - watching how events that happen in one book shape what happens in the future. Just for the record, the books I've read so far can stand alone, but I'm sure I'm getting the biggest bang for my bucks - as would other readers, IMHO - by taking it one step at a time. They're short steps, I hasten to add; I polished this one

off in just one day.

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## **Bruce Nieminski says**

8.5/10

240 pages

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## **Jim says**

Helm's ex-wife needs help, so he shows up in Reno, Nevada & finds himself in the middle of a mess with a local mobster, a foreign agent, his ex & her new husband. Hamilton contrasts a variety of characters & brings an ironic twist to the entire story in a masterful manner.

As usual, his descriptions of the countryside are fantastic. Having spent a bit of time in the area, I know that he did. He manages to quickly & thoroughly paint a picture of the area so that you feel as if you know the place. No extraneous details or extra words, yet a full description.

See these pages for more of Hamilton's work, about him, & the latest releases.

<http://www.matthelmbooks.com/intro.html>

<http://www.benish-industries.com/hami...>

<http://goodreadergonebad.net/donaldha...>

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## **Mike (the Paladin) says**

I suppose you'll get tired of me waxing nostalgic whenever I review one of these. I tend to mention each time that when I was young and innocent and then young and not so innocent I liked books of what were called the spy-fi genre and the "men's action" genre but missed these because of the "crappy movies" made using the character's name.

I do this each time as I never know if the people reading my review of the later books have read my reviews of the earlier books.

Anyway...Helm is a good character. He's not James Bond and he's really not Dean Martin or Tony Franciosa. If these are your picture/picture of Matt Helm then please, just forget those. They don't even remotely resemble *The Matt Helm*.

Helm is a laconic, taciturn even terse assassin. He does the jobs he's sent on, makes the "touches" he's ordered to make and just on occasion saves the world...or maybe just the nation.

Here his lack of judgement from the past comes back to haunt Helm in the form of his ex-wife who left him (with their kids) when she found out he hadn't actually spent the war (WWII) behind a desk not doing any nasty killing. As helm himself points out people seem okay with bombers dropping bombs on entire populations but take out one specific person and you're evil.

With the inclusion of more personal problems and....a younger female co-protagonist this is a little different from the earlier outings of our "hero". Though Matt is still himself and his personality is the same. he'll do what's necessary to get the job done even if that means always being alone.

As it turns out these are actually a cut above a lot of the spy/action/thriller fiction they are contemporary with. I can recommend them with the caveat that they show some very non-PC attitudes (especially where some of the female characters are concerned). Some will have no problem with this others will hate it. decide for yourself.

Enjoy.

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### **Huw Collingbourne says**

Matt Helm is the sort of action hero that makes Jack Reacher or Jason Bourne look like wimps. These novels, written in the early '60s, set the pattern for the many tough, ruthless action heroes that were to follow. This is the 3rd in the series and I have to say it is the weakest so far: #1 was a good yarn, #2 somewhat less so; this one (#3) seems a bit flimsy. Still, unlike modern thrillers, which often go on long after the author has run out of ideas, at least this is only about 230 pages long. All in all, a slight but entertaining potboiler.

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### **Harv Griffin says**

THE REMOVERS is one of my favorite Matt Helm novels. Matt gets to use his superpower twice in this novel. Matt Helm's superpower is his ability to extricate himself from hopeless situations. In the typical Matt Helm novel, he allows himself to be captured and rendered helpless by his adversaries; he then gets loose and raises hell. In THE REMOVERS he is captured twice, once intentionally, once not so much.

Please note that this is the third Matt Helm novel, and the total count of how many times Matt has been rendered helpless and then escaped is three; three for three; first novel = 0; second novel = 1; third novel = 2.

Copyright 1961, several years before the first John D. Travis McGee novel came out, the writing is in no sense politically correct, so it will offend female readers and possibly male readers as well.

As is usual for Matt Helm novels, a bit of additional suspension of disbelief is required, but I don't mind, I like the way Donald Hamilton writes. Here Matt unofficially goes to help his ex-wife out of a jam, and gets officially involved with gangsters and a foreign spy smuggling radioactive devices.

@hg47

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### **Dave says**

"The Removers," first published in 1961, was the third book in the top- notch Matt Helm series, featuring what critics referred to as the hard-boiled spy, particularly when compared to the more genteel Bond series by Fleming. This is probably the best of the early Helm novels and is a solid plotted book with very little

meandering. It actually as a story has less connection to spy fiction than to hardboiled tough guy novels, but perhaps that is what I like about it.

Here, Helm is now fully divorced from Beth, who could not handle the fact that the man she had thought was a puttering photographer/ writer had a past as one of the deadliest agents ever to fight against the Nazis in the European theater. Called out of retirement because of ghosts from his past, Helm could no longer hide the truth from Beth, who reeled in horror at the violence he had been involved in. She is now remarried and lives on a ranch in Nevada, somewhere near Reno. When Helm responds to her call for help, he finds that the new husband is a tough character in his own right and that dealings with the local hoods threaten the safety of Helm's ex-wife and children.

The well-executed story is filled with tough guy situations and menacing thugs. This is a book primarily about gangsters and thugs and protecting family in the wild west. Of course, there is a young knockout for Helm to get involved with. It is action-packed and filled with tension. Throughout the entire novel, Hamilton doesn't hit a wrong note even once. It is that well-written.

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### **Brett Battles says**

Love the MATT HELM series. Yes, it's dated, but still a blast. Each is well written, and thoroughly enjoyable. Great beach reads if you can find copies!

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### **Bert says**

Moira was definitely hot-to-trot, no doubt about it.

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