



He Who Hesitates

Ed McBain

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Outside the 87th Precinct a stranger stands in the falling snow. He knows he should go in and tell a policeman about what happened the night before, about Molly. Every second that he hesitates takes him one step farther away from the 87th Precinct station, as another second ticks away on an innocent woman's life.

He Who Hesitates Details

Date : Published May 19th 1994 by Hodder & Stoughton Publishers (first published 1965)

ISBN : 9780340593318

Author : Ed McBain

Format : Paperback 320 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction

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Sandi says

A bit of a departure in the 87th Precinct series since there is pretty much no police procedural plot and the detectives have very little page time. More of a psychological character study, but I did not think it was bad, just different from the other books in the series I have read.

Keith Astbury says

Part of the attraction of reading this long running series is that you get to know the main characters and enjoy reading what they are up and how they deal with what comes their way. Every now and again, however, McBain threw a bit of a curveball and wrote an 87th Precinct novel that barely featured the detectives we have come to know so well. Normally, I don't enjoy these as much as the usual ones, but this was an exception. Without giving too much away, the main detectives barely feature in *He Who Hesitates* - indeed, Carella, the star man himself, didn't features until page 63 of my edition. Instead, we follow country boy Roger Broome in the big city, slowly learning why he wants to speak to the Police. One of my favourites in this series so far.

Tom says

This was an odd addition to the 87th canon. It's the story of an out-of-towner named Broome getting a firsthand view of the big, bad city. Our tried and true bulls make very brief appearances as this "guest" interweaves through the neighborhood. I think McBain was trying to do something different to shake things up. Might've worked a little better if half of the chapters had been from the viewpoint of the bulls, and the other half focused on Broome. Like all of McBain's books, though, still well written and captures the flow of the city perfectly.

Monica Willyard says

This book drove me nuts! I kept reading and hoping it would get better. It didn't, and it drove me to distraction.

Michael says

The clever premise of this book makes it one of the better stories in the series. What we know is a man has something to tell the police, but he cannot bring himself to speak it. Is it something good or bad? Will it save a life or not? Will it get him in trouble or will it make him a hero? These questions aren't answered until you get deep into the book. But it's not a bad journey to find these answers. Well done, Mr. McBain.

Colin Mitchell says

Another great evening spent in the 87th Precinct. This, quite short book, is something very different and perhaps unusual in a crime genre novel. Roger Broome is in town to sell the wooden items made by himself and his brother in their workshop and house, out of town, were they live with their mother. Until the very last page Roger is dithering about going to the station house as there is something that he wants to talk about. He meets a sex offender in the park, brushes into Detective Andy Parker, the bully of the 87th, and a drug user. He still never quite makes it up the entrance steps. Steve Carella and his wife make a brief appearance but what has Roger on his mind? I

I urge you to sit down with this one. 4stars.

Mark Stratton says

Oddest, weirdest, and most unsettling book thus far in the series. Shouldn't have been in the series, to be honest.

Skip says

I am unsure how this book qualifies as an 87th Street Precinct book. Basically, it's about a guy who accidentally kills a girl he picks up in a bar and then spends the rest of the book deciding whether or not he should report his crime. Awful.

James Thane says

This is, by far, the strangest of the books in Ed McBain's 87th Precinct series, at least among the ones I've read thus far. While the story takes place within the confines of the precinct, only a couple of the detectives who normally populate these stories make even a cameo appearance, and they have no practical impact on the outcome of the story.

The tale unfolds from the third person point-of-view of Roger Broome who is visiting Isola from a rural community upstate. Broome and his brother manufacture handcrafted bowls and other wooden items and Roger is in town to sell them. The story opens early one cold winter morning when Broome leaves the rooming house where he is staying, intent on going to the police station. He has something to tell the detectives there. We don't learn for some time exactly what it is he has to say, but once he gets to the station, Broome gets cold feet and decides to delay going in for a bit.

He continues to delay for much of the rest of the day while he ruminates about who he wants to see once in the station and what he wants to tell them. Gradually, the reader learns what is on his mind and why he's hesitating so long.

And that's about it. The reader is naturally curious about all of this, but there's very little tension in the story and the book seems excessively padded with material that might have been designed to turn what could have been an entertaining short story into a relatively short book. It's not a bad book, but it's certainly not McBain's best effort. Readers new to the series would be well-advised to begin with another entry, and all but the most compulsive readers of the series could skip this one without missing much.

Quillracer says

What can you say about Ed McBain's 87th Precinct series that hasn't been said already?

He set the standard for police procedurals and over 57 books in the series always met that standard and most times bested it. Only McBain could make the weather – a February snowstorm in this case – a character as richly drawn as any human one.

And many times, he broke the mold – like here. This is an 87th Precinct book, yet the people who populate the world of the 87th Precinct are only bit players in this entry. The star is a man who spends the whole book vacillating between going to the police and returning to his home in upstate New York. That it didn't feature McBain's major characters kept me from giving it a higher rating.

This is the 19th book in the series, written in 1965, and it shows in the dialog, police procedures, and little details (75 cents for a Valentine's Day card!) that bring a book to life. But McBain's storytelling is as crisp and engaging today as it was 53(!) years ago.

He Who Hesitates is only 164 pages long, yet the story McBain tells is as complex and richly drawn as any two or three times that length. That's the mark of a master.

I only have 6 books from this series left to read. And when I finish that sixth one, it will be a sad day indeed.

Tom Stamper says

This installment in the series is told by a stranger to the city. He's a young man in town to sell his wood wares. The police are distant figures. He needs to speak with them but he's afraid. He wanders the city picking up meals and drinks. His mother wants him home, but he has unfinished business. The mystery is what exactly is his business and why does he want to see the cops. If this was the first book this series you read then you'll have no real sense of the series. It's really an outlier, an experiment by McBain that realized the formula could easily get stale and a new approach might give it some life. The approach worked for me and even the ending was a surprise considering what I've come to expect having been slowly reading them in order.

Christine Blachford says

This book was slightly different to the more normal 87th Precinct series, taking the point of view of the criminal and sticking with it throughout the entire story. It was almost disconcerting that the regulars barely

make any appearance in the book, with just a brief scene where we follow Carella into a restaurant, and a short interview conducted by Hawes (or Horse as it is misheard).

I quite enjoyed the new angle this story portrayed, particularly as it showed us the city from the point of view of a newcomer, and the police going about their business from outside the office. It was interesting to see how the story and the background unfolded, but I felt a bit disappointed with how the story worked out, although it makes perfect sense I guess.

Overall, a good 87th Precinct book, and I did enjoy the reference to the previous story - Ax.

Don says

If American author O. Henry, who is known for his unexpected endings, decided to give Ed McBain a break by contributing to the 87th Precinct series, this would have been his entry.

Because I'm not one one hundredth as smart as either of these prolific authors, I can think of no way of summarizing this fun read without taking away from the experience. Even the blurb in the talking book catalog says a bit more than I think is wise.

The problem, of course, is that I have now left you with no reason to read "He Who Hesitates," and, if you don't, you will miss out on an unforgettable experience. And that would certainly be quite a loss. If the first sentence of this review caused you to wonder about the book, take the plunge and see what you think.

NOTE: As any of you who follow my reviews regularly are aware, I recently became a bit of a convert where my reading habits are concerned. I have generally read series such as this by moving in and out of them at will with no particular regard to the order in which the books appear. I now realize that, in many cases, there is a definite advantage to reading them in order (or as close to that as I can get) and so I am returning to series whose entries I have liked to revisit them and "fill in the blanks," as it were. This has proved to be extremely rewarding, though it sometimes shows weaknesses I didn't know existed. I am finding, for example, that certain writers utilize particular solutions to their crimes far too frequently which is frustrating indeed. McBain is definitely not in that category, at least not so far. It is amazing that, while he stays true to his characters, he finds so many creative ways to tell the stories that I simply can't stop reading. In addition, I have come to care very much about the cops who make up the 87th Precinct and I look forward to learning about the trajectory of their lives as the series progresses.

Jason Lee says

McBain (or Hunter AS McBain) is probably my favorite writer. It was kind of a bummer to give an 87th two stars. Had to, though. These books were churned out quickly. This is the only one I've read, so far, that felt like Evan needed to have spent more time with it.

Miriam Mabelle says

Che libro! ? ???? Una donna diventata vedova in giovane età delega, al suo figlio primogenito di sette anni,

il ruolo di “uomo di famiglia”. Da quel momento in avanti, Roger Broome, il protagonista della storia, un bambino verosimilmente non diverso da molti altri, si perde in quella identità imposta, non è più un bambino eppure non maturerà mai come uomo.

Cinque stelle da parte mia per “L'uomo dei dubbi”, anche se il libro è descritto molto meglio e con maggiore attinenza dal titolo inglese originale: “He who hesitates”... colui che esita... Titolo perfetto! L'intero libro gira infatti letteralmente intorno all'ESITAZIONE DI ROGER.

In una gelida notte invernale, Roger si è imbattuto in Molly, una ragazza tra le più brutte che si siano mai viste, e tra la rabbia repressa causatagli dalla madre e la ragazza che non smette di parlare, succede il fattaccio. Quale sia questo fattaccio, l'autore ce lo svelerà nel filo del racconto attraverso dei flashback.

Il fatto è che Roger non funziona proprio come l'uomo adulto che egli dovrebbe essere a ventisette anni. Quella mamma, che noi non conosciamo direttamente ma di cui lui parla nell'intero arco del libro, oltre a obbligarlo a coprire le veci di “uomo di famiglia”, non lo ha cresciuto alla vita, formato, aiutato a maturare! Roger non sembra rendersi affatto conto dell'enorme gravità dell'atto estremamente raccapricciante che ha commesso... Sembra quasi un gioco...

Il libro inizia con Roger che si sveglia dopo la notte del fattaccio e deve recarsi alla stazione di Polizia... Quello che dovrebbe fare sarebbe piuttosto semplice: entrare e consegnarsi alle autorità. Quello che invece fa è girare intorno alla stazione, pedinare poliziotti, osservare poliziotti, Il libro è scritto molto bene e raccontato egregiamente da un eccellente scrittore... Detto questo, la trama, particolare nel suo genere, può piacere e può non piacere. A me è piaciuta moltissimo! ??

Con l' “uomo dei dubbi”, Ed McBain, eteronimo dello scrittore Evan Hunter, ci porta nella vita e nella mente di un uomo mentalmente disturbato, un disturbo nato e sviluppatisi a causa di una madre debole nella propria vita ed esigente nei confronti del figlio. L'ultima parola del libro, seguita dal punto conclusivo, non a caso è la parola “madre”. Madre! Una parola che è una sentenza: colei che alla fine è da tenersi responsabile dei deliri di questo uomo bambino, alto quasi due metri ma dal cervello di un bimetto.

Roger sembrerebbe a prima vista un uomo qualunque: sì molto alto certo, ma normalissimo, un gigante buono. Se non fosse che, a causa di sua madre, Roger non riesce a vivere come lo fanno gli uomini della sua età. Con l'idea e le parole della madre sempre addosso, Roger ha diverse problematiche col mondo femminile e, come quasi sempre succede nei rapporti di co-dipendenza madre-figlio, il protagonista del libro non riesce ad avere rapporti duraturi con le donne.

Non solo, c'è un fatto di cui Roger non riesce proprio a capacitarsi: perché? perché gli piacciono soltanto le donne più brutte esistenti in qualunque situazione? Dalla più orrenda dell'intera scuola... e via dicendo... Roger non riesce a spiegarselo, ma il lettore lo ha capito molto bene: Roger è il tipico uomo che una donna non l'avrà mai, perché finirà i suoi giorni prendendosi cura della madre anziana. Inconsciamente quindi sceglie donne di cui sa che non potrà mai innamorarsi, a cui sa che non potrà mai attaccarsi.

Lo scrittore ci porta nel profondo della psiche di Roger per farci capire come possa nascere il delirio... E come possa un uomo - nato come molti altri - trasformarsi in un mostro insensibile, capace di commettere atrocità.

Ogni tanto Roger si sente sollevato al pensiero di andare in prigione... Perché sa che quello è l'unico posto dove può vivere senza la presenza soffocante di sua madre. Ma proprio come il bambino che in realtà egli è, pur essendo consapevole che deve consegnarsi alla Polizia, i suoi meccanismi mentali lo portano a trovare

scuse, su scuse... Ogni evento, visione, parola, è una scusa per non fare quello che sa di dover fare.

Ho trovato il libro in sé eccezionale (e in diversi punti comico!) e sorrido nel pensare a una recensione Amazon piuttosto critica sul libro stesso: la capisco!!! ? Quella recensione mi aveva tra l'altro fatto dubitare molto sul procedere o meno alla lettura dl libro... Alla fine, mi sento di giudicare questo libro un piccolo capolavoro di psicanalisi... Un piccolo viaggio nel mondo malato di un pover'uomo che forse sarebbe cresciuto diversamente - e molto meglio - con una madre diversa. Un pover'uomo soltanto perché parliamo di finzione letteraria. Nella realtà dei fatti, un vero e proprio mostro!

Libro valutato 5 stelle!!! ?????

Magadeilibri
