



## Battle Mask

*Don Pendleton*

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**Battle Mask** Don Pendleton

**With a new face and an old foe, the Executioner sets out to avenge his friends**

Of the ten members of Mack Bolan's death squad, formed to take the war against the Mafia to a bloody new level, seven are dead and two are in jail. Only Bolan, the crack sniper known as the Executioner, remains. There is a \$100,000 bounty on his head, and every cop in Los Angeles is on his tail. After narrowly escaping a Mafia assault on his hideout, Bolan decides to lose his greatest liability: his face.

With the help of a former army surgeon, Bolan's chiseled jaw and steely eyes are transformed into the features of someone unrecognizable—and decidedly Sicilian. With trademark cunning, Bolan infiltrates the syndicate that butchered his friends, cozying up to the boss's daughter in search of vengeance. Soon his new face, like the one before it, will strike terror into the hearts of mafiosi everywhere.

## Battle Mask Details

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Author : Don Pendleton

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## **From Reader Review Battle Mask for online ebook**

### **Jon Koebrick says**

Battle Mask was action galore as Mack Bolan continued his war on the West Coast mafia. A classic action series that embody the 1970 male fantasy. A low 3 star book that earns the ratings on entertainment value. A good filler series for reading between more serious books.

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### **Michael MacCheyne says**

#### **Great**

Love the series been reading it for about 30 years started it in the military. Then I could not wait for the next book to come out. I have reread them already

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### **Edwin says**

Fine entry in the series as Pendleton really fleshes out his Mack Bolan character and the the plot focuses more on intrigue and espionage than on pure action, which can become a bit monotonous and predictable. My favorite of the initial Executioner trilogy.

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### **Daniel says**

This review originally published in Looking For a Good Book. Rated 3.25 of 5

Picking up right where the previous book left off, Mack Bolan is the only surviving member of the Death Squad. Most are dead, though some are now behind bars.

Bolan, known mostly as 'The Execution,' has declared war on the Mafia after the mob was responsible for the deaths of his family. His skills were honed by the United States military, where he was one of the best snipers the U.S. has had. He was cool and detached and could carry out a killing flawlessly. But now he's put those skills to use on American soil, taking on the mob - something America's own police force hasn't been able to do with much success.

In the previous book, Bolan and squad took on the mob in the Los Angeles area. The Los Angeles police have a task force dedicated solely to taking down The Executioner, and the mob has a \$100,000 bounty on Bolan's head. This book begins with some mob connections getting a fix on where Bolan is hiding out. Despite a careful plan of attack, Bolan manages to fight his way clear, though only just barely.

It clearly isn't safe for Bolan, what with some friends dead and the others captured, and a price tag on his life. There's only one thing The Executioner can do to escape the net closing in on him in Los Angeles... he needs a new face. And with that, he can once again get inside the mob, learning names and locations.

Of the three Executioner books I've now read, this one maybe has the least amount of action (though it's sometimes difficult to think of it that way since it starts out with such a high-powered sequence). And it almost feels like it comes full circle with Bolan infiltrating the mob and becoming one of their best hit-men.

One thing that is becoming more and more obvious with each book is that Bolan relies on the generosity of others much more than I expected. Here, an Army surgeon agrees to give him a new face, and a local sheriff looks the other way as long as Bolan promises to take the fighting elsewhere. But because of this outside help, his status as a ruthless killer who can avoid capture becomes legendary.

This third book didn't hold my attention quite as well as the others, but I'm still interested in reading more in this series as I find it. A recent trip to a local used book store had me surprised to find almost an entire shelf filled with Executioner series books, though none in sequence at the beginning, where I am currently reading.

The Executioner series is a thrilling read for those interested in pulse-pounding action sequences and watching the bad guys get decimated by the good guy.

Looking for a good book? *Battle Mask*, by Don Pendleton is the third book in the Executioner series and falls just a little short on the action as seen in the first two books, but still delivers on the quick-moving story.

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### **James Hein says**

What can I say these books are addictive :)

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### **Cheruv says**

I would rate this a 3.5 - 3.75\*

Another good pulp action offering, that has Mack Bolan firmly behind the wheel of his warmachine against the Mafia. The story is not an earth shattering philosophical revelation. Nor is this literary gold. Just good old fashioned adrenaline infused action, that kept me turning the pages until the last bullet casing drops to the floor and the smoke clears.

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### **Adam says**

After his miraculous escape at the end of *Death Squad* (aided in part by Carl Lyons), Bolan is back on the trail of Mob boss Julian "Deej" DiGeorge. Unlike *Death Squad*, however, Bolan is on his own in *Battle Mask*. Although Pendleton's third Executioner novel isn't quite as good as *War Against the Mafia*, I think it's a slight improvement over *Death Squad*. I prefer to see Bolan working alone, perhaps occasionally receiving assistance from sympathetic parties, but nothing more. *Battle Mask* is also quite graphic in its depiction of the fate that so often befalls Bolan's friends. Dr. Brantzen, his old war buddy who gives him the plastic surgery necessary to infiltrate the DiGeorge family, undergoes the most disturbing and graphic torture seen in the series so far, getting himself sliced up into "turkey" meat. Sure, Bolan exacts swift and violent

revenge (as shown on the cover of the novel), but nothing can change the fact that a good friend of his was brutalized, or the fact that the friendly old man who drives Bolan to safety at the beginning of the novel pays for his kindness with a gut full of shotgun slugs. This book shows, as so many subsequent others do, that being Bolan's friend is a dangerous job. Beside the return to the gritty and hard-boiled style of his first Executioner novel, Pendleton offers more suspense and tension in *Battle Mask* than he did with the continual shoot-outs and frontal assaults of *Death Squad*, which I consider a plus.

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### **Dave says**

Pendleton's Executioner series continues here in its third volume. If you haven't read the first two volumes, I would suggest you do so as they give you the full background of Mack Bolan and why he returned from service in Vietnam to conduct a private war against the Mafia. The biggest question I had before picking up *Battle Mask* was where Pendleton could go with the story considering how guns-blazing filled with action the first two books were. Question answered. This book is just as bloody and filled with action as the first two. Most importantly, Men's action story or not, Pendleton is an excellent storyteller. It is easy, quick reading and so action-packed it is really hard to put down. *Battle Mask* once again finds Bolan on his own against overwhelming odds. It's a story about the miracles of plastic surgery and fake identities and Bolan getting the upper hand against his enemies. The plastic surgery bit is of course similar to Richard Stark's *Man With the Getaway Face*. In any event, Read every page. The Executioner series is that good.

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### **Monica Willyard says**

now the series and several recurrent characters start to take shape.

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### **Matt says**

4.5 out of 5 Stars

I quite enjoy *Battle Mask*. It's a near flawless book by Don Pendleton filled with action, smarter mafia tough guys, interesting side characters (I really adore Andrea D'Agosta, the capo's daughter) and we get to meet Hal Brognola, a key figure and ally to Mack in later books.

It also shows a side of Mack's personal rage when people he's close to get butchered. A man that has no family anymore, even most of his nam' buddies killed in the last book and yet, he keeps losing people and that's a tough pill for him to swallow, even self doubt creeps in.. If the war is really worth it.

In the end, an excellent read. Best one in the series yet imo

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

Don has plastic surgery and strangely enough some violent problems. Okay but it's good action and they still have a story line here.

From reviews of the first 2 books:

Before I went in the army back in the early 70s I read several of these books. Being a shooter/gun enthusiast Pendleton's detailed account of the weapons used (something i'm sure drove some people away from the books) I found very interesting. Aside from that the stories were adrenaline charged violent thrill rides and that's all that young men need sometimes.

If you want a good fast exciting read find the early Executioner books. As a point of interest I read that Marvel acknowledged that "some" inspiration for The Punisher came from The Executioner as did "some" for DC's The Vigilante.

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## **Jon Guenther says**

### **Triumphant conclusion to Executioner trilogy**

While there are many more books to go in this series, this is the third book in The Executioner Trilogy that turned Mack Bolan into a literary legend. This is probably the best of the three, and also the book that introduced another pivotal character: Hal Brognola. Triumphant!

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## **Quentin Wallace says**

I enjoyed this one, but it seemed a little too similar to the first volume. Bolan once again infiltrates the mafia, but this time he has plastic surgery to totally change his face. It just seems a little far fetched the mafia would welcome a stranger into the organization so easily, even if Bolan does look different. I also hate it that Bolan keeps getting his friends and associates killed, but unfortunately that's probably just how it would really happen in this situation.

Otherwise, another good installment with plenty of action. Pendleton writes great action and his books never seem long winded. If you're looking for great action/adventure and don't mind some graphic violence, this is the series for you.

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## **Gary Peterson says**

Another exciting entry in the annals of adventure. Pendleton was a man with a plan, drawing on characters and events in the last couple novels to create a saga starring Mack Bolan, the Executioner. This book follows immediately on the heels of Death Squad and I recommend reading them in sequence and one right after the

other.

**SPOILERS AHEAD:** The series takes a turn with this volume. Bolan has been presented as a folk hero whose exploits and whose picture have been seen nationwide. An ill-fated old duffer in a small town café even recognizes Bolan when he stops to buy gas. In order to wage his war against the Mafia more effectively, Bolan has to alter his appearance, and turns to an old war buddy Jim Brantzen, now a successful plastic surgeon, who works his magic scalpel and transforms Mack Bolan into the unrecognizable Frank Lambretta. The new face is the "battle mask" of the book's title.

It's almost funny how Bolan's face change fails to fool those who know him, such as Sgt. Carl Lyons and even "Deej's bitter harvest" Andrea. A man can change his outward appearance, but his commanding presence and authority, sharpness of mind, and other unique qualities can't be altered or disguised by a knife.

In addition to Lyons, Captain "Big Tim" Braddock is back, as is Genghis Conn, and mobsters Julian DiGeorge and Leo "Screwy Looey" Pena. Introduced are some memorable minor characters, like Andrea D'Agosta, widowed daughter of DiGeorge who has a love-hate relationship with her crime capo father, mobsters Phil Marasco and Benny Peaceful, and a helpful Dept. of Justice agent named Harold Brognola.

The action here is more measured than it was in *Death Squad*, not to imply the book is ever boring. This story reminded me of a good *Mission: Impossible* plot, as Bolan moves and maneuvers the pieces of his chessboard into place, building the perfect frame. The *Mission: Impossible* vibe is enhanced with scenes like the secret meeting in the drive-in movie theater where Pointer aka Bolan slips into the backseat of Lyons' car to exchange information and incriminating documents.

I did drop *Battle Mask* to a four-star rating, however, because as fun as it was it did stretch credulity to the breaking point in its wild conclusion. Pendleton asks too much when he expects the reader to believe that after just a week mingling among the DiGeorge crime family, this brash outsider is able to turn half the soldiers against the other half, sparking a firefight to the death that leaves bodies strewn throughout the grounds and floating half-submerged in the pool. And that by merely hinting he's on assignment from notorious enforcers "Pat and Mike," Bolan can flip DiGeorge's right-hand man and turn him against the boss he's thus far served with unflagging loyalty? (Though it was a blast reading Bolan's lulling Marasco to his side with a history lesson about Egyptian burial practices. "'I been hoping you ain't no Egyptian, Philip Honey,' Bolan said" (165)).

The seamy sex found in the first novel is wholly absent, replaced however by graphic violence and gore. Pendleton has a gift for vivid descriptions, such as describing the battered and broken conditions of the six occupants of Screwy Looey's car after the high-speed crash, and especially in his wince-worthy description of the tortures Pena inflicted upon Brantzen. Pendleton can also describe scenes like that high-speed chase and collision in such a clear and well-paced manner that it plays out in the mind like a movie (and a very good one at that!).

The concluding scene, with Bolan and Andrea riding off into the sunset together, was a weak and unsatisfying finish, mostly because Andrea was never a sympathetic, likeable character. Better would have been Bolan driving towards that new horizon alone, plotting his next mission, which is hinted to be a hit on Pat and Mike, men whose inflated reputation Bolan just has to puncture.

Not Pendleton's fault, but my copy of this book--a fourteenth printing from July 1978--had "Mack Bolan" misspelled as "Mark Bolan" not once but twice on page 31. And while that was the most egregious typo yet, I've seen many others along the way. With all the copies Pinnacle boasted about selling on the cover stripe,

one expects them to have corrected mistakes in its flagship title. And by 1978 *The Executioner* had sparked a booming industry of men's adventure book series. My copy of *Battle Mask* has seven pages of advertisements in the back for *The Executioner* series (then up to #26) along with *The Death Merchant*, *The Destroyer*, *The Butcher*, *The Penetrator*, *Malko*, and *The Private Army of Colonel Tobin*. (Yeah, I wanna read 'em all! The titles alone are intriguing, enticing and ripe with promise.)

I'm signing on for the long haul with Bolan and am looking forward to the next chapter in Pendleton's fast unfolding and developing super-saga!

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## **Barry says**

Mack Bolan with a new face infiltrates the DiGiorgio crime family and destroys it from within. Another Executioner victory

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