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Killer's Choice

Eddie Duggan



Killer's Choice, the fifth of Ed McBain's forty-eight or so 87th Precinct novels, was first published in 1957. The first, Cop Hater, was published in 1956, the most recent, The Big Bad City in 1999: McBain is nothing if not a prolific author, writing as Evan Hunter as well using several other pseudonyms. Killer's Choice demonstrates the qualities that make the 87th Precinct series popular: McBain's writing is efficient, and the plot is carefully structured. The book is effortless reading, moving along for the most part at an agreeable pace. The dialogue, realistic in the 1950s, may now sometimes seem a little laboured with a few too many 'he said's' in places. However, when McBain drops the 'said's' and lets the characters speak for themselves, which he often does, the dialogue flows smoothly. The typography is interesting too as various documents (letters, receipts, official forms and the like) are reproduced in facsimile form in the text. There are some amusing vignettes, such as the lift attendant in an 18-storey building who delivers a set piece on the mole-type existence of New Yorkers in the 1950s, and the little girl who tells a cop 'Oh, we [five-year-old girls] are nothing special'. Touches like this also serve to maintain variety as McBain shifts focus from cops to suspects to peripheral characters. If you've not read McBain or police procedural before, this reissue is worth checking out. Here you'll find the spiritual home of Hill Street Blues. It's interesting to ponder, if only briefly, what US TV cop shows would've been like if McBain hadn't turned to the typewriter when he hung up his badge?

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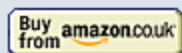
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