



The Devastators

Donald Hamilton

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On a bleak and lonely heath in northern Scotland they recovered the body of the third agent sent out on this mission. He had died - been murdered - of bubonic plague. It was up to Matt Helm to take it from there. For somewhere among those desolate Scottish moors was a half-crazed scientific genius who could devastate entire populations with one hideous, raging plague. It was Helm's job to get him . . . with the help of a beautiful American operative who was supposed to be his wife, and a beautiful Russian operative who made it clear she was his deadly enemy.

The Devastators Details

Date : Published 1965 by Fawcett Gold Medal Books

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Author : Donald Hamilton

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From Reader Review The Devastators for online ebook

Jim says

Very well read by Stefan Rudnicki & produced by SkyBoat Media. He really made another great adventure for Matt Helm pop. He talks tough, but has a softer side - usually. Sometimes, not so much, & that's the best part. It was fun to visit Scotland with him & meet Vadya again. She's a perfect match for Helm.

I was a bit surprised at the mention of a tactical nuke in this book, originally published in 1965. I thought those came a decade or so later.

This is book 9 of the series. Skyboat Media has book 10, The Betrayers. I bought it the other day & will get to it soon. Can't wait even though I've read this series in paperback multiple times. It's almost fresh again as audio books.

Mike (the Paladin) says

Look, this is not great literature. The 5 stars is (are? I was thinking "5 star rating" which is singular...but it doesn't sound right.)for enjoyability(spell check doesn't think that's a word)/interest. I do hesitate to use the word enjoy when it comes to our occasionally cold blooded hero but the book drew me in. Human foible I suppose.

Here Matt has been sent to "dispatch" a....well that would be telling and I don't want to do spoilers. Suffice it to say Matt's job is not to arrest the person or persons involved but to, shall we say "remove them from play".

Up front people these are Cold War books. They are NOT politically correct. If James Bond has a license to kill he could still take lessons from Matt (view spoiler).

I have mentioned why I missed these books and I'm sort of burning through them now. Excellent action reads. Not much for emotional depth and angst, somewhat escapist but all in all excellent reads if they are what you're looking for. Nice when you're just burned out and need something fast moving and interesting.

Recommended.

Vikas Datta says

You need a pretty devious mind to cope with the multiple layers of treachery that go in here but Matt Helm manages to do so on his feet - excitingly absorbing but a little too sanguine..

Bobbi says

These books are like M&M's. Love 'em but they make me fat.

Dennis says

This like all the Matt Helms are just fun reads

George K. says

"Θαν?σιμη απειλ?", εκδ?σεις ΒΙΠΕΡ.

?νατη ιστορ?α της σειρ?ς με ?ρωα τον εκτελεστ? Ματ Χελμ και ?χω την εντ?πωση ?τι, ?σως, ε?ναι η πιο αδ?ναμη απ? αυτ?ς που ?χω διαβ?σει μ?χρι στιγμ?ς, ?στω και για λ?γο. ?χι β?βαια ?τι με απογο?τευσε ? δεν μου ?ρεσε, κ?θε ?λλο, απλ? εντ?πισα κ?ποια μικρ? προβληματ?κια.

Το λοιπ?ν, ο Ματ Χελμ καλε?ται ξαν? να παραστ?σει τον παντρεμ?νο με μια συν?δελφο του και υποτ?θεται να περ?σουν μαζ? το γαμ?λιο ταξ?δι τους στο Λονδ?νο. ?λο αυτ? το θ?ατρο για ?ναν επιστ?μονα που ξ?φυγε απ? τις Αμερικ?νικες υπηρεσ?ες και γιατ? υπ?ρχε πιθαν?τητα κ?ποιοι να τους παρακολουθο?σαν. Το θ?μα ε?ναι ?τι αυτ?ς ο επιστ?μονας ασχολε?ται με ιο?ς και με σκοπ? το κ?ρδος δεν θα το ε?χε σε τ?ποτα να διασπερει ?ναν, με αποτ?λεσμα τον θ?νατο εκατομμυρ?ων αθ?ων ανθρ?πων. Για ποιους δουλε?ει ο επιστ?μονας και σε ποιο συγκεκριμ?νο μ?ρος της Σκωτ?ας κρ?βεται αυτ?ς και οι ?γνωστοι πρ?κτορες μιας ?γνωστης χ?ρας;

Δεν λ?ω, ε?χε μυστ?ριο, αρκετ? δρ?ση και ?λα τα καλο?δια των ιστορι?ν του Ντ?ναλντ Χ?μιλτον, αλλ? νομ?ζω ?τι κ?ποιες καταστ?σεις και κ?ποιοι δι?λογοι ?πασχαν λ?γο απ? αληθοφ?νεια, τουλ?χιστον σε σ?γκριση με προηγ?μενες ιστορ?ες με τον Ματ Χελμ. Κατ? τ'?λλα ευχαριστ?θηκα κατασκ?πους και συνωμοσ?ες και η ?ρα π?ρασε γρ?γορα και κυρ?ως ευχ?ριστα.

Jim says

Helm goes to London & then up to the Scottish Highlands in search of a scientist who is developing diseases. As usual, plenty of action & Helm is at his logical best in this one nicely compared to a very civilized British agent. We also get to meet Vadya, Helm's Russian counterpart, again.

Helm's cold logic is one of the things I like best about these books. Our hero is sent to out to do an assignment. They're not handed out for fun, but because they are very important & he gets the job done without regard for sentiment, usually. This is very well illustrated in this book when one agent says, "I couldn't shoot her in cold blood." Helm asks exasperatedly, "What does temperature have to do with it?"

The characters & scenery are well drawn, the action is all very logical without extraneous nifty devices. The time is the mid-60s & Helm is in his early to mid-40's.

Helm's age is a guess. He's supposed to be 36 in the 2d book, which would put his birthday about 1922 or 3. In other books, he mentions attending college & working for a newspaper before the war, so that could push his age up by several years.

Great read! On to the next book, The Betrayers!

Dave says

The Devastators is the ninth book in the Matt Helm series, possibly the most realistic spy fiction out there. Helm is tough, cynical, suspicious, and a trained killer. He's part of a little known squad no one talks about that does the dirty work no one likes to talk about. Although there are twists and doublecrosses, the novel is focused on what goes on in Helm's head-- such as who can he trust and why. It details the awkwardness of agents posing as husband and wife on their honeymoon and what it's like to deal with professionals and with amateurs. Although there are mad scientist/ science fiction aspects to this story, the center of it is on Helm's experience as an agent, not on who has the fastest ray gun or super secret shoe phone. The Helm books are cynical and hardboiled and unsentimental. Helm can't always afford to be a gentleman or to ask first and shoot later. This book pits agents from four different countries against each other and takes place in the Highlands of Scotland. It also marks the return of Vadya, Helm's sexy Russian counterpoint.

Harv Griffin says

Not one of my favorite Matt Helms, but it has some good moments.

Matt gets some revenge against Vadya, who tortured him with a soldering iron in an earlier book. Although Matt Helm only presents himself helpless to his enemies once in THE DEVASTATORS, he uses a Russian agent to sell him out to a Chinese agent, which is a new twist for the series.

Let's count the stats on the Matt Helm Smooth Move. Number of times Matt Helm uses himself as bait, and allows himself to be captured by the opposition (or presents himself directly to the opposition allowing the opposition to do whatever they please with him).

0 = DEATH OF A CITIZEN
1 = THE WRECKING CREW
2 = THE REMOVERS
1 = THE SILENCERS
1 = MURDERERS' ROW
3 = THE AMBUSHERS
2 = THE SHADOWERS
2 = THE RAVAGERS
1 = THE DEVASTATORS

In 9 novels that is 13 instances of the Matt Helm Maneuver.

@hg47

Delores Alger says

matt helm

James says

The first MATT HELM adventure that slogged a bit in it's telling. Helm is sent to London and Scotland to find an American scientist who has gone rogue and using his expertise in devastating plague experiments for very bad people. However, there is too much middle section boredom going on in this one. Too many ladies for Helm to move about like chess pieces in a rather boring game.

Tom Stamper says

Matt helm is sent to England on a phony honeymoon with a new wife that is really an assassin trying to find and kill a scientist unleashing biological weapons. Wrapped up in the case is an old friend and English equivalent that owes Helm for savings his life some years back and a pretty and dangerous Russian operative that he also has a history with. The Russians, Chinese, British, and Americans all have a stake in the weapon and have different motivations as what to do with it. The ending might not be altogether satisfying but the journey is still pretty entertaining. I remember the quality of the early stories being higher although I might just be feeling some fatigue having read the last 3 in a short period.

Peter says

Matt Helm was the American equivalent of James Bond but without the flair and dash of the British agent. This 1965 story has an interesting plot as Helm, on his “honeymoon” as cover, has to find the location of a mad scientist manufacturing deadly strains of common diseases somewhere in Scotland. Various other agents and agencies are involved in the same hunt as the Chinese appear to be exploiting the scientist. The action is good, the relationships very dated but at least, like most 1960s spy novels, it’s commendably brief. 2.5 stars.

Ronald says

probably read in winter 1970

Jack Webb says

Scottish Highlands turn

This time out, it's Scotland's turn for the Helm treatment. Quite the cast of characters this time, including a deluded scientist and a lady trying to take over the world. Reminded me of the Fu Manchu books. Good stuff.

