



## The Big Bad City

*Ed McBain*

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## **The Big Bad City** Ed McBain

In this city, you have to pay attention. In this city, things are happening all the time, all over the place, and you don't have to be a detective to smell evil in the wind.

Take this week's tabloids: the face of a dead girl is splashed across the front page. She was found sprawled near a park bench not seven blocks from the police station. Detectives Carella and Brown soon discover the girl has a most unusual past. Meanwhile, the late-night news tracks the exploits of The Cookie Boy, a professional thief who leaves his calling card -- a box of chocolate chip cookies -- at the scene of each score. And while the detectives of the 87th Precinct are investigating these cases, one of them is being stalked by the man who killed his father.

Welcome to the Big Bad City.

## **The Big Bad City Details**

Date : Published May 11th 2010 by Pocket (first published 1998)

ISBN : 9780671025694

Author : Ed McBain

Format : Mass Market Paperback 336 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction

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## **From Reader Review The Big Bad City for online ebook**

### **Paul says**

A few pages into this book I realized that I'd listened to it on tape a couple of years ago. I started to close the covers, then realized I was enjoying the read, and proceeded to finish it.

So I can encapsulate my review of the book by stating, with authority, that it is good enough to read twice.

Being one of the 87th Precinct novels, if you love one, you'll love the all, and vice versa, but the vice versa would be hard for me to imagine.

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### **James Thane says**

Of the first forty-nine entries in Ed McBain's 87th Precinct series, this (the forty-ninth) is, I think, the best so far. By now, the cast of characters has been thoroughly established and the members have changed very little through the years. When the first book in the series, *Cop Hater*, appeared, the detectives of the 87th were all in their middle thirties and they still are. The lead detective, Steve Carella, is dreading the approach of his fortieth birthday, but he's taken forty three years to age from thirty-five to forty, so he really shouldn't complain all that much. By now the precinct house, which also hasn't changed in all that time, should be as familiar to readers of the series as their own homes, as will the neighborhoods of McBain's fictional metropolis of Isola, the Big Bad City.

Given that, these books now must succeed or fail almost solely upon the merits of the story that McBain chooses to tell. Each of these books usually finds the detectives working two or three different cases simultaneously and over the years some of them have been more entertaining than others. The three cases that are interwoven through this book are uniformly very good.

As the book opens, detectives Steve Carella and Arthur Brown are called to the scene of a murder in a city park. A young woman has been strangled and, from the ring on her finger, Carella realizes that the woman was a nun, even though she's dressed in civilian clothes. He and Brown are even more surprised when the autopsy reveals that the murdered nun was sporting a set of expensive breast implants, a surgical procedure that I'm quite sure most of the nuns who taught me at St. Anthony's grade school would never have considered. But there are no witnesses, virtually no clues and even fewer leads in the case and so catching her killer is going to be a challenging piece of work.

While Carella and Brown work the murder case, detectives Meyer Meyer and Burt Kling are on the trail of the Cookie Boy, who breaks into peoples' homes, walks out with their valuables and leaves behind a box of chocolate chip cookies. He understands that it's not exactly a fair exchange, but then he did bake the cookies himself and they're very good cookies; he figures it's the least he can do. The newspapers are raising hell about his exploits, but the two detectives are trailing well behind him.

Finally, this book continues a thread that first appeared a couple of books ago. Without giving anything away, someone committed a serious crime against the family of one of the detectives. However, the person escaped conviction for the offense and has now returned to the scene, again constituting a serious threat.

McBain moves back and forth among these investigations and keeps the reader entertained throughout. As always in these books, there's a fair amount of wry humor mixed in with the blood and gore and the case of the murdered nun is especially interesting to follow. Again, for my money this is the best book in the series thus far, which is saying quite a bit given the very high standard that McBain set early on in the series. Any fan of the 87th Precinct will certainly want to search out this book.

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## **LJ says**

The Big Bad City - G

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In the opening pages, Steve Carella and Artie Brown return to the department with 9 basketball players (the 10th player was murdered) only to discover a knife fight erupting in a holding cell. It's a steamy August night, and Carella and Detective Parker end up having to shoot one of the fighters to cool things down. Then Meyer and Kling enter the scene; they're hot in pursuit of the Cookie Boy, a thief who leaves chocolate-chip cookies at every crime sight. Before the interminable day is done, Carella and Brown are called out to Grover Park to investigate a homicide. A nun has been strangled to death, but she's no ordinary Sister. She's got signs of a breast augmentation operation that hint at a sordid past. Finally, readers are privy to a conversation between Juju and Sonny. Sonny killed a cop's dad, and Juju is convinced that the police will bend the rules to see that Sonny winds up dead. Juju insists that the only way out of the death trap is to kill the cop first. The officer's name is Steve Carella. And all of this happens in the first 15 pages.

McBain is the master of Police Procedurals.

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## **Steve says**

Ed McBain is the King of police procedural books. I haven't read him in quite a while, but seeing as this is #49 in the series, I guess it's time to start again! In this novel as always there are two stories going on at the same time. Steve is being persured by the the man that killed his father and there is a burglar called "The Cookie Man" who Meyer Meyer and company are after. Great read!

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## **K says**

Well, I finished out the year on a good note with another 87th precinct novel from McBain, He is a master of police dialogue and procedural mystery, and knows how to keep it all moving while making the reader laugh out loud along the way. This book had all the ingredients and while not a deep or dark tale (unlike the Nordic Noirs), was entertaining throughout. A bit of lighthearted reading on which to end 2015. Happy New Year to all.

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## **Joshua Emil says**

The story focuses on two cases. The first to appear is a woman found dead in a park blocks away from the

precinct. The detectives assigned were Carella and Brown; as they go deeper, they uncover secrets the victim kept (unusual secrets). The second is a string of burglary and robbery perpetrated by The Cookie Boy, who leaves cookies on every crime scene.

Besides from these cases, a stalker is closing in on one of the men of the 87th Precinct.

This is has been one of the best police procedural I have read since William J. Caunitz's Pigtown.

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### **Mike says**

After tearing through a young adult alien invasion series, a very down to earth cops and crime book seemed a good change of pace, and McBain hit the spot. This was a very straightforward set of semi-intertwining stories around one group of homicide detectives. You get a good feel for the cops personal lives without it being overbearing on the meat of the matter, which are the crimes and the policework involved. Everything was pretty "normal" in the grand scheme of things - a burglary gone sideways, a killing over minimal amounts of money that really was about much more, and the long lasting impacts violence can hold over people, usually resulting in more violence.

In today's climate, a book where cops and criminals are presented very honestly as just people doing their "jobs", with various flaws and shading and little that is black and white, is refreshing as acknowledging this is very hard at times, particularly these times ("guy had a record - so what he got shot" / "all cops are just looking to shoot people"). For the most part, no one in McBains story is perfect or evil - just all on various points in the scale, much like real life.

There was a certain "this is kinda like one of those cop shows of the 90's" and maybe they were based on this in that there were three or so stories, with the view going back and forth - and you know what, that isn't the worse thing in the world... some of those shows were pretty good, and so was the book. Worth the read when you've had enough of fantasy or romance and need a few hours of just on the streets cops and robbers.

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### **Bill Donhiser says**

A police procedural with a good storyline well done.

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### **Tony Gleeson says**

The forty-ninth entry in the 87th Precinct series (as I close in on the final entries, 55 in all!) and to me a slight disappointment. But even mediocre Hunter/McBain is still pretty derved good stuff. This one involves the mysterious murder of a nun-- with breast implants yet! (Don't ask, go read the darned thing.) There is also the "Cookie Boy," a burglar who leaves chocolate chip cookies on the pillow of the homes he robs. I started to get the feeling that McBain was tiring of his usual characters, the "boys" of the 87th Precinct. By now he had started to emphasize the obnoxiously fascinating detective Fat Ollie Weeks of the neighboring 88th Precinct and to spend more time on the viewpoints of the other characters in the story. There is still ample "procedural" time as Steve Carella and company uncover the strange labyrinthine background of the deceased sister and her case entwines with that of the Cookie Boy.

I only gave three stars to this tale in comparison with the shining lights of the series. Had this book been written by Joe Smith-- I unabashedly confess, I might have given it an extra star!

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**wally says**

ed mcbain is a good story teller. an 87th precinct story. life in the big bad city. an entertaining read.

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**Shirley Alvarez says**

**THE BIG BAD CITY**

I am always amazed at how much detail is in these books. They are correct in information about what was happening in the world and guess what? It fits today perfect! Nothing is new!

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**Margie says**

As usual this book was as good as the rest of the 87th pct series, I read this book many years ago and forgot, but it was a good reread.

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**Linda L says**

Wonderful -- I loved it and can't wait for more 87th stories.

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**Nigel says**

Unmistakeable McBain - a murdered nun, a quirky burglar who leaves cookies for his victims and the man who killed Carella's father is egged on to get Carella before Carella gets him. The stories are masterfully orchestrated with dark sly wit written in a voice that is by turns mordant, comic and grim, evoking the sprawl of seedy, homey, squalid humanity in the Big Bad City. Like, say, Lansdale, McBain is the closest approximation to an experience of skilled oral storytelling on the printed page.

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**Tom says**

My very first McBain novel. Totally dug it. I can see why people who love Parker's books would love this series. Good atmosphere, interesting characters, quick dialogue. Great summer read!

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## **Irene B. says**

McBain is popcorn for the brain. This is one of the better ones. I read them to find out how his characters' lives progress.

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## **Heather says**

First Ed McBain book that I have read and I enjoyed his humor and the way the story unfolded. I didn't feel too lost, having not read any of the previous books in the series, but there was some things that I was missing from the story. Not the greatest mystery, but the characters were well rounded and McBain made me want to know all of them better. Would read more in the series.

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## **Ellen Keim says**

It's been a long time since I've read a book in this series. Nice to know they still hold up.

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## **David Highton says**

An 87th story published in 1998, with Steve Carella fretting about facing 40 (more than 40 years after he first appears in the series). Like some other long-running series, the characters become ageless, even as the cultural references and the technology move along with the times. A murder of a nun, a series of burglaries and the re-emergence of the murderer of Carella's father are the key themes which run parallel in this good book - the usual reliable police procedural from the 87th.

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## **Audrey says**

Sunday evening turned a rosy pink and then a deeper blush and then a reddish-lavender-blue and then purple and black, the golden day succumbing at last to night.

It was time to go buy a gun.

**Synopsis:** Three inter-locking cases in the 87th Precinct: a dead nun, an unhinged stalker and a burglar who bakes chocolate-chip cookies. *Go.*

In the course of one very long, hot August in the city, the 87th Precinct has to contend with a dead nun with breast implants and a baking burglar whose career gets away from him in a very big way. Oh, and someone's

trying to kill one of the detectives.

It's hard to talk about this novel without giving away the whole plot. Suffice it to say, it's the 87th Precinct. The same detectives, the same measured pace and gritty realism, but this time with a bittersweet note of time passing, things lost. Carella's turning forty. He's not well with that. To some extent, I think you could complain that this book becomes *The Steve Carella Show*, with a majority of the action focusing on him and his case, his angst, his family. But his case is the twistiest, the most difficult and the one that yields the fewest answers.

I had been totally trying to read a different book right now, about Russian exiled royalty, trying to off each other all over 1920s Paris, Egypt and Shanghai, but as soon as this book made it into the house, I had a hard time staying away from it. I just love this series, even when it's a little older, a little slower, a little obsessed with the twilight. It has a right to be.

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