



The Killing Ground

Jack Higgins

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The master of suspense returns, with a chilling novel of modern terrorism and revenge.

For intelligence operative Sean Dillon, it begins with a routine passport check. But the events it will lead to will be as bloody as any he has ever known.

The man he stops at Heathrow Airport is Caspar Rashid, born and bred in England but with family ties to a Bedouin tribe fiercely wedded to the old ways, as Rashid has just found out to his pain. His thirteen-year-old daughter, Sara, has been kidnapped by Rashid's own father and taken to Iraq to be married to a man known as the Hammer of God, one of the Middle East's most feared terrorists. Dillon has had his own run-ins with that clan, and when the distraught man begs Dillon for help, he sees a chance to settle some old scores-but he has no idea of the terrible chain of events he is about to unleash, nor of the implacable enemies he is about to gain. Before his journey is done, many men will die-and Dillon may be one of them.

Filled with dark suspense, driven by characters of complexity and passion, this novel once again proves that in the words of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* "Jack Higgins is the dean of intrigue novelists. He has no equal."

The Killing Ground Details

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Author : Jack Higgins

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From Reader Review The Killing Ground for online ebook

Tom Piercy says

My first Jack Higgins novel, "The Eagle Has Landed", showed just what he was capable of.

By comparison, "The Killing Ground" seems formulaic.

If you like cardboard cut-out characters and gung-ho action, you might enjoy this. I'm afraid that, just four weeks after reading it, I can't remember a thing about it.

Dean Economy says

Good book to read if you want something that you can put down at any time. It seems that Jack Higgins used scenes from several of his older books and just rewrote them a little. If you like his characters you will enjoy this book. If you expect something original you will be disappointed.

Rebecca says

I do so enjoy these Sean Dillon books from Jack Higgins. They are always loads of fun to read and this was no exception.

The Killing Ground continues the Rashid storyline which has been a story arc in a few of the Dillon books.

This time it is a different member of the Rashid family, Caspar who lives with his with Molly and daughter Sara in London. Caspar is no longer Muslim and has been rejected by his Bedouin brothers in Hazar. However, as punishment, they kidnap his daughter for her to be betrothed to Hussein Rashid who as a follow of Bin Laden has been given the name Hammer of God.

Billy Salter and Dillon, go to Hazar and kidnap Sara back in payment for Caspar giving them more information about the Rashid organisation that is left. At the same time, the Russians have also decided that they have had enough of Ferguson, Dillon and Salter's interference in their affairs and have decided to take them out.

Again, the action travels from Baghdad, Hazar to Dublin, London and Sussex with the stories connecting to give you the final play out at the end. Higgin's later books, flow so well and are very easy to read, there is no nonsense with them and take you from one situation to the next so well. He manages to connect them so well with how people betraying other people so they find out the information they need.

This time I have knocked off one star, because I had one small gripe, which was the repeated use of a storyline that Higgin's has used before in another Dillon book. I don't want to go into too much detail as it might spoil for those who have not read it yet. But it relates to the use of a disused tunnel to get into a compound without anyone knowing about it. I am sure that Higgin's used this not long ago and sometimes his lack of imagination for solving problems can let him down.

Otherwise I would have given it 5 stars because it was a really enjoyable read overall.

Rick says

I'd really give this 2 1/2 stars, but that isn't an option on this site, I guess. It is another entertaining Higgins' tale, but like most of his newer novels, it lacks the original punch of his earlier novels. They begin to read all the same. That said, this one was an improvement over some of the other recent novels, and he does tell an entertaining story.

One gripe... he has characters who are cursing and hating Sunni Muslims, which would imply -- as they are Muslim characters -- that they are Shiite Muslims. But then a few sentences later, they are praising Osama Bin Laden and their loyalty to his cause. Major disconnect there. Bin Laden's Al Qaeda is a SUNNI-based organization, has spoken against Shiites, and has few, if any, friends in Shiite circles. That's not to say that Shiites are not involved in terrorism or fighting America/UK forces in Iraq, but it just is a bit off to me.

Samuel Tyler says

The days of vintage Jack Higgins are long gone, drowned in a sea of vinegar that is the Sean Dillon books. These identikit novels see Dillion and his increasingly large posse take on some criminal or other and win the day. I think I have read nearly all of them, but the similarity that they possess means that I can never be too sure if I have picked up a new book, or am just reading it again. 'The Killing Ground' is a rare treat in the series of being a book that is alright. Yes, it is another Dillon book, but the action is quick and the consequences nonsensical.

Dillon is up against another of the Rashid family, in this case an aged Uncle, but also a young and deadly killer. When a young woman is kidnapped from the UK and forced into living in Iraq, the undercover spy decides to go even more off the books and get her back without the knowledge of Brigadier Ferguson.

By being even more rogue than usual, 'Killing' is slightly punchier and fun than other Dillon books written around the same period. The plot feels very similar to others and even references previous set pieces, before copying them – a very odd way of writing. However, there are a few very entertaining action sequences here that cannot be said of some of the other books in the series. A rescue from Iraq stands out as it leaves even Dillion feeling a little helpless.

Perhaps it is the few years I have given between reading Higgins books, but this was not a bad effort. It is a quick read, daft and full of action. It won't win any prizes and is nowhere up to the author's own standards from the 60-80s, but still it has enough in it to keep long term fans of the author happy.

John Boyda says

Sorry, but this one stunk! I like the Sean Dillon character, I like the writing, but the plot on this one was terrible. Unbelievable supporting characters and a plethora of coincidences, also unbelievable (for both the good and the bad guys). Without happenstance, none of the action would have happened, none of the main

characters would have been able to have their final duels. I can only hope the next is better.

Dhritiman Bhuyan says

Jack Higgins is one of those authors who doesn't let his readers put down the book. The pages simply fly. Dillon is my hero. He is too good.

Alex Gherzo says

Fourteen books into the Sean Dillon series, it's clear Jack Higgins got bored. *Without Mercy*, the previous entry, was an awful book, and *The Killing Ground* isn't much better. It reads like it was written over a weekend, not edited, and published just to get another Dillon adventure on the shelves. Aside from some character names, weapons and drinks, they barely resemble the older books in the series.

Staking out an airport, Sean Dillon captures a member of the Rashid family, but this particular Rashid is actually an honest citizen. He does, however, have a kidnapped daughter, and when Dillon and the rest of the Prime Minister's Private Army offer to help they get pulled into a bigger plot involving Russian spies, the IRA and an Al Qaeda connected terrorist known as the Hammer of God. It's nowhere near as cool as it sounds.

Spoilers...

It's hard to know where to begin complaining. The plot is convoluted as hell, and it never comes together in any coherent way. I guess this network of Russians is going to remain in the background pulling the evil strings, which is fine, but then they're mashed up with the Rashids -- another group of recurring villains, and a better one because instead of bringing the same characters back a new group of family members will just turn up in each book -- plus hired IRA gunmen and a mysterious figure called the Broker who seems to be involved with everyone. And most of the villains are still around by the end. The Russians are all there; the head IRA guy is alive, though some of his henchmen were killed; the Broker is not only at large but not identified. Only Hussein Rashid and his sect of the Rashid family are dealt with. Too many times the bad guys are intentionally wounded; even Harry Salter, who is supposed to be a ruthless gangster, sends an assassin to kill a Russian who attacked him and the assassin just shoots him in the leg. Everything amounts to a game of tag, and it just becomes boring.

The characters are dull and inconsistent. Sean Dillon is indistinguishable from anyone else; all his charm, humor and cool are gone and he just speaks matter-of-factly about everything, like everyone else. Sara Rashid is supposed to be thirteen but acts like she's fifty and addicted to Prozac; she also vacillates from wanting to escape Hussein to wanting to stay with him, and there's no rhyme or reason to any of it. There was an opportunity to show how being exposed to religious fanaticism can indoctrinate someone, but it's never dealt with in any coherent manner. And everyone commenting how astonishing she is

gets old fast. Igor Levin is a part of the team now, despite being one of the people responsible for killing Hannah, which none of her "friends" seem to care about. There are also way too many characters, to the point where Dillon no longer feels like the lead; he's just another supporting character. There were so many assassination attempts in this book it would've been the perfect opportunity to thin the herd at least a little; alas, no.

Then there are many technical problems. There are lots of moments where it's impossible to tell who's talking, partly due to inconsistencies in speakers (a character will speak in one paragraph, then take over for himself in the next). At one point, Roper -- who is paralyzed -- stands up out of his wheelchair. A Rashid is killed by a group of Sunnis, which makes no sense because they're affiliated with Al Qaeda, which is a Sunni organization, making the Rashids Sunni as well. All of these things and more are why I say it feels like the book wasn't edited.

Reading these last two Higgins books was a real bummer. I don't know if he's tired of Dillon or what, but I don't think his heart is in it anymore. I've stuck with the series for a long time so it's hard to abandon it now, but I'm sorely tempted.

John says

Jack Higgins is on top of his game. Sean Dillon and company are doing what they do best--track down the bad guys and get rid of them. As in all Higgins books, there is a high body count. This story does leave a few loose ends: Sara, the Broker, and Ali Hassim to name a few.

George Hancock says

Good story, fast paced novel - international intrigue

Peter says

i just think these books are so good and all worth five stars.

Kevin Reeder says

The gang continues to fight a good fight. Great British/Irish piece of action and mystery. This one really was good interjecting a thirteen year old beyond her years.

Robert Colquhoun says

I would give this 1.5 stars if I could.

In one word, contrived.

The coincidental events (perfect people overhearing perfect conversations and deciding to report them to the perfect people at the perfect time with perfect results) were to the point of being ludicrous.

I lost count of how many people were "shot between the eyes".

I'm not one to start a book and not finish it but I sure came close with this one. All in all, it was just silly and I would not recommend it to anyone.

Warren Thoms says

Not a bad story but I found in this book and some of the others in the series that the ending is a total of 5 pages of the book. Some books will use that as an epilogue but when you still have what would normally be at least 20 pages or more of and ending crunched into 5 pages or so, it just feels like it could have been better. Heck I'm not a writer but I could have written a better ending. Maybe the next one will be better. Other than that, if you have liked the series so far it is like that.

Carla says

Contains reference to modern war. Sadam Hussein and terrorism. Old Ira members to the rescue.
