



Designed to Kill

Chester D. Campbell

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A thoroughly enjoyable mystery with an intelligent plot, clever clues and characters who are like people you know. Phillip Margolin, New York Times bestselling author.

Designed to Kill Details

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Author : Chester D. Campbell

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From Reader Review Designed to Kill for online ebook

Lillie says

The writing in this book is the best I've seen in a while. I've come to expect errors and editing problems to at least a minor degree; in fact, I've quit commenting on the need for editing unless the problems are extensive. I didn't notice a single error in this book, and the writing style is relaxed and easy to follow. The characters were likable and competent--they didn't go downstairs alone in the dark in response to a strange noise or commit a dozen felonies in the course of the investigation. A good story well-told.

Rhonda says

Campbell has written an extremely good mystery story here. His characters are realistic and human without some of the annoying cloying habits which seem to singularly identify a person in some modern mystery novels. I felt like each of the actions which the protagonist took required some sort of actual effort and time; no one was magically transported to the front of the line at the restaurant on a Friday evening and even the recovery from accidents seemed moderately real. In movies, of course, one receives a concussion, takes two aspirin and is off running down the street. Life doesn't work that way for Campbell.

I could not help but compare this to some of the other mystery novels I have read lately. While I admit that I think that the various Patterson novels have become formulaic and somewhat contrived, what really bothers me is that the writing never seems all that good. In *Designed to Kill*, we are introduced to things which have nothing directly to do with the plot but are there to give the story flavor and texture. In fact, the background is interesting because you have a feel for where you are and what is happening to the characters. When the protagonist drives a distance, you can feel that it is really a drive and when you stop for lunch, it's really lunch....along with all the temptations and roadblocks which accompany any real adult diet.

If I had one criticism, and it would be miniscule considering how good I think this book is, it would be that at the end, it came together somewhat suddenly. While I thought that the building investigation/ hearing might reveal some clues, I was not quite prepared for the barrage of telephone calls and sources providing information which fit together. The reality of it is that you always find someone who gets the information slightly wrong or, more likely, can't locate the necessary information at all.

The author redeemed himself by not putting the clues together in perfect order. Even though he had given us the main clue to the murderer in the book, it seemed realistic that no one would have thought of it as important until that time.... and then of course it was almost too late. Still the care with which the protagonist and his wife set the scene was in concert with how careful he had been throughout...so it made sense and yet caught the reader by surprise. I think that is the mark of an excellent writer.

I am giving this book 4 stars (which I rarely do with modern fiction) because I am so thrilled to have discovered such a worthwhile writer. You may be assured that I will read something else by him very soon when I want to kick back and relax with a good mystery.

Sharon Michael says

Entertaining mystery with a polished "professional feel" to the writing. A sensible, mature couple star as the amateur detectives with the investigation talents provided logically by the main character's military investigators' background.

Fast action in the opening that hooks the reader quickly, well developed characters and a realistic and unusual plot line that twists in unexpected ways. Refreshing to find main characters without major character defects, neuroses and addictions and action that doesn't rely on someone doing something really stupid to advance the plot.

My only criticism would be the unfortunate emphasis on rather obstructive, rude local police officers which does seem to be one of the standard practices in many 'amateur sleuth' mysteries.

Robin Warden says

This caught my eye because the main character is from Nashville, yet maintains a beach condo in Perdido Key. Given my connection with the 2, I thought I'd give it a shot. I was pleasantly surprised & enjoyed this sleuth story. Nice to see a couple near my age as the P.I.'s & loved all the TN & FLA/ALA references.

Michelle says

Good book

You people should just read this book yourselves and write your own review on this novel yourself and I really enjoyed reading this book very much so . Shelley MA

Stacei says

another good Greg McKenzie mystery

Greg and Jill are pulled into the fire again. While they investigate the apparent suicide of their best friends son, they become embroiled in murder and beatings and general incompetence on the part of many. Greg and Jill take on the part of unlicensed Private Investigators. I never saw the murderer coming and was quite surprised several times. Recommend this lite fun read

Ed Scott says

Enjoyable mystery with a great twist at the end. The book wasn't cluttered with superfluous characters. Nothing bothers me more than to introduce a character who you expect to be part of the storyline just to have his name not mentioned until 200 pages later. Why introduce those kinds of characters? Now that I have

explained that, let me say that the author in this book tied all the characters into the main plot, and even the minor players were used enough to matter. Very good book.

Scot says

Second in a series. I picked it up as I thought it might teach me something about the work process in architecture, but it was more of a traditional murder mystery tied to the rhythms of a happy, healthy retirement lifestyle, AARP-focused demographic, set in the south (mostly Florida but also Tennessee, Alabama). At first I found the author's penchant for throwing in so many details irritating--not because I don't like details, but so much about fashion of every character, or the range of items on a menu, or all the steps and reasons for a secondary character's therapy exercises--these details weren't establishing mood, or developing character, or advancing plot, they seemed to be slowing down movement of the narrative forward so much I was getting exasperated.

Then I realized, I was supposed to slow down and not be in such a hurry. The target audience are retired folks who want a pleasant diversion with a hero (and his lovely wife) that they can identify with and admire. I do credit the author for having a good command of the language needed and for knowing the routine of an investigator--and for including some of the duller but necessary elements of that routine. The story did build toward the climax, too, so once I settled in I enjoyed the leisurely pace and the rising tension.

Patricia Reding says

I received a copy of *Designed to Kill* (Greg McKenzie Mysteries #2) as a free download on Amazon. In exchange, I offer this author this, my honest review.

I have been enjoying a number of mysteries of late. I'm not sure why I've been picking them up, but they have been a welcome change from my generally preferred genre. (This may be, in part because I don't write mysteries. Thus, I don't ever find myself wondering what might have happened if . . .)

With a clear understanding of the area of Florida in which the story is set and a firm grasp of general construction principles, Campbell tells a tale in which McKenzie and his wife, Jill, set out to solve a mystery. The two seek to determine if the death of the son of their best friends, a man who built an upscale beachfront condominium, was a suicide—as had been claimed—or murder. With the assistance of some locals and friends from McKenzie's former law enforcement days, McKenzie and Jill thwart the efforts of those seeking to keep facts buried while avoiding the local mafia types and upsetting law enforcement personnel. Together, they unravel the mystery, bring the culprits to justice, and are able to bring some peace to their best friends.

Designed to Kill moved quickly, included sufficient elements of surprise to keep me reading, and drew a believable relationship between McKenzie and Jill. As is often the test for me with books in series, I had to ask myself if I would read more. The answer is a simple "yes!"

Also posted on www.Oathtaker.com, at PatriciaReding.BookLikes.com and on Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

Rissi says

C. D. Campbell really needs a good editor. The details of what people are wearing, the car they are driving, what the house and shrubbery look like do nothing g for the mystery. I forced myself to finish the book.

Robbie says

This was a well-written mystery about a husband and wife team solving a crime for a friend. The characters were likeable, the story was good, but there wasn't an extreme amount of intensity. For those who prefer mysteries that aren't gory, violent and bloody, this will be a good choice. I enjoyed it.

Rebecca says

I almost didn't download this book because a typo in the description had me worried about quality. But I definitely don't regret my choice. A very enjoyable read and decently edited (not perfect, but few are). A nice stable first person POV after a third omniscient intro. I would definitely be interested in more of the series. I didn't even suspect there was an earlier book until well into it and was able to follow all of it. No background dumps. It really felt like an independent novel.

Brick O'Neil says

Refreshing take on the detective mysteries that I've read in the past. Chester Campbell's book is a first for me in his writings and I must say I have not been disappointed. There wasn't the usual 'over-the-top-testosterone' one usually reads in a male lead detective or investigator, there wasn't the slut-of-the-century-sex-kitten that some writers typically fall back on; there wasn't the bumbling-yet-smart-detective that others seem to think readers enjoy.

No, Chester creates a retired couple that have been together, lived a life and now investigate murder mysteries for friends. Without the previous trappings mentioned, Chester leaves room for actual investigation that utilizes a mind over brawn, a loving and caring husband who only has eyes for his wife and a wife that will do anything for her husband. Even question murder suspects. Chester describes each character with the same detail, leaving no stone unturned.

His scenes are descriptive without getting bogged down in details. The sand, the ocean, the condominiums and so forth, bring forth images that help scene after scene fly by. I was pleasantly surprised and if another of Chester's books come up, I'll be sure to give a second look.

I would give Designed to Kill 4.5 stars.

J.R. says

Retired Air Force investigator Greg McKenzie can't refuse when his best friend asks him to investigate the alleged suicide of his son, though he's uncertain how it might be handled if the result proves it to be true.

Police contend the son, a design engineer, took his own life out of remorse after a structural defect resulted in the deaths of guests at the opening of a luxury condominium in Florida.

Greg and his wife, Jill, are an engaging couple it would be a delight to know. Their honesty and dedication to clearing the reputation of their friend's son lands them in a heap of trouble—both with scoundrels and the police—as they go about asking questions and probing in touchy places.

They soon discover chicanery on the part of the developer and his minions, an inspector who's willing to look the other way and even the influence of Mafia goons. Convincing hard-headed local police, however, is another matter.

This is an entertaining second entry in the Greg McKenzie series, cleverly plotted with good characterization and dialogue. There's a nice twist at the end, too.

Laurie says

A compelling who done it.

I got this book free on bookbub but will definitely read more from this author. This story kept me interested from start to finish. I enjoyed that although the main investigator is the husband, he gives his wife credit for cleverly worming vital information from sources that help to crack the case. The story did not have to rely on descriptive blood and gore scenes, sweating sex or foul language to keep in reader interested. The chemistry between the two protagonists and the twists and turns of the investigation made this a good read.
