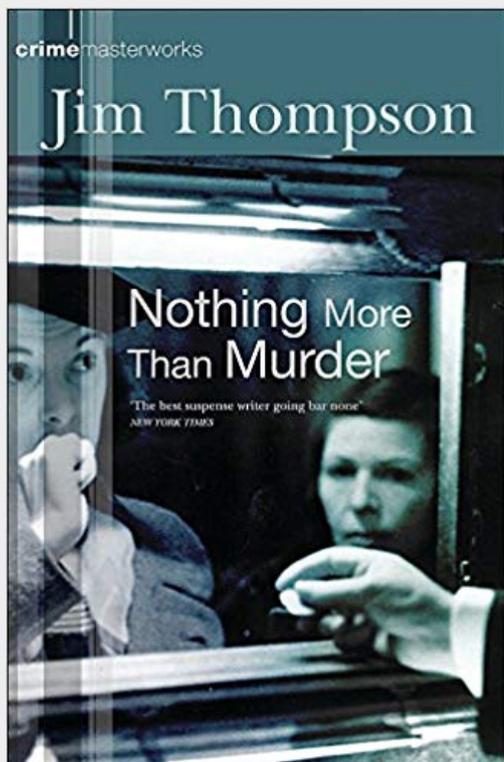


Nothing More Than Murder (Crime Masterworks) by Jim Thompson



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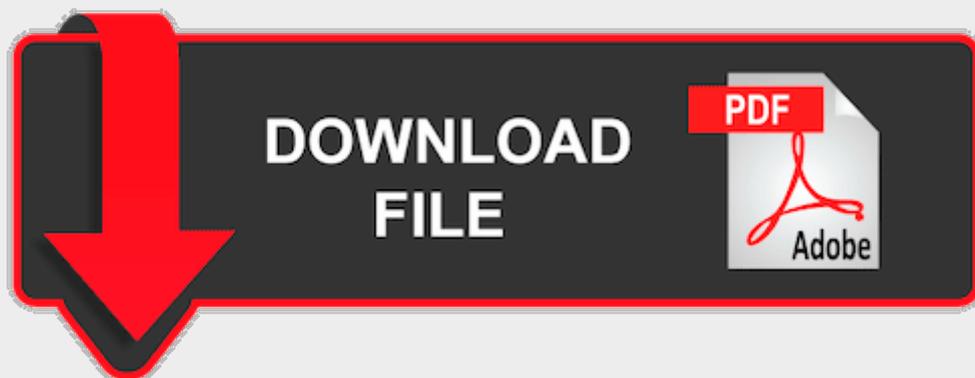
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Joe Wilmot is a smooth operator. He runs the picture house in Stoneville and he knows how to deal with everyone, from the movie distributors and the union representatives to his projectionist and the punters. But when it comes to handling his wife, his mistress and a bogus insurance claim, it turns out he isn't quite as clever as he thought. An uncompromising and terrifying vision of small-town corruption and the romantic triangle from the author of the toughest crime novels ever.



Reviews of the [Nothing More Than Murder \(Crime Masterworks\)](#)

by Jim Thompson

1. Mopimicr

This is not one of Thompson's more compelling crime novels. It is too deeply involved in how a local movie house franchise was run in the 1950s. Joe Wilmot, the protagonist and narrative voice is a thoroughly reprehensible person, not uncommon in a Thompson novel but Joe has absolutely no redeeming qualities. Doc McCoy in *The Getaway* for example, is resourceful and brave despite his obvious criminal tendencies. Roy Dillon in *The Grifters* is charming, clever, and has an interesting backstory. William Collins in *After Dark My Sweet*, is perhaps Thompson's most complex and empathetic character. Joe Wilmot, although a shrewd businessman, is an opportunist with no scruples. Those who do business with him have to for various reasons but no one likes him and neither does the reader. Joe cheats absolutely everyone who's involved with him in trivial ways. The reader soon comes to detest him. The plot revolves around a murderous insurance scam. What you have here that acquires a three star rating is Thompson's wonderful voice, his attention to detail and the complex interesting plot. The Thompson novels I mention above I could not put down until I finished them. *Nothing More Than Murder* I had to push myself to finish. I really don't want to know these people.

2. Kajikus

Jim Thompson's "*Nothing More Than Murder*" is a slow-moving cat and mouse game told by the despicable and offensive protagonist, Joe Wilmot. Murder and insurance fraud are set against the detailed workings of a small town movie theater. The reader is introduced to a great deal of information about the back business of the movie house, competition, and even details about the projection room, managing reels of film, and filling the seats.

Joe Wilmot is not the only objectionable character. Almost every member of the cast is flawed in some way. Joe's "girlfriend," Carol, is equally reprehensible, as is the wife. Maybe the only likable character is the insurance investigator who is clever and evasive.

This novel was too slow for me. It is more psychological than physical, and

did not maintain a sense of tension that made me want to keep reading. The plot is complex and interesting, and moves along methodically, like a chess game. The outcome is not particularly predictable, and glimpses inside Joe's mind are entertaining in a dark way.

I have not read this author before. I plan to, as I expect some of his other work is better.

3. Burirus

"Nothing More Than Murder," first published in 1949, was Jim Thompson's first major success and was followed in 1952 by the book most critics agree is his magnum opus ("The Killer Inside Me"). On the surface, "Nothing More Than Murder" might appear to be yet another twist on James Cain's "Double Indemnity." Here, the husband (Joe Wilmot) has an affair with Carol. There's a double indemnity insurance policy on the wife (Elizabeth), who is seemingly murdered in a bizarre film editing accident. But, this is a Jim Thompson book and the basic idea of the three-sided romance is twisted in quite a different way. What if the wife accepts that the marriage has gone to hell in a hand basket and offers to step aside if she can collect the insurance money? After all, all you would need is a body somewhat resembling the wife and it doesn't really matter where you find that body, does it?

Moreover, this is not a simple tale of lust and greed and guilt tearing one apart (as if such a tale were ever simple). This is a Jim Thompson novel and it is a world where seemingly everyone is greedy, dirty, underhanded, and conniving. Joe Wilmot is not a basically decent guy. Make no mistake about that. Never mind the adultery or the murder conspiracy. He is in the movie theater business and he is involved in underhanded, sneaky deals to stifle any competition in his small city and to undermine the union rules. He is as cagey as a shark. And, in the end, everyone seems to put together how he has put more than one over on them. In typical Thompson fashion, the walls start closing in on Wilmot and the noose around his neck gets squeezed tighter and tighter.

4. Thetath

Not one of Jim Thompson's best, but it has some good lines and the plot is fairly unique as it involves the film distribution business in the Midwest in the 1950's. Of course there's also murder and betrayal and bad luck, all the Thompson staples. The book also includes two short stories, neither of which is very notable.

5. happy light

I just recently started reading Jim Thompson. This is my second book by him. He's definitely a master at dialog, both internal and external. This is noir writing at its best.

6. Tane

Not his best, but still great.

7. Yozshunris

A lot of Cinema talk, but once you get passed all of that in the beginning the story gets pretty good.

8. Writers of the 20th century. I have All of his novels and now with Kindle I'm reading them again Nothing More Than Murder is one of my top 5 Thompson books!

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