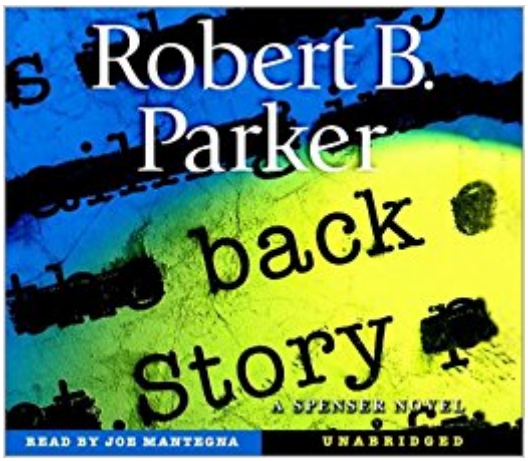
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Back Story



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Synopsis

Renaissance man Spenser - he of the acerbic social commentary, the gourmet cookery, and the steely abs - turns his considerable talents to the unraveling of a thirty-year-old murder mystery. During a 1974 holdup in a Boston bank by a revolutionary group calling itself the Dread Scott Brigade, Emily Gordon, a visitor cashing traveler’s checks, is shot and killed. Despite security-camera photos and a letter from the group claiming responsibility, nobody saw who shot her, and the perpetrators have remained at large for three decades. Enter Paul Giacomin, the closest thing to Spenser’s son. When Paul’s friend Daryl Gordon, Emily’s daughter, decides she needs closure regarding her mother’s death, she turns to Spenser, who must reach past the lack of clues and missing FBI report to seek the truth.

Book Information

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Best Sellers Rank: #1,074,953 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 inÃ Â Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > (P) > Parker, Robert B. #1490 inÃ Â Books > Books on CD > General #1722 inÃ Â Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > Unabridged

Customer Reviews

In this 30th entry in one of mystery fiction’s longest-running and best-loved series, Spenser--the tough yet sensitive Boston private eye with no first name--takes on an unsolved murder nearly three decades old. The client, an actress, is a friend of Paul Giacomin, Spenser’s surrogate son (who first appeared in 1981’s Early Autumn). Her mother was slain by leftist radicals at a bank holdup in 1974, and now she wants to know who fired the shot. As Spenser digs into the past, he soon learns that powerful people on both sides of the law want the case left alone--badly enough to kill. These death threats provide a fine excuse for Hawk, Spenser’s extremely scary (yet sensitive) bad-guy pal, to tag along in nearly every scene as bodyguard. The interaction of the two friends is one of this series’s familiar pleasures, as is the presence of Susan Silverman, Spenser’s longtime love interest. Another

pleasure is Parker's stripped-down prose, a marvel of craftsmanship as smooth as 18-year-old Scotch. (Plus we get the first meeting between Spenser and Jesse Stone, hero of another Parker series.) Alas, the whole enterprise feels a little tired. The plot never generates much sustained suspense, and the author's adoration for his central characters renders them at times almost cartoonesque. Still, Back Story is excellently prepared comfort food, even if it isn't five-star cuisine. --Nicholas H. Allison --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

Spenser's respectable 30th outing (he debuted 30 years ago in The Godwulf Manuscript) finds the veteran Boston PI teaming briefly with Jesse Stone, the cop hero of a newer Parker series (Death in Paradise, etc.). The move works because Parker plays it low-key, presenting Stone as just one of many characters who cross Spenser's path as the PI-hired by a friend of his adoptive son, Paul, for the princely sum of six Krispy Kremes-digs into the 28-year-old murder of a woman during a bank robbery; the friend is the slain woman's daughter and wants closure. Before Spenser bumps into Stone, the top cop in Paradise, Mass., he connects the killing to the daughter of big time Boston mobster Sonny Karnofsky, an old foe. When Spenser won't back off, Karnofsky threatens Spenser's girlfriend, Susan, then orders a hit on the PI. Enter as protection longtime sidekick Hawk; other series vets make appearances too on Spenser's behalf, including cops Belsen and Quirk and shooter Vinnie Morris. An interesting new character, a Jewish FBI agent, also helps out. The repartee between Spenser and Hawk is fast and funny; the sentiment between Spenser and Susan and the musings about Spenser's code are only occasionally cloying; and there's a scattering of remarkable action scenes including a tense shootout in Harvard Stadium. Series fans will enjoy this mix of old and new, but the title kind of says it all: this series, probably the finest and most influential PI series since Chandler, could use some forward momentum. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

.I like the Robert B. Parker novels because of his writing style. TheyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re fast paced, and I like the short clipped dialogue. This was a typical Spenser story with people trying to kill him and his girlfriend, Susan, because he [Spenser] was getting too close to the truth.However, I have to give this story three stars because, although it was an interesting enough story, I found it to be a bit convoluted. Keeping track of all the characters was a bit confusing at times. I think even Mr. Parker had difficulty keeping track of them. ÃƒÂ Ã Â•Ã Å .IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m far from being a prude, but I also thought his use of the ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“fÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• word was a bit overdone.

When Spenser’s unofficial son Paul Giacomon asks for help, there is no force on Earth that will stop the great PI from complying. Eyebrows are raised however when the assistance takes the form of the investigation into a 24 year old unsolved mystery of his girlfriends mothers murder. Not only did the case go unsolved, but important papers have gone missing, including - of all things - the official FBI report on the confessed murderers.Robert B Parker was a master invoking the emotions of the reader to enhance his story telling experience, and BACK STORY is no exception. New friends are made, new enemies are encountered, but early on tears will flow and a sob is sure to escape your chest when a much-loved character returns to the "family". All of this and the hunt for killer has not even started.Two legends of the Parker universe meet like a clash of meteors in the night sky as an added incentive to read this book, which is sure to leave the reader with goosebumps. Looking back, Sheriff Stone’s role was quite small but his mere presence across such a small number of pages adds volumes to both the significance of the book, as well as the reader’s enjoyment.BACK STORY is quite a complex read. By book’s end you will be struggling to keep up with whom did what to whom (unless you take notes) but with some heart pumping excitement towards the end, and some greatly appreciated sentimentality and psychoanalysis between our two favourite lovers it all comes out in the wash.Another awesome reading experience from the master of the crime novel.BFN Greggorio!

Jesse Stone, another fantastic Parker creation, makes his sole appearance in a Spenser novel written by Robert B. Parker here. It’s a great read. I’ve read it twice now. Both times it was great. Parker’s ability to pace and plot doesn’t get as much attention as his mastery with dialogue did, but he was great with both. Parker used Spenser’s adventures to address important issues without being anything close to preachy. His novels made me smile and reading them was always time well spent. Crime fiction fans should find a friend in Spenser, Susan, Hawk et al. Any fan of good writing will too.

It is seldom that a story is written that starts at the birth of a character then proceeds linearly to that character’s death. Instead the story starts at some point in the protagonist’s life and inserts the necessary parts of his/her life as necessary; this is called the back story. Parker has done this to one of his characters in this Spenser novel and Spenser sets out to flesh out this back story. The woman’s name is Daryl Gordon, she is introduced as Daryl Silver and the first step is to determine her name. Then she states her mother was killed 28 years earlier and she bribes Spenser to take the case by feeding him a half dozen Krispy Kreme doughnuts and asks him to find out who killed

her mother. Spenser continually says he is taking the case due to these doughnuts. The case is complicated by the changes Spenser finds as he begins his investigation.A tough mobster is involved who tells Spenser to stay out because the mobster's family is involved. This is a mistake, the warning is ignored and Spenser bores on in. Mothers and fathers are switched, race is involved, murders occur and Spenser keeps bulling along. Not only is Spenser involved, so are the city police, the state cops, and even the FBI.Parker stirs the pot, people fade in and out, hippies intrude, and Spenser finds out the true mother and father, straightening out the back story. The whole book is about this back story, no principals are killed and Spenser lets the mobster go despite the killings he has done to protect his family. It is not Spenser's fault, it is Parker's doings and I think it ruins the whole book. It is not the first time Spenser lets murderers off.

A bit less to me than the usual Spenser story.

This Davis offering can better be enjoyed after you have read many of the previous Spencer novels. Great characters from the past abound and when they enter the picture you automatically flash back, in your mind , to previous happenings. Some of the marvelous dialog and action will be recalled and you will say, "I remember you old friend." This book is to be enjoyed and savored like the wonderful left overs from Thanksgiving dinner that are so wonderful again the next day. Maybe not quite as good but filling and satisfying the second time around. I can never get enough of Davis no matter what genre has captivated his writing genius!..

Back Story which involves solving a 30 (actually a 28) year old is a "back story" in many ways... Old characters from different Parker novels, old dialogue among the characters which can always be clever and humorous because the characters are likeable that way, (even if they have a dark past), and an old formula where Spenser basically plows along clueless, stirs up the water to get a reaction from surprising sources which indicates that something is important enough to keep on digging and annoying people until something is uncovered. For new readers, I would pick Parker's earlier novels because they were a breath of fresh air, and still are. For Parker fans...well I guess you will read this anyway. It's an ok Spenser novel.

Excelleent as usual.

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