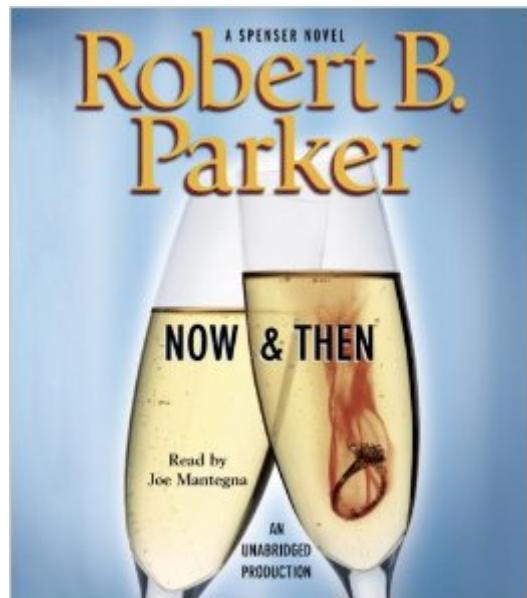


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Now & Then (Spenser Mysteries)



Synopsis

Spenser knows something's amiss the moment Dennis Doherty walks into his office. The guy's aggressive yet wary, in the way men frightened for their marriages always are. So when Doherty asks Spenser to investigate his wife Jordan's abnormal behavior, Spenser agrees. A job's a job, after all. Not surprisingly, Spenser catches Jordan with another man, tells Dennis what he's found out, and considers the case closed. But a couple of days later, all hell breaks loose, and three people are dead. This isn't just a marital affair gone bad. Spenser is in the middle of hornet's nest of trouble, and he has to get out of it without getting stung. With Hawk watching his back and gun-for-hire Vinnie Morris providing extra cover, Spenser delves into a complicated and far-reaching operation: Jordan's former lover Perry Alderson is the leader of a group that helps sponsor terrorists. The Boston P.I. will use all his connections "both above and below the law" to uncover the truth behind Alderson's antigovernment organization. Alderson doesn't like Spenser poking around his business, so he decides to get to him through Susan. But what Alderson doesn't realize is that Spenser will do anything to keep Susan out of harm's way; nothing will keep him from the woman he loves.

Book Information

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Best Sellers Rank: #1,242,870 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #30 in Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > (P) > Parker, Robert B. #2131 in Books > Books on CD > Mystery & Thrillers #3093 in Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > Unabridged

Customer Reviews

The last couple of Spenser novels written by Robert B. Parker focus on old issues that the private eye and author have stepped around for years. Now both are getting enmeshed in events that bring those old troubles and insecurities to the forefront so that Spenser finally has to lay them to rest. Last

year's Hundred Dollar Baby is the final tale in the April Kyle saga. She was the young prostitute Spenser saved, sort of, in the series' ninth book, Ceremony. Fans, especially women readers, got split over the resolution in that novel. This year's offering, Now & Then, is going to unite all the fans and leave them waiting with baited breath for next year's entry. Ah, but the good Dr. Parker has learned how to unleash the power of the soap opera endings. He's doing the same in the Sunny Randall and Jesse Stone series as well. In the opening pages of Now & Then, Spenser is approached by, and eventually hired by, Dennis Doherty. Doherty is a cagy customer and doesn't act like he really wants to know if his wife is cheating on him. Before he knows it, Spenser finds himself relating to Doherty because of the breakup he had with Susan Silverman all those years ago (Valediction and A Catskill Eagle for series purists). It takes Spenser little time at all to confirm that Doherty's wife is indeed cheating. Spenser enlists the help of Hawk, his darker side, to track down the answer. Hawk is the first to advance the notion that Spenser is getting too personally involved. It's this interplay of these two characters that I've come to love so much. Getting to peer inside of male bonding at work is awesome, and no one does it better than Parker. Spenser struggles over how much to tell Doherty.

Now & Then is an extremely weak and shallow current outing by Robert B. Parker, in which little happens, save for a rehashing of whether or not Spenser and his longtime lady friend should marry. Years ago, Susan Silverman ran off with another man, leaving a void in both Spenser's life and the once-shared life of Susan and Spenser. In this novel, the attempt to close the latter void comes up again and again, with the repetition tedious and quite boring. When that void arises the first time, both Susan and Spenser are good with it; they state that they have gotten past it and have built a much stronger life together, than the one before Susan left. Yet, they rehash that issue, ad nauseum. Equally tedious is that, while there is an implied terrorist threat, the tension levels are so low concerning such a possibility, that the reader's interest is nil. All we see is a handful of people who might be part of some terrorist plot, showing nothing to that effect, thus eliminating dramatic tension. There is no abbreviated timetable that is controlling the action, no recognizable and deadly threat, no real danger. As to the supposed leader of the plot, the only time he shows any action is when he is seducing women--(two that we see)...and that action is extremely low. Even when he attempts to seduce Susan, we only have her word to that effect. Indeed that is what is wrong with this novel: Mostly talk and little action. Even Hawk, who is the epitome of action versus talk, is relegated to a position of a bodyguard. None of his celebrated pent-up and explosive energy is there. Even Spenser only throws one punch, yet he is supposedly dealing with demons that have

been eating at his sense of "Right" ever since Susan left.

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