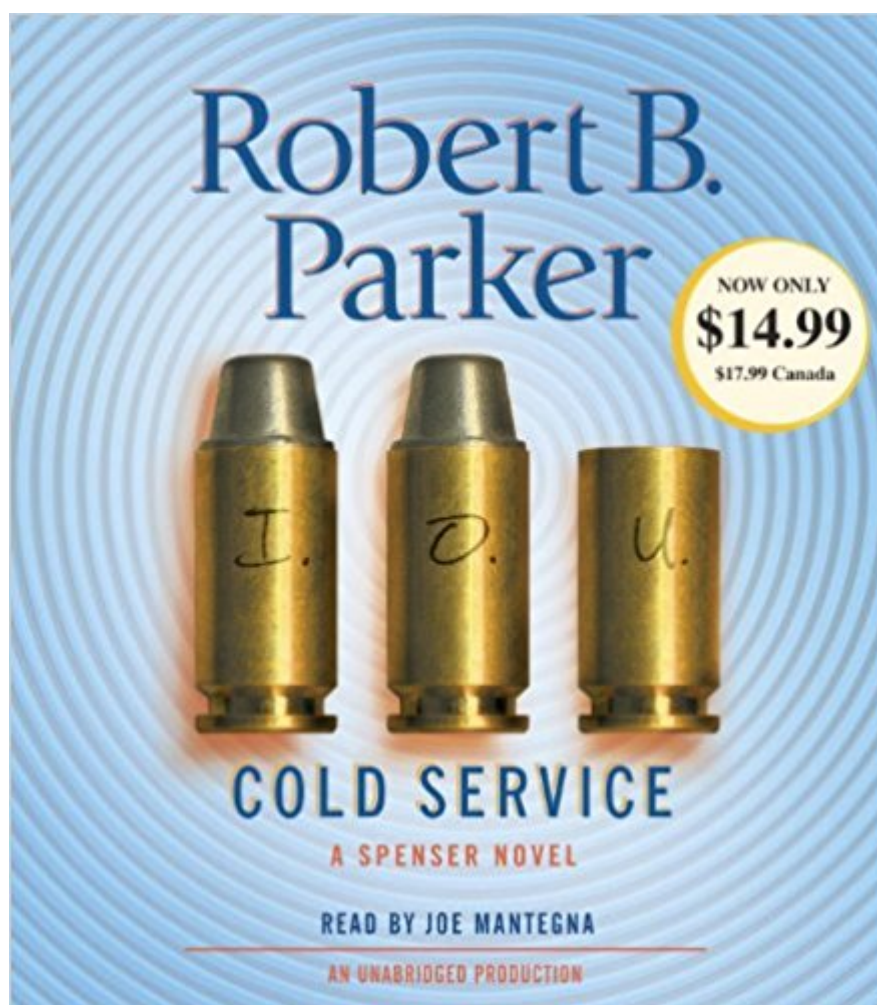


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Cold Service (Spenser)



Synopsis

Spenserâ€™s Godâ€™s gift to the Boston crime sceneâ€• (Kirkus Reviews)â€”and his redoubtable sidekick, Hawk, seek revenge on a cold-blooded killer. When his closest ally, Hawk, is brutally injured and left for dead while protecting bookie Luther Gillespie, Spenser embarks on an epic journey to rehabilitate his friend in body and soul. Hawk, always proud, has never been dependent on anyone. Now he is forced to make connections: to accept the medical technology that will ensure his physical recovery, and to reinforce the tenuous emotional ties he has to those around him. Spenser quickly learns that the Ukrainian mob is responsible for the hit, but finding a way into their tightly knit circle is not nearly so simple. Their total control of the town of Marshport, from the bodegas to the police force to the mayorâ€™s office, isnâ€™t just a sign of rampant corruptionâ€”itâ€™s a form of arrogance that only serves to ignite Hawkâ€™s desire to get even. As the body count rises, Spenser is forced to employ some questionable techniques and even more questionable hired guns, while redefining his friendship with Hawk in the name of vengeance.

Book Information

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Authors, A-Z > (P) > Parker, Robert B. #1149 inÂ Books > Books on CD > Mystery & Thrillers

#1637 inÂ Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > Unabridged

Customer Reviews

My review title is the epigram which introduces this outstanding novel by Robert Parker and which together with the book jacket illustration summarizes the storyline. However, despite the fact that this thirty-second entry in Robert Parker's Spenser series is as usual told in the first person with Spenser as the narrator, Hawk's and Spenser's usual roles are reversed. In fact, Spenser begins the story with the words "It started without me". With Spenser, we then learn from Hawk, tethered to

an IV line and constantly monitored by the staff at the hospital where he is recovering, that he was shot "three times in the back with a big rifle [by a] good shooter [who] grouped all three shots between [the] shoulder blades [but luckily] missed the spine, missed the heart " and thus left Hawk to recover and seek revenge. Hawk had been hired by a bookie, Luther Gillespie, to protect him after he had been threatened by the Ukrainian mob trying to take over his book. Hawk has learned that after he went down they killed Luther, his wife, and two oldest kids, sparing only the youngest son who was in day care and now will be raised by his grandmother. Thus, Hawk knows that after a long and difficult recovery, he will need to not only avenge the attack on him and remove any trace of fear and self doubt which would otherwise remain, but more importantly he can most effectively make whatever amends are possible to Luther for failing to protect his family by somehow insuring the future security of Luther's orphaned young son. As Hawk summarizes the situation to Spenser, "I want to know who they are and where they are. And I want to know they did it. Not think it, know it." To Spenser's admonition that Hawk "won't be ready even if we know who and where", Hawk replies "sooner or later, I'll be ready."

"Cold Service," Robert B. Parker's thirty-second Spenser novel will inevitably and invariably be compared by fans to the twenty-fourth Spenser novel, "Small Vices." The latter was the pivotal novel where Spenser was gunned down by the shadowy assassin known as the Grey Man. It took Susan Silverman and Hawk a year to put our hero back together again so that he could take steps to even the score with his assailant. This 2005 Spenser novel begins with Hawk in the hospital, having been shot in the back three times while protecting bookie Luther Gillespie. Now it is Spenser's turn to stand by his friend and not only help him rehabilitate but also to help him even the score. However, there are some significant differences between the two similar stories. First, the rehabilitation part is greatly truncated this time around because the wounds are clearly more to Hawk's pride than his body. Second, because we are talking about Hawk we are much more on the outside than when Spenser was in the same situation. Hawk has already been shot and is talking to Spenser in the hospital when this one starts, and while we miss the action at the start Parker provides symmetry by letting us miss the action at the end as well, which tends to suggest that the action is not the point here. Third, there are significant moral dilemmas this time around. Ironically, none of them exist for Hawk but rather for Spenser, who has reservations about the killing that will be involved, and for Cecilia, Hawk's current paramour, who is nowhere near as accepting of the way her man settles accounts as is the lovely Susan.

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