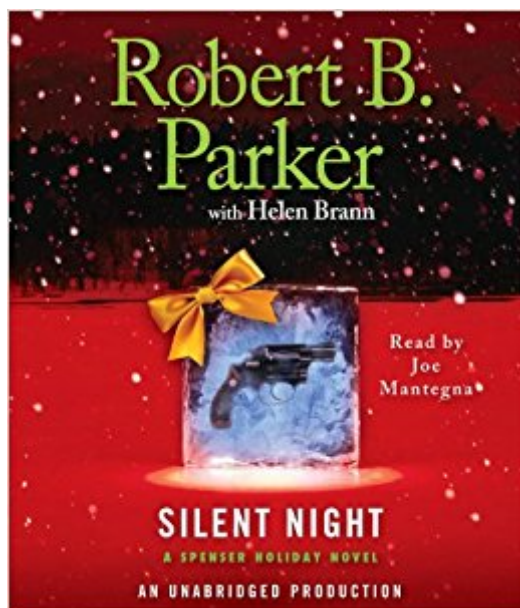


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# Silent Night: A Spenser Holiday Novel (Spenser Holiday Novels)



## Synopsis

It's December in Boston, and Spenser is busy planning the menu for Christmas dinner when he's confronted in his office by a young boy named Slide. Homeless and alone, Slide has found refuge with an organization named Street Business, which gives shelter and seeks job opportunities for the homeless and lost. Slide's mentor, Jackie Alvarez, is being threatened, and Street Business is in danger of losing its tenuous foothold in the community, turning Slide and many others like him back on the street. But it's not a simple case of intimidation. Spenser, aided by Hawk, finds a trail that leads to a dangerous drug kingpin, whose hold on the at-risk community Street Business serves threatens not just the boys' safety and security, but their lives as well. Unfinished at the time of his death, *Silent Night* was completed by Parker's longtime agent, whose decades-long association with Parker's work gives her unique insight and perspective to his voice and storytelling style. Her contribution also speaks volumes about their enduring friendship.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Brann, the longtime agent of Robert B. Parker (1932–2010), does a seamless job of completing the unfinished manuscript of what's billed as a Spenser holiday novel. The Boston PI gets a visit from an 11-year-old street kid, Slide, who asks that Spenser help out Jackie Alvarez, the director of an unlicensed shelter, Street Business, funded by Jackie's affluent brother, Juan. Jackie, who's been receiving threats, fears that someone is trying to close him down. Spenser takes the case, of

course, enlisting his longtime muscle, Hawk, to watch his back while he gets into the requisite number of violent confrontations on the way to achieving justice. Love interest Susan Silverman lends support. As in Parker's later books in the series and Ace Atkins's pastiches, the storyline and characterizations offer more of the same with few surprises, but diehard Parker fans will be delighted. Agent: Helen Brann, Helen Brann Agency. (Oct.) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

The late Robert B. Parker was apparently surrounded by people eager either to keep his Spenser legacy going, or to keep the profits flowing. Following the publication of new installments of Parker's various series written by different authors, we now have an unfinished Spenser novel, a Christmas story, that has been finished by Brann, the author's agent. This is a shortish but fairly satisfying Spenser tale set in the run-up before Christmas and featuring many of the signature elements of the beloved series: we have Spenser's cooking preparations, always a marvelous part of his books, and appearances by his longtime love, Susan Silverman, and best friend, Hawk. The mystery on which it all rests starts with a scared street kid showing up in Spenser's Boston office. Spenser quickly determines that someone is using intimidation tactics to drive street kids out of their group home. The novel is long on atmosphere, a bit off when it comes to dialogue, and almost totally lacking in detective methods, making the reader wonder just how much of the book Parker wrote. Readers will decide if this last Christmas story is a gift or a stickup. --Connie Fletcher --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

I have always been an avid Robert B. Parker/Spenser fan. As such, I have come to expect a certain level of action, including a fair amount of cooking, working out at the gym and gun play/fighting. Regrettably, "Silent Night" doesn't live up to my expectations. I appreciate Helen Brann's desire to continue Parker's writing. She's just not Robert B. Parker and never will be.

Let's stop this ghostly ghost writing. I'm amazed the author worked closely with Parker, because I wondered if she'd ever read the real thing! "We were at my place. I was making supper. Susan was at my kitchen counter." This passive-voice drivel introduces a chapter! Parker didn't waste words in such manner and never stopped the action with turgid mush. And, while making supper, Spenser manages to "plate" the linguini without adding the toasted pignoli and bread crumbs just described at some length. Not a minor error and Parker wouldn't "plate" anything (nor would Spenser). She is inconsistent with Hawk's dialect: first, "Jag be subtle elegance, babe" (correct); second, "Tell Susan

I'm looking forward to it." (no, no, no!). This particular book makes me wonder how Joan Parker ever let it be produced. The only good "Parker" author was Ace Atkins. Enough!

If you are expecting a story scripted in the manner of Robert B. Parker...this is not it...Just because you use the names of Spenser, Susan and Hawk...and others does not make it a Spenser novel...I have only read the first 34 pages...and may not finish this...the characters have no charm and are actually out of character...I recommend to spend your money elsewhereWell I tried to read some more and it is pretty much not readable...I'll just donate it to the local libraryWell I keep seeing positive reviews popping up...and these people certainly have never read a Robert B. Parker Spenser novel before...and I am guessing that they have not read Silent Night either...I am tired of people posting reviews that are there only to help sales...this needs to be stopped....If I could I would rate this book a minus 100 stars...and that would be kind...look at the other negative reviews...we are the fans...we have no underlying agenda...I have nothing against the author or the publishing company...if you do decide to buy this book... and if I were a betting man...I would bet you would have a hard time finishing the read...I definitely feel like my money was stolen

As a long time Spenser reader I waited with patience for the final unfinished manuscript, specially since the new stories written by Atkins are sadly a failure; it was close but not a Parker. I had hoped for a half finished book that was completed by his friend, but it seems as if Parker had only left an outline that needed to be fleshed out. The story was good and showed a very substantial familiarity with the characters, for the most part Spenser was his charming smart Alec self, while Susan was as smart as ever. When it came to her treatment of Hawk, Helen missed the essential complexities of the man, he was too reflective and not nearly as brash and self-assured as Parker has made him. Except for Hawk, you might have forgotten Parker had passed, this was a very good tale with well drawn characters you grew to care about, but in the end it just seemed as if we were saying a final farewell to a family member.

First of all, the voice is actually pretty close to that of Spenser. I wouldn't say that Parker's long time agent has nailed it, but she's got it down probably a little better than Ace Atkins. The plot was reasonable: an orphaned kid is worried about the fact that his shelter is under threat. Spencer looks into it and find that the head of the shelter has a brother who is a big time drug dealer and things proceed to their inevitable conclusion. A couple of criticisms. One could read many volumes of Spenser before realizing that his first name is never mentioned. It was an in joke of Parker's and

one that he obviously enjoyed, but he was a good enough writer to pull it off. In this book, a number of people (including Susan!) call him Spenser where a first name would have been more appropriate. It was jarring. Second, one character, the putative love interest of the bad guy, is former tennis player. She got into drugs and had a hard time, and seemingly needed to be financially supported by the bad guy, but it is stated that she won at least 5 grand slam titles. In the real world, if you win 5 grand slam titles, you are world famous and very, very rich. This girl, no matter how far she's fallen, does not to be a kept woman. Even if she's no longer playing, endorsement money, and modeling (since she's gorgeous) would keep her in diamonds for many years to come. Still, I liked it...one last breath of the real Spenser. I'll miss him.

This Spenser book seemed more formulaic than most, got downright maudlin in the last few chapters. Although I finished it, I didn't enjoy it as much as most.

As a longtime fan of Spenser, I always enjoy returning the world and characters Parker created for his readers. Parker was working on Silent Night when he died and it was completed by his longtime literary agent, Helen Brann. It is not clear how much was completely by Parker and how much was done by Brann. If one did not know this, one probably wouldn't guess it. One would think it was just another mediocre, though enjoyable, installment of Spenser. It is a classic Parker plot with the standard cast of characters (even Paul makes an appearance--sort of). Nevertheless, there is something off, mostly in the dialogue. This was often Parker's strongest suit, and it isn't quite right here. A sharpness, a wittiness, that is missing, especially with Hawk. Nevertheless, I liked it as I always do. While I like what Ace Atkins is doing with his Spenser novels, it is sad that this is the last Spenser directly (even if only partially) from Parker.

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