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Double Deuce (Spenser Mysteries)



Synopsis

When a teenage girl and her baby are gunned down by feuding street gangs, tenants of a Boston housing project hire Hawk and Spenser to protect them and bring the killers to justice. 150,000 first printing. \$130,000 ad/promo. Mystery Guild Main. Doubleday & Lit Guild Alt. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (87 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Parker likes to change up the Spenser series. He gets stuck in a formula just chugging along in Boston, and likes to mix it up every few novels. He writes a basic Spenser novel, and they complain hes just going through the motions. If he writes something different they complain he should stick to what he writes best. Give me a break! Here's why you should read Double Deuce. The classic stand off. Yes, we get to learn alot more about Hawk, but not too much as to deflate the mystery about the caracter. But the boasting that goes on between Hawk and the Gangs is interesting. There isnt alot of mystery in this one, some of the Spenser novels arent so much a who-done-it but more of a how-will-you-resolve-it kind of book. I've read this book many times, there are better in the series, but if your reading them in order, don't skip this one!

"Double Deuce" is the Spenser novel where our hero finally plays the supporting role to Hawk. A drive-by shooting in the Double Deuce project has claimed the life of 15-year old Devona Jefferson and her baby. Hawk is hired by the tenants association to find the killer and drive out the gang that considers the place their turf. Spenser signs on, at one-third of the nothing Hawk is being paid, to

help out. Since Hawk is in the lead on this one the question of why he is doing this becomes a major subplot. At face value it seems he is doing it for a woman who just might be his Susan Silverman, but of course nothing can be taken at face value in a Spenser novel and expectations are rarely met. Since this is the 19th novel in Robert B. Parker's series of Spenser novels, it is certainly about time that Hawk had a chance to take the lead. Of course this means that "Double Deuce" has a much different feel to it because whereas our hero takes every opportunity to mouth off to everybody on anything, Hawk's strength is in just looking at people until they fall apart (one of the reasons I think the character worked so well on television is that Avery Brooks had the looks down cold). So while this is the most atypical Spenser novel yet, it does try to be true to the Hawk character, which justifies the stylistic change. I just think that he works better as more of a man of mystery where we never really know why he does what he does. Hopefully Parker will take a second try at having Hawk be the main character in a future novel.

Parker has succeeded in writing crime thrillers that are entertaining and fast reads and yet give you issues to think about. "Double Deuce" is no exception, and this time, the issues are racial relations and gang psychology. This novel has a more intense than usual opening for Spenser, because we get to sorta know the young girl and her baby daughter just before they're killed, and to have a feeling of the life they were leading. From there, as other reviews have pointed out, Hawk is the principal character this time, though Spenser does provide him with valuable information just before the climax. And hey, Hawk is involved in a relationship too, as if trying to clear a housing project in the ghetto of a gang isn't enough. The romantic side plot this time takes up the question as to whether Spenser & Susan should be living together or not. Especially good here is the portrayal of the attitude of the project residents and the activist preacher helping them towards Spencer. Also good is the portrayal of the grudging mutual respect between Hawk and the gang leader. On top of that, we're given an idea of how Hawk, in his own way, rose above his childhood beginnings.

This is a short book--but then most of Parker's are. It isn't the usual double space, but it's only 224 pages long--and a very fast read. It does, however, provide a number of insights into his 3 main characters via the ploy of Susan and Spenser living together as well as Hawk revealing some of his background as a foil to members of ghetto gangs (esp. Major Johnson) and a bit on their relationship with Tony Marcus. Thus, it is an important book for the Spenser series. It also includes quite a bit of social commentary and obvious contrasts between/among "the projects" and their residents, the middle class (i.e. Spenser, Susan, and Pearl--though not called "the wonder dog"

herein), the media, and social workers. As usual Parker looks beneath the surface for reasons vs. the usual excuses or protestations of the characters. The plot isn't too much a mystery, but the book includes Parker's usual humor and brisk dialog as well as some deep insights into human nature: Robert B. Parker "Double Deuce" G. P. Putnam NY 1992 hardback: p. 99: "There's some sort of inverse relation between social structure and what...honor codes?" p. 100: If there are no things that are important, then things are assigned importance arbitrarily and defended at great risk. Because the risk validates the importance. p. 119: She smiled the smile that launched a thousand commercials. p. 145: None of the things people say on talk shows are very useful. p. 166: (quoting Wallace Stevens) One must have a mind of winter...to behold the nothing that is not there and the nothing that is. p. 169: Hawk could scare Mount Rushmore. "All in all I enjoyed the book and believe Spenser & Parker fans in general would probably agree that it's worth reading.

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