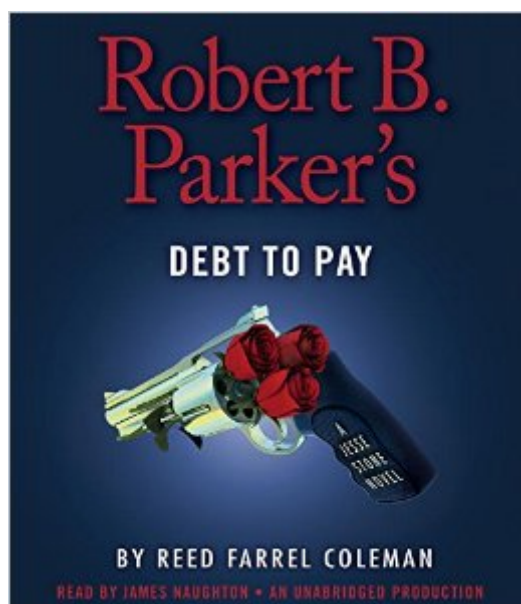


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Robert B. Parker's Debt To Pay (A Jesse Stone Novel)



Synopsis

The brilliant new novel in Robert B. Parker's New York Times "bestselling series featuring police chief Jesse Stone." All is quiet in Paradise, except for a spate of innocuous vandalism. Good thing, too, because Jesse Stone is preoccupied with the women in his life, both past and present. As his ex-wife, Jenn, is about to marry a Dallas real-estate tycoon, Jesse isn't too sure his relationship with former FBI agent Diana Evans is built to last. But those concerns get put on the back burner when a major Boston crime boss is brutally murdered. Despite all evidence to the contrary, Jesse suspects it's the work of Mr. Peepers, a psychotic assassin who has caused trouble for Jesse in the past. Peepers has long promised revenge against the Mob, Jesse, and Suit for their roles in foiling one of his hits "and against Jenn as well. And though Jesse and Jenn have long parted ways, Jesse still feels responsible for her safety. Jesse and Diana head to Dallas for the wedding and, along with the tycoon's security team, try to stop Peepers before the bill comes due. With Peepers toying with the authorities as to when and where he'll strike, Jesse is up against the wall. Still, there's a debt to pay and blood to be spilled to satisfy it. But whose blood, and just how much? From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Robert Parker's nine Jesse Stone novels are among the most popular mysteries of the first decade of the 21st century. Debt to Pay is the third installment in Reed Farrel Coleman's attempt to continue the series after Parker's death in 2010. Coleman is a first rate mystery novelist, and to his

credit, does not try to imitate Parker. Rather this book uses Parker's characters in a different style. While this kind of thing could work, it unfortunately doesn't in this case. The book will not please Parker fans, but the straitjacket of using another author's universe makes this much less satisfying than Coleman's pure work. Fortunately, there is plenty of pure Parker and pure Coleman out there, so only people who have read all of it need consider this mediocrity. At the worst points of this book, Coleman does not even seem to be trying. The book has way too many clichéd lines from the It-was-a-dark-and-stormy-night school of bad prose. For examples: "She wasn't afraid about competing with a real woman, but it's impossible to compete with a memory." "Diana may not have had a place for her Glock, but she wasn't going into that room without weapons," (those weapons consisted of a skimpy dress and stilettos, heels not knives). "Molly, Suit and Jesse stared at one another for the longest moments of their lives." "Otherwise it had been a quiet month. Very quiet. Too quiet." The last one gives a hint of another annoying touch, Coleman loves to repeat the simplest things four times.

Let me get this out of the way up front: I'm giving this book 4 stars because of its interesting, fast-paced plot. But when it comes to character development in the style of the late, great Robert B. Parker, I'd be hard-pressed to give it 3. Conclusion? If you haven't read Parker's books featuring small-town police chief Jesse Stone (this is the 15th, I believe), it's likely you'll enjoy this. If, like me, you've been a Parker fan for many years, maybe not so much. This book does stand on its own well, although I'm sure I got more out of it because I've read others. And therein, I think, lies part of the problem: Knowing the characters so well from Parker's writing makes it harder to accept them as written by a "new" voice. But that aside, the voices here seem, well, bland. To be sure, Jesse is older and, if possible, mellower; he's pretty much settled into his role in the small community of Paradise, stopped drinking, come to terms with his co-dependent relationship with former wife Jenn (who's about to get remarried), and enjoying the heck out of a woman he's pretty sure he loves more than his ex. Gone, though, is his short, droll style of conversation - replaced by more lengthy ruminations that threaten to bog down the progress of the story. Ah, but on to the plot - and it's a killer right from the git-go. As Jesse enjoys quality time with his love, former FBI agent Diana Evans, the worst thing going on in Paradise is that some crazy is running around shooting out tires. But then comes the unseemly demise of a Boston crime boss with whom Jesse has enjoyed a tenuous friendship - and the tide turns. It was murder, Jesse believes - done by a never-caught psycho the police have dubbed Mr.

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