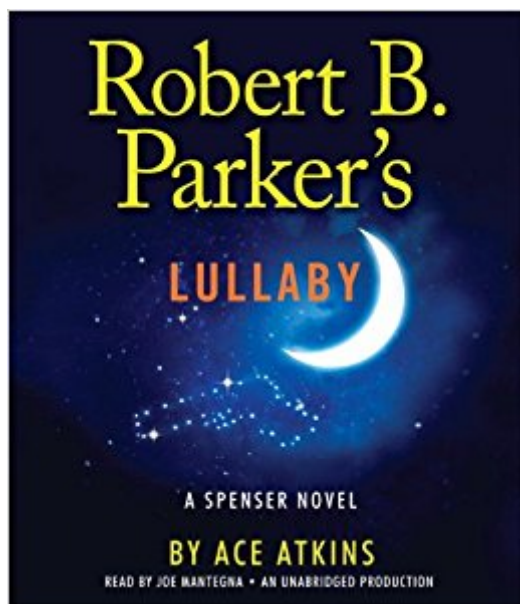


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# Robert B. Parker's Lullaby (Spenser Novels)



## Synopsis

When fourteen-year-old Mattie Sullivan asks Spenser to look into her mother's murder, he's not completely convinced by her claim that the police investigation four years ago was botched. Mattie is gruff, street-smart, and wise beyond her years, left to care for her younger siblings and an alcoholic grandmother in a dilapidated apartment in South Boston. But her need for closure and her determination to make things right hit Spenser where he lives—they're the very characteristics he abides by. Mattie believes the man convicted of the crime is innocent, and points Spenser to the Southie toughs she saw carrying her mother away hours before her murder. Neither the Boston PD nor the neighborhood thugs are keen on his dredging up the past, but as Spenser becomes more involved in the case, he starts to realize that Mattie may be on to something. He will need Hawk's help to find peace for a job that's more dangerous than Spenser ever thought.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Handpicked by the Parker estate to be the keeper of the flame for the Spenser franchise, award-winning author Ace Atkins rises flawlessly to the occasion. Atkins succeeds. He doesn't sound like somebody trying to emulate Parker. He sounds like Parker in a book that hits all the usual Spenser notes. He has the wisecrack-filled dialogue down and Parker's cadences, too: Spenser, thankfully, sounds like Spenser. You also get the vivid sense of place, flexing of muscles and spare plot that were

hallmarks of Parker—his 39 Spenser books—it is a feat when a writer creates characters who live and breathe on the page and make readers care and keep coming back for more. To manage that with someone else's characters, let alone with an icon like Spenser, is a minor miracle. Ace Atkins pulls it off.

—Chicago Sun-Times

“Even the most fanatical Parker fans would be hard pressed to identify any aspect of this Spenser novel that doesn't read as if it were penned by Spenser's late creator. Atkins hits all the familiar marks...as he offers familiar pleasures.

—Publishers Weekly

“A brisk read. Atkins gets the important things right, from Spenser's dark sarcasm to the gritty attitude of Mattie Sullivan, a 14-year-old Southie girl trying to solve her mother's murder.

—Boston Daily

“Ace Atkins has proven an exceptionally talented writer.... Taking on the challenge of continuing the much-loved Spenser series is a daunting task. Ace Atkins responds with a knock-out punch in round one. Parker would most definitely approve.

—Shelf Awareness

“It's all there: The crisp, rhythmic sentences. The ironic banter. The distinctly Spenserian attitude toward life that Atkins adopted as his own. And yet, those who have read both Parker and Atkins closely may also detect a muted, indefinable quality that's pure Atkins. And that's a very good thing.

Parker lives. Spenser is back.

—Bruce DeSilva, Edgar Award Winning author of *Cliff Walk*

“It's the real deal. Atkins captures Parker's distinctive voice, the sardonic, self-deprecating, sharply observant first-person narration that makes the Spenser books so compelling, and so much fun.

—Tampa Bay Times

“In *Lullaby*, Ace Atkins has brought back everything we love about Robert B. Parker's Boston P.I. Spenser, and he makes it look seamless and easy.

Atkins takes the reins of the Spenser series with self-assured ease. He also proves he's the right man for the job.

—MysteryPeople.com

--This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Robert B. Parker was the author of seventy books. Winner of the Mystery Writers of America Grand Master Award and long considered the undisputed dean of American crime fiction, he died in January 2010.

I was a little fearful as I started reading *Lullaby*. After seeing what Michael Brandman did to *Jesse Stone* I worried that Spenser would be lost as well. Ace Atkins work is reminiscent of the early

Spenser. A bit more gritty and the writing less refined. The sentences were choppy with too many "I said" and "she said" as Atkins tried to copy Parker's melding of many short statements rather than descriptive sentences. Choppy. I felt that the characters had lost a little of what Parker had developed them into, but not so much in a bad way. The intimacy of Spenser's relationship with Susan seemed to have lost ground, becoming more about sex than two people who loved and supported each other unconditionally. Again, it was like the early Spenser books, with tight relationships, but dialed back in ways. We'll see how Atkins does as he writes more and settles into the characters and makes Spenser his own. He did well for a first trip out wearing another author's characters. This was a Spenser novel. People who like Spenser novels should like this one too. It was a quick read that moved along sprightly. Spenser is hired by a fourteen year old girl wise beyond her years to prove that the man in prison for killing her mother is innocent. The investigation takes Spenser and Hawk on a ride that brings back his strained relationship with kingpin Joe Broz, thought to be dead, and face to face with Broz's son. Also an Irish sociopath with big plans and a crooked FBI section chief enter the mix. The bullets fly as old friendships are tested and it's up to Spenser to make things right for a little girl forced to grow up too quickly. Hawk, Martin Quirk, Frank Belson, Rita Fiore, Vinnie Morris, Joe and Gerry Broz, Former FBI SAC Epstein, Henry Cimoli and Pearl the Wonder Dog all make appearances.

I am a huge RBP fan and read all his books, Spenser is my hero and couldn't wait to see what Ace Atkins would do with Lullaby and...I REALLY LIKED THIS BOOK! Lullaby reminded me of RBP's earlier Spenser novels, with its gritty plot, more words on the page, and the return of some older characters, like Gerry and Joe Broz. The Spenser/Susan chapters are less nauseating than the last few books. Hawk is also back and better than ever! Lullaby is a legitimate and entertaining continuation of the Spenser series. The series is in very good hands with Ace. I hope he writes a Spenser novel every year for the next hundred years!

I know this opinion won't be a popular one: I think that fans of Parker refuse to admit that, in the end, the master himself started to slip a little. The type got bigger, the margins got wider and that made it easier for Parker to pass off novellas as 300-page novels. He had begun to recycle old plots and incorporate characters in ridiculous ways (for example, "Potshot" the novel in which every tough guy Spenser ever met became part of his Seven Samurai posse, regardless of whether they'd tried in the past to kill him). I was very sad when Parker died at the Spencer series would not go on. I think the Joan Parker made a wise decision and gave fans a gift in selecting Ace Atkins to carry on

her husband's legacy - he manages to mimic Parker's voice while bringing much-needed depth and complexity, both of which had become short in supply. Atkins himself made a wise decision in the first story he chose to present. We Spenser fans like him best when he's aiding the downtrodden and speaking up for the voiceless. Mattie Sullivan fits in that niche perfectly as a poor teenager who witnessed her mother's death years earlier and want to find the truth in her passing. A few disgruntled readers insist that Atkins got it all wrong, that this just isn't their Spenser and Hawk. To them I say, "Good". Robert Parker himself had started to squander the good relationship we had with him. These characters may not be exactly right, but they are true in spirit and stout of heart. I choose to think of this as a Hardy Boys or Nancy Drew situation - all were written by different authors with slightly different takes, but emotionally true to the core concept.

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