



Stranger In Paradise

Robert B. Parker

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An Apache hit man arrives in Paradise to find a missing girl and snuff out her mother. But his conscience is getting the best of him. If he doesn't make the hit, he'll pay for it. So might Jesse Stone, who's been enlisted to protect them all.

Stranger In Paradise Details

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From Reader Review Stranger In Paradise for online ebook

Paul says

This was a good book in some respects and a fast read. The style is at times reminiscent of another longtime mystery writer, the late Elmore Leonard. Crow, a somewhat charismatic and chivalrous villain appears in town to help Sheriff Jesse Stone with a problem that is partly Crow's creation. He has been hired by a Florida mobster to kill the mobster's ex wife and bring a wayward 14 year old daughter back to Florida. Crow doesn't want to do either even though he's already taken the mobster's money.

Crow is the stereotypical bad guy with a heart of gold, and many of the characters, though mostly likable, are superficially drawn. I never really got emotionally involved in this book although it was crafted well and easy to read. Parker is better known for the "Spenser" series, and I'll give one of those books a try soon.

Janie Johnson says

This is book #7 in the Jesse Stone series. So far it is a decent series and I was hoping to get through the whole series this year, but whether or not that happens I am hoping it will be enjoyable throughout the whole series.

Synopsis

Police Chief Jesse Stone faces his most fearsome adversary in the latest addition to the celebrated series. The last time Jesse Stone, chief of police of Paradise, Massachusetts, saw Wilson "Crow" Cromartie, the Apache Indian hit man was racing away in a speedboat after executing one of the most lucrative and deadly heists in the town's history. Crow was part of a team of ex-cons who plotted to capture Stiles Island, the wealthy enclave off the Paradise coast, by blowing up the connecting bridge. Residents were kidnapped, some were killed, and Crow managed to escape with a boatload of cash, never to be seen again. Until now. So when Crow shows up in Jesse's office some ten years after the crime, it's not to turn himself in. Crow is on another job, and this time he's asking for Jesse's help-by asking him to stay out of his way. Crow's mission is simple: find young Amber Francisco and bring her back to her father, Louis, in Florida. It should be an easy payday for a pro like Crow, but there are complications. Amber, now living in squalor with her mother, Fiona, is mixed up with members of a Latino gang. And when Louis orders Crow to kill Fiona before heading back with Amber, he can't follow through. Crow may be a bad guy, but he doesn't kill women. It's up to Jesse to provide protection. Meanwhile, Jesse's on-again, off-again relationship with ex-wife Jenn picks up steam as Jenn investigates the gang problem for her TV station. As they dig deeper, the danger escalates. The life of a young girl hangs in the balance, and saving Amber could be the miracle Jesse and Jenn need for themselves, too.

One thing I really enjoy about this series is the pacing and how well the books flow, and this installment is no different. I love that these cases are in a small town environment, makes it feel more relatable to me since I am in a small town myself. I also enjoy the Authors use of dialogue. He is so good with that. I love all of the interaction between characters and it keeps the story moving along, makes for a quick fun read, and also it allows readers to keep track of the characters and who they are.

The characters are really fun for me as well. I enjoy Jesse a lot, mostly because he is so flawed, but I think besides him, I love Molly and her quirkiness and her mishaps, while she is still able to get the job done. She

is always there for Jesse along with Suitcase, his right hand man. There is a full cast of very colorful characters in this series and they are developing very well. They are all a very enjoyable part of the series and I look forward to meeting many more characters throughout the series.

Bart Hopkins says

If you're a Robert Parker fan, you should be used to a few things: Simple, yet realistic and relatable characters; flawed heroes with a strong personal code; and periodic use of his favorite phrases and ideas. A good example, paraphrasing, is that it's better to be lucky than to be good.

And while his overarching plot in the Spenser and Stone series of novels is usually some crime or problem that needs to be solved, relationships are ALWAYS a key subplot.

Wait for it...

The relationships are interesting and realistic, even if they are sometimes repetitive, but not usually in a bad way. He hits certain points multiple times for emphasis and, I think, to identify with people.

I found myself somewhat disappointed in the direction of one of his characters in this book. It involves relationships and is not part of the primary plot. I don't want to give up the name of the character, or the gender, but I found myself bothered by something the character did. Yes, he's a good writer and I have come to know these characters, which is an indication of his excellent stories and writing, but I really thought he took a bad turn with one character in this one.

And that's why I bumped it down to four stars.

It was still a really good book, but if you are familiar with the series, I wonder if you will feel let down like I did when you reach a certain part of the story.

Anyway, on to the next one!

Doris says

Tom Selleck was such a good choice to play Jesse Stone.

Jerry B says

We enjoyed our first Jesse Stone novel ("Split Image") recently, and decided to read another tale about the wise-crackin' but confident and competent Police Chief of Boston suburb Paradise Mass. In "Stranger", when a never-convicted villain of about a decade ago, Wilson "Crow" Cromartie, shows up in town and pays a "courtesy call" to Stone, they both know something's up, with Stone swearing to work on the old case some more. Despite that intention, the two create a bit of an unholy alliance to foil the attempts of a Florida mobster to extract his daughter Amber from town, killing her mother in the process if necessary. Crow seemingly has the contract to do so, but has qualms about "doing women" (except at bedtime!). So instead a

local gang gets involved, offs the mom, losing a member or two in the process; and then some Florida bad guys come up to take care of business, which proves fatal to a couple of them.

Despite all these killings, an entertaining story unfolds in which justice is quite well served, even if not the way they teach it in police academy! Stone is as likable as ever, and we almost root for his temporary pard Crow in the process. Meanwhile, Stone and ex-wife Jenn, who still love each other, pursue their respective therapists; and together with Stone's right-hand officer Molly, provide some interesting insights into marital relationships. So – two enjoyable outings in a row for this 11-book Parker series – we suspect that in due time we'll read the entire set!

Penny Evenson says

Another fast pace book but has a great plot!

Una Tiers says

While the violence was over the top, it was nice to meet with the series characters. Only Parker can write dialogue, tagging most lines as he said he said she said.

Barbara says

2.5 stars

Wilson Cromartie (Crow) - who claims to be an Apache Indian - perpetrated a huge robbery in Paradise, Massachussetts ten years ago and got away. Now that the statute of limitations has expired Crow is back in Paradise, having been hired to find the ex-wife and 14-year-old daughter of a big-time Florida criminal. As a courtesy Crow stops by the Paradise Police Department to tell Chief Jesse Stone he's in town and doesn't want any trouble with the cops. Crow finds the ladies he's seeking and learns that Amber, the teen, is involved with a 20-year-old low-life/gang banger.

As it turns out the Florida mob guy, Louis Francisco, wants his ex-wife killed and Amber sent back to Florida, but the girl absolutely doesn't want to go. Moreover, Crow has an aversion to harming women. Thus Crow makes it his mission to 'save' the girl. Due to a confluence of circumstances, Jesse decides to help Amber as well. So, oddly enough, the police chief and the criminal have a common goal in this book.

Meanwhile, a hoity-toity wealthy Paradise woman is trying to stop the opening of a pre-school for hispanic children in Paradise, claiming this will ruin property values and bring crime to town. Soon enough her fears seem to be validated when a dead body is found on the school property.

Regular characters in the series make an appearance including Jesse's psychiatrist, his ex-wife Jenn, and Paradise cops Molly and Suitcase (both of whom engage in illicit romance....not with each other). There's also a gang of young, vicious, but not-too-bright criminals. As usual Jesse is having trouble with his drinking, an ongoing theme in the series. There's some amusing repartee among some characters, which

makes a nice break from the more violent scenes.

The book is an easy, quick read with a straightforward main story and a couple of side issues. The primary plot is fairly predictable, no big surprises. Also, a good number of characters in the book are not especially likable. Crow is a killer without a conscience (though apparently with plenty of sex appeal), Amber is a foul-mouthed, badly behaved teenager, the rich lady has an agenda (though her backstory isn't particularly believable), and so on. Also, Robert Parker has a sort of tic in his writing and uses the phrase "he said" or "she said" a million times (it seems like). This gets really old.

Overall, a so-so book. Best for for a plane trip or beach read where you don't want too much of a challenge.

joyce g says

A fun read with very easy to care about characters. Who wouldn't love some Stone.

Grey853 says

Jesse Stone isn't Spenser. He's a lot more burdened by self-doubt, drinks too much, and is still hung up on his ex-wife. Spenser also has Hawk, whereas before this book, Stone only had his little cop force in the small town of Paradise. Now, along comes a professional assassin who like Hawk has his own code of how to behave. Crow doesn't kill women, but he does shoot the "bad" guys like mobsters, gangbangers, and other hitmen. I thought it was an interesting use of names, Hawk vs. Crow.

It's an easy book to read, but I was still a little disturbed by the parallels developing between the Spenser and Stone series. While I like Hawk despite his foibles or maybe because of them, I didn't really like Crow. Tough guy or not, he seems far too much like a predator, much more than Hawk does.

At any rate, it's a quick read with snappy dialogue and some action, something I've come to expect from most of the Parker books. Nobody does great dialogue like Parker.

joyce lynn says

another REALLY good one of Parker's.

i have 2 complaints, tho. #1 is, he kept making references to a couple of previous cases, only, i don't think they were ones that were in his previous books in this series. since at least 1 of those cases mentioned involved a murder, seemed rather important, so i felt i SHOULD have known about it, but ...

2ndly, i did NOT like how he had one of the main characters cheat on her husband. i know it happens all the time, and it hasn't bothered me w/ other characters. i guess because it "fit" for the others. for this character, tho ... it did NOT seem to fit for me. plus, i think because of that, this character would also have treated what she did so differently than Parker wrote her doing.

anyway ... i would still DEFINITELY recommend this book, and author, to those who liked twisted thrillers!

Barbara Mitchell says

Since Robert B. Parker died, I've been saving the few novels of his that I hadn't read. I parcel them out to myself very slowly. Yesterday I allowed myself the pleasure of reading this Jesse Stone novel.

If you've read any of this series or have seen a TV interpretation of one, you know Jesse has a drinking problem which got him fired from the police force in California, and an ex-wife who just refuses to stay away from him so he can get over her. He is now the police chief in Paradise, MA. He sees a shrink regularly in a vain attempt to handle his problems.

In Stranger in Paradise we have a character who is much like Hawk of the Spenser series. This guy is a crook, but he has scruples. He won't kill women, for instance; he likes them. And the women are fascinated by him, including me. He claims to be an Apache Indian and goes by the single name Crow although his real name is Wilson Cromartie. To my mind he makes this novel.

Detective "Suitcase" Simpson has changed since the beginning of the series, in what was to me a very surprising way. As usual, the story is punctuated by witty dialogue, a laid back approach to detecting, and some very snobby folks who are incensed because a half dozen little children are being transported to their neighborhood Monday through Friday to a new school. The residents keep going on about "the camel's nose in the tent" as if these little kids are going to steal their silver and put graffiti on their mansions. It's very funny, and of course Jesse gives them enough rope to hang themselves.

I'm not an unbiased reviewer in this case because I've loved Robert B. Parker novels forever, but really who wouldn't like this book. I urge you to read it.

Mahoghani 23 says

Jesse & Wilson "Crow" Cromartie working together? I never would have believed it!

Crow walks into Jesse's office, 10 years since the last time he was in Paradise with his friends and walked away with 20 million dollars. Now he's in town to conduct a job for a big town mafia man in Miami. He wants to let Jesse know what he's doing so he won't end up in any trouble. Crow & trouble are intertwined and there's no stopping the storm that's coming to Paradise.

Fiona & Amber Francisco (mother /daughter) are residing in Paradise Fiona is an alcoholic & Amber has become one of the Latina gangs in Marshport "sweetheart." When Amber purchased a 60" television for her boyfriend, the bill goes to her father and the storm begins,

Mary MacKintosh says

I have always loved Robert B. Parker's books. His male heroes are just slightly larger than life. Stone, the police chief in Paradise, has been played in television movies by Tom Selleck. He has a flaw: he drinks more

than he should. His other flaw is also a strength: his deep love for his wife Jenn, who has been unfaithful and from whom he is separated. This particular story features a bad guy to love. The man seems to be completely amoral and at the same time rather knightly. I think part of the reason I like Parker's novels is that I can be sure that women will be honored, children will be saved, and strength--even in the bad man--is honored.

One place in the edition I read Parker slipped. Jesse Stone was talking to someone and the person responds. The next comment ends with the words "I said." Parker lived inside his characters. Maybe that is what makes them so good.

I will miss Parker's writing.

Kemper says

The setup here goes back to the second book of the series *Trouble In Paradise* in which Police Chief Jesse Stone faced a crew of professional thieves including Winston 'Crow' Cromartie that looted an entire wealthy island of Jesse's ocean side community. Crow got away, but he's returned now that the statute of limitations has run out on that crime, and he's taken a job to locate the missing daughter of a crime kingpin from Florida. However, Crow balks when the kingpin orders him to murder his wife who was trying to hide the kid from him which forces Jesse into an uneasy partnership with Crow to try and protect the women.

The idea of a cop having to team up with a guy he knows is a criminal isn't half-bad, but the execution is so completely botched that all the characters come across as incompetent and unlikable to the point where I was kinda hating everyone by the the end of it. Robert B. Parker's books were never police procedurals, and he often had flawed characters bending the law for the greater good, but this one just stretches credibility far past the breaking point.

First and foremost, we're supposed to buy into the idea that even though Crow was involved in multiple felonies including murder, kidnapping, bank robbery, and the deaths of two police officers that Jesse makes only a token effort to build a case against him before giving up and just trying to keep an eye on him in a half-assed kind of way. I'm pretty sure that the FBI would have more than a few things to say about the bank robbery alone. It also seems that Jesse and his cops forget all about their two guys who died during a crime that Crow was part of because none of them seem to hold a grudge other than a few random comments about their deaths. Even when Jesse knows that Crow has been running around shooting people later in the book he just shrugs it off.

RBP loved writing about certain types of badasses who are all of a kind that recognized and respected each other no matter what side of the law they were on, and that's what he was going for here. However the circumstances under which Jesse met Crow in the previous book just do not allow for any type of believable plot other than Jesse doing everything he can to immediately arrest Crow. It really felt like RBP was trying to take a character he'd created as a pure criminal and tried to retcon him into being another Hawk. Plus, the whole idea of the statute of limitations being a factor also creates a huge problem with the internal timeline of the series.

There's the usual nonsense with Jesse's ex-wife Jenn and their inability to either let each other go or maintain a healthy relationship, but because of RBP committing to the ten year time frame (Which aligned to

the publishing dates of the books as well.) it also means that Jesse and Jenn have now spent over a decade in which they've been unable to get their shit together even with the help of therapists. The idea that the two of them having been doing this same exact routine for that long with no improvement or end in sight just makes me tired.

We've also got severe problems in that Jesse is supposed to be bending the rules and working with Crow because he's trying to save a girl. However, she's an unlikeable little shit who also is involved with some truly evil stuff. (view spoiler) Yet by the end Jesse has risked the lives of his officers as well as his own career to help this girl, and absolutely nothing is done to hold her responsible for her actions.

Overall, Jesse comes across as even more than a sap than ever because at least it's usually just his ex-wife that he allows to manipulate him, but here Crow plays him for a chump as well. Even the other supporting characters who have generally been reliable also turn into sex crazed idiots, and yet it's all played as if it's a cute source of amusement.

(view spoiler)

I'm not even sure of who I was supposed to be rooting for because the supposed hero of this series came across as complete rube who is not only incapable of arresting a guy he knows committed multiple crimes, he essentially ends up getting played for the entire book in the interest of trying to save a worthless kid who is guilty of terrible things herself.
