

Shrink Rap



Synopsis

"Parker can reveal more about a character in five words of dialogue than many writers can in an entire book...(Sunny Randall) is capable yet realistically human, and not above accepting a little help from her friends. A welcome addition to the fold." The Washington Post Book World

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Boston PI Sunny Randall is the daughter Robert Parker's series hero Spenser and his inamorata, Susan Silverman, might have had if they weren't so busy parenting Pearl the Wonder Dog. Like Spenser, Sunny is smart, tough, and fearless; like Susan, she's sexy, droll, and vulnerable; and like Pearl, Sunny's pit bull, Rosie, is the only character who's wise enough to hide when trouble comes knocking at the door. In *Shrink Rap*, Sunny's working as a bodyguard for a famous romance writer who's being stalked by her ex-husband, a psychiatrist engaged in extremely unprofessional conduct with his female patients. To get the goods on Dr. John Melvin, Sunny goes undercover as a vulnerable divorcee, which isn't that far from the truth; simultaneously, she's also seeing another therapist, who's supposed to be coaching her for her undercover role but is also helping her understand her troubled relationships with men. It's a clever device, and Parker makes the most of it in this spare, smart, swiftly paced mystery, one of Parker's best in recent years. --Jane Adams

As if responding to his new status as an MWA Grand Master, Parker turns in his strongest mystery in years with Boston PI Sunny Randall's third outing (after *Family Honor* and *Perish Twice*), a

particular relief after this spring's flaccid Spenser offering, *Widow's Walk*. The setup lacks originality. Sunny is hired to bodyguard a bestselling author, Melanie Joan Hall, who pens "high-end bodice rippers," just as years ago in *Stardust*, Spenser was hired to bodyguard a famous TV newscaster but by focusing on an author's plight during her book tour, Parker writes about experiences close to his own, delivering sharp portraits of publishing types and fans. Melanie Joan's former husband, John Melvin, a psychopathic psychiatrist, is stalking her. To learn about and discredit him, Sunny consults another psychiatrist, then enters incognito into therapy with Melvin, which adds tremendous resonance to the narrative as, inadvertently, she must confront her own neuroses during sessions, complexes involving her relationships with her parents and estranged husband. Soon Sunny sniffs out that Melvin has been raping and, occasionally, killing members of his all-female clientele by injecting them with a date rape drug. To nab Melvin, she submits to his using the drug on her, in an intense finale. With layers of psychological revelation, plenty of action, the welcome return of Sunny's supporting crew (most notably Spike, a gay counterpart to Spenser's Hawk) and, as usual, prose as tight as a drumhead, this is grade-A Parker. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Great Read

I like Mr. Parker's writing. He's the author of a more relaxed mystery and likable detectives. Unfortunately, the person reading this particular version (Deborah Raffin) is not very good. The plot is reflected in the reading. Not a great plot, but if the actress reading is good, it's easy to overlook funky plot lines and misses. Also, there were no bookmarks on any of the CDs--which is a big production mistake. I'll be wary of New Millennium (sp?) audio CDs in the future.

Parker does a pretty good job writing about a woman detective. I wonder how these stories fare from the female perspective? While the stories are predictable in some ways, that's one of the reasons I read them. I like to know that the bad guys will get their just deserts. I have now read the whole Sunny Randall collection, and have had my fill for now. Wish there were more!

As her ex-husband says, Sunny Randall, Robert Parker's fresh, new heroine is as cute as Meg Ryan and tougher than a Mafia Don. Unfortunately, she may be losing Robert Parker's interest already, well before she loses ours. *_Shrink Wrap_* does not do justice to her early promise. Sunny's case, where an appealing and likable author of Romance novels is being stalked in some pretty

creepy circumstances, is an intriguing and original one. The plot moves along briskly, making it difficult to put the book down. But Sunny is becoming increasingly one-dimensional and thinly drawn. There is no way not to like her. She is honest, earnest, smart and tough. She is trying to make her life into something honorable. She is sometimes as fast with a comeback as Spenser himself, and almost as funny. So Parker does her an injustice when he has eight people tell her she needs to ask for help, and makes her give each and every one the exact same answer, that she needs to do it herself. Understandable, laudable even, but we get it after the third time. Repeating it is a nuisance, like a one-note song. There is much about Sunny we would like to know, and while Parker explores a little, the whole character development of the book is built around one insight Sunny has into herself at the end, as a breakthrough, which is --- wait for it -- that her relationship with her father and mother has strongly influenced her relationships with men. Um, okay, good insight. But we could all have used a little more of Parker investing himself here, Sunny most of all. And then there is the dog. Spenser and Susan's Pearl is a delight, as is the way they feel and talk about her. But this little dog is taking up more emotional space in Parker's minimalistic story than any other supporting character. Which seems to me to be a mistake and again, a waste of potential. Spike, for example, is a magnetic character, not up to Hawk exactly -- who would be? -- but worth a lot more space on the wide-margined, large-typefaced pages. The books are getting shorter, thinner, more off-hand, as if Parker is writing while he's watching a ballgame. He can grab hold of Sunny and make her someone who will hold our interest for years. If he decides to make the effort. In *_Shrink Wrap_* it rains or snows and is bleak every day, except on the last page, when the sun comes out. Hopefully that lift out of the grayness will carry over to the next Sunny Randall book. She's worth it.

Another great read by a truly marvelous author. This led me to more Sunny Randall books. I didn't think I could like anyone as much as I like Jesse Stone and naughty Spenser. However, I like her. She's different than the private eye/bounty hunter heroines of Grafton and Javonovich. Great fun.

A fine alternative to the Spenser novels.

A very good series!

This story about a corrupt psychiatrist is a very good detective story. It required some dangerous undertakings. It is also very suspenseful.

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