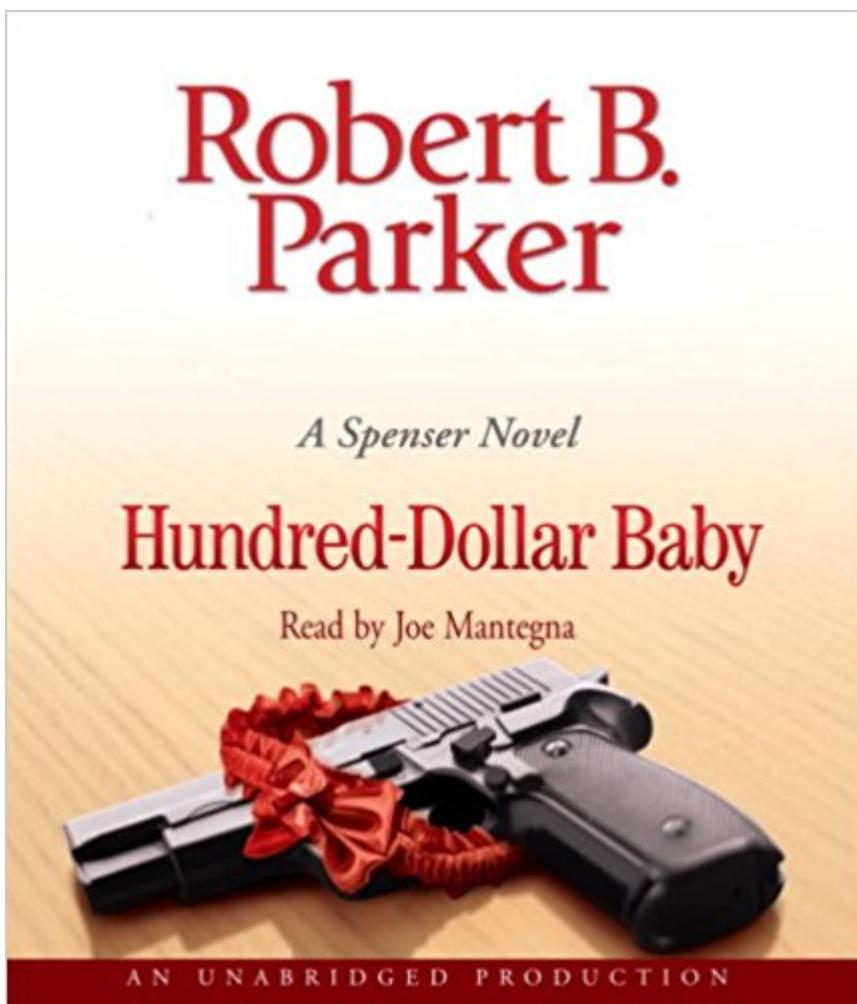


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# Hundred-Dollar Baby (Spenser Novels)



## **Synopsis**

Once upon a time, though not so long ago, there was a girl named April Kyle—âœa beautiful teenage runaway who turned to prostitution to escape her terrible family life. Now, April Kyle's return in *Hundred-Dollar Baby* is nothing short of shocking. When a mature, beautiful, and composed woman strides into Spenser's office, the Boston PI barely hesitates before recognizing his once and future client. Now a well-established madam herself, April is still looking for Spenser's approval, and it takes her a moment before she can ask him for his assistance. April claims to be in the dark about who is trying to shake her and her business down, but Spenser and Hawk find ties to organized crime and local kingpin Tony Marcus, as well as a scheme to franchise her operation across the country. As Spenser again plays the gallant knight, it becomes clear that April's not as innocent as she seems. In fact, she may be her own worst enemy.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

April Kyle, the damsel in distress that Spenser rescued in two earlier books, *Ceremony* (1982) and *Taming a Sea Horse* (1986), again turns to the iconic Boston PI for help in the 34th entry in Parker's popular series. Cynical yet romantic, Spenser easily handles the immediate threat of some men trying to muscle in on the high-class Boston whorehouse April is running. Unfortunately, that isn't the real problem, and Spenser without much surprise finds that April, the thugs and everyone else involved is lying to him. Instead of walking away, Spenser continues to probe, following trails that

lead to New York, a con artist, mob connections and other complications. This is vintage Parker, with Spenser exchanging witty dialogue with the faithful Hawk, sexy dialogue with his beloved Susan and smart-alecky dialogue with cops and villains. The old pros can make it look easy, and that goes for both the author and his hero as they deliver the goods smoothly and with inimitable style. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

April Kyle is the young runaway Spenser rescued from Boston's notorious Combat Zone in 1982's *Ceremony*. Bereft of conventional options, he left her in the care of Patricia Utley, operator of an upscale New York bordello. Now she is back in Boston operating a branch office for Utley and needs Spenserian assistance. Some locals are trying to move in on her operation. Perhaps Spenser and Hawk can dissuade them? They make quick work of the muscle but learn the catalyst for the takeover may have a more complex motive. April knows more than she has revealed to him about the source of the threat and her complicity. Spenser's frustration with Kyle's dishonesty and his avuncular need to help forces him to keep digging. The latest entry in the long-running series finds Parker revisiting familiar themes such as the often-deleterious effect that families have on their members and whether the damage can ever be truly undone. The banter between Spenser and his significant other, Susan Silverman, and the imperturbable Hawk--typically a highlight of the series--seems flat here, even veering toward cliche. Still, no Spenser novel fails to be entertaining, but Parker just may be doing better work these days with his two other series characters, Sunny Randall and Jesse Stone. Here's hoping he gets the big guy back on track. Wes LukowskyCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

you won't feel as bad about spending \$6.99 as you would if you paid for the hardback. The first part of this book is just plain boring. I really don't have to know exactly what every person in the book is wearing or the exact position Pearl the Wonderdog is lying in on whoever's sofa (there's a "chapter" of just Spenser and Pearl sitting on the sofa) or the play by play of Spenser looking out the window ; and the conversations between Spenser and Susan were dull and rather unnecessary. The story picks up a little at the end but it is disappointing overall. And I still have a real problem with how Parker "writes" Hawk's dialog, I cringe when I read it. He still sounds like he just came off the plantation. Surely Mr. Parker could find someone in Boston that he could use as an example of the current slang and speech patterns of the streets. He should listen to a hip-hop record or something.

(Although frankly I would be more frightened if Hawk spoke perfect English while he was pointing a gun at my head.) It's just time that Hawk stop playing Stepin Fetchit to Spenser. And could we PLEASE have some "conflict" between characters! Everyone understands each other so well it can get dull. Susan and Spenser have the same conversations in every book lately and they're always so perfectly accepting and happy with each other, it would be nice to make them more realistic - for goodness sake could they have a fight or something??? Everytime a new Spenser book comes out I hope it will be more like the old ones and less like a formulaic, overlong, short story. Once again I was wrong. I think I'll take my own advice next time.

Amazing of the stories and predicaments Spenser and Hawk get themselves into, plus coming up and smelling like a rose.

I love Spenser as a character. Always have. I love his quick humor. I love his confidence. I love the way he loves people. I love that he feels he has to save people from themselves more often than he saves them from other people trying to harm them. I probably won't ever dislike Spenser or want to stop reading about him. But there's the deal: sometimes now, I want more from him. I want more than the dialogue. I want more than the predictable conversations he has with Susan and Hawk. I want. . .what? Not change, precisely. I just want more added to the usual. In this book, Parker did his usual good job with continuity. That is to say, he didn't write anything that makes Spenser or any other character deviate from his/her norm. Spenser is charged with once again helping a woman he "saved" before, and there's a little tension there because she isn't someone who's easy to save (or even to like). But overall--the dialogue is remarkably similar to dialogue in previous Spenser novels. There's the same lack of question marks when characters are presumably asking questions. The same quick banter that makes the pages fly but sometimes also leaves the reader wanting. . .well, more. So, for me, this book was the equivalent of a nice little catch-up with Spenser and his circle. What it didn't do for me was leave me feeling that I knew him any better or had explored much in the way of new, exciting issues. A little spice would have been nice, Mr. Parker. That said, a ho-hum "Spenser" beats the average crime novel/mystery pretty much any day.

April Kyle, the young girl Spenser saved from a vicious prostitution ring only to move her up to a top-of-the-line prostitution ring, is back and once more needs to be saved. Only this time she's a full-grown woman running an independent sex operation of her own. When she shows up in Spenser's office, he doesn't at first recognize her. Then, after he does, she talks about how thugs

are menacing her operation, trying to cut in on her business. Spenser takes up her defense and soon finds himself enmeshed against a local thug working for a high-rolling predator. Robert B. Parker is the bestselling author of the Spenser, Jesse Stone, and Sunny Randall series as well as several independent works like WILDERNESS, LOVE & GLORY, and APPALOOSA. A television show, SPENSER: FOR HIRE, was based on his novels, as well as several made-for-TV movies. His Jesse Stone series has become a series of made-for-TV movies starring Tom Selleck. Parker's writing, as always, is elegant and smooth, whipping by in a blur as a seasoned reader slips comfortably back into the familiar world the author's been writing about for the last 30 years. April Kyle's story is a familiar one: she's in trouble and Spenser has to ride to the rescue. The violence and action develops well, and even the psychological profiling that Susan does fits the story in a satisfying manner. Hawk is present, riding backup as he usually does, and even Teddy Sapp, Frank Belson, and Martin Quirk put in appearances. I would have liked a little more history developed on April Kyle. In particular, why she left her family in the first place back in CEREMONY. That character development seemed to be missing in this book. As always, Parker's fans have been waiting on this novel. Knowing that it would be about April Kyle has made the wait even more intolerable. But it's here now, and long-time readers will enjoy the excursion with Spenser. I really suggest new readers pick up copies of CEREMONY and TAMING A SEA-HORSE before reading this one. That way more emotional context will be present for them.

Great book.

Love Spenser!

Fairly good story, much the same type of plot as in his earlier books. He gets hired to investigate a problem, few details found, and for the next 75% of the book, the hero hasn't a clue as to who done it. Then, in the last 10 pages, he gets a hint, solves the problem with a happy ending.

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