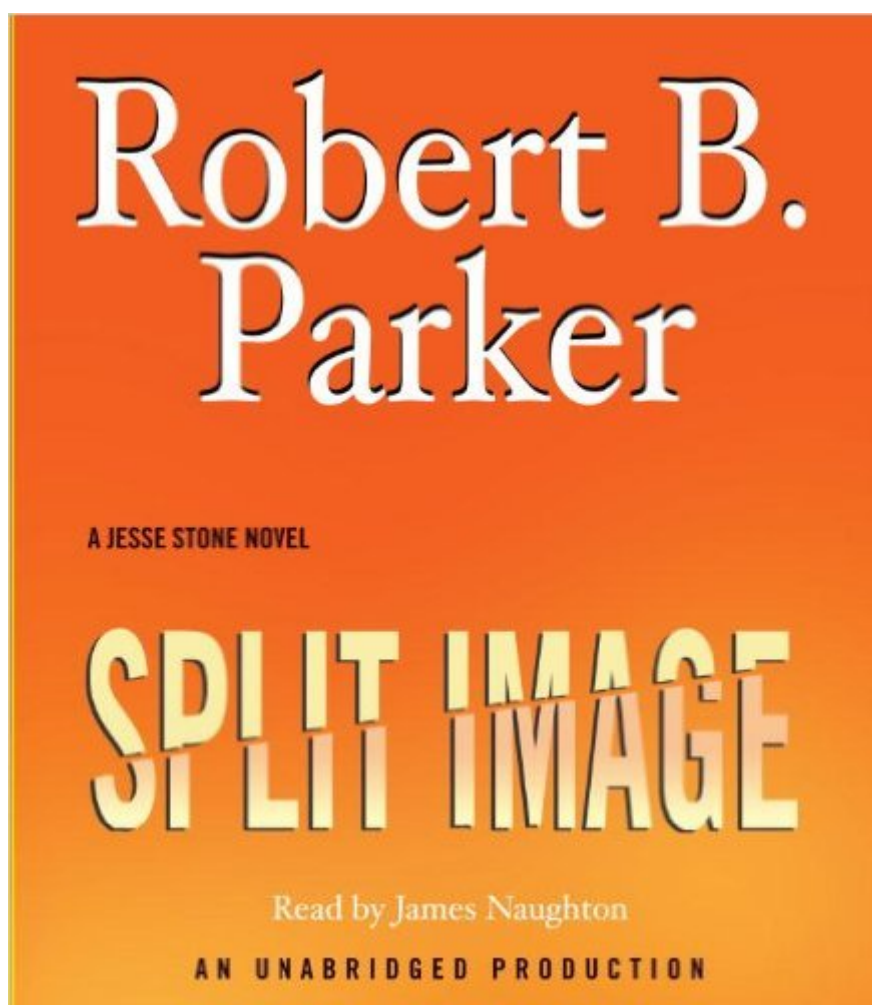


The book was found

## Split Image (Jesse Stone Novels)



## Synopsis

The body in the trunk was just the beginning. Turns out the stiff was a foot soldier for local tough guy Reggie Galen, now enjoying a comfortable retirement with his beautiful wife, Rebecca, in the nicest part of Paradise. Living next door are Knocko Moynihan and his wife, Robbie, who also happens to be Rebecca's twin. But what initially appears to be a low-level mob hit takes on new meaning when a high-ranking crime figure is found dead on Paradise Beach. Stressed by the case, his failed relationship with his ex-wife, and his ongoing battle with the bottle, Jesse needs something to keep him from spinning out of control. When private investigator Sunny Randall comes into town on a case, she asks for Jesse's help. As their professional and personal relationships become intertwined, both Jesse and Sunny realize that they have much in common with both their victims and their suspects and with each other.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars See all reviews (266 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #724,681 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #13 in Books > Books on CD >

Authors, A-Z > ( P ) > Parker, Robert B. #1180 in Books > Books on CD > Mystery & Thrillers

#1663 in Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > Unabridged

## Customer Reviews

So let's deal with the elephant in the room right away: how does one review a book when the author unexpectedly dies while it's being read? The death of Dr. Parker was a shock to the genre community, to be sure. Eulogies steeped in eloquence can be found with just a few clicks. The eloquence is deserved, Parker saved the PI genre. That is not debatable. So we will leave those eulogies for you to find (we recommend the one from the NY Times), and say, going forward, this review takes that sad fact into account not one bit. Split Image is more accurately described as a

Jesse Stone/Sunny Randall Novel, both characters are present, together and apart. Our story begins as Sunny visits Jesse for professional consult. She's been hired to look into an "eccentric" religious organization based in Paradise known as The Renewal. Her clients are parents whose daughter has moved into their house in Paradise. Sunny isn't quite sure if her clients are worried about their daughter or their reputation, and she starts her investigation by getting a briefing from the Paradise Police Chief, with whom she has an interesting romantic relationship. This briefing is filled with the banter that Parker is most famous for, and we immediately feel at home with these two. We like the fact that they are each others' refuge from bad situations in their own lives--Jesse's, the near-constant disappointment brought by his ex-wife, Jenn; Sunny, the irresolvable distance between her and her ex-husband, Richie. During their chat, a body is discovered in Paradise, that of Mob Enforcer Petrov Ognowski. Jesse leaves Sunny to her business, and start digging.

"He also split the rock, and the waters gushed out." -- Isaiah 48:21 I held off starting this book until I had absorbed and become accustomed to the news of Robert B. Parker's passing. Rather than anticipating that there would be dozens more Parker novels coming soon, I realized that the time had come to more carefully examine and consider the last few novels in the editorial pipeline. Split Image was a pleasant surprise for me in several dimensions. Although the cover refers to this as a Jesse Stone novel, there's quite a lot of Sunny Randall in the book, too, as she pursues a private investigation in Paradise, that well-known home and haunt for mobbed-up crooks and moral-appearing bad guys. Their interactions are rich in this series, and Split Image is one of the best books for bringing out the foundations for the mutual attractions and hurdles. In addition, Mr. Parker has handled a sexually tinged story with much more deftness than he usually did in the past. Sometimes his novels seem to be more like exercises in voyeurism concerning the vulgar than they are stories about human sexuality in all of its dimensions. To me the best police procedural and crime novels start with an unusual premise . . . and then play out in unexpected ways. Here the premise is one that I would never have come up with in a million years: Two mobsters who don't care that much for one another marry twins and live next door to one another in (where else?) Paradise. In many police procedurals, you know exactly what to expect from the beginning. Mr. Parker rewards us with a plot that has more surprises to keep things interesting than we have any right to expect. I liked that. In some of Mr.

There always has been something very satisfying about finishing a new Robert B. Parker novel, all of which are so complete and satisfying. But alas, there is a sadness that accompanies the last

page of *SPLIT IMAGE*, the first book released since his death in January. Indeed, while I am sure it was not done intentionally, the novel reads like a valediction for the two non-Spenser protagonists created in the 1990s: Jesse Stone, the chief of police for a small Massachusetts town, and Sunny Randall, the female private eye from Boston. *SPLIT IMAGE* is also one of those titles that perfectly reflects what the book is about. Years ago, the late, great mystery author Ed McBain told me that he always tried to get titles that worked on multiple levels. So, for instance, *ICE* could be something you fall on in the winter, but it could also be slang for stolen diamonds or killing somebody. In *SPLIT IMAGE*, Jesse and Sunny, who had a brief affair in Beverly Hills many years ago, find themselves involved in two perplexing but unrelated cases in Paradise. Jesse's case starts when a soldier for a retired mobster is bumped off, and he soon finds that the mobster just happens to live next door to another mobster, one who is not so retired. They are not rivals as far as anybody knows. As a matter of fact, they are both married to sisters who are identical twins, hence a "split image." Meanwhile, Sunny has been hired by the parents of a young woman who has run off to join a quasi-religious group in a town called "The Renewal." The group seems harmless enough, but they just might have a split image of their own --- and it could be far more sinister.

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