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Perchance To Dream



Synopsis

The Sternwood Family, immortalized in "The Big Sleep," is in trouble again...Vivian's psychotic sister Carmen had disappeared from the sanitarium, and Vivian herself has once again fallen into the clutches of Eddie Mars, the shady underworld character. Enter Philip Marlowe, the original tough-but-tender private eye. He saved the Sternwoods once before, and the butler believes he can do it again. --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (27 customer reviews)

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Authors, A-Z > (P) > Parker, Robert B. #18323 in Â Books > Books on CD > Mystery & Thrillers

#23234 in Â Books > Books on CD > General

Customer Reviews

We really admire Parker for having the knowledge and creativity to "dream" up a new Philip Marlowe some fifty years after the original "Big Sleep" was published. We may be influenced by having just recently read Chandler's original first novel (so it was fresh in our mind), but we thought Parker did a great job. First, his use of literal quotation from the original made an effective prologue as well as effective transitions for the plot line that continued in his sequel. Second, his replication of Marlowe, with which he had prior experience in finishing Chandler's last work, Poodle Springs , was so credible we barely missed the masterful prose of the series creator. In the story, the younger of (now deceased) General Sternwood's daughters, Carmen, is missing from a sanitarium to which she was committed as part of the outcome of "Sleep". Her sister Vivian, with whom Marlowe eventually became infatuated enough to bed, wants her found, but turned to another of her friends from the first book, Eddie Mars, to find. Meanwhile Norris the butler hires Marlowe to do the same, and ironically he and Eddie form an unlikely alliance at times to pursue matters. Before it's over, a scheme to make a millionaire out of the sanitarium founder, in cohorts with a wealthy land baron recluse, is uncovered; as is the perpetrator of a couple more killings along the way. Naturally the urbane but dogged Marlowe finds time in between drinking, smoking, and wowing attractive women,

to unravel all and ride off into the sunset as a hero. Some might quibble that Parker is a mediocre substitute for Mr. Chandler, but who might be up to the task of stringing wordcraft in that author's stead?

This novel seems to be only cursorily written by Robert Parker. It includes copious quotes borrowed from Chandler's original, *THE BIG SLEEP*. Regrettably, the direct contrast between these two writers this engenders only serves to illustrate just how lacking Parker's approach to Chandler's characters is. It is easy to imagine that the publishers hoped to capitalize on Chandler and Phillip Marlow's name recognition, and Parker (a much better writer than this volume demonstrates) was willing to prostitute his art by spending a few days writing this novel in return for some ready cash. At times, the novel reads like Parker is only grudgingly involved in the story. It seems hardly worth the effort for him or the reader to finish the novel. It's an uphill climb. In *PERCHANCE TO DREAM*, Parker contends with the same dilemma Chandler faced in *POODLE SPRINGS*. Chandler's first four chapters of *POODLE SPRINGS* somewhat resolves this issue by having Marlow, now married to money in the form of Linda Loring, live a stubbornly independent life. Faced with continuing *POODLE SPRINGS* from there, Parker unintentionally writes himself into a corner. He had not anticipated subsequently writing, *PERCHANCE TO DREAM*. *POODLE SPRINGS* is a successful novel because Parker not only writes a very good mystery story, he also resolves the domestic dilemma Chandler originally created by allowing Phillip Marlow to marry Linda Loring in *PLAYBACK*. One of the big problems with *PERCHANCE TO DREAM* is that Parker has Marlow refuse to marry Vivian Regan. That is essentially the same dilemma Chandler's Marlow will later face with Linda Loring in Chandler's *PLAYBACK*. In *PERCHANCE...*, Parker's Marlow ducks the issue simply by explaining his dilemma to Vivian.

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