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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.

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Customer Reviews

Parker, author of the Spenser novels, has made this "sequel to Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*" a stunning, drop-dead success. Private eye Philip Marlowe spins a yarn of greed, madness and death with the cool-eyed cynicism (and good-guy core) that made him the classic hardboiled dick. The era is post-WW II ("GI mortgages"), possibly early '50s ("cha cha cha"), the L.A. dream beginning to sour. Psychotic Carmen Sternwood is missing from an expensive sanatorium. After sultry Vivian has enlisted suave gangster Eddie Mars to locate her sister, the family butler, Norris, hires Marlowe for the same purpose. Sanatorium head Dr. Bonsentir stonewalls Marlowe's queries by using some heavy political clout, but further probing leads to a kinky billionaire who is practically untouchable. Marlowe is beaten up, a chopped-up body is found and an ex-inmate of the asylum dies "accidentally" before the PI uncovers a water-rights scam involving millions. Parker's effort goes beyond pastiche: he uses flashbacks from *The Big Sleep* daringly and seamlessly, and his terse style (a cop asks for the time of death: "Any idea when yet?") is flawlessly in Chandler's footsteps. This is dazzling. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an

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Parker is the internationally best-selling author of the Spenser mysteries. He lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Elliot Gould has starred in such diverse motion pictures as "M*A*S*H", Ingmar Bergman's "The Touch" and Steven Soderbergh's "Ocean's Eleven, Twelve, " and " Thirteen". He played Jack Geller in the hit TV-comedy "Friends" and was nominated for an Academy Award for his performance in " Bo and Carol and Ted and Alice".

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. He cannot marry her, because eventually he would become her puppet, and a mere slave to her money, a Mr. Regan. She accepts his rationale and backs away. This is unbelievable since Vivian Regan has been depicted as a very independent, strong woman, (portrayed by Chandler in THE BIG SLEEP- - and Lauren Bacall in the film) who always gets what she wants and would never accept Marlow's lame excuse. Chandler's Linda refuses to accept almost the exact same argument, yet winds up getting her man. Parker writes himself into a corner. In PERCHANCE..., he can't allow Marlow to marry Vivian because that novel

predates PAYBACK, and would contradict Chandler's work. The restraints this puts on his creative talents is perhaps why Parker subsequently refused to write any future Marlow novels, and why PERCHANCE TO DREAM is so indifferently written. In the end, of course, any Marlow is better than no Marlow. That is why it deserves more than one star.

A pretty entertaining attempt at imitating Raymond Chandler. It reads more like some of Chandler's early practice short stories than his complete novels. It has a slightly unfinished feel to it and is somewhat diminished by Parker's use of direct Chandler passages. Mr. Parker is a good writer but he is not Raymond Chandler (of course for that matter know one else is either). This is a nice novel if you don't expect the impossible. No writer can really imitate another especially one who wrote years ago. In my opinion Mr. Parker would be best off creating his own original work and let Mr. Chandler's writing join him in "sleeping the big sleep" so to speak.

I love Robert Parker's books and I love to read all a author's works starting from the first book written. gives you the unique ability to find just the book you want and a good price for purchase delivered to your door. thank you

The problem with this book is actually obvious, it's a sequel to the first book in a series. I'm not saying it's bad, it's actually worth a read, but all the constraints imposed by that really sap anything really creative from happening. So it feels wooden, like a paint-by-numbers kit. If you keep in mind it's not going to be a true Marlowe story when you read it, it's actually pretty good.

Robert Parker captures Chandler's characters and the aura of the time. His plot is twisty enough and the prose is graceful and evocative though no one can form images as clear-eyed and sensuous as Chandler's. He's the master but Parker does a loving good job of it. I was hoping for some Chandler magic one more time and in PERCHANCE TO DREAM, I got it.

Ok, I guess. Definitely a disappointment compared to Poodle Springs, which I think was at least as good as Chandler's The Little Sister and possibly even Playback . Why Parker chose the storyline he did is baffling - it's literally "Chinatown" with Philip Marlowe instead of Jake Gittes. No doubt he had his reasons. The lame-0 ending didn't help much either. Three stars outta five. The truth is, you take out the name Marlowe and type in another and you're down to two stars, maybe even less.

It's almost as good as the master. The writing is great, and Elliot Gould did his usual fabulous job. I have ALL the books he has done. This one never skipped a beat.

Robert B. Parker and Raymond Chandler were two of the best. Parker picked up Marlowe right where Chandler left off and continued the story. Good writing and right for the time period. A wonderful read that took me back in mt memories to the sleuths of the 50's.

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