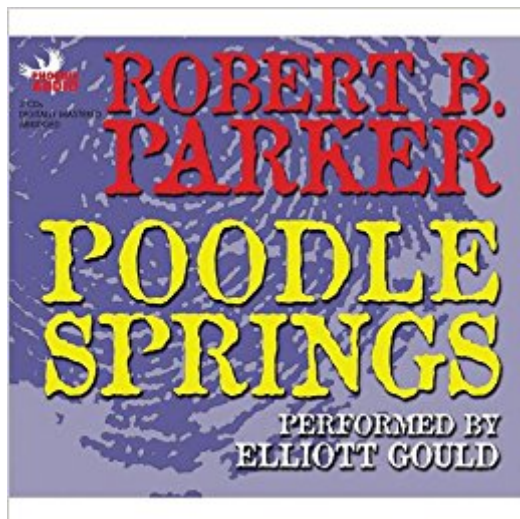


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# Poodle Springs



## Synopsis

Marlowe is back ... and he's married to a rich, beautiful society lady who wants him to settle down in the posh desert community of Poodle Springs. Marlowe may have married rich, but old habits die hard: he's hired to recover a gambling debt and soon finds himself in a case involving bigamy, pornography, and murder. The first four chapters of this final Marlowe mystery were written by noir master Raymond Chandler at the end of his life. Robert B. Parker was chosen by Chandler's estate to complete his last work, and the result is a true classic for Chandler aficionados and mystery fans alike.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When Chandler ( *The Big Sleep* ) died in 1959, he left only the first four chapters of L.A. private eye Philip Marlowe's seventh caper. Parker earns high marks for picking up the story from the slim opener and writing a thriller to rival his bestsellers on Spenser, Boston PI. Here Marlowe is newly wed to wealthy Linda and at home in her luxurious house in Poodle Springs (pseudonym for Palm Springs), but refuses to be a kept man. Hired by a local gambler to trace Les Valentine, a photographer who has welshed on a \$100,000 bet, the detective questions the missing man's bibulous wife Muffy, daughter of a multi-millionaire. Muffy's vague answers give nothing away, so Marlowe drives back to L.A.'s grubby streets, looking for information. Acting on a tip, he visits the office of "Larry Victor," and finds it vacant except for the body of a blonde model. Marlowe knows Larry is Les and suspects he was framed for murder, probably by the gambler's mob bosses, so the investigator stays on the case in the city at the risk of his life and marriage. Sustaining tensions,

writing in tune with the period and delivering a knockout finale, Parker does nobly by the great Chandler. 200,000 first printing; \$150,000 ad/promo; Mystery Guild main selection; Literary Guild, Doubleday Book Club alternate; author tour. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Chandler died in 1959, leaving behind the opening chapters of this Philip Marlowe private investigator novel set in the 1950s, which Parker has completed. Here, Marlowe has a rich wife (shades of Hammett's Nick and Nora Charles) and has moved from Los Angeles to the big-buck community of Poodle Springs, where he is hired by the area crime boss to track down a missing local who has run out on a gambling debt. The plot evolves with murder, blackmail, and a little bigamy for good measure. Though there's more talk than action, and Marlowe's usual hard edges are rounded off a bit, there is still deep intrigue and lots of snappy dialogue. Completing a story started by another is difficult, especially when it involves an established character, but Parker has done an impressive job in adapting to Chandler's style and sense of humor. All one can say when reading this is, "Marlowe, it's good to have you back." Literary Guild alternate; Doubleday Book Club featured alternate; Mystery Guild main selection.- Michael Rogers, "Library Journal"Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is not Marlowe. Chandler abandoned this project after four chapters because it violated his vision of Marlowe as forever drunk and alone (his editor and publisher wanted it to have a happy ending). Parker doesn't understand the character at all. He turned Marlowe into Terry Lennox. The best are from "The Big Sleep" to "The Long Goodbye". Don't bother with this one.

POODLE SPRINGS (1989), Raymond Chandler and Robert D. Parker When he died in 1959, Raymond Chandler, the author of the memorable Philip Marlowe detective novels, *The Big Sleep*; *Farewell, My Lovely* and *The Long Goodbye*, left behind the first four chapters of a new hard-edged mystery. Thirty years later, Robert B. Parker, author of nineteen similar books, including the *Spencer* thrillers, *Pale Kings* and *Princes* and *Crimson Joy*, used Chandler's notes as a starting point for yet another excellent Philip Marlowe mystery. The Poodle Springs of title is a thinly-veiled Palm Springs as it was in the late 1950s. In his *Grumbling Gods*, A Palm Springs Reader, desert bibliographer Peter Wild describes the area at that time as "a huge, pink, white-fringed pillow, shaped like a heart" adored by a pretentious and narcissistic lot with more money than is good for them but lacking any depth of

taste. Unfortunately, there are few if any Chanderlesque descriptions of the desert in Poodle Springs, and, in fact, most of the action takes place in Los Angeles. The main reason you might consider adding this volume to your reading list is because it tells an engrossing story in which the classic loner Marlowe, newly married to Linda, an heiress from Poodle Springs, soon finds himself up to his ears in two murders. This is how Poodle Springs opens: "Linda stopped the Fleetwood in front of the house without turning into the driveway. She leaned back and looked at the house and then looked at me. 'It's a new section of the Springs, darling. I rented the house for the season. It's a bit on the chi-chi side, but so is Poodle Springs. The pool is too small,' I said. 'And there is no springboard.' 'I've permission from the owner to put one in. I hope you will like the house, darling.' 'I'm paying twelve hundred dollars a month for this dive. I want you to like it.' 'I'll love it. Twelve hundred a month is more than I make being a detective. It'll be the first time I've been kept. Can I wear a sarong and paint my little toenails?' 'Yes,' I said. 'Yes.'"

Because only the first four chapters were written by Chandler, I expected it to not come up to his level. Happily, I was wrong! It started a bit slow and didn't have the usual zinger beginning, but it quickly picked up pace. All in all, it was quite brilliant and is an adequate tribute to the master -- Raymond Chandler!

Poodle Springs is Robert B. Parker's completion of a novel started by Raymond Chandler before he died in 1959 featuring private detective Philip Marlow. While I have read some of Chandler's previous novels featuring Marlow I have no emotional attachment to the character so I come with a blank slate in terms of evaluating whether Parker lives up to Chandler's character. Frankly I thought Parker did a fabulous job with the novel. It is a rather straightforward, gritty mystery, and a well done one at that. The tricky part is the unlikely event of Marlowe's being married to Linda Loring ne Potter (what her last name really is was a bit confusing to me, except she is now Mrs. Marlowe in this novel). In this novel Marlowe is living in the plush community of Poodle Springs with his very wealthy wife instead of his usual gritty haunts in Los Angeles. He is hired to find a man who has skipped out on a \$100,000 IOU from an illegal gambling establishment. It turns out the fellow is leading a double life involving pornography and blackmail and has gotten himself way over his head. Marlowe, intrepid

as ever, chases him down in a nicely twisted plot. While doing this Marlowe has to deal with his rich wife's unhappiness over his continuing to be a private eye when he could live a life of leisure and spend time with her. But that he can't do or he wouldn't be Philip Marlowe anymore. The story revolved more around the case than Marlowe's marriage to Linda but Parker does a great job of blending it in. Frankly, I think this is one of the better novels Parker has written. My only complaint about the novel is that we really never get to know Linda very well at all. Her mannerisms come off as a spoiled rich debutante but she is clearly not that. But we don't really ever know where she is coming from or get to know her. I suspect that Parker had plenty to work with to flesh out Marlowe's actions but had absolutely nothing to go on as to how Chandler envisioned developing Linda's character. So, my speculation is, in deference to Chandler he didn't try to flesh her character out too much but just left her pretty much like he found her. She comes off as a real swell gal. Overall, on pure enjoyment, I highly recommend it.

One last go-round with iconic character Philip Marlowe, in what had to be the dream gig of a lifetime for Robert B. Parker. A must-read for Chandler fans, if for no other reason other than the master himself actually wrote the first few chapters and laid out the basic framework of the story. Parker does an adequate job with the handoff and spins a tale, I think, on par with perhaps *The High Window* or *The Little Sister*, two of Chandler's works which I consider to be his lesser efforts (but still damn good reads). Make no mistake, though, this is Marlowe alright - still tough, still incorruptible, and still always the wise-ass. It's not a classic, but it is Marlowe and it is Chandler, and Parker, for his part, doesn't get in the way. Which, I strongly suspect was his intention. A light snack, but a tasty one nonetheless.

great read

Raymond Chandler is A Great Mystery Writer & Robert Parker finishes the Story Nicely. I Enjoyed Reading this Wonderful Book.

Robert B. Parker is the best author ever.

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