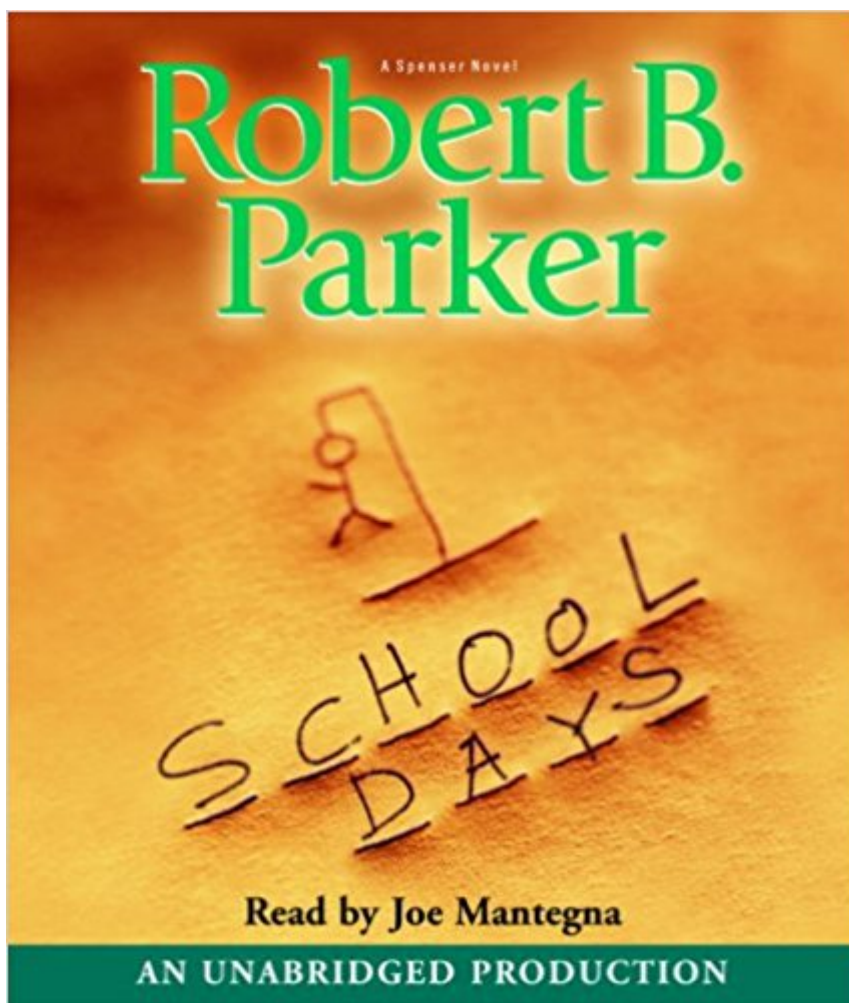




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## School Days (Spenser Novels)



## Synopsis

Lily Ellsworth--erect, firm, white-haired, and stylish--is the grand dame of Dowling, Massachusetts, and possesses an iron will and a bottomless purse. When she hires Spenser to investigate her grandson Jared Clark's alleged involvement in a school shooting, Spenser is led into an inquiry that grows more harrowing at every turn. Though seven people were killed in cold blood, and despite Jared's being named as a co-conspirator by the other shooter, Mrs. Ellsworth is convinced of her grandson's innocence. Jared's parents are resigned to his fate, and the boy himself doesn't seem to care whether he goes to prison for a crime he might not have committed. As the probe goes on, Spenser finds himself up against a number of roadblocks--from the school officials who don't want him asking questions, to Jared's own parents, who are completely indifferent to the boy's defense. Ultimately, Spenser discovers a web of blackmail and some heavy-duty indiscretions--and a truth too disturbing to contemplate. Before the case reaches its unfortunate end, he is forced to make a series of difficult decisions--with fatal consequences.

## Book Information

Series: Spenser Novels

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## Customer Reviews

Any new installment in Parker's long-running series starring tough, wisecracking Boston PI Spenser is a pleasure, and this time out high-maintenance girlfriend Susan Silverman is out of town, giving readers unfettered Spenser face time. The wealthy Lily Ellsworth hires Spenser to prove the innocence of her grandson, Jared Clark, accused of a Columbine High School-style shooting that has left five students and two teachers dead. Jared has confessed to the crime, and

Spenser faces major opposition from local law enforcement officials, school authorities, dysfunctional parents, opposing lawyers and deadly gang-bangers. As always, Spenser solves the case in a surprising manner, shoots some bad guys and has several attractive women offer him sex, all of which he handles in his proficient, wisenheimer way. Susan's German shorthaired pointer Pearl gets a lot of attentive babysitting, but longtime sidekick Hawk is nowhere in evidence. Those who have stuck with Spenser as Parker invented (and set loose) other case-crackers will be rewarded once again with another solid installment in this fine, enduring series. (Sept.) 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.

**\*Starred Review\*** Spenser returns! He fights, he flirts, he cooks, he wisecracks, he quotes poetry! This thirty-third outing for the Boston private eye is one of the most psychologically astute and well-choreographed entries in the entire series. And it has the added attraction of exiling Spenser's annoyingly perfect longtime girlfriend, Susan, to a conference, leaving the temporarily solo sleuth to resist some pulp fiction-like female advances with his acerbic version of knightly honor. Meanwhile, there's murder: a wealthy grandmother hires Spenser to clear her 17-year-old grandson of being the co-conspirator and co-killer in a school shooting at a private school that has left five students, a teacher, and an administrator dead. The boy's buddy has named him, and he has confessed to the crime. Everyone--police, school officials, the defense lawyer, and the immediate family--has given up on the kid, but Spenser has never seen a slammed door he didn't long to break down. Soon he's questioning everyone in the kid's circle, looking for the chink in that slammed door. Along the way, he rummages through all sorts of closets in the privileged world of the private school, turning up links to the underworld. The only flaw in this terrific performance is Parker's dialogue, which, though full of witty patter, often makes his characters sound as if they're reading an old-time-radio detective drama. Still, this is a high point in one of the genre's classic series. Connie FletcherCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

By this time Parker seemed to be phoning it in- repetitive storylines- cloying dialogue with Spenser and Susan- not enough of the Hawk character; and the books got shorter as the printing margins on the paper got wider and wider. Maybe since the series is being continued there will be a Hawk-centric story or maybe where Hawk is the main character. Instead of this one- start with the first ten Spenser novels and then decide if you want to go further- he seemed more engaged as a

writer in the earlier stories- try the first ten books first.

Although quite gripping and suspenseful, with Spenser as usual putting his life on the line, and the body count climbing, this is a very thought-provoking book. Two very young men are accused of the murder of several of their schoolmates. There is a chilling similarity to many of the High School massacres in the US we hear of on the evening news. Everyone seems prepared to put these boys in gaol and throw away the key. It seems they are an embarrassment to their families, to the teachers and faculty, to the police and even to the psychologists supposed to evaluate them. They all, including the parents of the boys simply want to 'put this unfortunate incident behind them'. But Spenser feels something in the scenario doesn't add up. Unlike everyone else he wants to know why this happened. He discovers things which have gone completely unnoticed by parents and teachers alike, and despite every attempt to thwart him, he eventually discovers the truth as well as the underlying causes. Among other things he considers the pressure-cooker effect of expectations on the young, and the effects of forcing young people, especially boys, to study subjects for which they are quite unfitted and which they find terminally boring. This book shows just how far boredom at this level can push those not academically suited to such studies. The book can be read and enjoyed as a simple mystery yarn, but is really much more. I definitely recommend it.

This story starts off as slow and cold as a winter's day in Boston but ends up being arguably the finest Spenser novel Mr Parker ever wrote, and surely one of the all time great detective stories. The ending to the case is simply brilliant and completely satisfying as well as sufficiently complex to allow the reader to forgive Mr Parker for the slow start. A detective story this brilliant with such a strong social conscience needs to be recognised so it is a shame this book did not receive any official recognition from the industry at the time of its release. Anyway, Spenser is hired to clear a school student of a mass murder charge but no body is talking and everybody (including the local police) wants the case - and Spenser - to go away. Our man Spenser soon finds out how easy it is to come up against brick walls and before he knows it he has made more enemies than friends on this case. This story is Susan-less and the entertainment factor drops a little without her sexiness to heat up the pages on a cold winter's night. But Spenser being Spenser, we know that he is up to the job of sticking up for the wronged and just like Superman, he is sure to fight for truth, justice and the American way. Spenser has a feeling of wrongness about the case; early on in the story, he just doesn't know exactly WHAT is wrong. The more he digs, the less he knows but stubbornness prevails and he finally makes a breakthrough which rips the heart out of the bad guys. The sharp,

biting and amusing dialogue is there as per Mr Parker's usual high standard and so once again this is another fantastic mystery and great purchase from the world's greatest book store!BFN Greggorio

The good news is that Susan is out of town, at a conference in North Carolina. The bad news is that except for a passing reference to him, Hawk does not appear in this novel. The further bad news is that though Susan is out of town there is still some cutesy-poo talk about her. Aside from all that, the story and the prose are lean and crisp and to the point. As I've written elsewhere, Parker has said that he has more to say about Spenser than Hawk because he doesn't know Hawk as well. How this could be the case, when Parker created him, I don't know, but it's a pity. A Hawk-less Spenser novel can still function effectively (as this one does), but it's like a well made cake without any icing.

The compiler's desire to fill 3 discs with school themes led to the inclusion of some really obscure tunes (at least for me) as well as the ones you'd expect. This is great: I mean everyone knows Ring Ring Goes the Bell but there are 75 songs here so everyone will probably discover something they've never heard and get to wonder "who was that? did they think they were gonna hit the big time? wonder what happened to them?" and then look 'em up and discover...great fun...highly recommended.

Gets better and better every book of Spenser I read, love the ever growing ties between them and of course Pearl.

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