

Robert B. Parker's Fallout

The small town of Paradise is devastated when a star high-school baseball player is found dead at the bottom of a bluff just a day after winning the team's biggest game. As Jesse Stone searches for answers about how the boy died and why, he is stonewalled at every turn, and it seems that someone is determined to keep him from digging further.

Jesse suddenly must divide his attention between two cases after the shocking murder of former Paradise police chief Charlie Farrell. Before his death, Farrell had been looking into a series of scam calls that preyed upon the elderly. But how do these "ghost calls" connect to his death? Both old and new enemies come into play during the investigation, and in the end, Jesse must find the common factor between the two deaths in order to prevent a third.

**PRAISE FOR
THE JESSE STONE NOVELS**

Robert B. Parker's Fallout

"An effective series of small-town jolts."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

Robert B. Parker's Stone's Throw

"Lupica seems thoroughly comfortable carrying on the fictional lives of Robert B. Parker's characters. He has the jaunty tone down pat, and everything flows from that with Parker's people."

—*Booklist*

Robert B. Parker's Fool's Paradise

"One of the best crime thrillers hitting stores this year . . . and quite possibly the best novel set in one of Parker's universes since the iconic author passed away."

—*The Real Book Spy*

Robert B. Parker's The Bitterest Pill

"Exceptional . . . Faithful to the spirit of Parker's characters without sticking to the status quo."

—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

Robert B. Parker's Colorblind

"Superior . . . The impact of these events on individuals [is] palpable, giving this nuanced entry more emotional weight."

—*Publishers Weekly*

"Another well-written, fast-paced yarn from one of the acknowledged masters of crime fiction."

—Associated Press

Robert B. Parker's The Hangman's Sonnet

"Heartfelt . . . Coleman balances plot and character perfectly."

—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

"Must reading for Parker devotees."

—*Booklist* (starred review)

Robert B. Parker's Debt to Pay

"His best to date."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

"A complex cat and mouse game that will keep readers turning pages."

—*Publishers Weekly*

"A suspenseful, clever thriller that moves at breakneck speed."

—*Booklist*

Robert B. Parker's The Devil Wins

"*The Devil Wins* is such a winner of a novel that Parker's loyal fans and Coleman's new ones will be equally delighted by his skills. This series can run forever in these new capable hands and readers will eagerly await each new book about Jesse Stone. I know I will."

—*HuffPost*

“Small town, big secret, and a community’s shame. In the blink of an eye, Jesse goes from worrying about potential storm damage to investigating three homicides. . . . A suspenseful, melancholy examination of loss and how sometimes, despite our best efforts, the past refuses to stay buried, and it will certainly please fans still craving more of Parker’s characters.”

—*Booklist*

“Coleman’s solid second Jesse Stone novel finds Parker’s flawed hero, now the police chief of Paradise, Mass., still having trouble separating from his ex, connecting with people emotionally, and dealing with guilt over a subordinate’s near-fatal shooting. . . . Coleman succeeds in adding some needed depth to Jesse’s character.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“Coleman does a remarkable job of developing the character, deepening our understanding of his struggle with the ghosts that haunt him. . . . Both a fine mystery story and a satisfying portrait of an emerging character that readers will look forward to hearing more from soon.”

—Associated Press

Robert B. Parker’s Blind Spot

“Fans of both Parker’s Spenser and Jesse Stone series will enjoy this 13th installment. . . . Like Spenser, Jesse is a man of honor who feels he must speak for the dead. . . . It is a great, fast beach read, recommended for all detective fiction fans.”

—*Library Journal*

“Coleman is continuing the Stone saga in his own crisp prose style. . . . Jesse Stone fans will be eager to discover where Coleman takes this compelling series next.”

—Associated Press



THE JESSE STONE NOVELS

Robert B. Parker's Fallout
(by Mike Lupica)

Robert B. Parker's Stone's Throw
(by Mike Lupica)

Robert B. Parker's Fool's Paradise
(by Mike Lupica)

Robert B. Parker's The Bitterest Pill
(by Reed Farrel Coleman)

Robert B. Parker's Colorblind
(by Reed Farrel Coleman)

Robert B. Parker's The Hangman's Sonnet
(by Reed Farrel Coleman)

Robert B. Parker's Debt to Pay
(by Reed Farrel Coleman)

Robert B. Parker's The Devil Wins
(by Reed Farrel Coleman)

Robert B. Parker's Blind Spot
(by Reed Farrel Coleman)

Robert B. Parker's Damned If You Do
(by Michael Brandman)

Robert B. Parker's Fool Me Twice
(by Michael Brandman)

Robert B. Parker's Killing the Blues
(by Michael Brandman)

Split Image

Night and Day

Stranger in Paradise

High Profile

Sea Change

Stone Cold

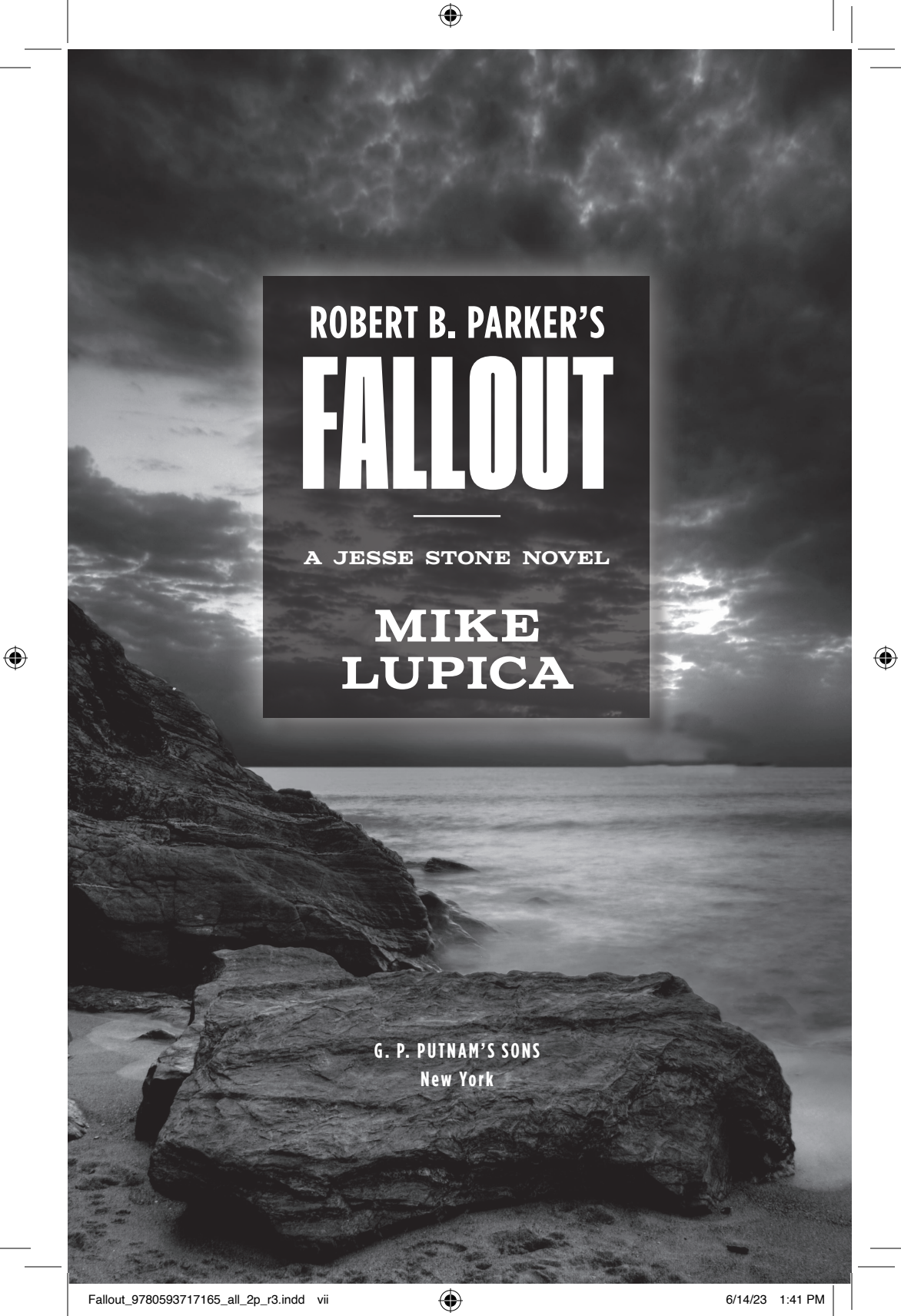
Death in Paradise

Trouble in Paradise

Night Passage

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ROBERT B. PARKER'S
FALLOUT

A JESSE STONE NOVEL

**MIKE
LUPICA**

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New York

PUTNAM
— EST. 1838 —

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This book is for Taylor Lupica.

Not only can't I believe she married me.

All this time later, I still can't believe she talked to me.



ROBERT B. PARKER'S
FALLOUT



ONE

Jesse Stone looked out at the baseball game being played at O'Hara Field, a ballgame on an afternoon like this always a beautiful thing, at least to him, his eyes fixed at the moment on the kid playing shortstop.

Jesse felt as if he were looking at himself, back when he was a high school senior, back when he could see a whole lifetime of baseball days like this stretching out in front of him.

This kid was a little taller. Had a little more range. But not more arm. Definitely not more arm.

Nobody ever had more arm than I did.

Jesse felt himself smiling. Because even knowing what he knew about what had happened once he made it as far as Triple-A, the big leagues close enough to touch, knowing how baseball would break his goddamn heart later, he wanted to climb down out of the bleachers and be this kid's age and change places with him in a heartbeat.

Just for one more afternoon.

Have one more game like this.

“What did you think about when it was late in a game like this?” Suitcase Simpson asked.

Suit was on one side of Jesse. Molly Crane was on the other. The kid at short, Jack Carlisle, was Suit’s nephew, his sister Laura’s boy. About to accept a scholarship to go play college ball at Vanderbilt, unless he changed his mind at the last second. Jesse didn’t follow college ball the way he did the majors. But he knew enough to know that Vanderbilt had a big-ass program, and had sent a lot of kids to the big leagues over the years.

“I wanted the ball hit to me,” Jesse said.

He heard a snort from Molly.

“So you could be in control. I’m shocked. Shocked, I tell ya.”

Without turning, Jesse put a finger to his lips.

“Don’t you shush me, Jesse Stone,” she said. “You act like we’re in church.”

“Baseball is better than church,” Jesse said.

Molly, the good Catholic girl, stared up at the sky. “Forgive him, Father.” She smiled. “And not just for that.”

Jesse turned to Suit. “I feel as if I’ve been sitting next to fans like her at ballgames my whole life.”

“You wish,” Molly said.

Suit shook his head. “I feel like I’ve got a bad middle seat on a long plane ride.”

The Paradise Pirates were ahead of Marshport, 2–1. League championship game. Bottom of the ninth. Jesse always wanted to laugh when he heard people calling teams “bitter” rivals in sports. Only people on the outside. They had no idea. All they had to do was watch a game like this. Every single one of these kids on this

field, both teams, waiting for the ball to be put in play and so much to start happening at once, was exactly where he wanted to be.

Where I always wanted to be.

Wanting the ball to be hit to me.

He had been working with Jack Carlisle a little bit this spring, at Suit's request. Trying to teach the kid some of the things that Jesse had learned on his own. Not teach him everything he knew. Just some of it. Some of the baseball he still had in him, despite landing on his shoulder that day in Albuquerque, his dreams about making The Show crash-landing right along with him.

His father had always been more interested in being a cop than he was in baseball. Or watching his kid play baseball. Jesse could count on one hand the times the old man had actually shown up for one of his games.

Two outs now. The Marshport center fielder had just struck out swinging.

But the tying run was still at third base.

Go-ahead run at second.

"Move to your right," Jesse said quietly.

As if somehow Jack Carlisle could hear him.

"He pulled one into the hole his last time out."

Still talking to himself. But tricking himself into believing he was talking to the kid at short.

"What?" Suit asked.

"Nothing," was Jesse's reply.

The Marshport batter stepped out of the box, buying himself some time. Maybe about to win the game, and the championship, for his team with a hit, or end his season with an out.

Across the field Jesse saw Nellie Shofner, from the *Town Crier*, taking notes. She still hadn't moved on to a bigger paper, though

she clearly had the talent, and the work ethic. Jesse knew she was working on a feature about Jack Carlisle, one the *Crier* was going to run as soon as he signed his letter of intent with Vandy.

Nellie saw Jesse looking over at her and waved.

“Oh, look,” Molly said. “It’s Gidget.”

Jesse ignored his deputy chief and leaned forward, the pitcher ready to pitch and the batter ready to hit now.

Hit it to short.

He’s not afraid, the way I never was.

It happened then, exactly the way Jesse had pictured it, or maybe willed it, the kid with the bat hitting a sharp grounder to Jack’s right. Crack of the bat unmistakable on a ball you’d just caught clean.

But the damned ball looking like a base hit, for sure.

Except.

Except Jack Carlisle *had* moved over, the way Jesse wanted him to. Jesse had seen him do it right before the pitch, the kid reading the ball perfectly as it came off the bat. So the ball was headed into left field. But then wasn’t. There was Jack Carlisle half sliding, half diving to his right, backhanding the ball. Knowing in the moment he had no chance at the kid who’d hit the ball, and was flying down the first base line behind him.

You either knew what to do next or you didn’t.

Jack knew.

From his knees, he sidearmed the ball to his third baseman. Snap throw, right on the bag, something on it. *I could make that throw.* The Paradise third baseman, Finn Baker, put the tag on the runner, the runner clearly out. But if the runner heading home crossed the plate before the tag was applied at third, game was tied.

He didn't.

Game over.

Home team had won the title.

After the celebration in the middle of the field, and then the trophy presentation, Jesse stood with Jack Carlisle near second base. Suit was there, too. And Molly. Jesse knew, though, from experience, the kid really didn't want to be with them. He wanted to go be with his teammates. This was part of it, Jesse remembered, that feeling you had in the first few minutes after you won the big game, and you never got those first few minutes back.

"Party tonight," Jack told Jesse. "Over at the Bluff."

Jesse grinned. "Better not be adult beverages involved."

The kid grinned back. A younger version of Suit. Family resemblance impossible not to see. Jesse thought Jack Carlisle looked more like Suit than he did his own mother.

"Can't speak for the boys," Jack said. "But I'm not gonna blow everything by getting drunk and stupid."

Then he ran across the field to where the Paradise Pirates were already posing for pictures.

"There were guys I played with in high school who could have taught a master class in drunk and stupid," Jesse said to Suit and Molly.

"Boy, those were the days, my friend," Molly said.

"We thought they'd never end," Jesse said.

It was right before Jesse felt as if somebody had dropped a bomb on Paradise, Mass.

Two, actually.