



Nobody Runs Forever

Richard Stark

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Seven men came to a meeting in Cincinnati. One wore a wire, and another didn't hesitate to kill him-fast and hard. Now Parker has left that meeting and the murder behind, and gotten involved in a scheme that is stuffed with money and trouble.

In the rural northwestern corner of Massachusetts, Parker and a pal plan to steal an armored car. But the human element gets in the way. From a nervous ex-con and his well-intentioned sister to a bank manager's two-timing wife and a beautiful, relentless cop, too many people have their hands too close to Parker's pie. Then a bounty hunter, who just happens to be hunting the man who never left the Cincinnati meeting, joins the fray.

Parker can see this job turning bad, yet he can't let go of the score. And when guns go off and the heist goes down, the perfect plan will explode with a sound and fury all its own. For Parker, there's always the choice of turning from fight to flight-even if there's nowhere to run...

Nobody Runs Forever Details

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From Reader Review Nobody Runs Forever for online ebook

Mike French says

Not my favorite of this series, but was enjoyable!

Dave says

In the introduction to "Deadly Edge," Charles Ardai explains that the Parker novels are all rather similar in that they all involve some kind of heist and things go wrong, but they are like jazz tunes that are all familiar in a sense, but no two solos are alike. "Nobody Runs Forever" is the 22nd book in this series (not counting the four Grofield books) and it is part one of the trilogy that ends the series with "Ask The Parrot" and "Dirty Money" being the other two pieces. Each of these three novels is complete for themselves, but together they are part of a continuous story about an armored car robbery in Western Massachusetts and its aftermath.

A smaller bank is getting swallowed up by a larger one and all the cash is being moved at night by a high security team in four armored vehicles. An Ex-con has been dating the bank president's wife and she has the inside scoop on when and what route the money is being moved. A perfect chance or is it ever that simple in Parker's world? Maybe you got an inside person, but the absolute worst thing is to have an amateur involved. And, before they even got underway (like on the first few pages) some joker wearing a wire had to be put down and the body hasn't even been laid to rest. At least, you're not attracting the attention of an over zealous woman cop, Detective Reversa. At least, a bounty hunter isn't trying to crash the party. At least the ex-con isn't running from a jealous husband.

It's hard to pick a favorite among the Parker novels as they are all terrific. This is another brilliant work by Mr. Westlake. Well-plotted and simply well done.

David Schaafsma says

The opening grabs you: Seven guys in Cincy play cards, soon to talk about a heist. Parker sees one of the guys is wearing a wire. He takes off his tie, come from behind the guy and strangles him while the others keep talking poker in the mic that Parker rips off the man's chest. What follows is a bank heist involving six bad guys, 4 armored cars, and sophisticated firepower.

You Can't Run Forever is the 22nd of 24 Parker books from Richard Stark, and it is a departure in a few ways from the main tradition he developed early on of a brutal, almost non-speaking noir main character and stripped-down plots. The basic approach is that Parker is a guy doing a job, working best with others who also do their jobs, a very working class approach to crime writing and heist life. In this most recent tale, Parker jokes around a bit (a kind of no-no compared to the earlier Parker), he isn't as brutal as we have come to expect (notwithstanding that opening strangling!), and like it or not, we get the much longer told tale from more perspectives than ever. While I prefer the lean and meaner earlier Parker stories, I appreciated the more complex telling, and many characters are really compelling.

The view from Parker himself is rather limited (and Stark finds this perspective limiting, too, as Parker doesn't like to talk, and isn't particularly reflective), but we also see things from the perspectives of

1) a female cop, Gwen, who changed her name from Wendy to be taken more seriously; she's a good cop

and comes pretty close to outwitting Parker;

2) a female bounty hunter's perspective, Sondra, who is just trying to collect money based on information about the whereabouts of that strangled guy;

3) an insider who works in the bank they want to rob, Jake, whom they shoot in the leg so he won't be under suspicion for helping with the job since he is in the hospital;

4) the wife of the bank owner; she helps with the job and wants out of her marriage; her husband wants out of the marriage, too, and hopes the money that is being transferred will help him divorce her.

So all these folks know the deal is going on (or that something is going on) on this particular night. As the action revs up in the last fifty pages, we cut back and forth from each perspective with increasing speed and efficiency.

Another thing that is interesting is that the ending of this novel is the least resolved one yet, with (mild spoiler) Parker on the run (with actual feet, not a Lexus), the heist not entirely successful, shall we say, as is usually the case. It feels surprisingly cliff-hangerish!

Film trailer for A Nice Little Bank That Should Be Robbed, referenced in the book, though the film seems comic compared to Stark's book; Stark, as Donald Westlake, did write a fun crime series, with a great sense of humor, but Parker is not generally known for that:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSCV_...

Martin says

This is another one that has a lot going at the same time, and so compulsively readable I had to read it all in a day, so I'm bumping it up to five stars. The book stands on its own, but it is in fact only the first part of the three-part storyline that continues in Ask The Parrot and concludes in Dirty Money. A lot of new characters in this one; I'm sure we'll see some of them again.

Stark still has the golden touch. Only two more *Parker* books to go!

Mike says

For various reasons I often end up reading "series books" out-of-sequence. Usually this is only a minor thing: a plot or character development that a later book incorporates as part of the background happens in a book I read some time afterwards. But once in a while there is a more pronounced A, then B relationship that I miss out on.

"Nobody Runs Forever" is the 22nd Parker book and its story and ending lead directly in to the 23rd ("Ask The Parrot") that I read a few weeks ago. The entire premise of that book and its subsequent storyline are wholly based in this one. Think of "Nobody Runs Forever" as the season-ending cliffhanger and "Ask The Parrot" as the next season opener. Good thing the author wasn't cancelled during the summer break!

In my limited experience with the Parker books, this is the only 2-parter than I know of. Thinking back to "The Man With The Getaway Face", it is possible that the opening of that book dovetails to the end of the first book in the series. Otherwise, that book and these two have very little in common.

This book is full of interesting little bits and characters. The opening act with the “heisters” and their problem that Parker spots is a great beginning. The Bounty Hunter Team is another good twist. I certainly wasn’t expecting to see Parker get snagged like that. Using Sandra as to drive the plot and give the reader a twist or two was very good, also. I don’t know if she surfaces again, but she could be a welcome driver to any Parker story.

I also liked the crime and how they arranged to pull it off; successfully getting all that cash and then being stuck with it is a real pity.

No matter how much I liked, I have to rate this book lower than other Parkers. This is the first one that I really felt was “bloated”. Sure, a couple of the others have seemed a little wordy, but this one is by far the fattest. Is it because Stark has given us more descriptions? Maybe. I didn’t do a word count nor did I keep track of description vs. narrative vs. action. In recollection, it seemed that there were too many little diversions - even if they were action and not ‘atmosphere’.

If this book had been edited down by 10 or 20 percent, perhaps the author would have been more economical with his words, background characters, and sub-plots. That kind of interplay works for other authors, other protagonists (think Lew Archer by Ross MacDonald), but not for Parker and Stark.

Although I think I would have noted its length and “dilution” in any case, I may be extra sensitive to it because I read “Flashfire” immediately prior to this. And that book is an amazing choreography of action, action, action with minimal side-stepping, making it resound with who and what Parker is. By no means am I suggesting that anyone skip this book. I think Part 2 moves back into a better rhythm and story for Parker (especially if you read them in order), but I’m only giving this one three (3) stars.

Kin says

Questi ultimi di Stark(Westlake) sono meno scoppiettanti di quelli che amavo 50 anni fa. Siamo invecchiati tutt'e due purtroppo.

Still says

One of the more complicated plots in the Parker series.

What starts out as a fast and simple three man armored car heist (or as simple as such a heist can be - remember after all, Parker hasn't fared well in previous attempted armored car robberies) fairly quickly develops major complications and unwanted secondary characters wanting in on the monkey points.

This one starts out like so:

When he saw that the one called Harbin was wearing a wire, Parker said, "Deal me out a hand," and got to his feet. They'd all come to this late-night meeting in suits and ties, traveling businessmen taking a break with a little seven-card stud. Harbin, a nervous

man unused to the dress shirt, kept twitching and moving around, bending forward to squint at his cards, and finally Parker, a quarter around the table to Harbin's left, saw in the gap between shirt buttons that flash of clear tape holding the wire down.

As he walked around the table, Parker stripped off his own tie -dark blue with green stripes- slid it into a double thickness, and arched it over Harbin's head. He drew the two ends through the loop and yanked back hard with his right hand as his body pressed both Harbin and the chair he was in against the table, and his left hand reached over to rip open Harbin's shirt. The other five at the table, about to speak or move or react to what Parker was doing, stopped when they saw the wire taped to Harbin's pale chest, the edge of the black metal box taped to his side.

Exit "Harbin".

How they conclude their obviously overheard game of stud and remove the body of the snitch is worth the price of admission alone.

I might be wrong but there are more female characters in this novel than in previous entries. Claire's here, of course but there are other women as well. Good women; bad women; smart women; greedy, stupid women. Can't reveal much more.

Once again -this one is a superior entry in the Parker series.

If you're reading the series you're going to have to read this one.

Doesn't really require having read previous entries but it wouldn't kill you to start with and and continue through the next 19 titles.

No one is better than Donald E. Westlake writing as "Richard Stark".

Michael Brown says

Reading several books in a series back to back is both good and bad. Good in that each new book does not really lead to confusion when a previous event is referenced and they are slightly quicker reads. On the bad side I find myself speed reading (back in the 60's we had classes to read fast and comprehend more) and since this is a fictional tale not really trying to remember every little twist and turn of the plot

Eric_W says

Excellent Parker novel.

These just whip right along, every heist coming with numerous complications and mistakes, exemplifying human foibles except for Parker who remains totally amoral and focused only on the job, and who must use his wits to deal with the inevitable screw-ups and unforeseen holes in the road.

To recount the plot would be to layer the review in spoilers. I'll just whet your interest with four armored

trucks, one very smart police detective, a smarmy doctor, two bounty hunters looking for a dead body, some ex-cons, and a church filled with hymnals.

Number 22 in the series. Read them all. Perfect length for a transcontinental flight. You won't even miss flying over Kansas and Nebraska.

Harold says

Wow! The 22nd Parker book. Two more to go. I'm going to binge it on out. This (#22) was one of the best.

Dan Schwent says

Parker and six other hoods are planning a heist when they discover one of the guys is wearing a wire. The job falls apart and Parker gets a line on another job: an armored car robbery. But can Parker stay ahead of the people looking for the dead man who wore the wire?

Yeah, the deeper I get into the post-Butcher's Moon Parker books, I'm not so sure Richard Stark should have picked things up again. Some of Parker's capers go great until the wheels come off somewhere close to the end. In Nobody Runs Forever, it seems like the wheels were never completely on. The caper had a lot of hitches to it and depended on too many amateurs. If it was five or six book earlier in the series, I don't think Parker would have took the job. I bought that Parker's run of bad luck was what convinced him but would everyone still be eager to work with Parker?

Parker himself was the same character, although I still think he seems softer in the post-Butcher's Moon books. Sandra was a good nemesis and I suspect she'll be in the next book. Dalesia and McWhitney were okay but nothing to write home about. The whole caper just seemed like a bad idea from the start.

Not to say it was a bad book. Nobody Runs Forever still had its moments. I loved what happened at McWhitney's bar and I loved the ending. Parker was still his cool self when things started going south.

I enjoyed Nobody Runs Forever but, like most of the post-Butcher's Moon Parker stories, it didn't have the punch of the originals.

Mark says

This is the last book of the SPE, the second Parker Epoch 1997-2008, I had not read. Richard Stark AKA Donald E. Westlake returned to his creation Parker after he wrote "Butcher's Moon" in 1974. Like another writer Spillane who returned to his creation Mike Hammer Stark also managed to do so successfully. For some fans the first sixteen books were superiour and the new series less so, but they all agree that it was nice to see the big fella return in books written by the original creator/writer.

This book is easily one of the better books with a beginning in which 7 men come together to plot some heist and before they get there one of them is detected wearing a wire. Which ends any heist immediately as well as wire wearer's life.. All men go their separate ways with no further planning involved by these professionals.

However when one of these men who is known to Parker offers him a go at another score, Parker should have walked out simply due to the large amount of amateurs involved. And then there is this smart female copper and a couple of bounty hunters. The plot and people has a large amount of twists and several times you wonder why Parker does not move on.

A highly entertaining thriller that leaves you wanting more Parker and it is simply one of the better novel from the SPE.

Donald E. Westlake / Richard Stark do gives us an excellent book and this is all me preparing for the new Westlake book that was created form a script meant to be a Pierce Brosnan 007 movie that gets its release this week.

That said the Parker series are well worth your while.

David says

The later Parker novels are busier than the earlier ones. The prose remains tight, but the plots have more moving parts, as if Starklake has become an increasingly skilled juggler over the years, and he wants to show off. In *Firebreak* (two books previous), this busyness felt a bit forced, but in *Nobody Runs Forever*, this busyness feels much more organic. Of course, Parker is an idiot to see this armored-car job through to its lemony end, but that's true of his jobs more often than not. With only two Parkers to go, I had planned to wait a while before the penultimate (*Ask the Parrot*), but that may not be possible.

Esme says

Sieben Männer in einem Hotelzimmer in Cincinnati beim Kartenspiel. Das Treffen dient dem Planen eines Coups mit Zahngold, doch bevor es dazu kommen kann, wird entdeckt, dass einer der Männer verwandt ist und dieser wird kurzerhand beseitigt. Schon im ersten Kapitel von Richard Starks Roman "Nobody Runs Forever" ("Keiner rennt für immer") wird klar, dass hier nicht lange gefackelt wird. Parker, ein Mann ohne Vornamen, ist ein cooler Berufsverbrecher, ein eiskalter Mann außerhalb aller Moral.

Nach dem Scheitern des ersten Planes tritt sofort ein neuer in Kraft. In der neuenglischen Kleinstadt Rutherford fusionieren zwei Banken, jede Menge Kohle ist unterwegs. Doch Mrs Inside ist die Frau des Bankdirektors und der Tipgeber hat ein Verhältnis mit ihr. Die Sache wird durch die Beteiligung von Amateuren und Emotionen verkompliziert. Jede der am Rande oder mitten in dieser Angelegenheit verstrickten Personen hat zudem noch ein eigenes Süppchen am Kochen, verfolgt eigene Ziele. Erleichtert wird es auch nicht durch das Auftauchen eines Kopfgeldjägers, der hinter dem in Cincinnati verschwundenen Spitzel her ist und eine schlaue und bildhübsche Polizistin, die viel zu viele Verbindungen zwischen den Beteiligten zieht. So müssen Parker und seine Kollegen den Aktionsplan immer wieder über den Haufen werfen und neue Kniffe aushecken, damit garantiert nichts schiefgehen kann. Doch Garantien gibt es in ihrem Beruf für nichts und niemanden...

Richard Stark ist das Pseudonym des an Silvester 2008 verstorbenen Autors Donald E. Westlake, der nicht nur Thriller schrieb, sondern sich in vielen sehr unterschiedlichen Genres versuchte. Und obwohl es sich bei "Keiner rennt für immer" um den zweiundzwanzigsten Roman aus der Reihe mit dem amoralischen Helden Parker, der bereits im Jahre 1962 zum ersten Mal auf Papier erschien, handelt, lässt sich dieser als *Stand Alone* lesen. Diese Romane haben außerdem eine Wirkung, die so gar nicht beabsichtigt war:

"Richard Stark hat sehr viel Post aus dem Gefängnis bekommen. [...] Aus dem State Prison von Walhalla im Bundesstaat Washington schrieb mir mal einer, er habe soundso viele Jahre wegen bewaffneten Raubüberfalls aufgebrummt bekommen und sich eine ganze Reihe meiner Parker-Romane mit ins Gefängnis genommen, um sich mal gründlich fortzubilden." (Quelle: *Tagesspiegel*)

Das Buch ist wegen seiner überwiegend dialogischen Struktur ein kurzweiliges Lesevergnügen. Trocken, gewieft, professionell - man merkt, der Mann ist ein Könnner. Doch gleichzeitig ist dies ein Buch, das nicht lange in der Erinnerung verbleiben wird oder Spuren in der Seele hinterlässt, denn auf tiefergehende Personenzeichnung wird weitestgehend verzichtet.

Lynn says

A first for this series.....a cliffhanger. Great build up, development, crime and aftermath; I was 5 pages from the end before I realized there wasn't room left to close the story. Bummer! I was counting on a big payday at the end. Guess I'd better Ask The Parrot.
