



The Man With The Getaway Face

Richard Stark

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Master thief Parker comes to a plastic surgeon in Nebraska with a face that the Outfit--the New York syndicate--wants to decorate with a bullet. But nothing can keep Parker away from his old life of crime--and the major heist of an armored car somewhere in New Jersey.

The Man With The Getaway Face Details

Date : Published 1963 by Pocket Books

ISBN :

Author : Richard Stark

Format : Mass Market Paperback 225 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction, Noir, Thriller

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From Reader Review The Man With The Getaway Face for online ebook

F.R. says

So this is a Goodreads re-read, as opposed to 'The Hunter' which I last read when I was still young and innocent of book-review related social-networks. But glancing back over my thoughts from the halcyon, long ago days of 2008, I find that I basically still agree with what I said. 'The Man with the Getaway Face' is a fantastic title, but merely a good book and a distinct drop off in quality from its predecessor. But reading it again with a greater appreciation of its place in the cycle, one can't help but be fascinated as to how this embryonic series is developing.

Most of the Parker novels focus on Parker working a heist and using his no-nonsense, no-compromise skillset to get over and fight back against any hitches which arise. That is exactly what we have here, and so since 'The Hunter' isn't that plot at all, this is the first time the soon to be trademarked formula of a Parker story is actually used. Except the hitches we have here are so ridiculously easy for Parker to manage. He sees what they are and works out his way around them almost instantaneously. As such the first time out, Westlake/Stark manages to write this plot without tension or jeopardy. Instead the jeopardy and tension comes from the sub-plot, which is the part connected to the last book and feeding into the next. But since that doesn't really kick off until the last fifth of 'The Man with the Getaway Face', we're left with a perfectly functional – but not as engaging as it should be – thriller.

Still it's always fun to read about Parker doing what Parker does, and he really is at his efficient best here. Those entering the series may be tempted to skip straight from 'The Hunter' to 'The Outfit' as those are the two giants of the early Parker books, but that would be a mistake as there is a lot here to admire, even though the most ardent Richard Stark fan might find this a difficult novel to actually love.

Review from November 2008

I really like the Parker books, they have a brutal amorality that you don't often read. And even though Parker himself is not a character you can warm to, I do find myself warming to him.

This is actually the second book, after 'The Hunter' (or 'Point Blank') and picks up where that book left off, with Parker having beaten the syndicate and getting a new face. From there it's the usual tale of a violent robbery, a double cross and Parker picking up the pieces as everything goes wrong.

Although enjoyable this is far from my favourite Parker novel. It precedes - and leads directly to - 'The Outfit', which has Parker up against the syndicate again, and this book feels like a shaggy dog story between two more substantial and entertaining stories.

It's not a bad book by any means, but - and I'm judging by very high standards here - there are better Parker novels out there.

Lo9man88 says

In this sequel our amoral protagonist goes through another plastic surgery to start fresh and anew , the death of the plastic surgeon creates a series of unfortunate albeit funny events that ultimately fucks things up for Parker and will potentially expose him to the "outfit" .

Mike (the Paladin) says

You know...I think Parker may be mellowing. There were a few cases here where he didn't kill someone I was sure he would.

What's gotten into the man. This is no way for a self respecting completely self absorbed, totally selfish homicidal psychopath to behave.

Well anyway another disturbing (because I liked the book) outing with our premier, "look out for #1" non-hero Parker.

having just gotten a new face from a plastic surgeon recommended by one of the people Parker trusts he's all set.

Until he gets roped into a questionable job with questionable partners...again.

In spite of all his rules about not working with people he doesn't trust he seems to do it a lot, you know?

Lots of blood, plenty of action not a bad read at all...

But it still disturbs me a bit I like these.

Mara says

Parker novels are unapologetic pulpy goodness. The lingo alone makes the read worthwhile. I'm not sure how I'm going to work a line like *Who's the bird dog on this one?* into casual conversation. Nor will I be 100% sure what I'm saying if I call someone a *frill* and/or a *busher*, but by god, by the end of the work week I intend to find out.

Parker has simple rules for life (he'd be pretty easy to program as far as artificial intelligence goes: if whore responsive, proceed; else, choke). He doesn't want too many moving pieces, and he knows how to get a job done. Now if he could just keep the rest of the other rubes in line, things wouldn't be so damn complicated!

In addition to dealing with an armored car heist featuring that irritating frill/busher, Parker has Stubbs to handle who, due to an incident involving a migrant farm worker strike, scabs and a two-by-four, is a bit of a simpleton. I feel like my vision of Opie from Family Guy was pretty dead on with that one.

It's a dark and enjoyable ride.

Judging a book by its cover:

I know they say you're not supposed to do that, but since not everyone will get their mitts on the 1984 vintage copy of Parker #2, I'm sharing my thoughts.

First off, what is up with Parker's profile? Between the jacket and the, well, puffy pseudo-fro hair, a mashup of Frankie Avalon and Michael Jackson from *Thriller* came to mind. Also, the mock turtleneck...really?*

I thought I'd include the summary according to the back cover, which is just beyond cheesy.

*Additionally, as Kemper pointed out in the comments, he ['84 cover Parker, not Kemper] may be donning a Member's Only jacket...

Mike says

This is a very "straight-ahead" type of story. The protagonist, Parker is an accomplished criminal who gets a new face from a Doctor in Nebraska. Why he needs it gets revealed in bits and pieces throughout the book. The majority of the plot involves Parker running down a lead for a "job" in New Jersey. Ever the professional, he determines that the heist is doable, but not in the way and with the crew that the originator and his girlfriend have proposed.

He and the girlfriend don't and won't get along, but they give the appearance of playing nice to keep the job in play. Parker goes through several elaborate and entirely rational steps to make things happen. I hadn't read the prior novel (where his need for the new face is established), but the writing throughout is very detailed, very polished.

I know that "Richard Stark" is a pen name for Donald Westlake and I have not read a lot by him under either by-line, but I am impressed. This is a very tight story with Parker puzzling out most things "in time" so that he can take command of the situation. He correctly predicts a double-cross and beats it. He also tracks down a man who killed the Doctor, but not before the late Docs associates inform the mob that he is still alive and sporting a new visage.

Now that I've seen what the character is and how the books are written, I'll be looking for more Parker novels.

Richard says

3.5 Stars

This takes up shortly after *The Hunter* left off, and Parker has just gotten a new face from a plastic surgeon so he can hide from the Outfit and do his dirty deeds in peace. But because he is still low on dough, he

reluctantly agrees to a shakily-planned armored car hold up that might not be worth it.

This might sound like a generic plot for your run-of-the-mill crime thriller, but what makes this one unique is that Parker knows from the get-go that a member of the crew will try to pull a double-cross. So on top of whether or not they'll be able to pull the job off, he has to also worry about staying one step ahead of the two-timing teammate.

It's a fun little heist caper in which we now get to see Parker interact with a team. Though this book feels a little like a pit stop on the way to an inevitable showdown with the Outfit, it's entertaining enough and left me wanting to know what happens next! Plus, it has the most awesome title of all the Parker books.

brian says

parker offers something very attractive to the reader: a proxy by which she can exact revenge on this world in a logical, sensible manner; one in which the brain totally overpowers the heart; one in which he can charge forward with the cool determination of an animal on the hunt. the clerk at the DMV won't renew your license? wait till she's alone, shiv her in the chest, drop the body in a dumpster, and get back in line. the drunken frat boy ain't moving outta the way and you really have to pee? lure him to the bathroom with the promise of some cheap bathroom sex, deliver a chop to the groin and as he folds over deliver a pistol shot to the back of the head. and so on... parker appeals to that cold maniacal part in all of us which civilized society works to tamp down.

a dual storyline: the one concerns a pretty conventional but extremely well-told armored car robbery; the other flips clean off the rails: the only guy who knows about parker's face-change surgery could reveal his identity and parker essentially shoves the guy in a sensory deprivation tank for two weeks -- when the guy breaks out his brains are all scrambled and he's on a mission. and parker's gotta put an end to it.

there's an interesting moment in which one of parker's team gives the guy in the tank (it's actually an underground fruit cellar, but might as well be a sensory deprivation tank) a flashlight to break the monotony. the guy wonders if parker allowed him the flashlight only to take it back -- as some kind of cruel joke. he then realizes that parker does nothing to be cruel: he doesn't care enough. he understands that parker hasn't even considered what it must be like alone in the fruit cellar for two weeks and the sole reason he lets the guy out a few minutes per day for air and sunlight is that if the man croaks, it provides more complications for parker than allowing the man to live. parker is all logic. if parker tortures a guy for information, he stops as soon as he gets what he needs. then he decides if it's more worth his while to kill the guy or let him live. parker can only see a situation insofar as it directly impacts his life and his chances for survival and/or gain. and yeah, as stated: this kinda life would be lonely and ridden with guilt and horror for most of us... but there's something clean and pure and attractive there, as well... y'know?

i'd love to see some kinda buddy cop movie with parker and f. nietzsche. those two'd yuk it up pretty nice, eh?

next up: *the handle*

Stephen says

4.0 stars. After settling a vendetta against his former crew and starting a big, juicy new one against the entire Outfit in the The Hunter....PARKER (aka Mr. Badass MoFo)....ISBACK!! He has a brand new face thanks to some nifty plastic surgery performed by an “off the books” doctor and is now in need of some quick cash to tide him over while he looks for his next big score.

In order to solve his fiscal crisis, Parker reluctantly agrees to team up with an old associate and his new woman in order to plan and carry out an armored car heist. That is basically all you need to know about the plot other than:

1. Nothing goes exactly as planned;
2. Everyone is not who they seem to be;
3. There are crosses, double-crosses***, and a number of left and right crosses;
4. A sub-plot has Parker having to deal with a man named Stubbs who I thought was one of the more interesting supporting characters from the first two books;
5. Booze will be drunk, hookers will be paid, cars will be stolen; guns will be fired and lives will be lost;

AND FINALLY...

6. PARKER is the man and he will TCB and settle all scores in the end.

***A quick comment about the crosses and double-crosses. Now I am only two books into this series and I have already learned the **FIRST COMMANDMENT OF THE BOOK OF PARKER** which reads: *Though shalt not fucketh with THE MAN lest ye be smoted and smoted tilleth ye be dead and thence shalt THE MAN pisseth on thy bloody corpse....Amen.* Why oh why oh WHY do the characters in these books continue to beleive that they can pull one over on him.

I mean, the trail of bodies leading away from the last double-cross hasn't even gotten cold yet. Not that I am complaining mind you as this is one of the best parts of the stories. I am just saying

Anyway, another great example of noir crime-fiction done right and another excellent Parker story. Can't wait to read the next one. Highly Recommended!!!

Kemper says

When Parker gets plastic surgery from a crooked doctor to change his appearance, he hopes that it will help hide him from the Outfit since they're still slightly peeved at him after the last book. With funds running low, Parker has to quickly sign on for a job robbing an armored car. However, the set-up involves a grouchy waitress named Alma, and she's showing every sign of wanting to pull something cute and keep the money for herself. Plus, the doctor who did Parker's surgery has been murdered and his people have sent a punch-drunk thug after him to see if Parker was the killer. There's a lot of complications, and if there's one thing

that Parker can't stand, it's seeing a simple plan get complicated.

While a self-contained story, this picks up from *The Hunter* and leads well into the third book, essentially making the first three of the series a trilogy. One of the nice things about this is that while there's an overall arc to the stories that make them rewarding if you read them all, they can also be enjoyed just as individual books.

This one also establishes the tone for the rest of the Parker series. There's usually a job with someone who can't be trusted along with some kind of outside circumstance screwing with Parker's well laid plans. One of Parker's partners sums it up nicely:

"It sounds like a good set-up. The way you talked about it, it sounds fine. But there's this Alma. There's always an Alma. Every damn time. Why can't we put together a job without an Alma in it?"

Unfortunately for Parker, there always will be an Alma around to muck up his schemes.

Jason Koivu says

Parker is a *bad* man. So, shouldn't I feel bad for rooting for him?.....NAH!

Cold-blooded crook in the first degree, Parker has just undergone a necessary face change when he is drawn into a heist for the quick cash prospect. Of course, once he gets the real details of the job he discovers his take won't be a fraction of what he thought it was. And that's not even the bad part about it! But hell, he goes along with it anyway, and I'm glad he did. Otherwise it wouldn't have been much of a book...

In this, the second book in the series, our "hero" doesn't come off as quite so psychotic. It's a little easier to pull for a guy who isn't torturing women. He's far from lovable, but at least he isn't almost completely repellent like I felt he was in book one.

There's a side story to *The Man With The Getaway Face* that drags a little bit. Mainly it's slow because the side character is slow, as in stupid. One too many knocks to the head have left him dimwitted. That's fine, but having to follow a character who doesn't understand what's going on means as a reader you are forced to endure repetition or long, drawn out passages in which you know exactly what's going on and where it's going. This gets boring real quick.

All in all though, this was a solid read at just the right length for this kind of mean-spirited stuff. I wouldn't want to spend a lot of time with these dickholes and twatwads, so I'm glad author Richard Stark kept it short.

Skip says

I liked this book much better than the first one: in retrospect, I am not sure why I gave *The Hunter* 4 stars. Anyway, I digress. Book #2 opens with Parker having had plastic surgery to escape the clutches of the Outfit. He immediately is contacted about a armored car robbery, and heads off to New Jersey. After his due diligence, he approves the plan, but worries about one of the partners. Meanwhile, the plastic surgeon is killed and his aide de camp comes looking for Parker, not realizing Parker was such a bad ass. After he

escapes, the guy goes off looking for another patient, satisfied with Parker's alibi, and Parker intervenes because of the threat of being out'ed. Liking the series better.

Mike says

our anti-hero Parker becomes embroiled in a scheme to rob an armored car. After running afoul of the crime syndicate previously, he travels to Nebraska to get a new face.

Written in '63, the action is pervasive, as Parker nonchalantly carries on with the plan.

James Thane says

This is the second book in Richard Stark's series about the amoral criminal, Parker. At the end of the first, *The Hunter*, Parker is on the run from the organized crime syndicate, the Outfit. At the opening of this book, he has made his way to Nebraska, where he successfully undergoes surgery to change his face to such an extent that even his old associates don't recognize him.

At the conclusion of the operation, Parker returns to the East, desperately in need of a score. An old acquaintance proposes an armored car heist, but Parker is extremely leary of the job. He's not all that confident in the old acquaintance and he likes even less the fact that the job is the bright idea of a waitress that the old acquaintance is living with. Parker's even more discouraged once he meets the woman in question, but he really needs the money and so agrees to the plan. He brings in another old friend, one in whom he has complete confidence, and redesigns the plan in the hope that he can get away with the loot before everything turns to crap.

As readers of this series will well know, that's never going to happen. Complications arise at nearly every turn and, as always, much of the fun in reading these books is watching the way in which Parker deals with one crisis after another. At this point, Stark, a pseudonym for Donald Westlake, was just beginning to hit his stride with this character. Happily, the series would run for a good number of years and nearly twenty-five books. This one, though, contains perhaps the best description of Parker, who "looked like a man who'd made money, but who'd made it without sitting behind a desk."

This book will appeal to any fan of crime fiction who likes his or her books lean, mean and captivating.

Dan Schwent says

Parker leaves Nebraska with a new face and a distinct lack of funds. He gets involved in a scheme to rob an armored car but there are complications. The plastic surgeon who operated on Parker winds up dead and people think Parker pulled the trigger. The armored car scheme is dodgy at best and one of the partners is planning a double cross. Can Parker figure out who the trigger man was and clear his name, pull off the armored car robbery, and avoid the double cross?

Westlake does it again. Parker is less a human being than an unstoppable force of nature. Stark's writing is as powerful as in the first book and the heist is well-planned and logical. Parker is as merciless as ever. Even

though he's a killer, I was glad he came out of the double cross the way he did. The ending dovetails nicely into the next book, where I'm assuming Parker will settle things with the mob.

So why not five stars? The whole subplot with Stubbs going to New York to find Wells dragged a little. Other than that, it was a great example of what crime fiction should be. I'm eagerly watching my mailbox in anticipation of the next volume, *The Outfit*.

Kwoomac says

[Even after he cuts off som

David Schaafsma says

The second in the Parker series from Richard Stark, a pseudonym for Donald Westlake. In the first, *The Hunter*, Parker makes *The Outfit* mad, thus creating the condition for the title. He gets plastic surgery to make a “getaway face” though a few people actually realize this new guy is actually Parker, including one principal one, a guy named Stubbs whom Parker keeps in a cellar until a job is done. Why not just kill him?

“It was dangerous to kill when there wasn't enough reason, because after a while killing became the solution to everything, and when you got to thinking that way you were only one step from the chair.”

Though we see him kill plenty in book one, here we go, a killer with principles.

In the first half of the book, Parker is broke and so pulls off an armored car heist (that aforementioned job) with several dopes, including a woman named Alma.

“It sounds like a good set-up. The way you talked about it, it sounds fine. But there's this Alma. There's always an Alma. Every damn time. Why can't we put together a job without an Alma in it?”

While some of the dopes create a kind of comic relief or foil for the tough guy Parker, this is not a funny story; it is almost elegant in its clean, straightforward style. A heist, nothing special, but it's a kind of model of storytelling efficiency.

Just to show he knows how to complicate his storytelling, the second half of the book features Starks depicting Stubbs getting loose to let *The Outfit* know Parker has a new identity, with Parker following him. This tale is told first from Stubbs's angle, then Parker's. Sure, people die! This is a Parker novel, what do you expect?

Stark in his style is as methodical as Parker, in a way, lean and mean and straightforward, straight, no chaser.

This trail to the mob I know is a set up for the third book, *The Outfit*, which makes it a bit of a trilogy to kick off the series. I would rate this 3.5, expecting even more from the next book. Awhile ago, I read Darwyn Cooke's cool sixties-style condensed comics adaptation of this tale, featured in a 24-page first chapter of *The Outfit*, since the second half of the book is essentially the prelude to that book.

Lynn says

Stark's writing style is as methodical as a police procedural, but this crime novel is a sharp and thrilling read. I was anticipating a lot of violence after the first book, but the reporterly writing deemphasizes it. It happens of course, but it's dispassionate and understated. I'm going to burn through this series in a flash.....and I just discovered my local library has graphic novel renditions of Parker 1 and 3. I feel like I've got treasure waiting for me at the library.

Greg says

I don't have much for this one.

The story was a lot stronger than for the first Parker novel. In a lot of ways this might be the best of the Parker novels I've read so far, as a coherent story it surpasses *The Outfit*, which I gave an extra star for being more over the top and appealing to imaginary bad-ass that I would probably want to be if I had no morals or inhibitions or whatever you want to call it.

This story involves Parker getting a plastic surgery to hide from the Mob, robbing an armored car and the set up for the big confrontation he has with the Mob in the next novel.

The formula to the Parker novels is pretty straight forward, and I don't know how they are going to keep reading, like if I'll get bored with them or whatnot as I read through the first 18 or so, but after reading the last two I'm thinking they are the literary equivalent of The Ramones, they are simple and straight forward and at least when Dee Dee is writing the songs and he isn't too whacked out on smack and his own delusions they are borderline fun genius. And really the beauty of the early Ramones songs isn't apparent though until you listen to the post-Dee Dee songs and you realize how Johnny and Joey can't write a decent song even using the basic structures from the early songs. And then you hear Ramones knock off bands you hear how eh they sound and you realize that there is something almost magical but simple that just works and how it seems like it should be easy to duplicate but apparently it isn't.

But next, *The Mourner*, and hopefully my Ramones analogy won't be too literal, because that would mean *The Outfit* was *Rocket to Russia* and it's all downhill from here.

Jim says

My edition was a download from the library produced by Audio Go, read by John Chancer, an edition not listed on GR. It's about 300 minutes long & was worth every minute.

I kept waiting to get the first in this series, but it keeps being checked out, so I finally just listened to this one. I do know sort of what happened in the first one because of the 2 movies based on the first book. I hear the 2d, Payback with Mel Gibson, wasn't great, but I liked it.

Anyway, I had no problem fitting right into Parker's world & following his thinking. He's a perfectly self-

centered SOB, no doubt about it, but I liked him. While he can be ruthless, he's also smart & doesn't look for trouble if he can avoid it. Considering the company he keeps, that's not possible, so he makes the best of things & if that means shooting a person or two, he does it without any frills or sadism, just gets the job done as if he's killing a rodent. Very cool.

I can't wait to listen to the next, The Outfit. I'm refurbishing a bunch of wood planes - tedious, exacting hand work - & these books help make it a pleasure.

Brandon says

After his dust-up with the syndicate, Parker heads to Nebraska to see a doctor about a new face. After his features are flip-flopped, Parker heads north and falls in with a few felons planning an armoured truck robbery. Being a perfectionist, Parker doesn't like the plan and after making a few adjustments, he comes to suspect one of the players isn't on the level.

On top of all this, the doctor who played Mr. Potato Head with Parker's mug winds up taking a dirt nap and Parker is the prime suspect. Will the robbery succeed? Will Parker prove his innocence in the doc's death? Will Parker punch someone in the kidney? Probably.

Westlake's (Richard Stark is a pseudonym for Donald Westlake) Parker is such a well-written character; his methods are straightforward and brutal – simply put, Parker doesn't have time for your nonsense. He's been living a life of crime long enough that he can smell a rat from a mile away, so when a scheme seems fishy, Parker doesn't sweat it, he simply comes up with his own game plan.

My only complaint is in regards to the amount of time Westlake's devoted to hashing and rehashing the plan. It felt at times like I was reading blueprints rather than a story. Would the story still have worked without such detail? Hard to say. However, Westlake could have moved it along a little faster.

Two down, twenty two to go!

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