

# Stone Cold (A Jesse Stone Novel)

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Tony and Brianna Lincoln just moved into Paradise, but friendly they aren't. In fact, these urbane thrill killers are knocking off the neighbors one by one, and Jesse Stone is next. Robert B. Parker was the author of more than fifty books. He died in January 2010.<sup>1</sup> After the murder, they made love in front of a video camera. When it was over, her mouth was bruised. He had long scratches across his back. They lay side by side on their backs, gasping for breath.

"Jesus!" he said, his voice hoarse.

"Yes," she whispered.

She moved into the compass of his left arm and rested her head against his chest. They lay silently for a while, not moving, waiting for oxygen.

"I love you," he said.

"I love you too," she said.

He put his face down against the top of her head where it lay on his chest. Her hair smelled of verbena. In time their breathing settled.

"Let's play the video," she whispered.

"Let's," he said.

The camera stood beside the bed on a tripod. He got up, took the tape from it, put it in the VCR, got back into bed, and picked up the remote from the night table. She moved back into the circle of his arm, her head back on his chest.

"Show time," he said, and clicked the remote.

They watched.

"My God," she said. "Look at me."

"I love how you're looking right into the camera," he said.

They watched quietly for a little while.

"Whoa," she said. "What are you doing to me there?"

"Nothing you don't like," he said.

When the tape was over he rewound it.

"You want to watch again?" he said.

She was drawing tiny circles on his chest with her left forefinger.

"Yes."

He started the tape again.

"You know what I loved," she said. "I loved the range of expression on his face."

"Yes," he said, "that was great. First it's like, what the hell is this?"

"And then like, are you serious?"

"And then, omigod!"

"That's the best," she said. "The way he looked when he knew we were going to kill him. I've never seen a look like that."

"Yes," he said. "That was pretty good."

"I wish we could have made it last longer," she said.

He shrugged.

"My bad," she said. "I got so excited. I shot too soon."

"I've been known to do that," he said.

"Well, aren't you Mr. Dirty Mouth," she said.

They both laughed.

"We'll get better at it," he said.

She was now rubbing the slow circles on his chest with her full palm, looking at the videotape.

"Ohhh," she said. "Look at me! Look at me!"

He laughed softly. She moved her hand down his stomach.

"What's happening here?" she said.

He laughed again.

"Ohh," she said. "Good news."

She turned her body hard against him and put her face up.

"Be careful," she murmured. "My mouth is sore."

They made love again while the image of their previous lovemaking moved unseen on the television screen, and the sounds of that mingled with the sounds they were making now.

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#### Other Books

Robert B. Parker's *The Hangman's Sonnet*. The stellar new novel in Robert B. Parker's New York Times bestselling series featuring Paradise police chief Jesse Stone. Jesse Stone, still reeling from the murder of his fiancée by crazed assassin Mr. Peepers, must keep his emotions in check long enough to get through the wedding day of his loyal protégé, Suitcase Simpson. The morning of the wedding, Jesse learns that a gala 75th birthday party is to be held for folk singer Terry Jester. Jester, once the equal of Bob Dylan, has spent the last forty years in seclusion after the mysterious disappearance of the master recording tape of his magnum opus, *The Hangman's Sonnet*. That same morning, an elderly Paradise woman dies while her house is being ransacked. What are the thieves looking for? And what's the connection to Terry Jester and the mysterious missing tape? Jesse's investigation is hampered by hostile politicians and a growing trail of blood and bodies, forcing him to solicit the help of mobster Vinnie Morris and a certain Boston area PI named Spenser. While the town fathers pressure him to avoid a PR nightmare, Jesse must connect the cases before the bodies pile up further.

© 2003 Robert B. Parker. The stellar new novel in Robert B. Parker's New York Times bestselling series featuring Paradise police chief Jesse Stone."