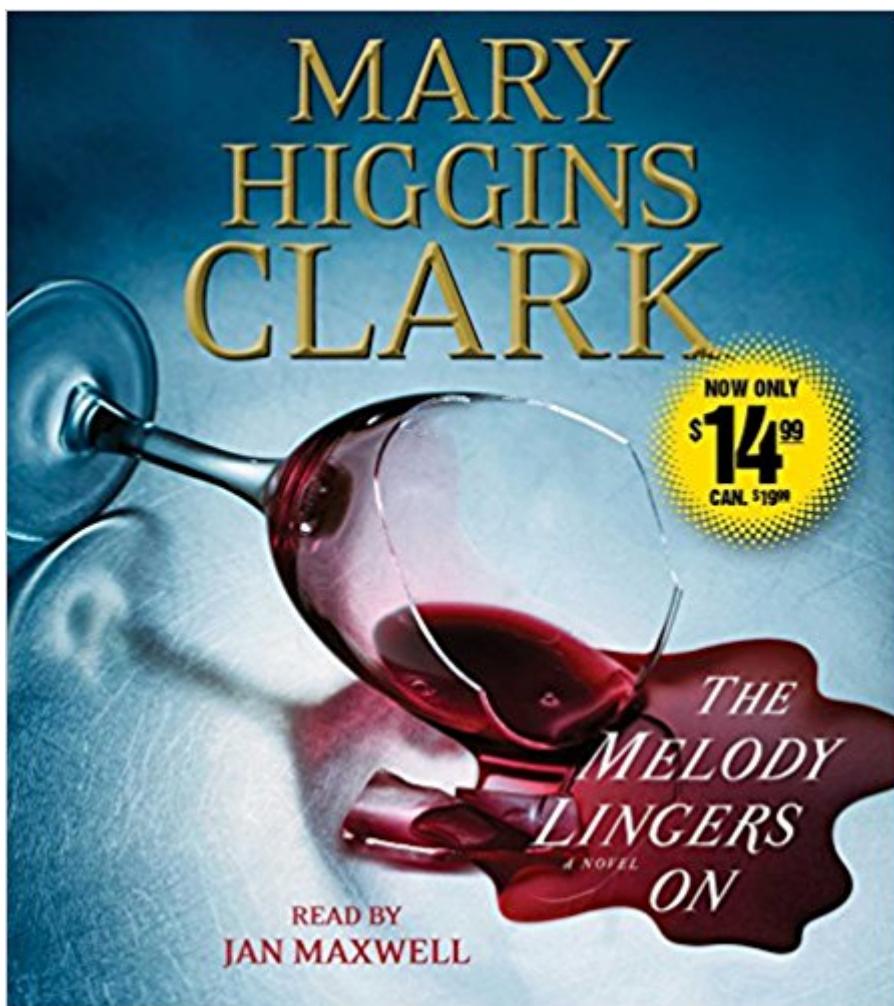


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The Melody Lingers On



Synopsis

A headline-making finance scandal and a breathtaking tale of deception collide in #1 New York Times bestselling author Mary Higgins Clark's finest thriller yet, now from Encore at a great value price point! As the sole assistant to a famous upscale interior designer, Lane Harmon is accustomed to visiting opulent homes. So her latest job at a modest New Jersey townhouse is unusual. Then she learns the home belongs to the wife of disgraced finance magnate Parker Bennett, who vanished two years earlier, along with the five billion dollar hedge fund he managed. The debate over whether Bennett was suicidal or staged his disappearance still continues. Both his clients and the federal government want to trace the money and find him. But Lane is surprisingly moved by Mrs. Bennett's steadfast faith in her husband's innocence. Gradually, Lane is also drawn to the Bennetts' son, Mark, who is equally determined to prove his father is not guilty. What she doesn't realize is the closer she gets to the notorious family, the more her life—and that of her five-year-old daughter—is in jeopardy.

Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Audio; Unabridged edition (April 19, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1442398078

ISBN-13: 978-1442398078

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.6 x 5.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 0.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 1,272 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #103,030 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 in Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > (C) > Clark, Mary Higgins #24 in Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > Unabridged #59 in Books > Books on CD > Mystery & Thrillers

Customer Reviews

"A summer list would be lacking without one from Mary Higgins Clark. Clark keeps readers wondering. Publishers Weekly, whose novels and short stories have entertained her fans for 40 years, proves again that she's a master of plot twists and sympathetic portrayals of strong damsels in serious distress. The Melody Lingers On is no exception, and the octogenarian Clark continues to shine. Richmond Times-Dispatch --This text refers

to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The #1 New York Times bestselling author Mary Higgins Clark has written thirty-seven suspense novels, four collections of short stories, a historical novel, a memoir, and two children's books. With her daughter Carol Higgins Clark, she has coauthored five more suspense novels, and also wrote *The Cinderella Murder*, *All Dressed in White*, *The Sleeping Beauty Killer*, and *Every Breath You Take* with bestselling author Alafair Burke. More than one hundred million copies of her books are in print in the United States alone. Her books are international bestsellers.

A story of an investment banker, Parker Bennett, who deceived his clients; the aftermath for those who were affected; and the mystery of what happened to the supposedly deceased crook, grabbed me from the first page of *The Melody Lingers On*. Lane Harmon is a young interior designer, an assistant to Gladys Harper, famed designer to the rich in Connecticut, Manhattan, and nearby wealthy neighborhoods. A single mom to four-year-old Katie, Lane finds herself unexpectedly drawn to Eric Bennett and his mother Anne, who reside in a downsized condo now being renovated by Lane and Gladys. It is obvious that there is considerable question as to whether or not Parker Bennett is actually dead, and if not, how he pulled it all off. There is also question as to how much, if anything, his wife and son knew of his dealings. Various FBI agents and undercover operatives bring out interesting perspectives. Typically intense, this page turner kept me going, wondering about the answers to what happened, who knew what and when, and what the mysterious music box in Anne's home had to do with anything. Of course I had my own guesses about the characters and events, but the author also offers the reader a peek at what went on before the downfall, and we get to watch the mysterious drama unfold. The fun is in wondering just how far the deception went and how much of his family had been privy to his goings-on, as well as who is in danger and who will save the day. 4 stars.

Parker Bennett has bilked hundreds of hard working, small-time investors out of their life savings to the tune of five billion dollars. His characterization draws a Bernie Madoff parallel in Mary Higgins Clark's thriller, *The Melody Lingers On*. Avoiding prosecution, Bennett has faked his own death. Everyone is convinced of this, including the FBI, Bennett's frail wife, Anne, and his suspicious son, Eric. Yet none of them can prove it. Lane Harmon, a budding interior designer, is the leading character in Clark's fast-paced, well executed mystery. Lane, along with her mentor, is hired to

redecorate Anne Bennett's new apartment, a step down from the stately mansion once inhabited by the swindler's wife. The suspicion surrounding Anne Bennett is minimal; she appears as the naive, unsuspecting wife she has always been. However, much suspicion surrounds her son, Eric. The FBI is hoping to prove the possibility of his collaboration. Lane, a widow by a tragic accident, becomes drawn to Eric. Was he involved in his father's grand embezzlement, or wasn't he? Mary Higgins Clark is at her best, once again enrapturing the reader in a well-conceived and captivating whirlwind. Her characters are genuine and memorable. The story is the type for which she's known best. As usual, a song from a time gone by is remembered in the story. Anne Bennett's music box plays an Irving Berlin tune: "The song has ended, but the melody lingers on..." On the island of St. Thomas, Parker Bennett lives discreetly as George Hawkins. Yet he has to get back to the states. His cash is running low, and his mistress is blackmailing him. Inside his wife's music box is the number to an alternate bank account, one where he has hidden other people's money. Once he arrives back in the US, the fast-paced action explodes to an unexpected conclusion, reminding the reader why Mary Higgins Clark is the Queen of Suspense.

While I recognize that Mary Higgins Clark is a highly successful, best selling author, the three books of hers that I have read remind me of the type of formula writing that was used by the author of Nancy Drew Mysteries when I was a young girl. Ms. Clark loves New York as a setting and loves to show off her knowledge of the premiere addresses in New York by having her characters live at them or visit them, regardless of whether it's likely they could afford to live in such upscale neighborhoods given their station in life. Her heroines (in the books I have read) are always slender, beautiful, educated, with glamorous jobs who have attractive men in high positions pursuing them. In this particular book, the heroine has a mother suffering from Alzheimer's Disease but it is abundantly clear that Ms. Clark did absolutely no research on this disease since the poor woman's treatment consists primarily of being watched carefully at home by a hired companion. She doesn't get any real medical attention until a court orders her to a psychiatric hospital for examination and that seems to be the end of her medical exposure. I would classify the MHC books I have read as "ok airplane books" for someone who just needs to pass the time and does not want to be intellectually challenged by reading. I have read my last one from this author.

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