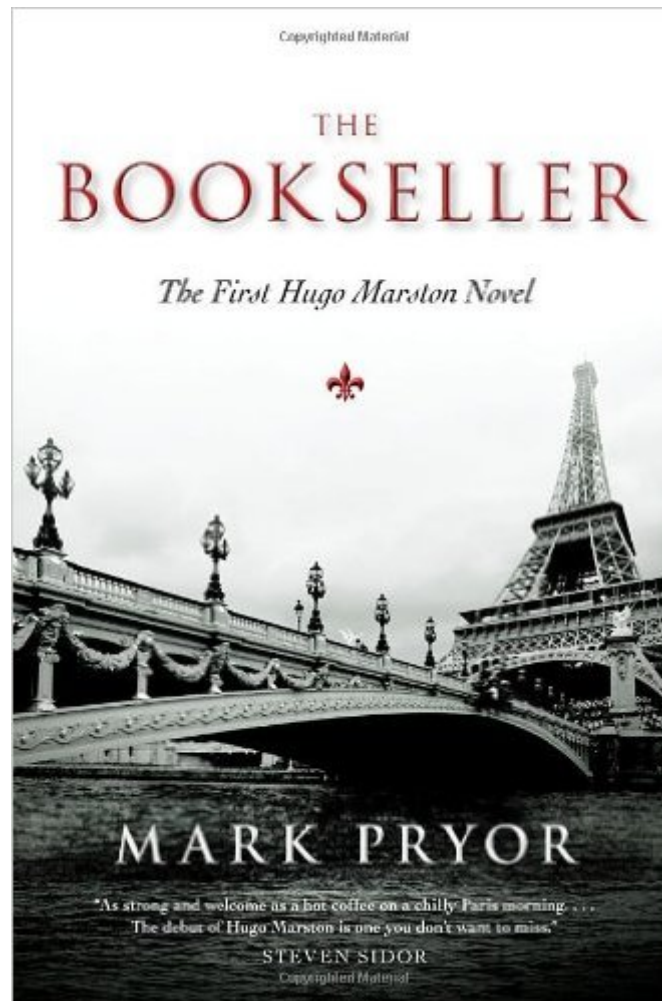


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The Bookseller: The First Hugo Marston Novel



Synopsis

Who is killing the celebrated bouquinistes of Paris? Max "an elderly Paris bookstall owner" is abducted at gunpoint. His friend, Hugo Marston, head of security at the US embassy, looks on helplessly, powerless to do anything to stop the kidnapper. Marston launches a search, enlisting the help of semiretired CIA agent Tom Green. Their investigation reveals that Max was a Holocaust survivor and later became a Nazi hunter. Is his disappearance somehow tied to his grim history, or even to the mysterious old books he sold? On the streets of Paris, tensions are rising as rival drug gangs engage in violent turf wars. Before long, other booksellers start to disappear, their bodies found floating in the Seine. Though the police are not interested in his opinion, Marston is convinced the hostilities have something to do with the murders of these bouquinistes. Then he himself becomes a target of the unknown assassins. With Tom by his side, Marston finally puts the pieces of the puzzle together, connecting the past with the present and leading the two men, quite literally, to the enemy's lair. Just as the killer intended.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've just finished *The Bookseller*, and I was disappointed. After reading reviews I expected a book which "crackles with intelligence, wit, and insider knowledge", "With a cast of characters you want to know better" and with "plenty of red herrings". I failed to identify much intelligence, thought the wit was laboured and found some of the characters - especially Tom - irritating in the extreme. And as

for the red herrings, yes, there were a couple but they hardly changed the course of the book. The details of Paris were quite well done, though spoiled somewhat by the author's admission in the foreword that he had changed names of locations. For me, this read like a screenplay for an episode of yet another "two American buddies fighting crime and injustice" TV series.

Absolutely wonderful depiction of Paris. I felt like I was really there. But the characters were silly, the plot unbelievable and writing style dull. I mean, the incredibly ridiculous hero ends up in bed with a rich Parisian reporter who hasn't had a relationship in years yet meets this American and suddenly flies into bed with him. He's supposedly the head of security at the American Embassy in Paris who is told to stop, investigating an abduction in Paris. But he doesn't. He runs around the city like Rambo and the French don't stop him. It's too silly for words. Don't waste your money. I'm sorry I did.

Add a new thriller to your bookshelves. *The Bookseller* is Mark Pryor's debut novel, and it's a cracker. Hugo Marston is the sort of understated hero you often find in Alan Furst's work, with perhaps a bit more grit given his ranching background in Texas and his work as head of security at the American Embassy in Paris. Hugo is an engaging character, urbane and polished, but also possessing a Texan's independent streak and a dogged determination to solve the mystery of his friend Max's disappearance. There are plenty of red herrings to lead you astray in this very fine and fast-paced debut. Pryor excels at creating memorable characters; even those who make the briefest of appearances are fully realized. I particularly like Tom, the semiretired CIA agent. With his fondness for the bottle and his foul mouth, he makes a great foil for Hugo. Let's see, have I missed anything? Oh, yes. There are Nazi hunters and Nazi collaborators, a sexy reporter who may or may not be playing Hugo, an aristocratic bibliophile, and gunplay. Not enough for you yet? Add some dazzling descriptions of Paris in winter and a peek into the history of the booksellers who inhabit the stalls along the Seine, and you've got an appealing and exciting new thriller to read. I'm already looking forward to Hugo's next adventure and hoping there will be many more.

I've never been to Paris, but I felt as if I were there with US Embassy security agent Hugo Marston, on the bank of the Seine. Hugo is an emotionally wounded man, but he's thrown himself into his work, and treats others with kindness despite his own troubles. When an bookseller he's become fond of is hustled onto a boat, Hugo tries to interest the French police, but they seem unwilling to investigate, and Hugo must take matters into his own very capable hands. What worked: Hugo is

written with just the right mix of warmth, wit and hard-muscled strength. I found the mystery engrossing and wasn't sure until the end just who was guilty and who was innocent. The descriptions of Paris and surroundings transported me there as I read. What didn't work as well: I felt the author relied a little too much on cure-alls like the buddy who is so good with computers he can come up with any fact needed and the secretary who can find and electronically deliver obscure building floor plans in the blink of an eye. Also, Hugo never seemed short of money, and happens into a fortune that doesn't really seem likely. But none of that really bothered me as I was enjoying the book. Hugo Marston reminded me of Robert Parker's Spenser, with his suave wit, quick fists, smarts and descriptions of meals and food. Picture Spenser, with a bit less of the brawl in him, relocated to the gray streets of Paris. Great reading!

About me: I'm a middle school/high school librarian
How I got this book: borrowed it from the public library.

This book is ridiculous. I bought it because my kindle recommended it to me after reading Mr Penumbra's 24 hour bookstore, which is a great book. I am HALFWAY through and the main character is still walking around Paris aimlessly telling random people his friend Max is missing and trying to gather information. NOTHING is happening. Also, every two or three pages he stops at a "picturesque" or "cozy" or "quaint" Parisian cafe/bar to buy a pain au chocolat/croissant/coffee. JEEZUS, whoever told this guy that was good story telling got their advice from children's detective novels. Come to think of that, I'll recommend this to my 15 year old sister. Actually scratch that it'll bore her to death. I'll prob finish it because I paid 8 DOLLARS for it. Or herhaps that's what I get for paying only 8 dllrs for a book. sigh.

We read this book for my book club. To a woman, we all agreed the plot was weak. Just too many holes and unbelievable scenes. What the author did really well was describing Paris and the bouquinistas.

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