



Swann's Last Song

Charles Salzberg

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When a seemingly simple missing person case turns into homicide. Henry Swann finds himself trapped in a complex web of multiple identities that takes him across two continents.

Swann's Last Song Details

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Author : Charles Salzberg

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From Reader Review Swann's Last Song for online ebook

Brett Cottrell says

Equal parts hard-boiled mystery and noir, it's a fun, quick read.

Sherrian says

It was a mediocre book. I think I have read all the books I care to read by this author.

Joe says

Swann's Last Song is a no-frills, very entertaining, and highly readable mystery/spy novel. There is no fat, and the narrative, full of turns and twists and international intrigue, never meanders into self-indulgence. You get seedy hotels, rock and roll excess, Hollywood glitz, Mexican revolution, and with a little Cold War thrown in. Yet the story never feels bogged down or overwhelming. Swann is both a throwback to old school detectives like Marlowe, but he is also an original modern creation, complete with modern-day neurosis. A first-person narrative like this succeeds (or fails) based on the voice. In Swann, Salzberg nails the slightly broken, cynical yet hopeful anti-hero; an everyman we can root for. This is a fast read that reminds you books can be both complex AND fun.

Tricia Zielinski says

Classic mystery series in the making! Preferred the original ending but really enjoyed the option of having both.

Madeline Sharples says

A great fast read. I loved the characters, the dialogue, and the puzzle-solving.

Ann Keller says

Henry Swann is just an ordinary skip tracer in New York, sometimes paid in food stamps; that is, when he is paid at all. Then SHE walked in. Beautiful, poised Sally Janus hired Swann to locate her missing husband. It seemed like a simple enough case, but Harry Janus was involved in something sinister, big enough that someone decided he'd be better off dead.

Tracking down Harry's killer turns out to be a lot more complex than Swann anticipated. A dangerous web

of deception, lies, multiple identities, drugs and antiquities dealing propels Swann to Mexico, where creatures that walk, fly, crawl and slither threaten to do Swann in at every turn. Swann barely escapes with his life and hurries to Berlin, as the noose of danger continues to tighten around his throat.

Thrilling and action packed, Swann's Last Song is an excellent read! SIX STARS, if not a halfpenny more.

Erica Miles says

Oh, my, what a trip! Author Charles Salzberg takes the reader from New York City to Los Angeles, California, to across the border to Mexico to Acapulco and then on a flight to Berlin, Germany--all on a quest to solve the mystery of a missing husband's whereabouts. Salzberg's hero, Detective Henry Swann is an unusual and entertaining character. His most unusual trait, or impulse, as it were, is that he is fond of solving puzzles and putting the pieces together. This personality trait drives him to the limits of exploration and adventure, as he skip traces with the money of a classy New York lady who originally hires him to find her husband and, eventually, to find her missing husband's killer. The descriptions of exotic and mysterious places in this novel are absolutely stunning and the dialogue simply outstanding. And the philosophy behind all of Henry Swann's relentless hunting is truly a beautiful thing to contemplate. This book is more than a detective story. It is not only extremely funny and utterly sad at times, it is also a highly philosophical novel that deserves consideration as a first-rate piece of literature. And not only that. The reader is given the extra treat of a surprise ending. A thoroughly enjoyable trip, indeed!

Erica Miles, Author of *Dazzled by Darkness:
A Story of Art & Desire*

josaleeni says

I'm new to mysteries and this was a great introduction to a classic detective story. Henry Swann is an easy guy to like and long after the plot resolves, he's the one you remember and want to adventure with again.

Ellen says

Swann's Last Song by Charles Salzberg.

Henry Swann is not your ordinary skip tracer aka repo man. He has a conscience and more than that he has the motivation to get to the truth. the motivation-money...or so he thought. Sally Janus is the gorgeous dish who shows up one day at Swann's office. Her husband has been found murdered and she wants to know who killed him. Sally is willing to pay a hefty price for the answer and so Swann's her man. Swann is no ordinary sleuth and this is no ordinary whodunnit case. This case takes Swann around the world and back in trying to connect the dots as to who Harry Janus really was. Then there are the connecting dots to the people involved in Janus's life. Just what was Harry Janus really up to and why?

Swann added all the clues up and came out with an ending no one saw coming. This may have started out as another P.I. from the old school but it was so much more.

Pat says

Not quite as good as Swann Dives In, but still definitely a GOOD "read"! I loved Henry Swann in the previous book because he was a reader who loved books like I do, well in this book another redeeming quality - he loves crossword puzzles. What is not to like about this guy - loves books, crossword puzzles and solves mysteries! This one takes him to CA, Mexico and Germany before he figures it out. Loved Swann Dives In, liked Swann's Last Song which will not be the last Charles Salzberg book for me. In fact, I just downloaded Devil in the Hole for \$3 on Amazon!

Nate Briggs says

Just about every significant and/or superb noir novel of the last 50 years is still in print. So I have no idea why you would turn to this watered-down impersonation of a "private eye" narrative when you have all the "good stuff" readily available.

The narrator — Swann himself — is vague and dim (in more ways than one); the dialogue totally pedestrian; the characters totally derivative; the resolution, when it comes, is less an epiphany than a summation of what any reader might have expected; and, to confirm its total lack of invention, the story drags in escaped Nazis and the black market in stolen art treasures. (We're 70 years from the end of WWII - it seems like maybe we could finally let go of the Third Reich).

Obviously, I'm in the minority in thinking this, but I believe any author coming into an established genre should be bringing something new and startling. Everything in this book is old, threadbare, tired, and hollow — so it was hard to find the determination to finish reading it, and I can't possibly recommend it.

David Nemeth says

Before even picking up Charles Salzberg's *Swann's Last Song* (Down & Out Books), it was going to be a tough battle in that I have an outrageously high bar for PI books. This is mostly due to the work that Stephen J. Cannell, Roy Huggins, Meta Rosenberg, and James Garner did on the creation of Jim Rockford and then further cemented by my readings of Dashiell Hammett's *Red Harvest* and Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*.

Salzberg's protagonist Henry Swann is more of a repo man rather than a skip chaser and he definitely doesn't think of himself as a private investigator. Swann gets a job to track down a rich woman's husband, the catch is that she doesn't know much about him — they have two separate residences in New York City and the last she saw him was nine days ago. Like any PI, Swann takes the case because of money.

I was beginning to think I might be out of my element here and, for a split second, I contemplated folding up my notebook and calling it a day. But then I took a look at the enormous ring on her finger and thought about the lottery-sized payday I might wring out of her and my greedy little heart skipped a beat.

Influenced by the hard-boiled detectives of yesterday, *Swann's Last Song* is a fun read: the drinking is frequent, the women are fast, the criminals are bad, and the job is kind of boring.

A few days later, I found myself in a very familiar position: leaning against the side of an Upper East Side apartment building, a prop newspaper in my hands. I was on the job.

Swann chases the phantom husband and as he digs into his past, the mystery builds in some unexpected ways. Though it didn't hit my ridiculously high standards for a PI story, Salzberg's novel made me want to read more in this series.

Charles Salzberg says

Okay, it's my book. But if I didn't think it was pretty good, I wouldn't have read it. Hope you do, too.

Pat says

In the tradition of the great detective crime fiction writers, Hammett, Chandler, MacDonald, et al, an under-achieving private detective in New York meets a 'dame' and is sent on a convoluted trail of mayhem to find the killer of her husband. From New York to LA, to Mexico and Germany, dodging dangers left and right, he doggedly follows clues morphing in both time and space. The reader is presented with 2 'solutions' to the crime and left to choose the most satisfying one. Great fun!
