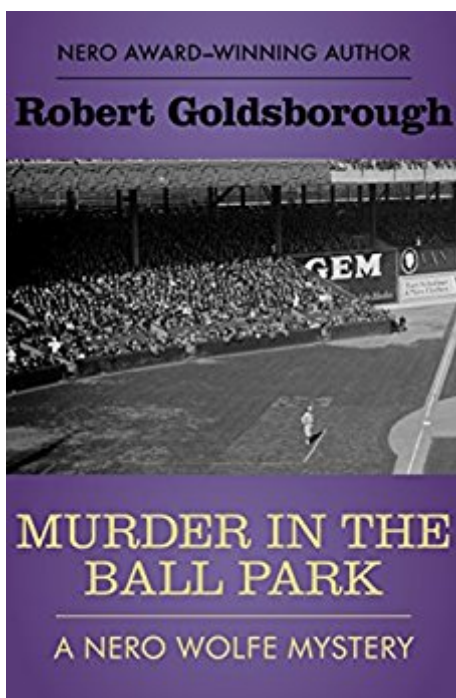


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Murder In The Ball Park (The Nero Wolfe Mysteries Book 9)



Synopsis

Wolfe earns a big league call-up after a senator gets taken out at the ball game Archie Goodwin and Saul Panzer have ventured into the wilds of northern Manhattan to watch the Giants take on the Dodgers at the Polo Grounds. The national anthem is just winding down when Panzer spies a notable in the box seats: state senator Orson Milbank, a silver-haired scoundrel with enemies in every corner of upstate New York. In the fourth inning, a monstrous line drive brings every fan in the grandstand to his feet "every fan save for one silver-haired senator, who has been shot dead by a sniper in the upper deck. Archie's employer "the rotund genius Nero Wolfe" has no interest in investigating the stadium slaying, but Archie is swayed by the senator's suspiciously lovely widow. Her husband was mired hip-deep in corruption, and sorting out who killed him will be a task far less pleasant than an afternoon at the ball park.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I received this last night (Mon 1/27) and have read about 60% of it. It's really nice to have a new Nero and Archie story even if there are a few minor flaws - for example some of the dialogue

doesn't quite ring true So far the plot is not much to write home about but even some of the cannon had that problem. I will add to this when I finish it - probably in a day or 2. So far I would recommend this for Wolfe or Archie fans and all mystery lovers - rating so far is a 3.75 to 4.25 out of 5 stars. *****2/4/14 I finished this last Thursday (1/30/14) - the dialogue improved the last 50% or so of the book. So I would now rate the first 50% a 3.75 and the last 50% a 4.25 making this a very solid 4.0 stars out of 5 stars. I did find the part where Saul Panzer saves Archie's butt from the 2 thugs a little odd - Archie always prides himself on being difficult to be surprised and it was a little hard to take that he was this time - but otherwise the last half was better than the first half. I still recommend this to Nero or Archie fans or any mystery lovers.

If you miss Nero Wolfe and are looking for some new adventures, the Goldsborough series will probably meet that need. The recent entries are set at an unspecified time in the past--apparently the early 1950s, presumably occurring between published cases by Wolfe creator Rex Stout--so that cranks up the nostalgia factor a bit. Goldsborough's first few--originally published in the late 1980s--took place in the then-present, as sequels to the Stout stories. But there's nothing special about this story, plot or the supporting characters offered up here. (And a state senator back in the fifties having the sort of staff described here, seems a little anachronistic.) At best, this is an adequate, but formulaic Nero Wolfe tale; at worst a forgettable one.

The rating is really 3.5, but I definitely don't intend this as a "bad thing". It's well worth reading if you're a fan of Nero Wolfe. I began reading Wolfe in the 60s when I was a teenager. I loved the books and did everything I could to obtain all the stories, whether novels or shorter stories. (I have one from the Elery Queen Mystery Magazine.) I was disheartened when Stout died in 1975, so I was both glad, but a little hesitant, when in 1986, a new Wolfe book appeared by Robert Goldsborough. Glad, of course, because I missed Wolfe and Archie, but hesitant because I wasn't sure this author could pull it off. Rex Stout, after all, was Rex Stout, maybe not a literary genius, but an excellent creator of a world of mystery. But the subsequent Goldsborough books have been good. And so is this one. The ending, which I won't spoil, was weak in my opinion. But it wasn't terrible. It did naturally follow from the facts presented, so it was credible even if not exciting. The dialog wasn't always the greatest (it made me wince in a few places), but it still sounded more or less like Archie's voice. And that's why I read the Wolfe books, again and again, because I really like listening to Archie's voice. The bottom line is, if you like Wolfe and Archie, you'll get to spend some time with them again and that's what matters most.

As a longtime Wolfe admirer, any new book is a must read for me. This attempt is rich in its descriptions of the time period and the familiar lifestyles of the regular cast of characters, and for that it earns its 3 stars. The plot, however is lacking...the evidence revealed in the end is hardly conclusive beyond a reasonable doubt, and having the suspect confess while in later police custody seems to be a stretch. At the great guilt announcement, I key waiting for more evidence. As far as the actual story, I haven't gone back and counted, but it seems Archie and Lon Cohen had the conversation concerning Lon getting the scoop too often. Something like Archie saying "Lon, can you get this for us"? and Lon responding that "Wolfe owes me the story" and Archie reminding him that Wolfe has always gotten the scoop. Just wishing the author had a little better mystery to solve, and didn't repeat himself too often.

I loved the Nero Wolfe mysteries set back in the day. Robert Goldsborough has continued and updated the detective after Rex Stout passed away. I still enjoy the stories and feel he has done a good job.

Pretty poor overall. I thought I'd give the Goldsborough books a try as I'm a big Nero Wolfe fan. Maybe some of the others are better, but this one wasn't very good. None of the regular characters from Saul to Cramer to Wolfe had much resemblance to the Rex Stout versions - they were like cardboard characters - Saul tailing Archie? Archie getting beat up by two punk gangsters? The plot was very thin, the dialog in several sections was grade school level, very embarrassing. I agree with the other reviewer about the several pages where the woman running for office had the town meeting and the cheerleaders paraded through with signs - what was that about? Inserted in the wrong book? The conversations between Lily and Archie were awful - "do you want to neck?" Cringeworthy. The worst line in the book - "...she said with a toss of her blonde mane." Maybe Archie should have taken the woman to the zoo to toss manes with the lions?

I was delighted to see another addition to RG's Nero Wolfe mysteries. It had many of the elements that I enjoyed from the original series: Archie being flippant and facile, Wolfe opaque and mysterious until the denouement and Cramer who is far more subdued. The meals sound delicious and my vocabulary improved by a couple words. The criticism of the ending being too simple with the police securing a confession is fatuous. It was the 1950s and Miranda hadn't arrived yet. Rex Stout never sewed his cases up tightly either. As far as Saul rescuing Archie and Lon Cohen having

assignments from Wolf and Archie, there has to be some give in the formula. I am just pleased to see Archie and Nero and their associates in a new story. Thank you Robert Goldsborough. Five stars for your successful effort to continue a favorite author.

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