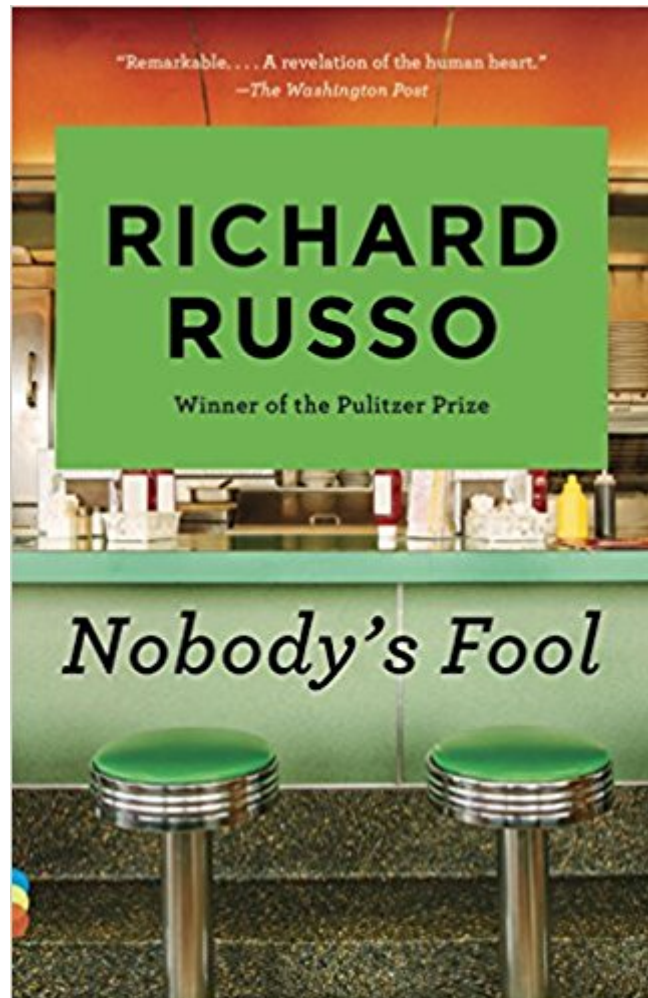




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Nobody's Fool



Synopsis

This slyly funny, moving novel about a blue-collar town in upstate New York—•and in the life of Sully, of one of its unluckiest citizens, who has been doing the wrong thing triumphantly for fifty years—is a classic American story. Divorced from his own wife and carrying on halfheartedly with another man's, saddled with a bum knee and friends who make enemies redundant, Sully now has one new problem to cope with: a long-estranged son who is in imminent danger of following in his father's footsteps. With its uproarious humor and a heart that embraces humanity's follies as well as its triumphs, *Nobody's Fool*, from Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Richard Russo, is storytelling at its most generous. *Nobody's Fool* was made into a movie starring Paul Newman, Bruce Willis, Jessica Tandy, and Melody Griffith.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Set in the economically desperate ex-resort town of North Bath, N.Y., Russo's novel displays his characteristic verbal panache and biting wit. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Sixty-year-old Sully is "nobody's fool," except maybe his own. Out of work (undeclared-income work is what he does, when he can), down to his last few bucks, hampered by an arthritic broken knee, Sully is worried that he's started on a run of bad luck. And he has. The banker son of his octogenarian landlady wants him evicted; Sully's estranged son comes home for Thanksgiving only to have his wife split; Sully's own high-strung ex-wife seems headed for a nervous breakdown; and his longtime lover is blaming him for her daughter's winding up in the hospital with a busted jaw. But

Sully's biggest problem is the memory of his own abusive father, a ghost who haunts his every day. As he demonstrated in *Mohawk* (Random, 1986) and *The Risk Pool* (Random, 1989), Russo knows the small towns of upstate New York and the people who inhabit them; he writes with humor and compassion. A delight. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 2/1/93.- Charles Michaud, Turner Free Lib., Randolph, Mass. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I love Richard Russo and I have read everything he has ever written - except this. Why I put this off I don't know. When my book club picked this I was only too happy to finally give it a go. I am happy to say that it may be my favorite one of all, comparable to *Empire Falls*. Brief summary and review, no spoilers: This story takes place in upstate New York in the small village of North Bath. The place has become one of those small towns where commerce has passed it by and the town is hoping to get an amusement park built nearby in order to bring people back. Donald "Sully" Sullivan is the main character in this novel and he is 60 years old and is the upstairs tenant of his 8th grade teacher, Mrs. Beryl. Her son, often referred to as "the Bank", is jealous of Sully and is one of those trying to get the amusement park built. Sully is about as down and out on luck as is the town, but he gets by his wits and by hard work. He works doing construction work for a philandering boss named Carl who is married to the town beauty. Sully's best friend (or at least the man who hangs around him the most) is the simple-minded yet sweet character nicknamed Rub. Things start to change when Sully becomes involved with his son Peter and his grandson Will who have returned to North Bath and when Sully starts to have more and more problems with his ailing knee. What happens to Sully and his friends and family? What characters will end up staying with each other? Will the amusement park happen? And as with any Russo novel, we have an assorted group of eccentric and wonderful characters who provide us with banter and humor mixed in with some truly poignant and memorable moments. We also learn about each character's past, and in particular about Sully's abusive father, and how that affected Sully and made him the person he is today. I flat out loved this book. It was made into a movie in the early 1990's with Paul Newman as Sully and it was wonderful picturing him in the role as I read the book. Highly recommended. The sequel *Everybody's Fool* was just released recently and I plan on reading that soon.

I love a writer who sets a scene so well you can hear the bacon frying, smell the mud on Sully's boots, and hear the branches creak outside Miss Beryl's window. The characters use real conversational language. These are not people I would likely be friends with but I felt like I was

eavesdropping on their sordid, messy, complex, boring lives. All that time perched on a barstool, making fun of each other, oblivious to their poor choices and wondering aloud why life isn't better makes for an incredulous journey with these "characters". There wasn't much of a story per se ... just a voyeuristic look at a train wreck of men destined to find no joy in life. Sounds depressing? It was. But also funny and captivating. Like I said, a great writer!! Take a chance on this one.

This was the first time that I have read Richard Russo. What a pleasant surprise! The character development was AMAZING and extremely entertaining. Throughout this book I felt like I was a long time member of the Bath community. Richard expressed much truth about poor decisions, aging, life in a small town and human nature. I have only one complaint (that is also a praise)... from the first few pages, Richard built a tension and expectation that 'something' was going to happen. I was glued to this book, so excited to read what was going to 'happen'. Yet the ending, though poignant, kind of felt like the last 4th of July bottle rocket that kind of fizzles but to finally skyrocket into the night sky.

Well developed characters, but the plot is almost nonexistent, and the pace drags. Russo is a good writer, but sometimes the character Sully became a little too darling in his witty replies. A lot of repetition in the actions of these characters. I kept waiting for something to happen.

It was good enough to finish, but I would probably not start it again. The characters were quirky and interesting and I could see how some people might really enjoy it. Maybe the "small town, upstate NY in decline" thing was too close to my roots for me.

We read and read, don't we? The good and the bad. We read favorites, good or bad, lol. Then you read some one like Richard Russo . It all become apparent why we read. Russo is one of the finest out there. NOBODY FOOL is another classic. Such prose. In this one we meet the folks of North Bath, NY. What a crew ! And what a guy Sully is. Read this one folks. Heck read Russo. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Excellent book. I usually go to the suspense and crime novels for their fast pace, but this book grabbed and kept all of my attention. Well developed characters, whose foibles I would repeatedly think to myself "yes, that fool is me". I actually laughed out loud, and love when that happens. So I purchased "Anybody's Fool" and picked up the story ten years later. Again, loved it. Now I await two

more of his novels and hope they are equally rewarding.

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