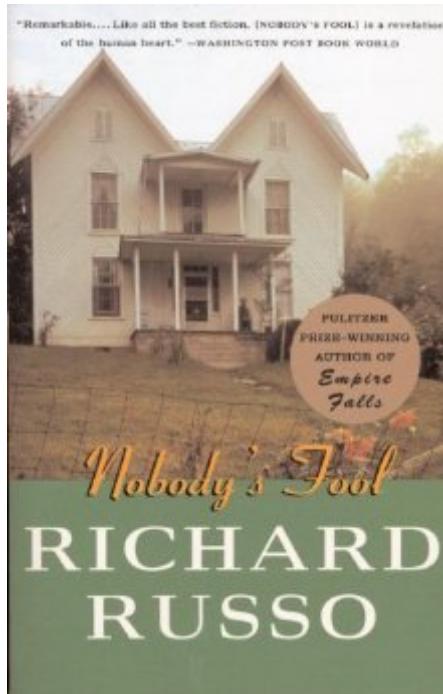


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Nobody's Fool (Vintage Contemporaries)



Synopsis

Richard Russo's slyly funny and moving novel follows the unexpected operation of grace in a deadbeat town in upstate New Yorkâ "and in the life of one of its unluckiest citizens, Sully, who has been doing the wrong thing triumphantly for fifty years. 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 sly and uproarious humor and a heart that embraces humanity's follies as well as its triumphs, Nobody's Fool is storytelling at its most generous.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This a wonderful book. It will have you smiling, laughing, and concerned with the lives and events of a place that might otherwise be seen as of little worth. Anyone who has driven through the secondary roads of Northern New York will recognize the book's breathtaking authenticity. This is the land of rusting cars sitting on blocks in front yards, old farm houses slumped over and left unpainted for decades, and ugly roadside beer joints with neon window signs. The town at the center of the story is a place, once somewhat grand, now for years in serious decline. Charm can be

spotted in the decayed gingerbread woodwork of century-old houses whose residents are too poor or old to keep them up. Some huge old trees give parts of the main street a disguise of faded elegance. The town might be taken as a metaphor for the main character, Sully, who is slowly rotting into the same fabric of decay. Sully is charming, offensive, funny, and pathetic in turns. He is both biting observer of the town's slide into oblivion and full participant. Sully is a complex human being, and surely one of the most memorable characters in modern American literature. He is actually one of a number of attempts by Richard Russo to come to terms with the man who was his extraordinary father. Most of these attempts have not been as appealing or successful as *Nobody's Fool*, the only exception being *The Risk Pool*, another fine book, where his central character is a boy thrown by circumstances into the bizarre, chaotic life of his father, a much rawer character than Sully. Russo has the gift to hold a place up to laughter while yet never separating himself from what he is having us laugh at. It is that quality that gives grace to a story that could fall into brutal sarcasm.

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