



Plot it Yourself

Rex Stout

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The heavyweight champion of detective genius is confronted by a bloody series of brilliant murders and an uncatchable killer who terrorizes New York's literary world.

Plot it Yourself Details

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Author : Rex Stout

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From Reader Review Plot it Yourself for online ebook

Richard Schwindt says

Plot it Yourself features Rex Stout writing at the top of his game. He knew the publishing world and he knew authors; moreover he knew how to put together a taut and atmospheric mystery. One of the many things that makes Stout's books so great is his ability to draw minor characters to compete with the oversized Wolfe and Archie. When I return to the novels I am continually struck by his gifts in this regard; ostensibly based on Archie's powers of observation. Watch the pathetic gallery of small time writers caught up in the plagiarism scam; their fear, avarice and resentment. Sharply rendered scenes and snappy dialogue lurk in every Wolfe novel; they are timeless and will always be worth your attention.

Haley McDaniel says

I enjoyed this thought provoking book! Nice twist at the end.

Vicki Cline says

Wolfe is approached by a committee of authors and publishers to find out who is behind the string of spurious claims of plagiarism. It gets serious fast when some of the people who claimed to have been plagiarized turn up murdered. Of course, by the end the murderer has been uncovered. This book contains one of the rare instances when Wolfe leaves the house on business.

Markku says

A little spoiler - Wolfe denies himself beer for several days. That alone is a sufficient reason to read this story.

Caroline says

Some light reading after a couple of tomes. Not Stout's best--Wolfe commits an egregious oversight that a dedicated Wolfite just can't credit. Archie doesn't turn Rowcliff inside out. And the byplay among the regulars doesn't measure up. But mediocre Stout is still an enjoyable couple of hours.

Since it's about the publishing world, one supposes an insider could identify at least some of the characters.

Chris Rogers says

Very clever! A writer's mystery, to be sure. The ending definitely was a surprise. Stout is an excellent writer to read to learn how to craft characters.

Desmond says

As one of the later of Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe novels *Plot It Yourself* has been said by some to not be one of the best, however I think it stands up alongside *Some Buried Caesar*, *The Doorbell Rang*, and *Death of a Doxy*. There is some fine prose as to be expected by Stout and all the desirable cast is present including Sal Panzer, Orrie Cather, Fred Durkin, and even Theodolinda "Dol" Bonner (the female detective who appears occasionally in the Wolfe stories and once in her own novel *The Hand in the Glove*).

In this outing Wolfe is hired by a committee of writers and publishers to deal with a string of plagiarism suits. In customary fashion Nero proves himself the smartest person in the room to such a degree the culprit is moved to escalate their crimes to murder to forestall his investigation. Archie gets some good lines, but less interaction with women, and there's a good scene with Inspector Cramer of Homicide who has a rare opportunity to get a dig in at Wolfe.

As always Stout plays fair with the reader and the solution is in plain sight for the astute. This has always been one of my favorite parts of Stout's Wolfe novels. Much like Ellery Queen it's up to the reader how much they want to have a go at solving the mystery while it remains equally as enjoyable just to go along for the ride. The reveal of the culprit and final scene is among Stout's best.

I readily recommend the works of Stout to anyone within earshot and this one is no exception. *Plot It Yourself* is a worthy addition to the series that can be read and re-read by fans of mystery or just plain old good writing.

Peggy says

I listened to this audiobook. I love Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe books. Wolfe is a sixth of ton, a genius private eye who lives and works in a stylish brownstone in New York. He (almost) never leaves home. Archie Goodwin is his right hand man, and legs if needed. In this book a group of authors and publishers come to Wolfe to hire him to find out who is perpetrating a plagiarism fraud on them. There have been claims that the plots and characters in published books have been stolen from the real authors. As Wolfe looks into the claims he concludes the separate manuscripts have been written by the same person while the complaints were filed by several different people against different writers. While trying to find this person, one by one the authors who filed the claims are being murdered. The perplexing case keeps you guessing until the end. Classic Nero Wolfe.

Jennifer Stevenson says

This is one of my favorite Nero Wolfe books. The food in it is only so-so, but the story, where (SPOILER ALERT) an author is the villain, and everyone in it is an author or a publisher, and all the clues are literary, is irresistible to me. Wolfe pulls a mutiny early on, then he gets over it. The killer keeps staying ahead of him to the point where he's roaring.

I always say a good series is not about whodunit but about the relationships of the main continuing characters. The question in these books is, What is Wolfe eating? How is he getting on Archie's last nerve? How is Archie going to get him back, and who will have the last word? The relationships between these two and Fritz the cook and Theodore the orchid guy stir the pot. I don't think you can call the Wolfe/Goodwin duo "slash" but (ew, I just had a visual on that, need mental floss stat!) BUT their "marriage" is pretty wonderful. If I look at them as a loose, asexual menage of four rigidly homosocial men--meaning not gay at all, but preferring the company of other men--it works, and I can overlook Archie's exuberant male chauvinism.

I definitely give it a five.

Paolo Nardi says

<http://speloncalibro.blogspot.it/2007...>

Bill Kerwin says

Nero Wolfe is hired to get to the bottom of a suspicious series of plagiarism suits in which established authors are being framed and successfully sued because of the "evidence" of planted plagiarized manuscripts. Wolfe determines all these manuscripts are the work of one person, and soon the bodies (of the supposed original authors of those manuscripts) start piling up..

This novel is notable for its treatment of the interdependent yet hostile relationship between author and publisher, something a veteran novelist like Stout would know something about. The first third of this novel is as absorbing and ingenious as any Wolfe I've read, but the development and denouement don't quite measure up to the beginning.

Still, it is thoroughly entertaining.

Ruth says

Oh Rex, why couldn't you have written 100 more?

In this volume plagiarism plagues the NY literary industry in the 1950s, and Nero leaves the brownstone, if only briefly. For a man who never leaves his home, I seem to gravitate to every book in which he does.

Cindy says

A little boring in places but I did learn a lot about copy wright.

Alger says

Not an actual mystery, more of a premise that Stout had for the perfect crime. To demonstrate this the bulk of the novel is a chronicle of frustration, with bodies piling up and no way forward in the case. Up to the point of resolution these frustrations reveal new sides to the business relationship of Archie and Nero, with Archie being the one who is creative, making decisions, and recognizing when some path is a dead end, while Nero only emerges from the background at the point when he pinpoints the murderer and holds one of his trademark inquests where everything is revealed.

There is a greater than usual amount of smoke and mirrors in the conclusion, much of it to inform us of the incredible deviousness of the system of plagiarism accusations and the cover-up that followed. Unfortunately this is only a distraction from the extreme thinness of the resolution. This is another of the Stout novels that is richer in inspiration and the telling than in the conclusion. In that regard it is a typical Wolfe novel, and should not be faulted for that. Where I am disappointed is that the characters are less developed and less motivated in their actions than usual, especially the female characters who are often simply measured by Archie's willingness to admire their physical aspects and how he reacts to them accordingly. So, because the book relies so much more on Archie's initiative makes this a below average effort.

Highlandtown says

A treat to read Wolfe's take on writing styles. A rare case where Wolfe leaves the house.

Evgeny says

Welcome to the big mess that is modern intellectual property laws. Do not believe me? Take a look at the following as an example:

These laws were not any easier to understand almost 60 years ago when this book was first published. A group of publishers and authors came to Nero Wolfe for a consultation. Somebody devised a good blackmailing scheme involving bestselling books. Basically as soon as a book reaches bestselling status a person - different every time - comes out and claims he/she submitted the book for publication before the published book was written, but it was rejected and the manuscript was never returned. The said manuscript suddenly and unsuspectingly appears in publication group's archives. An invitation to court follows with the charge of plagiarism.

It took me awhile to explain the clever but illegal money making scheme, but it is actually quite simple. The investigation however was nothing but. It involved quite a few dead bodies, plot twists and one of the most complicated mysteries of the series. Both detectives also managed to get an egg on their faces and thus it became personal for them especially Nero Wolfe who has a very high self-esteem.

So in conclusion in addition to the usual great interaction between the characters this novel also has a very complicated mystery which I mentioned above as an additional bonus.

E.M. Lynley says

Another Nero Wolfe story set in the world of publishing, this one revolving around plagiarism. As a writer, it's a topic close to my heart, and the story takes an interesting perspective on the issue, because it's a form of reverse plagiarism. A set of authors are accused of plagiarism and sued, to end up settling the cases for large sums of money. In fact, it's all a scam and the accusers are all in on a conspiracy.

As a mystery this one falls short of Stout's best efforts. The culprit is fairly easy to determine and there are really no characters I ended up liking (except Archie and the rest of Wolfe's household). The analysis of the writing styles that help Wolfe solve the mystery is fascinating for its attention to writing style, word choice, etc., but the motivation and explanations seemed weaker than usual.

Again, it's Michael Pritchard's performance as Archie that saves the story. I'd give it 3 stars if I read it rather than listened to it.

Marie says

This was another good Nero Wolfe mystery. A pivotal moment in the plot was when Archie Goodwin commented about how he was stymied when Nero Wolfe finally figured out who was the culprit, based on a clue given by one of the other suspects. As stated in other reviews, Archie was basically talking to the reader while making this comment. Read it. You'll enjoy it.

Usfromdk says

Quite a few of the Nero Wolfe mysteries are not really 'solvable' in the same way e.g. Agatha Christie's mysteries are, but this one definitely is 'solvable', which is part of the reason why I liked it a lot; the fact that I did manage to figure it out may also have been a contributing factor to my giving the book five stars. A very enjoyable read.

Jon says

As usual, not a wasted word. I was completely flummoxed, as were Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin through most of this one. Three times Archie directly addressed me the reader and admitted that the answer may seem obvious to me, but that it was much more difficult when he and Wolfe were actually living it, as opposed to having it all organized and laid out between the covers of a book. Of course at no point did I actually have a clue. And when the clues were finally revealed, I had missed all of them. Great to be so thoroughly outwitted.
