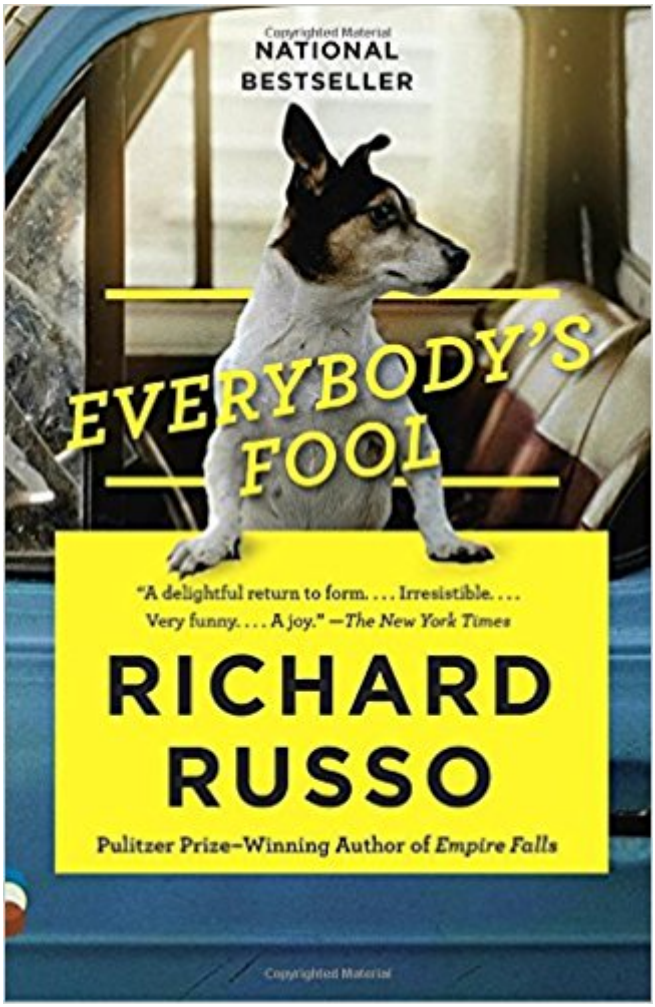
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Everybody's Fool: A Novel (Vintage Contemporaries)



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Synopsis

National Bestseller and aÃ Â New York TimesÃ Â 2016 Notable BookIn these pages, Richard Russo returns to North Bath, the Rust Belt town first brought to unforgettable life in NobodyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Fool. Now, ten years later, Doug Raymer has become the chief of police and is tormented by the improbable death of his wifeÃ¢â ¬â •not to mention his suspicion that he was a failure of a husband. Meanwhile, the irrepressible Sully has come into a small fortune, but is suddenly faced with a VA cardiologistÃ¢â ¬â„¢s estimate that he only has a year or two left to live. As Sully frantically works to keep the bad news from the important people in his life, we are reunited with his son and grandson . . . with Ruth, the married woman with whom he carried on for years . . . and with the hapless Rub Squeers, who worries that he and Sully arenÃ¢â ¬â„¢t still best friends. Filled with humor, heart, and hard-luck characters you canÃ¢â ¬â„¢t help but love, EverybodyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Fool is a crowning achievement from one of the great storytellers of our time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When Doug Raymer, chief of police of the forlornly depressed town of North Bath, N.Y., falls into an open grave during a funeral service, it is only the first of many farcical and grisly incidents in Russo’s shaggy dog story of revenge and redemption. Among the comical set pieces that propel the narrative are a poisonous snakebite, a falling brick wall, and a stigmatalike hand injury. North Bath, as readers of Nobody’s Fool will remember, is the home of Sully Sullivan, the hero of the previous book and also a character here. Self-conscious, self-deprecating, and convinced he’s everybody’s

fool, Raymer is obsessed with finding the man his late wife was about to run off with when she fell down the stairs and died. He’s convinced that the garage door opener he found in her car will lead him to her lover’s home. Meanwhile, he pursues an old feud with Sully; engages in repartee with his clever assistant and her twin brother; and tries to arrest a sociopath whose preferred means of communication are his fists. The remaining circle of ne’er-do-wells, ex-cons, daily drunks, deadbeats, and thieves behave badly enough to keep readers chuckling. The give-and-take of rude but funny dialogue is Russo’s trademark, as is his empathy for down-and-outers on the verge of financial calamity. He takes a few false steps, such as giving Raymer a little voice in his head named Dougie, but clever plot twists end the novel on lighthearted note. 250,000-copy announced first printing. (May)\n --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Ã¢â ¬Å“A delightful return to form. . . . Irresistible. . . . Very funny. . . . A joy.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •The New York TimesÃ¢â ¬Å“Profound and wise. . . . [Russo is] a writer of great comedy and warmth.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •USA TodayÃ¢â ¬Å“Elegiac but never sentimental. . . . RussoÃ¢â ¬â„¢s compassionate heart is open to the sorrows, and yes, the foolishness of this lonely world, but also the humor, friendship and love that abide.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •San Francisco ChronicleÃ¢â ¬Å“For fans whoÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve missed Sully and the gang,Ã Â EverybodyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s FoolÃ Â is like hopping on the last empty barstool surrounded by old friends.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Entertainment Weekly Ã¢â ¬Å“A delight.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •The Washington Post

Author has once again assembled a delightful (for the most part) cast of characters in the same small New York town taking life one day at a time. A police chief who hears and is directed by " a voice" in his head as he pursues whoever his now deceased wife was having an affair with; a tenant whose sole job is to sign for (but not open) ups packages daily; a recently released convict who has come home to roost and by doing so terrorize his ex-wife and her family; and a town main-stay who proves to be a hero of sorts in spite of health issues he is scared to pursue. Add these characters to the police chiefs female deputy (with whom he thinks he is falling love; her brother (who has issues of his own) and a snake which has escaped and adds to the pandemonium the town experiences.Richard Russo has again hit a home run with this most enjoyable novel. I eagerly await his next offering.

What a terrific sequel--as all good sequels do, it explains what happens to everyone in satisfying detail. But it also is a fascinating departure from the first book, Nobody’s Fool, in its tone. The first

book had a small-town feel, albeit with some dark themes, but it felt more Anne Tyler than Elmore Leonard. This sequel has a darker mood--at least two characters are sociopaths, and a central character struggles with a psychotic break. I loved it--what a terrific ending!--and in spite of the darkness, Russo's characters shine and come through heroically. Before reading it I went back and re-read my old copy of Nobody's Fool, which set me up nicely for Everybody's, but Russo adds reminders here and there in Everybody's to carry you along even if it's been a long time since you looked at Nobody's.

Richard Russo is one of my favorite authors and Everybody's Fool is a prime example of why he is. His writing always excels in giving depth to everyday people while providing a backdrop of nearly absurd, humorous events which tie them together. I am always in awe of anyone that manages to add depth to a story's characters, while maintaining the reader's attention. And Mr. Russo never fails to do that.As I read Everybody's Fool, I was so caught up with learning about and understanding these characters that for all I cared, the main story line could have been as mundane as that of the opening of a new Starbucks. The way he does manages this is through a perfect blend of the character's thoughts, points of view, and remembrances. I couldn't help but think of all the times I've read the character writing tip to 'not tell the audience, show them'. Strangely enough, in essence he is telling us and it works. It works extremely well.As for the plot, in typical fashion, he creates a set of events which take place over the span of only a few days, but have such impact on the people involved, that the whole story seems to go on for much longer (in a good way, as it is keeping your attention). It gives that real-life feeling of how day-to-day routines eat up our time without notice, while strong events capture our attention. In the case of Everybody's Fool however, the events are, as I mentioned, bordering on absurd, yet wonderfully comical.Which brings me to another reason I enjoy his works: his humor. His writing capably spans from slapstick, to witty dialog, to insightful comic observations on human behavior - abundant and in good balance.What to expect:As a reader you will be introduced (or in many cases re-introduced if you previously read Nobody's Fool) to a number of the more unique characters in the upstate New York town of Bath. And, while this is, by definition, a sequel, the reader can jump right in. Mr. Russo, does a very good job of ensuring this book can stand on it's own. As I indicated, this is primarily a book of character study - a crisp view into humanity - so bear in mind that all other elements will be subservient to that.

Nobody's Fool was the first Russo book I read, 20 years ago, in one sitting, while spending an ill

advised night in Laguardia Airport. Sully and his town kept me alert and kept my luggage from being stolen. Then came the movie, which Russo himself has praised as being true to the spirit of his book. It is the character of Doug Raymer, as portrayed by Philip Seymour Hoffman, who is featured here, a fact that Russo says caused him distress when Hoffman died even as he was writing. But this book, as with all Russo's work, really stars an ensemble cast.The action picks up ten years after the end of the last book. It contains Russo's trademark mix of hilarity, pathos, and even a little mystery. Each character is so well drawn, Sully being up to his old behavior. He never really changed. Highly highly recommended.

Remember the SNL skit with Christopher Walken acting as Blue Oyster Cult producer yelling "more cowbell"? Think this book would benefit from "more Sully"! Sully, you may remember was the main character in the first in this duo titled "Nobody's Fool" played in the movie version by Paul Newman. (And if you don't remember, I suggest you read that one before this.) The book continues the tale of a dying upstate NY town, and it was great to return to Bath since some of the characters almost became good friends in the first one. Now, some have passed, some have prospered, some have fallen. While the story contains the great humor, characterization and insight of the first, the spotlight shines a bit more on other characters while I think most of us were expecting "more Sully". Not that he doesn't play a major role, he just seems a bit more in the background. Still, a good and worthy read!

I just can't get through this book. The characters are depressing, the town is depressing, it is not one of Russo's best efforts. I keep giving it another chance and try to get interested in the story, but after a few pages, I put it down and go back to reading a more interesting, faster paced book. Some of Russo's past books were faster paced and more enjoyable with colorful characters, but I wouldn't recommend this one.

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