



Too Many Women

Rex Stout

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Archie, Nero Wolfe's assistant, goes undercover to investigate a murder at a Wall Street firm, where he discovers a fringe benefit: hundreds of women work there. Everyone's alibi is air-tight, so Archie and Wolfe set a trap. Which woman will fall into it?

Too Many Women Details

Date : Published (first published October 20th 1947)

ISBN :

Author : Rex Stout

Format : Kindle Edition 192 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Crime, Detective

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From Reader Review Too Many Women for online ebook

Leslie says

3.5*

It was a lot of fun listening to Archie's encounters with the many young women in engineering firm Naylor-Kerr. While I certainly was not able to figure out the culprit before Wolfe, I thought that this one didn't show off Wolfe's personality as well as some of the other books in the series.

Michael Pritchard does a decent narration and his voice for Nero Wolfe is particularly good.

ΰρηση Λΰβαρη says

Αν και σαν πλοκ΄ δεν ΄ταν στην ουσ΄α τ΄ποτα το ιδια΄τερο, το Π΄ρα Πολλ΄ς Γυναι΄κες ε΄ναι σ΄γουρα απ΄ τα καλ΄τερα μυθιστορ΄ματα (και ΄χι μ΄νο στην κατηγορ΄α της αστυνομικ΄ς λογοτεχν΄ας) που ε΄χα την τ΄χη να πι΄σω στα χ΄ρια μου. Ο χειρισμ΄ς της γλ΄σσας εκπληκτικ΄ς, η ατμ΄σφαιρα τ΄λεια ισορροπημ΄νη και ΄πως ακριβ΄ς πρ΄πει, με χιο΄μορ και βαρ΄γδουπες δηλ΄σεις σε ΄λα τα κατ΄λληλα σημει΄α, η ιστορ΄α δεν σου επιτρ΄πει να την αφ΄σεις πριν την ολοκληρ΄σεις για τα καλ΄. Αν και ΄μουν επιφυλακτικ΄ στην αρχ΄, μιας και ΄μουν αβ΄βαιη ως προς την αν΄γνωση μιας ιστορ΄ας μυστηρ΄ου γραμμ΄νης σε ΄λλη εποχ΄, ο Ρεξ Στ΄ουτ με εξ΄πληξε ευχ΄ριστα και το κε΄μεν΄ του με συνεπ΄ρε και με ενθουσ΄ασε. Και ε΄μαι σ΄γουρη πως την ΄δια εντ΄πωση θα δημιουργ΄σει και σε ΄λους τους λ΄τρεις των καλ΄ν νου΄ρ.

Alison C says

Too Many Women, a Nero Wolfe novel by Rex Stout, was published in 1947; when I started the project of reading the entire series, I was unable to find it. As a result, I've just read it out of chronological order in that as of this writing, I'm up to books in the series published in 1958. However, since neither Wolfe nor Archie, nor any of the other characters for that matter, ever changes or grows in the series, this is not really a problem. Archie is asked to take an office job at a large corporation where one supervisor, the son of one of the two founders, is insisting that what appears to be the hit-and-run death of an employee some months earlier was really murder. Initially Archie is to be a personnel officer looking into employee matters, but that cover is soon set aside and he is able to do the real work for which he has been hired, determining the truth or falsity of the supervisor's assertion. Of course this being a Nero Wolfe book, soon there is another death, this time definitely murder, and Archie and Nero finally have something to go on.... The title of the book refers to the fact that hundreds of women are working as transcriptionists in this company, and Archie in his pre-Lily days is quite the cat set amongst the pigeons here. Somewhat more sexist than the average Nero Wolfe tale, this is still quite a fun read, although I had a pretty good idea as to the identity of the murderer fairly early on. As usual, recommended.

Lindsay Boitnott says

Work has been crazy the last few weeks. I always find myself needing a good cozy mystery when I'm stressed. I was struggling to find what I wanted, so I decided to stick with a solid favorite, Nero Wolfe.

Too Many Women did the trick! Archie finds himself working in an office setting surrounded by beautiful women and conniving men. A man was run down by a car and Archie is asked to prove it was murder. What follows is humorous account of Archie's attempt to survive in the office world, full of lies and manipulation.

Of course I adore Archie and Wolfe, but I was even more pleased at how the women are presented. Sure some of them are flighty and manipulative (which is accurate based on my personal experience) but there were a number that were smart and self reliant. I didn't figure out 'who dunnit' until right before Wolfe made his big reveal. And the banter between Inspector Cramer and Wolfe always makes me smile!

Nero Wolfe always makes my day and Too Many Women didn't disappoint. What is your go to comfort read? What historic cozy mystery do you recommend?

Lindsay

Check out more reviews at www.HistoryMysteryBooks.com!

Angela says

I love reading about Archie and Nero and Fritz. This time Archie attempts to go undercover yet doesn't quite do it

Colleen says

I have to say that this is my least favorite book in the Nero Wolfe series. In this novel, Rex Stout breaks precedence and has Archie carry most of the plot and story line. Archie takes a job in a company, undercover, to learn if a murder was actually committed or not.

The few times Rex Stout changed the main structure of the story, it hasn't worked well. You really don't hear a lot from Nero except when Archie checks in.

Also, I don't know what Rex Stout was thinking in this book...he has women throwing themselves at Archie in the most ridiculous ways (ex. they won't answer Archie's questions unless he throws his arms around them and kisses them first- these are women he barely knows) I mean...come on....So Archie will humor them and hug and kiss them so he can get his questions answered.

I would say this is the worst novel out of all the Nero Wolfe novels

Mkb says

I was very excited to get this at Xmas as it was the only Nero Wolfe I hadn't read. Now, knowing that some of the descriptions of and attitudes towards women in the books leave something to be desired, I tried not to get my hopes up. That was a good move on my part. While it was nice to learn that Archie has 2 brothers and 2 sisters, and that his mother's maiden name was Leslie, and that there were curtains around restaurant booths to be opened and closed for smooching in private, that didn't make up for how uncharming Archie was in his interactions with women! You can do better Archie! Lily Rowan deserves a better version of you than the bourbon-drinking, cigarette-smoking, brawling version of Wolfe's brilliant lieutenant.

Becky says

First sentence: It was the same old rigmarole. Sometimes I found it amusing; sometimes it only bored me; sometimes it gave me a pronounced pain, especially when I had had more of Wolfe than was good for either of us.

With Rex Stout, it's merely a matter of determining if I liked a book or loved a book. There was never a question of if I would like it at all. For I've never read a Nero Wolfe mystery that I didn't at least like. There's just something enjoyable and wonderful about the detective team of Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin. I love and adore both characters. In *Too Many Women*, Archie is the dominant character. While Wolfe is present in the novel, to a certain degree, it is Archie who is doing most of the work. (Now Archie would probably be the first to point out that he's always the one doing all of the work.) *Too Many Women* sees Archie Goodwin going undercover (well, at least at the start) at a company. He's been hired to investigate a death. One of the company's employees was killed in a hit and run accident. A few fellow employees at least feel that this was intentional and no accident. So Archie's job is to talk with just about all the employees--well, the ones who had dealings with the victim--and find out if it was murder, to catch the murderer if he is to be found. (The premise of this one reminded me of *Murder Must Advertise* by Dorothy Sayers, in that mystery the detective, Lord Peter Wimsey goes undercover at an agency to find a murderer.)

Was it enjoyable? Yes. Definitely. I never regret spending time with Nero and Archie.

Was it the best, best, best Wolfe mystery ever? Not really. I mean it was a good book, a good mystery. I think for those who like to see Archie flirt with women--he does have a way with women--this one will appeal. For those looking for great banter between Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin, well, this one isn't as good as some of the other novels I've read.

Evgeny says

A case of fatal hit-and-run with a victim being an employee of an engineering supply company seems to satisfy everybody including the police of being really a random hit-and-run. The problem is another employee of the same company who is convinced it was a murder. He is making such big noise that it began affecting the company image. Nero Wolfe takes the case to get to the bottom of this, but because he practically never leaves his home Archie Goodwin is hired as a replacement for the late guy to get the inside scoop of the company going-ons. He realizes he is surrounded by a lot of women in the company, probably much more than he would like.

A lot of reviewers did not like this book much because Nero Wolfe plays a very small part in the book while Archie Goodwin takes more prominent role in the investigation. I agree that the brilliant interaction between two detectives is much less prominent here, but the novel also shows Goodwin as a competent investigator on his own right. He does not have deduction skills of Wolfe's, but as an action man he is still quite capable. His description of the company's bureaucracy is priceless and still can be applied to modern times almost 60 years after the book was published.

The rating is 4 stars thanks to Archie Goodwin's wit and abilities.

This review is a copy/paste of my LeafMarks one: <https://www.leafmarks.com/lm/#/users/...>

Andrea says

This, while rather slow-paced since the action doesn't really pick up till halfway through the novel when Archie and Wolfe stop working against each other, is an example of the kind of time-travel which can be achieved reading books written/set in the past. References to cinema as the "flat-face opera", to the number of people who not only don't lock their cars, but actually leave their keys in them, and most particularly the sheer dissonance of two men walking into a room full of secretaries and one remarking to the other: "Not a virgin among them".

While the remarker is intentionally depicted as an eccentric and nasty little man, the social considerations which come with that remark - that women are either virgin or married and if married will be off being wives instead of secretaries - is one which makes you first blink, then be immensely grateful that now is not then.

Unfortunately this book never really recovers from the "spinning the wheels" feel of no progress, even when things start happening, and it is one of those books where all the characters we meet are so difficult to like that it becomes hard to care what happens to them - and Archie's character is also dragged down by "too many women". Not an enjoyable read.

Hobart says

Like *The Silent Speaker*, this one gets re-read more than others in my collection, and is still fun to read every time.

The president of the large engineering supply corporation, Naylor-Kerr, comes to Wolfe with an interesting problem. During a recent survey of departments about employee turn-over, an employee of the company is listed as "murdered." Which is a pretty good reason to no longer come to work, but the idea that one of their employees has been murdered (particularly when the police think he was just a victim of a hit-and-run) is a bit too scandalous for such a fine and upstanding company, and could Mr. Wolfe please rid them of such rumors? Wolfe takes the case, mostly to get Archie out of the office for awhile--they're getting on each other's nerves and could use some space. So Archie poses as a personnel consultant and goes undercover.

The first thing Archie notices on his arrival at the offices is that there are a whole lotta women (clerical staff, on the whole) working at this company (see quotation below), enough to ensure that he's got plenty of incentive to stick around and do a thorough investigation. He's not there too long before he begins to find

evidence that the murder accusation might be well founded after all--and before you know it, there's another body (shock!). The first victim was some sort of lothario, who didn't like to go far for his pray, so the suspect list is pretty large. Archie bounces around from attractive female suspect to attractive female suspect, questioning, wining and dining, and all other sorts of verbs, until his boss puts all the pieces together.

This is a breezy novel with plenty to recommend it in matters of style, humor, fun characters and plot quirks. Whether it be the petty bickering between the two stars, the patter between Archie and the women, or Archie having to put up with one individual's health food nuttiness; the interplay between various characters is definitely more than enough to draw the reader in.

I can't help but note, each time I read this, how much books like this disprove many of the assumptions we have about this time period--particularly those propagated by groups wanting to imagine the mid-20th century as some sort of moral oasis

I could reproduce pages and pages of Archie's descriptions of the staff of Kerr-Naylor to give Stout a chance to strut his stuff, but will leave them to their proper context, just listing two here for a sample:

...as far as space went, it was a room about the size of the Yankee Stadium, with hundreds of desks and girls at them. Along each side of that area, the entire length, was a series of partitioned offices, with some of the doors closed and some open. No stock of anything was in sight anywhere.

One good glance and I liked the job. The girls. All right there, all being paid to stay right there, and me being paid to move freely about and converse with anyone whomever, which was down in black and white.

Probably after I had been there a couple of years I would find that close-ups revealed inferior individual specimens, Grade B or lower in age, contours, skin quality, voice, or level of intellect, but from where I stood at nine-fifty-two Wednesday morning it was enough to take your breath away. At least half a thousand of them, and the general and overwhelming impression was of--clean, young, healthy, friendly, spirited, beautiful and ready. I stood and filled my eyes, trying to look detached. It was an ocean of opportunity.

She was not at all spectacular...but there were two things about her that hit you at a glance. You got the instant impression that there was something beautiful about her that no one but you would understand and no one but you could help her out of. If that sounds too complicated for a two-second-take, okay, I was there and I remember it distinctly.

Bill Kerwin says

An internal report sent to the C.E.O. of the engineering firm Naylor-Kerr suggests that the hit-and-run death of one of their employees may have been a murder instead. Archie goes undercover as an independent consultant to the "stock" department...which employs 500 lovely and charming women. Is this really a case of murder? If so, can Archie and Wolfe root out the culprit? And there is one perhaps more important question: surrounded by "too many women," will Archie keep his mind on his work?

One of the better Nero Wolfe mysteries.

Intermittent Reader says

Too Many Chapters.

This book is entertaining in the style of all Nero Wolfe books, but Nero Wolfe is under-utilized. The last 1/4 repetition was not needed. Unfortunately, the ending is in the last 1/4, but since I was ready for this book to be done, I was okay with that.

This would have been better as a tight, brisk novella, not draw out with so much talking, talking, talking. Too many chapters.

Weakest of all Nero Wolfe books.

astaliegurec says

Ho-hum. Yet another excellent Nero Wolfe book by Rex Stout ("Too Many Women," the 12th in the series, first published in 1947). This one's particularly lively since Archie is basically rolling in clover throughout it. The usual excellence in writing. The one thing that bothers me a bit is Stout's continuing caricaturization of Inspector Cramer. In the earlier works, Cramer was very competent and occasionally got a bit miffed with Wolfe. In this one, Cramer's still competent, but he's in permanent volcano mode every time he meets our protagonists. That's particularly irritating since Wolfe saved his bacon in the previous book. Still, it's a minor thing and I'm keeping my rating of an Excellent 5 stars out of 5.

Terje Fokstuen says

An up and coming executive is run and over and killed by an anonymous driver. Four months later rumors start spreading at his work place that he was murdered. The corporation then hires Nero Wolf to look into, and Nero sends Archie to work undercover. Posing, badly, as a new executive Archie is confronted by hundreds of young women typists as he tries to figure out what happened to the dead young executive. This is a enjoyable chapter in the Nero and Archie saga, but its mostly about Archie and his adventures with the young women of the typing pool. If you enjoy Archie's romantic meanderings, then this is the book for you. Highly recommended for fans of the wonderful Nero Wolf novels, and the golden age of detective fiction.
