



Bad for Business

Rex Stout

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When the elderly head of the Tingley Titbits catering service meets a sudden end, a beautiful young detective becomes the main suspect, until Tecumseh Fox arrives on the scene to sort out the ingredients in the case.

Bad for Business Details

Date : Published December 1st 1995 by Bantam (first published 1940)

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Author : Rex Stout

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Shirley Worley says

This is my first time reading a Tecumseh Fox mystery by R Stout. Stout's signature style of writing shines through, but Fox lags slightly behind the Nero and Archie series on my list of favorites. Still, he is an interesting character and has the same quick wit as Archie., and he's certainly more active than Nero. Plot was interesting, but seemed a little confusing toward the end.

Sue says

Fun old school PI.

Eva Lavrikova says

Not so clever, plot was quite obvious already in the middle of the story and after that it was a little boring to read. Not his best work.

Wade Grassman says

I am a total fan of the Nero Wolfe series and have read most of them. Tecumseh Fox is not Nero nor is he Archie Goodwin, but that is not to say he is bad. I looking forward to reading the other two stories in the future as they become available on Nook. I found it interesting how he works out the mystery and sort of steps you through it, unlike most mysteries that wait for the end to have some sort of reveal.

All said and done a totally wonderful little read that you should take with you to the beach or pool this summer, it will keep you guessing and entertained. What more could you want from a mystery by one of the true masters of the form.

Perry Whitford says

A non-Nero Wolfe story from Stout, featuring confident, smooth-talking private detective Tecumseh Fox in a locked room mystery revolving around a possible corporate buy-out and an impossibly convoluted series of comings and goings from a factory office over a single night.

Fox involves himself quixotically, a knight errant in a raincoat, combining the wisdom of Wolfe with the wit of Archie Goodwin. There are some pleasing one-liners, plenty of feasible suspects to get through and a fair amount of period quirkiness to enjoy too.

It may soon have proved bad for business for Stout to write about any detective other than Wolfe, but as locked room mysteries go, this isn't a bad bit of business at all.

Ardyth says

Tecumseh Fox didn't really charm me as the lead, but nice light period detective novel nonetheless.

Orinoco Womble (tidy bag and all) says

Bewildering if you've read all the Wolfe books and seen the A and E series. Because this is "The Bitter End" from a different perspective, with a different detective and a totally different style. I was starting to think either I was nuts, or that A and E had taken it upon themselves to Wolf-ize a Fox story. Then I realised that I had read the Wolfe version years ago, or listened to it on audio book or something. Same story, same basic characters except no Archie or Wolfe or Fritz. Weird.

Then I checked the publication dates. This was first published in a magazine in 1940. Death Times Three, which included the Wolfe version of this novella, was published very posthumously. It turns out that Stout's publisher wanted him to create another detective, and he decided to go from Wolfe to Fox (and thank goodness he didn't spell it Foxx or Foxxe). Not surprising that the Fox series didn't fly--his heart wasn't really in it, and it shows. This book lacks the humour, the spark, the crisp style of Archie and Nero's adventures. It drags in spots. How can that be? Well it is. It's just...okay. Therefore two stars.

Oh, and if you get a copy of Death Times Three--**DO NOT** read the introduction!! It spoils *both* versions--and by "spoils" I mean "tells you everything in detail to the place you don't need to read the book." **WHY? WHY? WHY DO PUBLISHERS DO THIS, WITH OF ALL THINGS A MYSTERY NOVEL? WHAT IS WRONG WITH PEOPLE?**

Adam Graham says

The best of the Tecumseh Fox books. A pretty clever mystery and Fox is freed from dull policemen and does a respectable job pursuing an investigation.

Julie says

Tecumseh Fox is an interesting figure, but doesn't have the appeal of Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin. I found it a slow read.

Chazzi says

I am more familiar with the Archie and Nero Wolf series. Tecumseh Fox is a new character for me. There are only 3 books with this character in it. He travels in the same area as Nero Wolfe, New York, but the two never seem to know of each other.

Amy Duncan is working as a private detective. Her case is to find out who has been putting quinine into the products of Tingley's Titbits. It is costing the company business and income. It wouldn't be difficult except the owner is her uncle and he doesn't feel a woman can do the job.

When Amy is called to her uncle's office, and wakes up on the floor next to her brutally murdered uncle she finds herself a prime suspect. Having me Fox earlier, she calls on him to help her solve the case of the murder and the poisoning. What starts out looking simple turns complicate when Fox finds that there are a number of possible suspects among the company and outsiders who are looking to buy the company.

Set in the fourties, it has that feel, but Fox is not the tough talking tec usually associated with this era. He does know his way around and is well known and pretty well respected by the police.

It is an enjoyable read, and I am curious about the other two books. Hope I can find them sometime.

Tony says

BAD FOR BUSINESS. (1940). Rex Stout. **.

That's right, Virginia, Rex Stout wrote some mysteries that didn't feature Nero Wolfe. They featured a character called Tecumseh Fox. Tecumseh was also a private detective, but not nearly as interesting as Nero. His cases were pretty much predictable, and his conversations were banal. This book was a good example of all you need to know about Tecumseh. I'm not sure why Stout tried to develop this character in preference to Nero Wolfe, but he did, and it didn't work. Don't say that you haven't been warned about this character and his escapades. As for me; once burned, twice shy.

Susan says

Many people don't know that Rex Stout had a series sleuth who wasn't named Nero Wolfe. And it's Tecumseh Fox--less eccentric but more active than Wolfe--who stars in this story about a manufacturer of food products who's found dead. The main suspect is his estranged niece, Amy Duncan, whose chartreuse eyes appeal to Fox, a sucker for a beautiful woman. Even though Amy is in love with her uncle's competitor, Fox is sure she's innocent--until someone claims to have had a conversation with her uncle half an hour after Amy found him dead.
