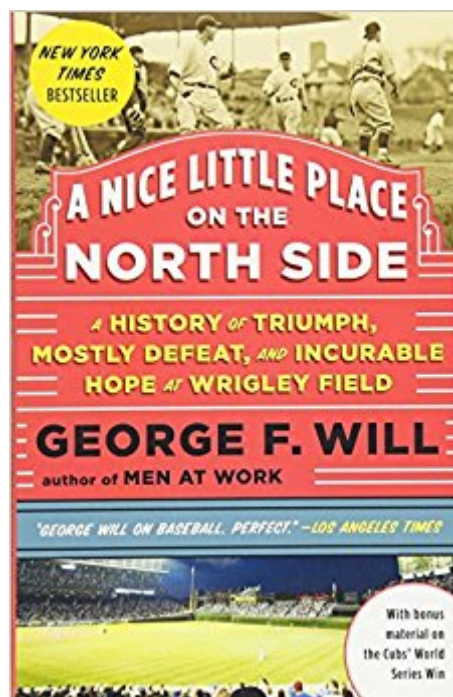




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# A Nice Little Place On The North Side: A History Of Triumph, Mostly Defeat, And Incurable Hope At Wrigley Field



## Synopsis

Now with bonus material on the Chicago Cubs' World Series win, the New York Times-bestselling history of America's most beloved baseball stadium, Wrigley Field, and the Cubs' century-long search for World Series glory. In *A Nice Little Place on the North Side*, leading columnist George Will returns to baseball with a deeply personal look at his hapless Chicago Cubs and their often beatified home, Wrigley Field, as it enters its second century. Baseball, Will argues, is full of metaphors for life, religion, and happiness, and Wrigley is considered one of its sacred spaces. But what is its true, hyperbole-free history? Will's winding beautifully like Wrigley's iconic ivy, Will's meditation on "The Friendly Confines" examines both the unforgettable stories that forged the field's legend and the larger-than-life characters from Wrigley and Ruth to Veeck, Durocher, and Banks who brought it glory, heartbreak, and scandal. Drawing upon his trademark knowledge and inimitable sense of humor, Will also explores his childhood connections to the team, the Cubs' future, and what keeps long-suffering fans rooting for the home team after so many years of futility. In the end, *A Nice Little Place on the North Side* is more than just the history of a ballpark. It is the story of Chicago, of baseball, and of America itself.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Wrigley Field, home of the Chicago Cubs, turns 100 this season. Will, a lifelong Cubs fan originally from downstate Illinois, steps back from politics to indulge his passion for the generally hapless Cubs (last World Series win in 1908). In the context of Wrigley's centennial, Will offers a

rambling, gently amusing history of the team since it moved in. With few triumphs to write about, Will focuses on some of the dominant and/or quirky personalities associated with the team through the years. He has a particular fondness for Ernie Banks, aka Mr. Cub, who performed heroically for some atrocious Cub teams from 1953 through 1971, laying out the case that Banks, a first-ballot Hall of Famer, hasn't lingered in the minds of today's fans the way he should have done. Will also delivers brief but revealing examinations of longtime team owner P. K. Wrigley, players Phil Cavarretta and Hack Wilson, and manager Leo Durocher. Will, who has a Pulitzer for commentary on his mantel as well as a roomful of other awards, is one of the nation's most visible Cub fans; this ode to the team and its home field will make a very pleasant read for baseball fans in general and Cub fans in particular. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Expect lots of television and other media promotion for this one, tied to various Wrigley Field celebrations. --Wes Lukowsky --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Praise for George Will and *A Nice Little Place on the North Side* "Fond yet surprisingly hard-hitting" "an intelligent, tough little book." "USA Today" "George Will is as serious about baseball as he is about the Constitution or foreign policy." *A Nice Little Place on the North Side* is replete with the amusing trivia that in baseball constitutes lore. "Wall Street Journal" "America's leading poet of baseball." "Chicago Tribune, Printers Row Journal" "George F. Will's wonderful book *A Nice Little Place on the North Side* reads like a history of a ballpark, but it's really a fan's interrogation of the most harrowing riddle: Why can't the Cubs win?...[Will is] one of the great baseball writers." "Commentary" "Will's bow-tied, button-down prose wears quite well in this, his third insightful book about baseball, after *Men at Work* and *Bunts*. His eye for the game remains warm and acute, as do his conservative instincts." "New York Times Book Review" "George Will is the most elegant of today's political essayists, and with 'Men at Work,' 'Bunts' and this tribute to Chicago, the ballpark that graces it, and the fans who pack it to root for its hapless team, he can be counted among the best baseball writers to come down the pike." "The Washington Times" "[Will's] latest, *A Nice Little Place on the North Side*, will sit solidly on the bookshelf with his previous baseball classics. As is always the case with Will, readers are treated to a mix of history, anecdotes, vignettes, cultural analysis, various informative diversions, and much wry humor." "The American Spectator" "George F. Will is as eloquent on baseball

as he is on politics. *AARP Bulletin* "Required reading" •  
New York Post From the Hardcover edition.

In *A Nice Little Place on The North Side*, George Will offers a light-hearted look at the history of the Chicago Cubs and Wrigley Field, which is mostly a hundred years of futility with occasional glimmers of hope to be snatched away by some bizarre event like a black cat, Leon Durham or Steve Bartman. I personally never believed in a "Cubs curse." But these things are part of Cubs lore. It's a short read filled with humorous anecdotes about everything from the mercurial ownership from the Wrigley family, to the Tribune Company, Sam Zell anyone. The beloved players and some of the colorful managers who dared to pilot the good ship Cubbie Bear. Some of these anecdotes can appear tangential such as the multipage section on the evolution of beer production in this country, but Will always manages to cycle back to the basic point, so you just go on the walk with him. It's lighthearted fun and a good way to kill a Sunday afternoon when the Cubs are not on.

I'm not really a fan of baseball in general and the Cubs in particular. With two younger brothers and my dad, I was exposed to WAAAYYYY too much baseball as a child. Cubs, White Sox and Yankees. It was enough to drive a girl crazy. As an adult, I have figured out that life already supplies enough disappointment without having to cheer for the Cubs too (It's bad enough that I am a Bears fan). That being said, I LOVED this book. It's a love letter to and about a mythical baseball field and an inept team from a lifelong fan. It's a great history on the Cubs and the field as well. It's written very tongue in cheek in the wry style that is unique to George Will and I giggled out loud throughout the book. Yes, Will makes fun of the Cub's ineptitude (how can you NOT?) but it's clear he is a devoted (deranged?) Cub fan who loves his team and their field. HIGHLY recommend for baseball lovers in general and you Cub fans in particular.

Will is a terrific sports writer. He inserts some side stories that may be interesting to non-sports fans (who may have bought the book because they know his other writings and are not baseball fans), but were a distraction. He certainly knows his Cubbie history but I would have enjoyed reading more about the Cubs of my youth (especially about the last war year with Swish Nicholson, Phil Cavaretta, Stan Hack and Claude Passeau, and especially about Hank Borowy whom the Yankees let go to the Cubs for the waiver price because--we shocked Yankee fans were told--Borowy was sure to have a hay fever attack in the last half of the season that would make him valueless (he was

11-2 with the Cubs); he could have written about the Jack Benny running "Greenberg is on third" joke about that world series. He could have included "You Know Me, Al" references and, most of all, explained the "Merkle curse"--resulting from the Cubs stolen win against the Gi'nts and their consequent last world series victory--that dooms the Cubs to never win another series. My point is that Will has a great book about the Wrigleys and their "park", Ernie Banks, Vaughn/Toney, and all, but I wish he would have spent just a little less time on such as the all important--but marginal here--history of beer in the US in his explanation of how the Cubbies keep the turnstiles turning. A can't miss if you are a baseball fan but--for me--it could have been better.

Amazing book. I had to go to Wrigley before I finished it...and I live in Philly. Will has a great command of language, nostalgia and metaphor with a healthy dose of business reality. Loved the book and it made me appreciate my trip to the Cubs field even more.

As a diehard Cubs fan, I eagerly anticipated this sojourn into Wrigley Field. Will presents a multitude of Wrigley Field tidbits, but misses the essence of the story. Will jumps around too much in relating a story, and I could not pass second base. I remember the joys of Ladies' Day and the hoopla of the seventh inning stretch. Ernie Banks would wander throughout the stadium before a game. Of course, the breeze from lake Michigan would send chills throughout your body in the late afternoon. Will drilled home the facts of the players, but missed why the fans have been so loyal after all these years.

His books are always interesting. Here he connects the Cubs hopeless years, Capone, and more.

Although George Will loves Wrigley Field (as I did when I was a little girl and sat in the bleachers with my brother and my mother many a summer day), his book leaves much to be desired. He tends to wander, giving us hints of the grandeur of the park, and the idiosyncracies of the owners of the park, but never grabs my attention. I would put the book down, then pick it up because I thought I SHOULD. Anyway, it did not meet my expectations for a man of Will's stature. I was disappointed.

Love this book. We are CUBS fans!!!

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