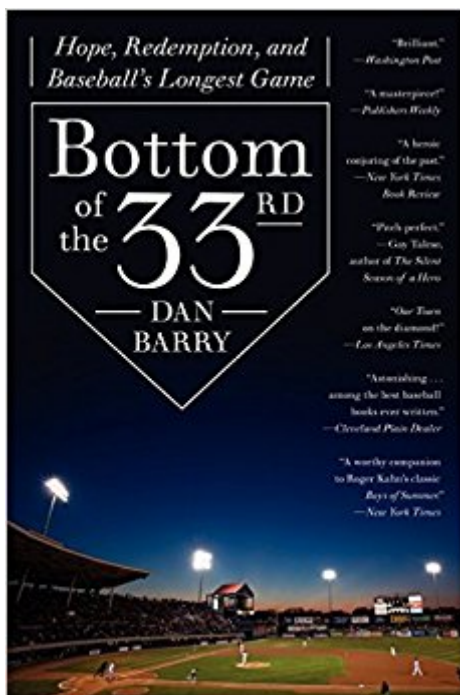


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Bottom Of The 33rd: Hope, Redemption, And Baseball's Longest Game



Synopsis

“Bottom of the 33rd is chaw-chewing, sunflower-spitting, pine tar proof that too much baseball is never enough.”

• Jane Leavy, author of *The Last Boy* and *Sandy Koufax*

“What a book”

• an exquisite exercise in story-telling, democracy and myth-making.

• Colum McCann, winner of the National Book Award for *Let The Great World Spin*

• From Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times columnist Dan Barry comes the beautifully recounted story of the longest game in baseball history

• a tale celebrating not only the robust intensity of baseball, but the aspirational ideal epitomized by the hard-fighting players of the minor leagues. In the tradition of *Moneyball*, *The Last Hero*, and *Wicked Good Year*, Barry’s *Bottom of the 33rd* is a reaffirming story of the American Dream finding its greatest expression in timeless contests of the Great American Pastime.

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Customer Reviews

New York Times columnist Barry provides a charming, meditative portrait of a minor league baseball game that seemed to last forever. Because of a rule-book glitch, the Pawtucket Red Sox and the Rochester Red Wings played for 33 innings on a chilly Saturday night into the Easter morning of 1981. Using the game as a focal point, Barry examines the lives and future careers of many of the players, including the then unknown Wade Boggs and Cal Ripken. Barry also profiles the Red Sox team owner, the fans and workers, and even the stadium and the depressed industrial town of Pawtucket, R.I. The game gives Barry ample opportunity to explore the world that surrounds it. Not every Triple-A player becomes a Cal Ripken, and Barry gives generous attention to those who didn’t make it

• the powerful outfielder who can’t hit a curve, the eccentric Dutch relief pitcher with

the unlikely name of Win Remmerswaal, the 26-year-old who feels like an old man among younger prospects. The three decades that have passed since the game allow Barry to track the arc of entire lives, adding emotional resonance. Barry is equally adept at describing the allure of a ballpark and the boost it can give to a struggling town like Pawtucket. (Apr.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Winner of the 2012 PEN/ESPN Award for Literary Sportswriting () Dan Barry has crafted a loving and lyrical tribute to a time and a place when you stayed until the final out...because that's what we did in America. Bottom of the 33rd is chaw-chewing, sunflower-spitting, pine tar proof that too much baseball is never enough. (Jane Leavy) "What a book -- an exquisite exercise in story-telling, democracy and myth-making that has, at its center, a great respect for the symphony of voices that make up America." (Colum McCann) "Dan Barry's meticulous reporting and literary talent are both evident in *Bottom of the 33rd*, a pitch-perfect and seamless meditation on baseball and the human condition." (Gay Talese) "A fascinating, beautifully told story... In the hands of Barry, a national correspondent for the *New York Times*, this marathon of duty, loyalty, misery and folly becomes a riveting narrative... The book feels like *Our Town* on the diamond." (Los Angeles Times) "An astonishing tale that lyrically articulates baseball's inexorable grip on its players and fans, *Bottom of the 33rd* belongs among the best baseball books ever written." (Cleveland Plain Dealer) "Meticulously researched and tremendously entertaining!" (Columbus Dispatch) "[Dan] Barry does more than simply recount the inning-by-inning-by-inning box score. He delves beneath the surface, like an archaeologist piecing together the shards and fragments of a forgotten society, to reconstruct a time and a night that have become part of baseball lore." (Associated Press) "Whether you're a baseball aficionado or a reader who just enjoys a good yarn, you'll love this book." (Minneapolis Star Tribune) "A worthy companion to Roger Kahn's classic *Boys of Summer*... [Dan Barry] exploits the power of memory and nostalgia with literary grace and journalistic exactitude. He blends a vivid, moment-by-moment re-creation of the game with what happens to its participants in the next 30 years." (Stefan Fatsis, *New York Times*) "Brilliantly rendered... The book is both a fount of luxurious writing and a tour-de-force of reportage." (Washington Post) "[An] heroic conjuring of the past." (New York Times Book Review) "[A]

masterpiece...destined for the Hall of Fame of baseball books. (Publisher's Weekly)

It was easy to identify with the people Dan Barry describes throughout his book, although the superb writing certainly pulls the readers into the story and urges us to continue reading all the way through the ending credits. As one who spent hundreds of hours with a ball, listening to it "whop, whop, whop" off the side of the house, I could identify with the dreams of the various players on both the Rochester and Pawtucket teams. Barry's storytelling is incredible, and he weaves stories of the major and minor characters in and out of the tale of two teams that could not find a way to end the game being played. Along the way we learn tidbits of information about those players who eventually ended up in the major leagues as well as what happened to the majority of those who didn't. Excellent story, recommended for baseball fans as well as for those who just enjoy reading a story that is well told.

Say the title of this book to any veteran baseball fan, and he or she will know exactly what's covered. In 1981, the Rochester Red Wings and Pawtucket Red Sox started playing baseball one chilly April night. The problem was that they just couldn't stop. The game went on, and on, and on, through 32 innings and until 4 a.m., and there still hadn't been a winner. It eventually was suspended and finished later in the season. There's been only one "bottom of the 33rd inning" in organized baseball history, since it was the longest game ever played. Thus, Dan Barry's book of that title covers that game. What's more, it's difficult to think that a book on this particular subject could have been done that much better. Barry reveals plenty of interesting details about the game, which started on April 18. The International League usually had a curfew that instructed umpires not to begin an inning after 12:50 a.m. However, a typographical error in the league's rules for that season somehow omitted that little rule. So the umpires felt obligated to keep playing. And play they did, until 4 a.m. when the game was finally suspended after a frantic call to the league president was finally returned. It takes a while for Barry's story to get moving, but that actually works well because the game becomes much more dramatic as it goes along and thus the story benefits from the set-up work. The author takes it inning by inning to a certain extent, although he doesn't get bogged down in the details of most of the "action." When the game starts to drag on well into double digits, the funhouse effect begins in earnest. The parents of the bat boy wonder why their son isn't home from the game yet. Friends of fans and others at the game call the police to ask if there had been an accident. Players wonder if there is any way out of the "Groundhog Day" of a baseball

game, in which the idea that a game can go on toward infinity without a winner being decided actually seems to be taking place. And how about Luis Aponte of Pawtucket, who went home after a long pitching stint, only to have his wife slam the door in his face because she didn't believe a game could be going on so late? It's funny to consider, but Barry didn't have that many people who needed to be interviewed in hindsight. There were the players, of course, and the umpires, and journalists, and front office workers. Most of the fans left, so that by the bottom of the 32nd the number of people in the stands watching was down to a couple of dozen or so. Barry also takes the time to fill out the backstories of the participants. You know what happened to Wade Boggs and Cal Ripken, but most minor leaguers never make it to the majors for very long if at all. Their stories take surprising turns, particularly in the case of the player who finally ended the game when it was picked up again in June. It's particularly true if you had a routing interest in either the Red Sox or Orioles from way back then, as the names will be familiar. Who knew Win Remmerswaal was such a memorable character? Barry also covers the city of Pawtucket and the Triple-A baseball team nicely. The author's only misstep is trying to be a little too stylish at times at the beginning of the book. But once he hits his stride, "Bottom of the 33rd" rolls into a true page-turner -- even though we know where the story is headed. It was voted as one of the best baseball books of the year when it came out, and it's easy to see why.

When one of the greatest sportswriters who ever lived recommended to me Dan Barry's account of the longest baseball game ever played, "Bottom of the 33rd," I thought he was merely hyping the book of a friend and made no effort to run out and buy it. I should have. It is a modern masterpiece. Nominally it is the story of the 33 inning game between the Pawtucket Red Sox and Rochester Red Wings of the Triple-A International League, the highest minor league level, which began on a blustering cold Easter Eve 1981, and ended on a freezing Easter Sunday. Yet it is so much more. It is also a history of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, a decaying rust belt mill town. It is a history of the game's setting, McCoy Stadium, built in the Great Depression on a sinkhole as a public works boondoggle to put the city's citizens to work by their powerful mayor, Thomas P. McCoy. It is the story of its Quebec born owner who rescued the franchise, Ben Mondor, a self made millionaire who bought and sold old textile mills and manufactured women's wear fabrics, and who was staunch Catholic in a Catholic city, and possessed a strong sense of Christian charity and obligation. It is the story of two future Hall of Famers who played all 33 innings, Wade Boggs and Cal Ripken, Jr. It is the story of all the players who never made it to the majors and their long suffering wives who worked part time jobs to support their dreams. It is the story of the teenagers who grew

up in Pawtucket and earned their first tiny paychecks working in menial jobs such as doing the laundry of the players, cooking their post game meals of spaghetti and chicken, selling tickets, picking up garbage. It is the story of the two managers, Joe Morgan and Doc Edwards, who spent their lives traveling the small roads and small towns of America to teach the American baseball dream to aspiring players who mostly never made it to the majors. It is mostly however, a story of Dan Barry's powerful writing. Such as: "The 7th inning has arrived, and Danny Parks has just walked Rochester's lead off batter, Mark Corey, which has led to another walk: that of Park's manager, Joe Morgan, now strolling toward the mound, and not for his health, or to take in the air...Morgan, head down as if prepared to hear a confession, runs a cleat over the mound. Parks, head bowed in contrition, then sweeps a cleat over what Morgan has just swept. Back and forth they go, gardening, muttering, engaged in a slow, self-conscious dance in which partners try not to look each other in the eye." Who won the game? Good question. Barry saves the answer for the end of the book. [Hansen Alexander is a New York attorney and author of two introductory law books, "A Tort is Not a Pastry," and "An Introduction to the Laws of the United States in the 21st Century."]

Wow! I really enjoyed this book. I'm not a die-hard baseball fan but I do love the game and I do prefer to attend AAA games. The author not only details all the crazy twists and turns in this bizarre game but also does a great job of telling the back stories of everyone involved (like the liquor distributor who pulled their beer concessions at the field and the heavy price they paid...). It becomes very clear, very fast that players working their ways up and down through the league layers have a tough time. They are subject to stresses on and off the field that most of us never consider until we read a story like this. If you like baseball, and if you think the game holds many metaphors to life, you'll love this book. It's extremely well researched and funny as hell.

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