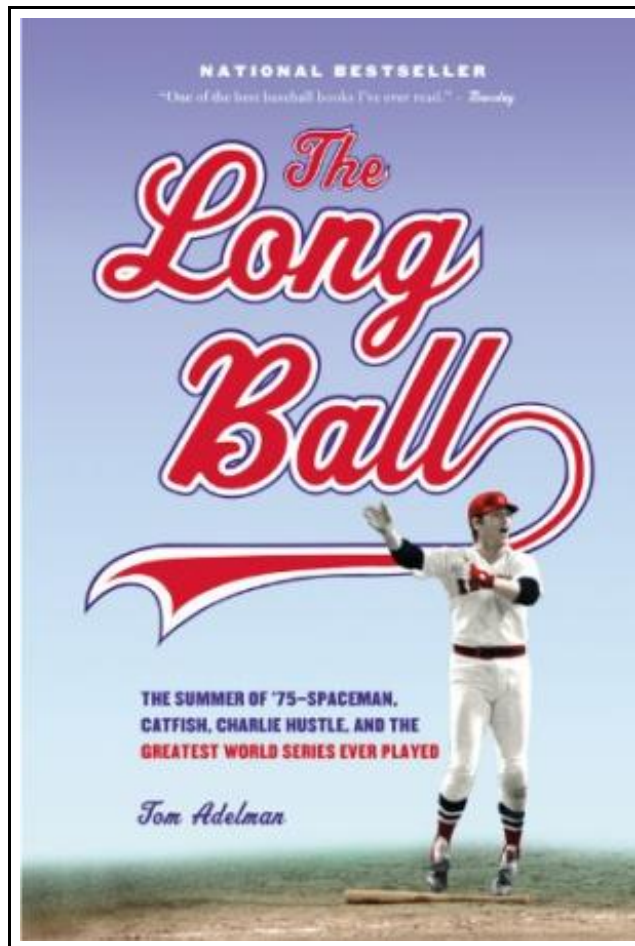


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Reviews

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(Bell Pacocha)

THE LONG BALL: THE SUMMER OF '75--SPACEMAN, CATFISH, CHARLIE HUSTLE, AND THE GREATEST WORLD SERIES EVER PLAYED

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Back Bay Books, 2003. Trade paperback. Book Condition: New. Illustrated. New. No dust jacket as issued. Trade paperback (US). Glued binding. 384 p. Contains: Illustrations. Audience: General/trade. From Publishers Weekly There's something about a good baseball yarn that brings out a writer's childlike enthusiasm; in this case, Adelman's gusto makes this account of the legendary 1975 World Series between the Cincinnati Reds and the Boston Red Sox at once a joy and a bit of a pain to read. Adelman's retelling of one of baseball's greatest showdowns goes in so many different directions that the reader is sometimes hard put to relax and enjoy it; skipping between teams, players and games with the ferocity of a suicide squeeze, Adelman jumps from Casey Stengel to Steve Garvey with a story about a missed steal sign thrown by Don Zimmer as a segue. He tosses in bits about players' personal lives, too-Johnny Bench's rocky marriage to an Ultra Brite model; Mickey Mantle's nightmares; Luis Tiant's longing for his family in Cuba-for added color. And he still manages to depict in gripping detail the split-second decisions of legends like Pete Rose, Sparky Anderson, the elder Bonds and Griffey, Billy Martin, Johnny Bench and Yaz-uncovering some great inside stories and little-known anecdotes along the way. Also, 1975 was the year free agency came to baseball, when Catfish Hunter challenged the indentured servitude practiced by the owners and won, later becoming the game's first free agent and signing with (who else?) the Yankees. It signaled the end of the era of players being contractually bound to one team and ushered in the high-priced bidding wars that are now the hallmark of the sport. While Adelman doesn't explore the advent of free agency nearly as much as he could, choosing instead to analyze pitching decisions...



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