

Wolfe and Archie - The Nero Wolfe One-Page

None of the materials here is intended to infringe on any copyrights or intellectual property.

By: Judd M. Goswick (Based on the Novels by Rex Stout)

Our Heroes

Nero Wolfe, famous private detective, lives ensconced in his brownstone on West 35th Street in New York City. He seldom leaves it and every day, but Sunday, he spends 9am to 11am and 6pm to 6pm in his Orchard greenhouse on the top floor of his abode. He is curt, obstinate, magisterial, and the best detective money can buy.

He is aided in his residence by his orchid expert Theodore Horstmann, his cook Fritz Brenner, and his "leg-man" Archie Goodwin.

Archie is the brawn to Wolfe's brain. He is a bit too breezy to be termed "hardboiled", but he is definitely a good egg. He like dancing, baseball, and has contacts all over the City that come in handy to his boss.

More Here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nero_Wolfe

The Series in Brief (and Additional Characters)

Most of the mysteries are concerned with upper-crust New York socialites who can afford the fees Wolfe charges to keep himself in fine food and orchids. The stories are also a love note to the way the City moved and breathed in the early 20th century.

Wolfe and Archie often run afoul of the NYC Homicide Detectives in their cases. Chief among them is Inspector Cramer. The Police do not like it when Wolfe horns in on an investigation they pick up and they always assume he is pulling a fast one - usually because he is!

There are three additional private eyes that Wolfe and Archie will call upon to fill-out the ranks when needed. Saul Panzer is a gifted PI and a generally useful investigator. Orrie Cather is a click-tongued social butterfly who gabs info out of people to great effect. Fred Durkin is great at following subjects - Archie says he "can't wait until Mr. Wolfe sends him to Russia to tail Khrushchev".

Lon Cohen, a reporter for a local paper, the *New York Gazette*, is often of use as well. He trades info on suspects for exclusives on cases.

Lily Rowan is a rich socialite that is Archie's favorite dance partner at the Flamingo Club and is often his in-road to the upper crust families of the city.

Nero Wolfe

Eccentric Genius Detective (4)
OCD Orchid Lover (2)
Husky Gourmet (3)
Avid Reader (1)
Agoraphobe (1)

Hook: Vanity - Wolfe cannot abide someone showing him up or making him look easily fooled. He will go to great lengths to solve cases dealing with these people.

Archie Goodwin

Hardboiled Private Detective (3)
Ladies' Man (3)
Well-connected Man (3)
Snappy Dresser (1)

Game-Mastering for Wolfe and Archie

The challenge when running a game with these two characters is to strike a balance between their styles. Wolfe stays at home unless something has gone truly off kilter. Archie works the streets for his boss and also goads him into working when Wolfe gets in a pout.

Rex Stout, the author of the series, uses Archie's good memory to good effect, having Archie report verbatim to Wolfe while the genius closes his eyes and puffs his lips as he works the problem over in his head.

The odd pairing and the resulting kinship, teamwork, and affection are the selling points of the series just as much as the mysteries. Some stories can be complicated or even created by issues resulting from some issue or consternation in the brownstone. These stories add unique color to what might otherwise be a fairly obvious mystery. A good GM can also have a mystery somehow upset the environment Wolfe enjoys, forcing him into activity to solve the case and put things back the way they were.

The chemistry of the players who step into the two main roles is key. They should be able to play these two men who are often as divided as united. Many a case involves Wolfe keeping Archie out of some crucial point of the plan or Archie performing his "duty" of nagging Wolfe to force him to work. If they players can have these tempests in their proverbial teapots without ruining their fun, the game will pop.