

Long before there was the Super Bowl, the NBA Championship, the Final Four, or the World Cup, there was the World Series. In the beginning, men in derbies sat in the outfield and marveled at Mathewson and McGraw. Today, fans congregate in sports bars, staring at screens big enough to see which players have shaved that day. For a century, the World Series has captured the nation's imagination. The drama has included Willie Mays's catch, of course, and Reggie Jackson's home runs, and the gratifying day when Walter Johnson finally won. But the plot lines have also featured the audacious fixing of the 1919 Series and the unlikely heroics of various journeymen never much heard of before the span of a few brilliant autumn days, and never much heard of since. There has been one perfect game. There have been any number of perfectly inexplicable managerial decisions, not all of them made by managers of the Red Sox. There has been drama, comedy, and pathos. Fall Classics is a collection of the best writing about the World Series in its first hundred years. Certainly it is a kind of history of the event. It is also a catalog of the work of some of the most accomplished and entertaining writers of the past century, since the World Series has drawn to itself not only our best sports scribblers, but many writers who wouldn't have dreamed of writing about the Stanley Cup Playoffs, the Final Four, or even the Super Bowl. Here you'll find Jimmy Breslin telling Damon Runyon's fantastic story of how he got the scoop on where Grover Cleveland Alexander spent the first innings of a seventh game he eventually won. (Hint: It wasn't the bullpen.) Satchel Paige recalls his experience of finally getting to pitch in the Series in 1948. Red Smith writes about Willie Mays's last hurrah with the Mets in 1973 against the A's. And Peter Gammons and Roger Angell give their takes on the two most famous game sixes of all, Gammons on 1975 and Angell on 1986. The games and the memories go on. For every fan whose heart yearns for a bleacher seat, a ballpark frank, and a slice of October Americana, Fall Classics is a treasure.

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