

[PDF] The Catcher Was A Spy

Nicholas Dawidoff - pdf download free book

Books Details:

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Author: Nicholas Dawidoff

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Berg (1902-1972) was a third-string major league catcher for 15 seasons, but it's not for his lack of baseball skills he's remembered, but rather for his intellectualism and eccentricity. After graduating from Princeton in 1923 (he later earned a law degree at Columbia University and studied at the Sorbonne), Berg joined the Brooklyn Dodgers. Dawidoff shows us the oddball Berg: he sometimes read 10 newspapers a day and he had "a near mania for cleanliness." With the outbreak of WW II, Berg's ability to speak perhaps 18 languages was put to use working for "Will Bill" Donovan at the OSS. Berg played an important role in supplying information on the German nuclear threat and after the war helped corral European scientists for the U.S. After the OSS was disbanded, Berg was cashiered and awarded the Medal of Freedom, which he refused to accept. For the remaining 25 years of his life he became "a vagabond, living on wit and charm and the kindness of friends." Dawidoff, a freelance writer, has done a wonderful job of unraveling the legends around the mystifying Berg. Photos.

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From Library Journal Baseball catcher, lawyer, and spy-Moe Berg was all of these, but first and foremost he was an enigma. All the ascertainable facts concerning Berg's life are presented here, including his 19 years as the most famous journeyman catcher in professional baseball; his stint at Columbia University and subsequent abortive legal career; his investigation of Germany's atomic bomb program for the Office of Strategic Services (a predecessor of the CIA) during World War II; and his postwar years, in which he lived off the kindness of friends. Dawidoff has done a lot of research on a fascinating subject but draws few conclusions, and his overall theme seems to be the impenetrability of his subject. In the end, Berg remains a mystery. A marginal purchase.

--*Terry Madden, Boise State Univ. Lib., Id.*

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