



The Short Stories of Damon Runyon - Volume I - The Bloodhounds of Broadway

Damon Runyon

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Damon Runyon was born Alfred Damon Runyan on October 4th, 1880, in Manhattan, Kansas. When Runyon was two his father was forced to sell his newspaper, and the family moved further west, eventually settling in Pueblo, Colorado in 1887, where Runyon spent the rest of his youth. By most accounts, he attended school only through the fourth grade and then, seeking a career, moved into the newspaper trade working for his father. In 1898, still a teenager, Runyon sought to broaden his horizons and enlisted in the U.S. Army to fight in the Spanish–American War. After his service he returned to Colorado and worked for several local newspapers. Runyon's expertise was covering the semi-professional teams in Colorado; for a man who would become indelibly linked to sports he endured a notable failure in an attempt to organize a Colorado minor baseball league. It lasted less than a week. In 1910 Runyon moved to New York City to work for the William Randolph Hearst newspaper chain, writing a daily column in *The New York American*. Here, in his first New York byline, his name was changed once more. The editor decided to drop the "Alfred" and run with the soon to be famous moniker "Damon Runyon." Promoted to be the Hearst newspapers' baseball columnist he developed his trademark knack of spotting the eccentric and the unusual, on the field or in the stands, and Runyon generally re-wrote and revolutionized the way baseball was covered in newspapers and shared this style with its adoring millions of fans. But Runyon was more than a great sports writer. His plays and essays became legendary ways of looking that bit differently at America, of soaking up the atmosphere of a glamorous and rip-roaring age and distilling it into black and white type. Of course, the cliché about newspapermen and writers is that they are heavy drinkers, chain-smokers, gamblers and obsessively chase women with a sideline in gathering info and actually getting something written just before the deadline hits. And, that pretty much was Runyon's life. In 1938, Runyon developed throat cancer which eventually would leave him unable to speak but not unable to work, which he continued to do so at a ferocious pace. From 1939 to 1943, Runyon pursued a Hollywood career as a writer and producer at MGM, Universal and RKO studios. The work continued to follow from Runyon's pen. Not only some fabulous short stories in his famous "Runyonesque" filled with characters as funny and gritty as anything that could be written but classic books that would endure long after he was gone. *Guys & Dolls* being merely one; a book, a film, a musical. Alfred Damon Runyon died in New York City on December 10th, 1946 from throat cancer, at age 66.

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