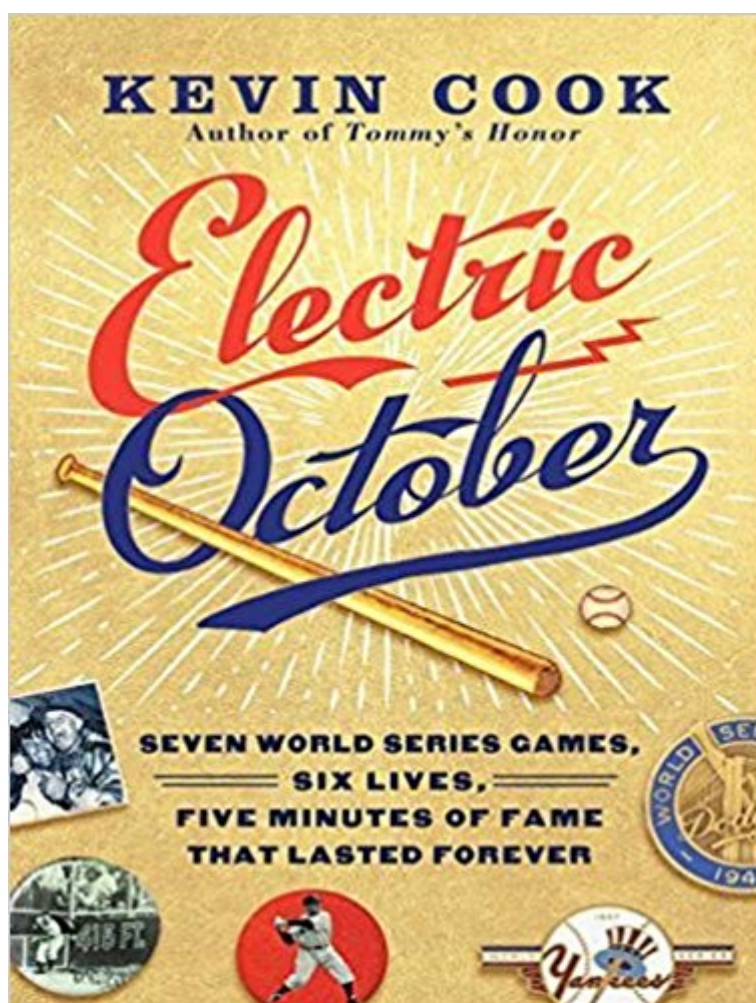


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# Electric October: Seven World Series Games, Six Lives, Five Minutes Of Fame That Lasted Forever



## Synopsis

The 1947 World Series was "the most exciting ever" in the words of Joe DiMaggio, with a decade's worth of drama packed into seven games between the mighty New York Yankees and underdog Brooklyn Dodgers. It was Jackie Robinson's first Series, a postwar spectacle featuring Frank Sinatra, Ernest Hemingway, and President Harry Truman in supporting roles. It was also the first televised World Series-sportswriters called it "Electric October." But for all the star power on display, the outcome hinged on role players: Bill Bevens, a journeyman who knocked on the door of pitching immortality; Al Gionfriddo and Cookie Lavagetto, bench players at the center of the Series' iconic moments; Snuffy Stirnweiss, a wartime batting champion who never got any respect; and managers Bucky Harris and Burt Shotton, each an unlikely choice to run his team. Kevin Cook brings the '47 Series to life, introducing us to men whose past offered no hint they were destined for extraordinary things. For some, the Series was a memory to hold onto. For others, it would haunt them to the end of their days. And for us, Cook offers new insights-at once heartbreaking and uplifting-into what fame and glory truly mean.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“A wonderful book by someone who clearly loves the game and the seemingly small moments that cement that love. Bravo!--Ken Burns”  
“The 1947 World Series had everything: Joe DiMaggio and Jackie Robinson, Yankee Stadium and Ebbets Field. It went a full and fully dramatic seven games, with enduring legends in both dugouts. And yet, as so often happens in baseball, bit players jumped from the agate type into the headlines as well. Kevin Cook

offers a fine appreciation of the games, the subplots, and the personalities that made 1947 a true Fall Classic. --Bob Costas "[an] essential summer read... a fascinating deep dive into the unlikely characters that made the 1947 World Series between the Yankees and Dodgers a classic" --New York Post "Entertaining, well-researched history.... In profiling the lives of these six overlooked men, Cook reveals the complicated reality of baseball's golden era." --Publishers Weekly (starred review) "An impressively reported, smoothly written book" --Kirkus Reviews "[An] entertaining slice of baseball history." --Booklist "An outstanding collection of stories about men, about life and about one glorious World Series, it is one that all baseball readers should add to their libraries." --SportsBookGuy.com "Electric October is a great baseball story and a classic American tale, as the six hard-working men at the heart of the narrative seized the moment when fate called. Kevin Cook has crafted one of the best books you'll read this year." --James Bradley, author of *Flags of Our Fathers* and *The China Mirage* "The pleasures of *Electric October* are many: from the spectacle of a Babe Ruth popup to the insights of the boy-manager Bucky Harris; from the origin of the relief specialist to the inception of a signature radio call; from a famous running catch to a terrifying prank among teammates. You'll also learn how it feels to be fired because Kevin Cook reveals that disappointment, and what skilled men do with it, has defined baseball across its many years." --Nicholas Dawidoff, author of *The Catcher Was a Spy* and *The Crowd Sounds Happy* "The lives on the margins always have been far more interesting to me than the ones at the top of the sports page. That's what makes *Electric October* such a wonder. Six character actors named Snuffy and Cookie, Burt and Al, and Bill and Bucky have their leading-man moments during the implausible events of the 1947 World Series. There is magic here and we all get to share in it. Terrific." --Leigh Montville, author of *The Big Bam: The Life and Times of Babe Ruth* and *Sting Like a Bee: Muhammad Ali vs. the United States of America, 1966-1971* --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Kevin Cook is the author of the award-winning *Tommy's Honor* (the basis for the feature film), *Titanic Thompson*, *Kitty Genovese*, and *The Dad Report: Fathers, Sons, and Baseball Families*. He lives in Northampton, Massachusetts. Joe Barrett has been a working stage, screen, and recording booth actor since 1974 and an award-winning and eight-time Audie Award-nominated audiobook narrator since 1999. He also practiced law for five years-but don't hold that against him. Joe is married to actress Andrea Wright, and together they have four children.

As a born in Brooklyn fan of the Dodgers whose family actually moved

right along with the Dodgers the same year to Los Angeles. Although this series is a little before my time, I have not only studied in detail this series over half a century prior to this book's release, but I have old eight millimeter films my parents took at Ebbets Field (now converted to DVD) from the 1947 World Series. Crystal clear shots of Leo "The Lip" and beautiful Laraine Day clear as day in the stands as well as "The Old Mahatma" Branch Rickey and an extremely dark and beautifully exciting Jackie Robinson in the midst of heroically changing the world! The book is centered on six individuals. Brooklyn Manager Burt Shotton, Yankee Manager Bucky Harris, Floyd "Bill" Bevens (whose nickname "Bill" was from the time a fly ball hit him in the bill of his cap and landed in his glove) and was one out away from being the first pitcher in baseball history to pitch a no-hitter in the World Series, Cookie Lavagetto whose pinch hit double with two outs in the ninth broke up Bevens shot at immortality and won the game for the Brooklyn Bums and made Cookie the King of Brooklyn and got him free drinks throughout his remaining time on earth. And seldom used miniscule outfielder Al Gionfriddo who made one of the greatest catches in World Series history when he raced to the bullpen fence and robbed sullen Joe DiMaggio of a homerun thereby saving the game for the Dodgers. As history has shown as famous as the picture of Gionfriddo is up against the fence, the resulting photo of the great Dimag showing emotion by kicking the dirt on the basepaths in frustration is just as famous as DiMaggio never showed emotion. (Unless of course someone made him pay for his own drink!) The sixth individual the author highlights is Yankee George "Snuffy" Stirnweiss a batting champion during the war years when almost all the big stars were fighting in World War II so he felt he was never given his rightful recognition and carried around an inferiority complex along with his ulcers. Where I learned the most from this book is where AND what these players and managers came from. What made them who they were before the fate of the 1947 World Series called them out on center stage. Though Bucky Harris (A future Hall of Famer) once known as "The Boy Wonder" by leading the Washington Senators to their only World Championship as

a twenty-seven-year-old player manager. That was in Washington in 1924; this was New York in the first televised World Series. After the seven-game-drama that DiMaggio himself called "the most exciting World Series ever" the author follows each individual's life post World Series out of the spotlight; all of the players except Snuffy never played another big league game after the 1947 series and Snuffy's life ended early and tragically. The author weaves a well told tale as the reader is taken through the six men's lives beginning, middle and end. So when they ultimately leave this world there is a sadness.-----NOTE: One glaring error to any true BROOKLYN DODGER FAN on page 191 the author writes : "and brought up left-hander Carl Erskine from the minors. AS ANY TRUE-BLUE BROOKLYN DODGER FAN WOULD KNOW OUR BELOVED OISK WAS RIGHT HANDED ALL THE WAY!

I read this book in two sittings. It is a gem of a book if you are interested in baseball history. Author Kevin Cook chose the very memorable 1947 World Series with six of the influential members who achieved fame, however fleeting, in this fall classic. Bill Bevens, Al Gionfriddo, Cookie Lavagetto, Snuffy Stirnweiss, Burt Shotton, and Bucky Harris are the featured individuals. Author Cook introduces each of the notables during their growing up years and the difficult childhood they experienced. The Christmas present of one of them was to take one shot out of a B B gun. We also learn how Bill Bevens received his nickname of "Bill." The fan in Ebbets Field who serenaded his favorite player, Cookie Lavagetto. Bucky Harris and Burt Shotton leaders of their respective teams and their players thoughts of each of them. Shotton had to suddenly step into the Dodgers job when Durocher was suspended and be a calming influence with the coming of Jackie Robinson onto the team. The regret of one of the featured players was that he signed the petition against Robinson playing on the Dodgers. The book also includes a summary of each of the seven games of the 1947 World Series. I often find this to be difficult to get through in books but in this case the author made it interesting to me. We also get to know how different team members got along with one another. We are treated (?) to the bombastic roaring redhead, Larry MacPhail's drunken exit during the Yankees' celebration following their Series win. The book concludes with a review of each of the featured individuals and their life following the 1947 Series. Some went on to longer careers in

baseball as managers or coaches while others found the going to be difficult to remain in the game. The book contains sixteen pages of photos several of which I have not seen previously. If you enjoy baseball history this book belongs in your library. I've ordered four extra copies from , three for friends and one extra for myself.

Electric October is different than the other baseball histories I've read -- it concentrates on a handful of players who played in the 1947 World Series between the Brooklyn Dodgers and the New York Yankees. Not the names we all know, like Jackie Robinson and Joe DiMaggio (although they are also here), but the players who have been forgotten by all but the most avid fans of the era. Cookie Lavagetto, Al Gionfreddo, Snuffy Stirnweiss, and others. I had never heard of these guys, but Kevin Cook tells their stories so that you really get a sense of how they were integral to the teams, what it was like participating in such an exciting series, and how they got to be in the right place at the right time. Author Kevin Cook interviewed family members, combed through newspaper accounts, and watched and listened to surviving recordings of the games. One of the things that makes the book different is that it includes the stories of the men not only as baseball players, but as fathers and husbands, making them three dimensional and a little more human. And it's great to see an account of a team sport in which the stars are not the only players highlighted -- after all DiMaggio and the other stars didn't get to the Series by themselves.

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