

## Why Nero Wolfe Never Ages

From [Moonlight Detective Blog](#)

*"I don't know how a brain that is never used passes the time."*

- Nero Wolfe (The Final Deduction, 1961)

The attentive readers of Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin stories are likely to be familiar with the apparent immortality of the characters, whose aging processes seems to be have been in suspended animation during the period between their first recorded appearance in *Fer-de-Lace* (1934) until their final bow in *A Family Affair* (1975). This is most notable in *A Right to Die* (1964), in which a character from *Too Many Cooks* (1938) reappears and has morphed from a young adult into a middle aged man with a grown son. There's also the advent of technology in the later books – so time does, in fact, move on outside of the brownstone, but does seems to have had a very weak grip, if any, on its inhabitants.

What's the secret of their perpetual robustness and everlasting good looks? To be honest, I don't have a clue, however, I do have one or two theories to offer on this matter – and they make so much sense that I want to consider them as part of the corpus. But hey, I am open to rivaling theories. ;)

**Theory #1:** if you're a habitual visitant of the brownstone on West 35th Street, then you probably have noticed that not everyone lived to tell about it. There's an impressive list of people who drew their last breath in (and around) Wolfe's abode, which could mean that the fundamentals of the house rests on an ancient, sacrificial altar and needs a blood offer every now and then to appease some archaic God of Death – who resides on the greenhouse roof in the human guise of Wolfe's orchid nurse, Theodore.

**Theory #2:** taking Nero Wolfe's personality into consideration, it's also possible that he simply repudiates the idea that time is irretrievable and who couldn't envisage him looking up from a book to glare at a ticking clock and muttering, "pfui!" If the passage of time wants to encroach on Nero Wolfe's time it has to check with Archie Goodwin first to make an appointment – just like everyone else.

**Theory #3:** Wolfe's greenhouse roof is stuffed with plants and flowers imported from that mythical place high-up in Tibetan mountain region, Shangri-La, emanating fragrances that considerably slows down bodily decay and mental rot of the residents of that famous brownstone.

Yes, the next book in the queue just so happens to be an entry from the Wolfe and Goodwin series, which prompted me to post this. Now, if only I had a quiet moment to work my way through the first couple of chapters. Hmm. I'm afraid I just wasted such a moment on this nonsense. Oh, well.