



Lucia Rising

E.F. Benson

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Three of Benson's Lucia stories. "Queen Lucia" was published in 1920, "Miss Mapp" in 1922 and "Lucia in London" in 1927. They are much-loved novels of provincial snobbery and became a successful television series.

Lucia Rising Details

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Author : E.F. Benson

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From Reader Review Lucia Rising for online ebook

Amanda Fairchild says

Utterly divine and not at all tarsome.

D says

This volume contains 3 novels:

- Queen Lucia: An extremely funny story about a self-proclaimed leader of Riseholme's social life, Lucia. Although she claims to have many talents, among which speaking Italian, playing the piano etc., she has in fact none. And sometimes this shows, leading to hilarious scenes as when she was asked to translate for a visiting Italian composer. ****
- Miss Mapp: I disagree with Keith Carabine who wrote the introduction to the volume: I find 'Miss Mapp', while different in concept, even better than 'Queen Lucia'. Reads like P. G. Wodehouse, but with more elaborate plots. *****
- Lucia in London: How Lucia took on a bigger job, namely London social life. The author used a clever device, the 'Luciaphiles' to keep the protagonist from embarrassment. I thought it might be more of the same as 'Queen Lucia' but the story is subtly different and had me roaring with laughter again. *****

Richard Thomas says

Simply a delight of satire and fun. Who could not find the Lucia and Mapp books a joy to read and re-read? For once the TV adaptation was close to the books and the first from the BBC was by far the best with Geraldine McEwen and Prunella Scales as the protagonists.

Debbie says

Deliciously satirical and entertaining observations of the human condition!

Pramod Nair says

Delightful read for all fans of pleasant social satire. This volume, which contains 3 titles - Queen Lucia, Miss Mapp and Lucia in London – along with it's companion volume is a bargain to own for all those fans of the witty, malicious comedy which happens between Lucia and her archrival Ms Mapp.

Isabel says

I've read and re-read the Mapp and Lucia books for 40 years. They're my 'go-to' books for escape, relaxation and humour. My children grew up seeing these books always on my bedside table - and they're still there. They were so used to seeing me read them that when I met my daughter in Rye at the beginning of a 6 week trip through Europe, she arranged with the local Benson expert to give us a walking tour of 'Mapp and Lucia's Tilling' - even though it was off season and we were the only ones on the tour. Benson describes Tilling so well that when I finally got to Rye for the first time, I knew every street and lookout.

Zoella says

Witty, cheeky, very British. Hurrah!

Jennifer says

I enjoyed these 3 novels so much I'm actually putting off getting the next volume because I don't want to finish them too quickly! Absolutely wonderful.

T. Thurai says

Hilarious! A wonderful portrayal of small-town snobbery in the 1920s. Refined and lady-like, Lucia will nevertheless go to any lengths to assert her supremacy over her rivals - and no trick is too underhand for her (including stealing everyone else's good ideas!). Yet, despite her affectations and devious tricks, she enlivens her community. She's the sort of person you miss when she's not there, although her presence can be highly irritating to all. A wonderful read. Although written some time ago, you can still recognise the character types.

Added information: the town called Tilling that appears in later books is actually Rye in Sussex. The author E.F. Benson lived there in Lamb House - which also housed Henry James at one point. What a literary heritage! (You can get inside to see the ground floor and garden as it is run by the National Trust).

Webcowgirl says

An almost unbearable pleasure.

Linda says

If you live in Riseholme, England, you are a minion of Lucia (pronounced the Italian way), the Queen of Art and Culture. She controls the social network and has raised the poor little town to a degree of culture it has never known before. Any social event MUST have Lucia play the first movement of The Moonlight Sonata (she doesn't play the other two because they don't have the same 'mood' although her best friend Georgie knows they are actually too difficult for her!) and provide the requisite communal sigh (denoting the sheer

beauty of it). If music is provided (and it had better never be a grammaphone!), Lucia will sit in her "appreciative" pose of elbow on knee, leaning forward, chin resting on hand, eyes slightly unfocused so that you know she is concentrating on the beauty of the music. In short she is a small town tyrant. But a loveable one. In the first story in this edition, Queen Lucia, Lucia's reign is suddenly threatened by the arrival of an opera diva who, of course not understanding the dear inhabitants of Riseholme and their tastes, institutes free-for-all "play" evenings, plays music on the grammaphone and threatens Lucia's dominance in every way. Will Lucia be able to survive? Will she be replaced? Will Riseholme lose its cultural magnificence?

In the second story, Lucia in London, Lucia's husband's aunt dies and throws them into deep mourning (although they haven't seen her in the 7 years she's been in the asylum) AND into the ownership of a house in a nice section of London. Lucia has never made it a secret of her distaste of London and its hustle-bustle, mindless actions, etc. When she visits it, she always longs to return to "dear Riseholme" with its quiet and its culture. But now it appears that she is determined to move to London. Will she really go? Will she decided to stay? What will happen to the Hurst, her house in Riseholme? And who will take over the social programming?

Lucia's neighbors are a wonderful lot as well. Georgie (or Georgino, since they MUST speak Italian!) is not married, lives by himself, accompanies Lucia in her piano duets and embroiders. Mrs. Quantock, short and round, moves from one fad to the next - spiritualism, yoga, onion soup diets, you name it. Mrs. Antrobus who can't hear a thing in spite of her enormous ear trumpet. Mrs. Weston who rides all day in a bath chair, pushed by one servant or another at a breakneck speed around the town. And others too numerous to mention.

Another story on a different heroine, Miss Mapp, is included as well. Miss Mapp is around 40 and has her eye on the Major who lives just across the street. In more way than one. Miss Mapp has a bow window in her garden room from which she can watch the entire street to catch someone doing something he/she ought not. She is worried that her servants are using her phone for their own purposes, she MUST be the one who starts gossip spinning around town, can NEVER be wrong about what's happening in the town, and never hesitates to explain the the Major and the Captain how they must lead their lives.

In short, these two ladies typify English small town life between the Great War and the Great Depression. The humor is sharp, the characters all complicit, and the writing sweet. E. F. Benson is well worth reading.

Donald says

I feel this should count as 3 towards my Reading Challenge since it's an omnibus edition!

Lisa says

I keep this book by my bed always. I've read it multiple times, and I feel like I know the characters as well as I know my neighbors. This volume contains Books 1-3 of the "Lucia" Stories. How to describe? One of the FUNNIEST books I've ever read, certainly. It relates the tales of Lucia, a self-important, pretentious middle-aged poseur who strives to be the queen bee of her little village, Riseholme. She insists on speaking

butchered Italian (but knows only about 15 words -- when the Italian opera singer comes to town and they seat her next to Lucia at a luncheon, embarrassment ensues), always has to be the best at everything, and orders her best friend Georgie (a confirmed bachelor with an interest in petitpoint embroidery) around as her minion. They are always getting into sticky situations and trying to preserve their top standing in the neighborhood. She does everything for show, nothing because she actually means it. Everyone else in the village is totally onto her, but she lives with rose-colored glasses on and is convinced that everyone adores her.

After you read this, read "Lucia Victrix" where Lucia meets a nemesis who's up to playing her dastardly games of oneupmanship, Miss Elizabeth Mapp.

Amanda says

The older I get, the more convinced I am that humor is a completely neglected genre. Not enough people celebrate the ridiculous. Lucia and all the people of Riseholme and Tilling are ridiculous in the extreme, and Lucia's feud with Olga is better than Elizabeth Bennett and Katherine deBourgh.

msjoonee says

It's a shame E.F. Benson only wrote 6 Lucia books! Good thing they are all available in 2 yummy volumes! Lucia and her archrival Ms Mapp are hands down two of the funniest, most malicious enemies to ever see print. Multiple rereadings of this book have not made it any less funny!
