



Rumpole of the Bailey

John Mortimer

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Rumpole of the Bailey is a British television series created and written by the British writer and barrister John Mortimer. It stars Leo McKern as Horace Rumpole, an ageing London barrister who defends any and all clients. The original show has been spun off into a series of short stories, novels, and radio programmes.

Rumpole of the Bailey Details

Date : Published February 28th 1980 by Penguin Books (first published 1978)

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Author : John Mortimer

Format : Paperback 208 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Humor, Short Stories, Crime



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From Reader Review Rumpole of the Bailey for online ebook

Susan says

So funny.

Leslie says

Rating for this audiobook edition, 4★ for the book itself.

About the book:

These vignettes hover between crime and humor. Rumpole is much more concerned with getting a favorable verdict than he is in finding or knowing the truth, yet in his somewhat bumbling way he does manage to figure out the rights of things.

I had forgotten how much Rumpole and Erskine-Brown opposed each other. E-B really is a toad in the book. I was first exposed to Rumpole through the BBC/PBS TV series and they must have toned down Erskine-Brown.

Speaking of the TV show brings me to the narration. Frederick Davidson does an OK job but the voice of Rumpole in my head is still that of the actor from the TV series -- even while listening to someone else! So Davidson's narration ended up being a disappointment. However, if you don't have the TV show stuck in your brain, this would be a very good narration.

Hapzydeco says

As one reviewer once said, "Rumpole is hilarious brain candy". After reading this collection of stories and chuckling aloud you will probably nod your head in agreement.

Nimbex says

Me ha gustado y ojalá Impedimenta edite otros libros de la serie. Las historias no tienen mucha intriga, son más legales que detectivescas pero son entretenidas, agradables de leer y muy british.

Jen says

This is a collection of short stories about an English lawyer named Horace Rumpole. His "speciality" is defending criminals, and his colleagues often give him a hard time about his refusal to take any other types of cases. He refers to his wife as "She Who Must Be Obeyed" and seems to rather dislike his home life.

I had a hard time with the humor in this collection. Some of it was chuckle-worthy, but mostly I found myself groaning or rolling my eyes. The “She Who Must Be Obeyed” line was cute the first couple times it was used, but I was past tired of it by the final story.

Each of the short stories was rather predictable. You essentially knew what the outcome was going to be.

Rumpole struck me as a curmudgeon, full of self-pity. He’s also a rather flat character. He makes little change throughout the stories. He seems to resent others’ success even though he makes no attempt to change his own station. And his son Nick seemed to be following in his footsteps; even Nick's wife seemed to be a carbon-copy of his mother.

This is the first in the Rumpole series, but I won't be pursuing any of the other books.

Helen says

Applies to all of the Rumpole Series' Books:

How do you describe Horace Rumpole? A funny, drunk portly old British barrister, wed to She-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, and all that ensues in following along in his endless travails.

I stumbled on this series at the recommendation of my friend Liz years ago and devoured every book in it that same week.

Many are out of print now; go to your local library and get your Rumpole fix that way - well worth it!

Mientras Leo says

Me ha gustado, sobre todo la ambientación en los años sesenta que no me la esperaba, me sorprendió muchísimo

<http://entremontonesdelibros.blogspot...>

Cyndi says

Good British humor! Rumpole is sarcastic and fun to read.

Elaine says

Any Rumpole book is funny, sad, very well written, and just plain GOOD. Even the videos are great. Good doesn't always prevail. The bad guys are often hard to spot. The main characters are horribly flawed, but you really care about them. I read these books over and over because even if you know how they end, they're still good. Oh, I forgot to mention that they're all short stories linked together with Horace Rumpole, a lawyer in England, his wife, Hilda (he calls her "She Who Must Be Obeyed"), the people Rumpole works with, and the

people Rumpole defends in court. John Mortimer, the author, is an ex-attorney, so there's nothing fake about the stories. He is a great writer--he did the screen play for the Brideshead Revisited miniseries. What else can I say? You need to give this book a try.

Kathryn Ness says

Oh, my old friend, Rumpole! How I love him and all the delightful characters so well portrayed by Mortimer. I adore Rumpole's recitation of poetry for all situations, his kindheartedness to his petty and often scheming colleagues and his brilliant defense of all the Timson family. Hilda, or "She Who Must Be Obeyed" is his long-suffering and ambitious wife who is often disgusted by Rumpole's antics and lack of career ambition. I always wonder if Rumpole and Hilda love each other or are they just in the habit of being together? Most of all, I love that Rumpole can laugh at himself. The PBS series starring Leo McKern was faithful to the books almost to each word uttered, and McKern was the perfect portrayer of Rumpole. I loved these stories so much that when I was London a few years ago, I had to visit the "Old Bailey."

Angie Shere says

Very entertaining and humorous-perfect for listening to as an audio book. As I had previously watched this as a series on BBC I was familiar with the characters, but I enjoyed getting reacquainted.

Dean says

I love Rumpole. I read all the books starting approximately 29 years ago. Just as good now.

Graham Powell says

This was my first Rumpole book, and I have to say I'm going back for more. RUMPOLE OF THE BAILEY is a set of linked short stories, cataloging six of barrister Horace Rumpole's cases. The exact details are not particularly important, it's the tone and the style which carry the day. First of all, these stories are extremely funny, funny in that scathing British way. But they're also more than that - there is a strong vein of social criticism running through them, and in many of them a feeling of great sadness.

So, great fun but at the same time some real heft. I greatly enjoyed these stories and would recommend the book to anyone.

Tweedledum says

Rumpole is a great great character and his stories are always full of wit and gentle humour. Rumpole cares deeply about justice and has a true understanding of the importance of a fair trial. Yet he hides his passion under a gruff exterior. John Mortimer created in Rumpole a lawyer who constantly reminds us why our legal

system must never be undermined.

"Whenever I feel down I turn to Rumpole. "

Shawn says

Funny. Charming. And the legal stuff is insightful and done with an extremely light touch. This is the first of 15 story collections or full-length novels. I will be reading more of these ...

Jason Koivu says

Rumpole of the Bailey is former barrister (lawyer) John Mortimer's first crack at fictionalizing his former life. His hero, Horace Rumpole, toils down at London's Old Bailey defending morally tarnished persons, who usually didn't "do it" ...at least not this time around.

This is a batch of humor to lighten the soul with a sprinkle of pathos for real world problems. Mortimer writes in a breezy, almost Wodehousian way, substituting the care-free, silly bachelor for a more curmudgeonly, sly near-retiree. But while Rumpole may be a bit grumpy with his colleagues and wife, and though he defends criminals, he is a thoroughly sympathetic character. Mortimer knows his boundaries and stays within them. He can also be relied upon to tell a satisfying tale competently.

I could've given this five stars, I enjoyed it that much. And there's hardly anything to complain about it. I didn't give a perfect score because it's a collection of light comedy, short stories and so for that reason alone it doesn't seem worthy of 5 stars. That's terribly unfair of me, I know, but it's how I feel right now. It's probably not how I've felt in the past, nor undoubtedly will it be how I feel in the future. It's a funny world, isn't it?

Kara says

Fantastically funny with great characters.

Nora says

This was the book that started it all, that introduced Rumpole and many of the regular cast of characters (although over the years more characters were added and some left the series), including his wife, Hilda (better known as She Who Must Be Obeyed, or sometimes just referred to as She), the hapless Claude Erskine Brown, Guthrie Featherstone, Phillida Trant (later to become Phillida Erskine-Brown), Old Tom, and the infamous Timson Family (a wide ranging group of not very competent criminals who are always getting arrested for something, and who almost invariably take Rumpole as their barrister).

There was a television series based on these stories, and it was quite good, but really the stories themselves are better, because it's Rumpole's first person narration that brings his world to life, the world of a modern

day "Old Bailey Hack" as he refers to himself, a cunning barrister who never pleads guilty (well, almost never), who does almost nothing but criminal defense at the bar and maneuvers and manipulates his fellow barristers in chambers.

Rumpole is a lovable character, a man of high ideals and great common sense, who smokes bad cigars, drinks even worse claret (Chateau Thames Embankment, he calls it), quotes Shakespeare and Wordsworth, and usually gets to the bottom of his cases and, if he doesn't actually get his clients acquitted, will usually get them justice. The stories are intricate and funny, even if you've never been closer to a courtroom than watching television or the movies. However, if you have any familiarity with the law (and there are interesting differences between English and American law that Rumpole makes clear), the stories take on another level of amusement. Really a wonderful series, and an excellent introduction to the characters and the setting.

Jim Becker says

Just funny. I listened to the stories in the book while out running. The miles just flow by without me being aware of them. Ahhhh...

LJ says

RUMPOLE OF THE BAILEY (Legal-Horace Rumpole-England-Cont) – Good
Mortimer, John – Short Stories
Penguin Books, 1978, UK Paperback – ISBN: 0140046704

First Sentence: I, Horace Rumpole, barrister at law, 68 next birthday, Old Bailey Hack, husband to Mrs. Hilda Rumpole (known to me only as She Who Must Be Obeyed) and father to Nicholas Rumpole (lecturer in social studies at the University of Baltimore, I have always been extremely proud of Nick); I, who have a mind full of old murders, legal anecdotes and memorable fragments of old murders, legal anecdotes and memorable fragments of the Oxford book of English Verse...

*** This first book in the Rumpole series introduces the barrister, his wife, Hilda, and three of his cases.

*** Rumpole is the consummate English character; he's lord of his courtroom but serf to his wife in his home. The sobriquet of "She Who Must Be Obeyed" is amusing the first couple references but wears thin quickly, although it suits the character. However, I enjoyed the character and the supporting characters around him. I thoroughly enjoyed his penchant for quotations, particularly those of Wordsworth. The stories were entertaining. I like British humor. The hardest part for me is that they were short stories, of which I'm not a particular fan, so there's less character development, arc and dimension. I enjoyed the book, but I actually like the television series better.
