

## THE BODECIA BOOK CLUB REVIEW

### Jump! by Jilly Cooper

I have heard some people call Jilly Cooper Queen of the Bonkbuster!! Having been brought up with Christine Pullien-Thompson books as a child we progressed to the mistress of horsey books and got to know the dashing rugged underdog Jake Lovell and that darned smooth womaniser Rupert Campbell Black and eagerly followed their exploits.

The ladies of book club dressed accordingly and came to the meeting dressed for National Hunt racing in suitable hats and fascinators. Suitably suited and booted we got into the gritty discussion of is it up to the Cooper standard of sexual intrigue! Unfortunately we agreed that Jump did not live up to the other Cooper books and we had to read three quarters in until we got some! Which when we got there after a hefty up hill climb was not the reward we wanted. I do suppose though that it has been a few years since we last saw the heroes, and both Jakey and Rupert C-B are now getting on a bit! Jilly Cooper herself when asked if she finds it easy to write about sex replied "I don't think I can do it any more. In *Jump!* I thought I ought to try and tackle elderly sex but I did find it very difficult. I just think I was a bit tired and it's quite difficult to write sex scenes when you're tired."

However the book covered all the bases, with politics, terrorism, and ageism and of course the animals.

Jump! is – in terms of surroundings at least – a return to form. "Cooper's descriptions of the glorious Cotswold countryside are some of the most lyrical ever written". Jump! is a story of a widow who saves an injured horse and is immersed in National Hunt racing.

The heroine, Etta Bancroft is an under-confident 60 something granny, dreamy, sweet-faced and wildly fond of animals. When her awfully horrible husband dies, she's forced by her selfish children to sell her beautiful house and become the unpaid nanny to their ghastly brats. Drifting about in the woods one night, she discovers a horrifically injured filly and nurses her back to health. Mrs Wilkinson, as she's soon named, turns out to be a startlingly talented racehorse, and despite having lost an eye is soon charging her way round Cheltenham and Aintree, the village syndicate who have invested in her follow drunkenly in her glory.

There are a lot of characters in the book, who else starts a novel with an 11-page dramatis personae of all 83 characters, plus every dog and horse? This should be a sign that it is such a heavy tome, you just know that you are going to have to refer to when you forget who someone is! This did lead to some confusion over characters, both two and the four legged variety!

We wanted to scream the obvious at the characters and to get Etta to stand up to her children who, in our minds were bordering on abuse. We all kind of knew that a Jilly Cooper book was going to have a sweet ending, so was quite predictable to that fact and lived up to it.

We finished off the evening by all wanting to own a one eyed race horse and go to the races! Unfortunately for us it was back to the real world of work and kids, leaving a distant memory of the equine aristocracy!

A good read to get away to the Cotswolds and dream of owning huge houses and horses!

We gave Jump! **5 / 10**

The book we are now reading is **Dead Simple by Peter James**

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**Don't forget the first rule of Book Club!**