



# Rumpole on Trial

*John Mortimer*

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## **Rumpole on Trial** John Mortimer

As Rumpole wends his way from court to wine bar and to the matrimonial home in Froxbury Mansions, listeners find their hero jousting with the Devil as he defends eight-year-old Tracy Timson against the dire threats of the local authority, is wooed by a beautiful violin player, watches Sam Ballard peer into the future, and appears before the Disciplinary Tribunal of the Bar Council.

## **Rumpole on Trial Details**

Date : Published December 1st 1993 by Penguin (first published July 2nd 1992)

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Author : John Mortimer

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# From Reader Review Rumpole on Trial for online ebook

## Lucy Fisher says

I love Rumpole, so why did I give the book only three stars? This is a late collection, and I'm guessing most of the stories were written after the TV series ended. I only recall seeing Rumpole and the Children of the Devil on the box. I'm a Rumpole superfan and completist, so I must have read the stories before, but some seemed unfamiliar. The one about Hilda's titled (distant) relatives is longer than usual, and Rumpole and the Soothsayer much shorter. As another reviewer pointed out, in most of the stories (and TV episodes) "the main trial, office politics, and home life all have a linked theme". The Soothsayer treats only of the trial of a spiritualist for fraud.

Mortimer's prose is always a joy to read. Some have damned him with faint praise - "almost as good as Wodehouse" - but to me he is in the best tradition of English humour. In his life at the bar he fought for freedom, and better conditions for prisoners (as head of the Howard League for Prison Reform - disparaged by his characters as a bunch of bleeding-hearts).

Here as in his other books (and the series) he uses Rumpole to highlight causes he cared about: the strange and cruel habit of upper-class Brits of sending their small children (aged seven) away to punitive boarding schools. Also conditions in prisons - at least the sanitation has improved.

Mortimer was a libertarian, and he enjoys poking fun at "Ms" Liz Probert with her feminist jargon. Nobody really talked like that in general conversation, but the abstract language of "male stereotypes" sounds familiar. Liz was brilliantly played in the TV version by Samantha Bond.

Perhaps I should give the book another star. Only the "Soothsayer" episode strikes a false note. It is the same old story of the fake medium who has real powers, much to his appalled surprise. Perhaps.

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## Plum-crazy says

Really enjoyed these tales. Timothy West's voice is of the same timbre as Leo McKern's so it was very reminiscent of the tv series.....he even sounded like *she-who-must-be-obeyed* :o)

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## Simon says

A treat. Something to look forward to. Intelligent, entertaining and very funny.

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## Eugene says

Good old Rumpole. If you're a fan, these books are endlessly satisfying; and with Mr. Mortimer's passing, I'm thrilled that there's a few I've yet to read. RUMPOLE ON TRIAL was a real joy; late in the game, an older, somewhat more reflective Rumpole has the power to charm us and make us want to share a bottle of

Chateau Thames Embankment with him, perhaps at Pommeroy's Wine Bar, or his Froxbury Mansion flat with Wife Hilda safely away with old school chum Dody, while Horace regales us with another tale of his clashes with Judge Bullingham or Soapy Sam Ballard.

I say, let's crack another bottle of plonk, shall we? And let us raise a glass to the immortal Horace Rumpole. Ave atque vale!

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### **Trish Tomes says**

I really do not know how to classify the books/audio/film episode of Rumpole's cases. The whole of his Inn, the Chamber of his law firm, the silks, the judges, his wife, "She Who Must Be Obeyed", those he defends seem to pop up in every case, so it is a serial story of the cases he represents. Rumpole is an honest, down-to-earth barrister who is just plain fun, entertaining to listen to or read.

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### **Damaskcat says**

A collection of seven stories featuring Horace Rumpole and colleagues - Phyllida Erskine-Brown now a judge; her husband, Claude still trying to become a QC and have an extra-marital affair without being caught; Mizz Liz Probert, the radical young lawyer and 'Soapy' Sam Ballard the head of chambers. Not to speak of 'She Who Must Be Obeyed' AKA Hilda Rumpole, the indefatigable Timson family who keep Rumpole in bread and butter and 'Bonny' Bernard, their solicitor who always gives Rumpole his cases.

I think this is one of the best collections of Rumpole stories though it is currently only available second hand and not available at all as an e-book. I've always been especially fond of 'Rumpole and the Eternal Triangle' which is much more serious and poignant than many Rumpole stories and which sees him emerge from the case a sadder and wiser man. I also love 'Rumpole and the Soothsayer' with its neat twist at the end.

If you can get hold of a copy of this book then I guarantee that if you love Rumpole you will not be disappointed.

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### **Julie Davis says**

Book Bingo #5 - A Book That is More Than 10 Years Old

Now, that's no problem for me. However, I let the decision wait for a few days. Then rearranging and cleaning out books I came across my collection of Rumpole books. I hadn't picked them up for some time, being familiar with the solutions to most of the mysteries.

When dipping into them now I remembered the other reason for reading these delightful short stories. John Mortimer's style and Rumpole's personality are so engaging that it really doesn't matter if one knows the solution. These stories transport you to a different time with a rumpled knight in shining armor who just wants to get on with doing the one thing he may be able to control ... his job in getting various villains (and sometimes an innocent person) off of their legal charges.

What a joy it is to pick up this book at bedtime and dip into it before dropping off to sleep.

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### **Lucy Takeda says**

I enjoyed the series on BBC decades ago. This is a collection of short stories about the down to Earth barrister ( I think!) dealing with the challenges of the court system and She Who Must Be Obeyed. He loves his crummy wine. He has a certain respect for his extensive clients. He is eccentric! This collection includes a story about " the woman" ala Sherlock Holmes, someone stealing evidence from Rumpole's house, and a family feud involving devil worship. Highly enjoyable!

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### **Srivani says**

Rumpole never disappoints.

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### **Dorothy says**

This is a volume of short stories in the Rumpole of the Bailey series and is very enjoyable. John Mortimer cleverly pokes fun of the British legal system and the characters who inhabit the Inns of Court in London. A great light read and ably narrated in this audio version by Timothy West

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### **Ross says**

Nothing cheers me up like reading Rumpole, even the second or third time. The authenticity of the character could only have been conjured up by Mortimer from his years of experience as a barrister and QC. The humour is incisive and sophisticated (replete with morcels of literary allusion), but in inimitable Rumpole style (just audible asides in the courtroom), is crude when provoked. In Mortimer's hands sarcasm is elevated to the highest form of humour. The irreverent, insubordinate wisdom of Rumpole is a guaranteed cure for depression, but manifestly not a cure for cynicism about the judicial process. So, settle down with a bottle of red and enjoy this one again.

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### **Laura says**

*From BBC Radio 4 Extra:*

John Mortimer's two part Radio 4 Rumpole story brings us the magician of the Old Bailey at his implacable best as he defends our ancient freedoms, while remaining uneasy about exactly what his wife Hilda is up to in her continuing friendship with a high court judge

ASBOs may be the pride and joy of new Labour, but they don't cut much ice with Horace Rumpole; he takes

the old fashioned view that if anyone is going to be threatened with a restriction of their liberty then some form of meaningful legal procedure ought to be put in place.

Not that Hilda agrees of course, but she's too busy completing her memoirs and planning a radical new career to dissuade him from taking an interest when one of the Timson children is given an ASBO for playing football in the street. And if that wasn't enough, Rumpole's colleagues have voiced some rather prudish objections to the small cigars and glasses of red wine he enjoys in his room in Chambers. They may even slap an ASBO on him, which won't help his cause of being appointed a QC at long last!

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### **Clifton Campbell says**

Great read. Watched the television series but the books are so much more enjoyable!

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### **Jeff Crompton says**

John Mortimer's Rumpole books are consistently excellent; I particularly enjoyed the title story here, in which Rumpole is brought up before the Bar Council's Disciplinary Tribunal on charges he is not particularly inclined to fight.

If this is a four-star entry in the series rather than a five-star volume, it's because it doesn't capture the sadness of Rumpole's life as well as some of the other books, funny as they all are. Horace Rumpole is only really alive when he's addressing the jury or arguing with a judge; the first volume in the series, *Rumpole of the Bailey*, captures that quality as well as any of them.

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### **Jill Hutchinson says**

I love the Rumpole books and this one is no exception. A collection of short stories which feature all the denizens of the Inns of Court, some of the recurring shady characters that Rumpole is so fond of defending and his wife She Who Must Be Obeyed. You can't go wrong with lovable, grumpy Rumpole.....he will make you smile and laugh out loud. A very endearing character in a very endearing series.

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