



Three Men on the Bummel

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Conceived as a fairly serious guide to amateur boating on the Thames in 1889, Jerome K. Jerome's best-known novel ended up as a hilarious account of the misadventures of three friends and a dog as they attempt to relax and enjoy themselves amid unreliable weather forecasts, imaginary illnesses, repellent cooking, and an unopenable can of pineapple chunks. *Three Men in a Boat* was a terrific success for its author, and a surprisingly accurate portrayal of the age. George, Harris, and J., the narrator, were entertaining representatives of the new middle class, seeking to escape the dreary world of offices and desks during weekend trips out into the countryside. Jerome's heroes proved so popular that he brought them back for an equally picaresque bicycle tour of Germany, an adventure recorded in *Three Men on the Bummel*. The new Introduction by Jeremy Lewis describes the social context of the two books and the remarkable life of their author.

Three Men on the Bummel Details

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Author : Jerome K. Jerome

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From Reader Review Three Men on the Bummel for online ebook

Santhosh says

While this is a decent enough book by itself, it does suffer in unfavourable comparison with *Three Men in a Boat*. The first book had some fantastic setpieces and a line of funny anecdotes, both of which are relatively fewer in this one. Those few, mind you, still do the job in making this a fairly enjoyable read in that understated, self-deprecating and pompously funny way that the first book was so popular for.

There are quite a few long passages, though, that read more like a travelogue trying too hard to be funny. It describes 19th century Germany in what's supposed to be an exaggerated tone playing up to the common stereotypes of the age, but doesn't quite come off as funny enough often enough.

Verdict: Fairly good read, but could have done with more anecdotes. And the dog!

Henry Avila says

Before our little jaunt into yesteryear, I must confess ... miss the irreplaceable dog, and his charismatic presence ...this sequel to , *Three Men in a Boat*, a hilarious story, lacks the foward charge of the indomitable animal, (more human than many) where is the fearless leader , Montmorency ? *Three Men on the Bummel* (stroll) has our good friends a decade later, older but not wiser, yes fatter, richer but still eager to get away again, from dear, cold England. A pleasant adventurous bicycle trip, around Germany they plan, particularly the ominous, nevertheless interesting Black Forest of mystery and myth. J. and Harris are married, their wives show no disinclination, to the idea in fact, they secretly welcome it, a pleasurable break a vacation too, for the spouses and children of the unlovable, if truth be told men... Sounds real nice, the two must be annoying husbands. Still George the bachelor, has only an old aunt, who cares... the trio, after the usual long discussions , useless talk and the procrastinating, finally get under way, two bicycles and three men, no problem, one is a tandem bicycle, they'll switch often to keep themselves fresh (it's a solemn agreement). Arriving by boat, in Hamburg, then Hanover and later going to intriguing Berlin...Staying in hotels and inns, farmer's foul barns if nothing else is available, imagine the rather strange smells , they encounter still the animals don't mind the boys, too much though...In the famous and illustrious capital of the nation, the men are quite disappointed, with the city no grandeur exists, a plain, ordinary metropolis . Germany has clean towns, somewhat humdrum, but they're fascinated by the German people, law abiding, citizens, following the rules set by their superiors, mostly the police. These men are god- like, to them, never would they dare, to disobey, the children (boys), all want to become mighty policemen...The reserved Germans, polite and remote to foreigners , love eating and drinking, becoming often so drunk, the revelers need just a little help... to get home. Even boisterous students are encouraged to do the same, a long tradition, gladly followed by the boys, at the universities. Sword dueling a tradition in school clubs , students are happiest when they receives bloody scars on the face, proud to show his friends, basking in their admiration, the girls flock to him, he is brave, a real man...In the legendary Black Forest, the clueless trio become very lost indeed, can't tell which way is north or south, or east or west, neither. Exhausted, climbing a steep hill, to get their bearings, embarrassed, seeing the village, the men just left a short time ago , yet try again the same galling results, the magical village appears once more. Hour after hour of hiking, they can't find a route out a storm comes, thunder and lightning , the rains pour down and the soaked men seeking shelter under a tree, cold and wet, miserable...The curious owner of the nearby restaurant wonders why, they didn't come in from the downpour. Better go get the odd strangers, Englishmen...everyone says , on the continent, are all mad!

Riku Sayuj says

The Bummel provides too few laughs in comparison to The Boat (say one laugh for every ten pages, instead of ten laughs for every page).

Besides, the linear narrative does not agree with the three men. Yes, the anecdotes were missed (to say nothing of the dog).

Trish says

This is the second book about the three London-based friends going on an adventure. This time, some years have passed since the boat trip, the dog is no longer with them, and two of them are married.

It's all about escaping, once again, and romping through a countryside without having the first clue but being convinced one is an expert and all others are idiots.

Thus, the three embark upon a journey to and through Germany. Their route is weird if one knows the country and not all statements are correct (Münster, for example, is neither in the Black Forest nor Alsatia) but it's not about accuracy anyway.

On their way from Hamburg via Berlin and Hannover to Constance and other places, they have the usual hilarious encounters. This time made even more funny by the usual prejudices about the nation-without-humour, a lack linguistic skills and their general almost endearing idiocy.

I couldn't enjoy the narration of this audiobook as much as the first but that might also have to do (in part) with the fact that I had to listen to this at a slower speed. The humour and mishaps, however, were as great as in the first book, this time made even a tad more enjoyable because I am German and therefore know which of the prejudices was absolutely correct so I sometimes burst out laughing. And there was some dog there near the end after all.

Oh, and the word "Bummel" is German and is not what the narrator says in the end. *lol* It's basically strolling around and looking at everything while doing so, with time to spare (or not caring about time). Most often associated with a shopping spree.

Rebecca says

Jerome's digressive style can be amusing in small doses, but this book is almost nothing *but* asides. I did enjoy the parts that most closely resemble a travelogue of the cycle trip through Germany, but these are drowned under a flood of irrelevant memories and anecdotes. I much preferred Diary of a Pilgrimage.

Vimal Thiagarajan says

At a time when I desperately needed to inject some raw humour into my depressed system, I was fortunate enough to read JKJ's *Three Men in a Boat*. And when the need arose again last week, I knew where to look. That wry and dry British wit, that subliminal sarcasm, that hysterically comical narration, all in unlimited supply again. But underlying all the riotous humour, there are a lot of passages which clearly indicate how profound a guy Jerome really was. Most of the digs he takes at the Germans throughout the book were accurate British sentiments of the pre-war times. The real spine-chilling moment for me came in the final chapter when Jerome accurately predicted what could go wrong with the German way of social functioning which can lead to a global catastrophe - the book was published in 1898, a good 15 years before WW1 and 40 years before WW2!

Suzannah says

This was not just almost as funny as the first book; it was also FASCINATING in a lot of ways that I totally didn't expect. Can't wait to review this one! ...someday, when I have the time.

Evgeny says

In this book we revisit the old friends introduced in *Three Men in a Boat* (minus the dog, unfortunately). They are much older and married now - J. and Harris that is, George is still a bachelor. The three men decided they need a change in their lives yet again. This time they go on a bicycle trip in Germany's Black Forest; hilarity ensues.

The novel failed to repeat the charm and the humor of the first one. People familiar with *Three Men in a Boat* remember the constant change of subject by the narrator. These side stories were short, funny, and to the point. The first third of this novel has the same structure, but the side stories became bigger and lost their focus somewhat. The humor is still there, but to a lesser degree. After this part a big rambling of the author comes out from nowhere; it goes on and on endlessly. By the time it is over, the narration lost all its steam. It tries to pick up again, but never quite does - not to the level of the first part of the book. The ending was very abrupt, even for this kind of literature.

The major part of the book is taken by author's satirical description of Germany. It is funny at times and some of the prediction are very close to the things to come later, but on the whole it felt like an Englishman was laughing at German culture and customs without having a clue about them and coming out like he is full of it. From what I know I never had a German person among my ancestors (I do have several German friends); I was not offended by this part, but I was feeling kind of awkward.

Is the book worth reading? If you thought the first one was simply OK, the answer is no. If you like the former, then by all means read this one, it still has its moments: the misadventures of the friends on the road which is "impossible to miss" instantly comes to mind. For people wondering what bummel means: it is just a fancy name for a journey.

This review is a copy/paste of my BookLikes one: <http://gene.booklikes.com/post/975026...>

Joe says

Although less popular than *Three Men on a Boat* (which is known to at least 40 people), *Bummel* is much much better. More compact and less rambling, it actually seemed more like a travelogue instead of a stream of consciousness rendering of Jerome Jerome's mind. Portions were laugh-out-loud funny, and the slow bits were fewer and further between than *Boat*. Gun to my head, if I had to recommend one to read to say you've read it, go for *Boat*... but if I had to recommend one to read because it's more fun, read *Bummel*.

Beth says

As a followup to the more brilliant *Three Men on a Boat* (To Say Nothing of the Dog), Jerome K. Jerome's three dimwitted Englishmen go on a bike trip to Germany, and silliness ensues. The author reminds me of a Jerry Seinfeld, able to see absurdity in everyday life. Never mind that it was written in 1900; his comments on bicycling, Germans, marriage, and tourism remain true, and make one want to call up friends and force them to listen to you read the best bits aloud.

For example, when one fellow is dreaming of finding the perfect bicycle seat, the other tells him, "'You give up that idea; this is an imperfect world of joy and sorrow mingled. There may be a better land where bicycle saddles are made out of rainbow, stuffed with cloud; in this world the simplest thing is to get used to something hard.'"

Ot, in discussing the charms of Stuttgart: "It has the additional attraction of containing little that one need to go out of one's way to see: a medium-sized pictures gallery, a small museum of antiquities, and half a palace, and you are through with the entire thing and can enjoy yourself."

Sairam Krishnan says

Hilarious. Rip-roaringly hilarious. Had been meaning to read this one after '*Three Men and a Boat*', but only now have I managed to do it.

Granted, the original is drop-dead funny, but this one doesn't disappoint either. My landlord must have been pretty concerned with my quite frequent outbursts of laughter today! Jerome K. Jerome is a master at that old favorite - pompous British prose, through the lens of which even normal everyday events seem alarmingly funny.

George and Harris are their usual selves, and 1900s Germany comes to life, though in an understated way, and the book could be seen as a portrait of pre-war life in Europe.

Goes on my list of all-time favorites and will have to endure several re-reads..!

Ashish says

The book had tremendous potential, especially as it was building up on the hilariously great book "Three men in a boat" as we revisit the characters and what new shenanigans they are getting themselves into this time around. Sadly, this doesn't really take off like in the previous books, and while it has its moments, they don't match up to the previous book. It's more observational in its humour, playing on cultural differences rather than the more situational humour of the first part. Not a bad read at all, but the sheer expectations from it turned out to be its bane.

Lizixer says

Highly enjoyable and very funny (especially if you are a history geek) comic novel that satirises beautifully the Edwardian craze for cycling as well as giving a fascinating insight into how the English viewed the new young state of Germany. The book is really a series of sketches and observations, some like the throwing things at cats and the German attitude to grass are laugh out loud moments, others strike you as wry and strangely modern observations on such things as young children's habit of getting up at the crack of dawn or the limitations of journalism. I also learned after whom the cartoon cat and mouse Tom and Jerry were named thanks to a line in this book.

Near the end, there is a chill for the modern reader on reading J.K.J.'s warning about the direction Germany could go in if they were governed by bad rulers.

A good piece of Edwardian comic writing well worth whiling away an afternoon reading seated in a deckchair with a glass of cold lemonade.

Diabolika says

Continuazione un po' meno divertente di *Three Men in a Boat*, con gli stessi protagonisti in viaggio nella Foresta Nera.

Si trovano meno aneddoti sulle loro disavventure ma tante considerazioni, ironiche e sarcastiche, sul popolo e sulla società tedesca.

I giudizi (o pregiudizi) che gli inglesi hanno verso i tedeschi, letti da un'italiana, sono quanto meno interessanti... ;-)

Praj says

"A 'Bummel', " I explained, "I should describe as a journey, long or short, without an end; the only thing regulating it being the necessity of getting back within a given time to the point from which one started..... But long or short, but here or there, our thoughts are ever on the running of the sand..... We have been much interested, and often a little tired. But on the whole we have had a pleasant time, and are sorry when 'tis over."

This closing passage sums up my precise sentiments for this book. The book primarily deals with distinctive and entertaining experiences of three friends (Jerome, Harris and George), while on a cycling tour throughout Germany. Often when you read a sequel after the parent book, one cannot help but to evaluate the two. Overlooking my resistance to do so, I have to disclose that this book fails to capture the enchantment and exuberance of 'Three Men in a Boat'. Nevertheless, it should not be dismissed easily!

While the opening sections are a bit loose and floppy; in time the narrative does gather the lost spark with the onset of the bicycle tour. And, then it's a vortex of humor and satire that swoops the reader into the perils of touring a foreign land. The comical vignettes slowly fabricate into a satirical euphoria that Jerome is known to produce. Several comical confrontations between George and Jerome bring back the lost smile and cheer. One such episode needs a mention:-

George:-*"Why, in Germany, is it the custom to put the letter-box up a tree? Why do they not fix it to the front door as we do? I should hate having to climb up a tree to get my letters. Besides, it is not fair to the postman. In addition to being most exhausting, the delivery of letters must to a heavy man, on windy nights, be positively dangerous work."*

(Jerome): *"I followed his gaze out of window."* I said,

Jerome:-*"Those are not letter-boxes, they are birds' nests. You must understand this nation. The German loves birds, but he likes tidy birds."*

The subtle glee shown in the exploration of a new land by three outsiders and numerous other similar anecdotes keeps you glued and entertained till the end.

'Three Men on a Bummel' is firmly not an afterthought of 'Three Men in a Boat'. It is an entirely new adventure pertaining to exploring a fresh and astonishing land. Hence it should be viewed in singular light to make the reading plausible.
