



The Misinterpretation of Tara Jupp

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Country girl Tara is whisked off to '60s London to become a star; there she is dressed, she is shown off at Chelsea parties, photographed by the best. She meets songwriters, singers, designers, and records her song. And she falls in love - with two men. Behind the buzz and excitement of her success, the bitterness between her elder sister Lucy and her friend Matilda haunts Tara. Their past friendship is broken and among the secrets and the strangeness of both their marriages, the past keeps on reappearing.

The Misinterpretation of Tara Jupp Details

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CiderandRedRot says

Remember that delightfully retro novel *The Lost Art of Keeping Secrets* with the candy coloured cover that everyone seemed to be reading on public transport circa 2006? Well, this is Eva Rice's much anticipated follow up, which I think many of us assumed would never see the light of day after the release date kept shifting and eventually just disappeared altogether.

(Disclaimer: I don't recall much about *Lost Art...* except that I enjoyed it. Its vintage setting and period-appropriate plot was a welcome change from your average mid-noughties chick lit, but I don't have any great recollection of or love for some of the characters that cross over from that novel to this one.)

Nearly a decade later, we have this meandering and bloated story* of a naive country gal who falls in with the local nobs and rides the train of early 60s nepotism all the way from Cornwall to the Big Smoke. The story is broken into three parts, with the first - and most convincing - focusing on vicar's daughter Tara and her unwieldy family, including ravishing eldest sister, Lucy. Tara has a big voice and a love of that there rhythm and blues music from across the Atlantic. Her sister is a history buff with a photographic memory and a soul deep love of Nikolaus Pevsner to go with her long legs and model looks (yes, really). Tara's weakness is for horses; Lucy's is for houses. Both find some completion in the local stately home Trellanack and through their friendship with the daughter of the manor, Matilda.

As with *Lost Art...*, Rice has a real gift for evoking a nostalgia-tinged rural childhood, the quaintness of the first and last county in England in the 1950s. However, the narrative voice is *bizarre*. Rice has chosen to have Tara tell the story as if reminiscing on the follies of her youth from some distant future, although this is never clearly addressed or explained.

Once the Jupp Sisters get to London things take a rather superficial 'Greatest Hits of the Swinging Sixties' turn. Lucy invents the mini skirt en route to a party where she will meet Brian Jones. Tara takes up with a photographer who is a stand in for David Bailey, is dressed by 'Biba', and dances on tables at the Marquee Club on July 12th 1962, the night of the Stones' debut. There's an ongoing plot that touches on the post-war rush to demolish historic London - 'You're obsolete my baby/ My poor old-fashioned baby/ I said baby, baby, baby you're out of time' (view spoiler) - in the name of concrete 'progress' and modernism.

It was in this portion of the novel that I got an inkling as to why Rice might have taken all those years to complete *Misinterpretation...* There are so many concepts thrown at the wall, so much woolliness, that I suspect Rice got bogged down in this world, but lacked a strong driving plot line to give her narrative purpose. (view spoiler)

Bethany says

(Initial review written 1/7/13) I didn't know this was coming out, so the moment I found out I just sat in shock audibly saying, "What... what... what." Etc.

Now that I'm past the shock, I'm SO EXCITED.

I think *The Misinterpretation of Tara Jupp* is the ever-elusive *Dragonfly Summer* published under a new title!

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I don't see a pre-order option on amazon yet, and I don't want to spend more than I have to on the UK amazon. (I literally just bought something there five minutes ago.) But I will if I have to, because I've worshiped Eva Rice ever since I read *The Lost Art of Keeping Secrets*! (Or as close to worship as is healthy....)

(Review written post-reading, 10/1/13)

It's so hard for me to judge this book objectively. (But why must I be objective, really?) Of course *The Misinterpretation of Tara Jupp* doesn't reach near that cherished spot in my heart where *The Lost Art of Keeping Secrets* lives. I feel ridiculous that I feel the need to say that, but if you're reviewing a sort-of sequel to one of your favourite books, these things just come up. Still, I loved this.

Firstly, it was all I could do not to squeal loudly every time there was mention (or in some cases appearances!) of Harry, Penelope, and Charlotte. Those are three of my dearest friends, you see.

And as for Inigo, it was so strange to see that charming young boy all grown up! Especially as he appeared less charming at first, but really he was just more mature, distant, and a bit world-weary.

Tara and her family are such dears! I wouldn't have minded an entire book about them! Though I would've missed the tales of Tara and Lucy's foibles in the mod and mad world of early 60s London.

Maybe this is only 4.5 stars but I am rounding up because of many reasons. Mainly I'm just so happy I finally got to read this book!

Amy (Turn the Page) says

Eva Rice's period novels are kind of akin to curling up on a rainy day with hot, buttery crumpets and tea. There's a warmth and nostalgia to them, like you're settling in for an hour or two of catching up with old friends.

The Lost Art of Keeping Secrets is one of my favourite all-time books, one that I've read too many times to count. So when Quercus contacted me and asked if I'd like to review *The Misinterpretation of Tara Jupp* I

jumped at the chance. To my delight, the book arrived alongside a handwritten note by the author and a CD featuring the hit release single of the main character, with lyrics written by a certain Inigo Wallace (fans of *The Lost Art of Keeping Secrets* will be pleased to discover that yes, familiar faces do pop up in this book).

Rice's skills as an author lie not only in her ability to bring the 1960's so vividly to life, but in the way she writes realistic, rounded and compelling characters. Tara isn't as engaging a heroine as Penelope, but I liked the narrative choice to let the reader see the world through her eyes. Tara feels like a young woman I could have known growing up. I probably was her at some point growing up. Sheltered and naïve, I think Tara is a protagonist a lot of readers will identify with. That feeling of being slightly awkward in your own skin, unsure of yourself yet anxious to please, wanting to stand out, but not quite having the confidence, experience or poise to pull it off. Yet she's never a weak or insipid character. Rice really captures that feeling of being seventeen with the whole world at your fingertips.

The heart of the novel is really Tara's relationship with her sister. Lucy's story forms some of the most fascinating parts of the book, from her turbulent friendship with childhood friend Matilda to her passionate romance and troubled marriage with Raoul. Tara idolizes both Raoul and her sister's marriage, but as she is introduced to a world of famous singers, musicians, photographers and models, her understanding of the world and the people in it is tested. Lucy is a far more stubborn, fiery counterpart to Tara and I enjoyed watching both of them struggle with their choices, find their own identities and grow throughout the book.

Though you could easily read *The Misinterpretation of Tara Jupp* without having picked up *The Lost Art of Keeping Secrets*, there are old friends who make brief appearances, while a grown up Inigo plays an important part in Tara's singing career. As someone who adored these characters the first time round it's always a thrill to see where they've ended up since we last left them. (view spoiler)

Set eight years after *The Lost Art of Keeping Secrets*, this feels like quite a different book, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. It's more mature, certainly denser and perhaps a smidgen over-long. It has quite a sedate beginning, but looking back I appreciated the depth of character background Rice takes the time to build up. Some readers might be a little thrown that a good first third of the novel is about Tara's childhood and despite the synopsis, I wouldn't say the focus of the book is really Tara's singing career.

'Small country girl makes it big' may sound a little cliché but Rice handles it in her own unique style. *The Misinterpretation of Tara Jupp* is a coming-of-age story that has a richness and character to it and in large part this is due to the amount of detail that has gone into this book. As with her previous novel, Rice really captures the era, the people and the movements of the time and several recognisable figures grace the pages, including Brian Jones, Nikolaus Pevsner and David Bailey. (view spoiler) Rice gives us a host of messy characters we can relate to and whips up the feeling and energy of the time. Fans of the 60's or those who remember it will undoubtedly get an even greater satisfaction out of this one.

'Incredible,' I said. 'I have a rare feeling that I'm going to be able to tell my grandchildren that once upon a time, I was in the right place at the right time.'

'The right place at the right time,' mused Inigo. 'Don't think I've been there since I accidentally walked in on Charlotte Ferris in her underwear in the Blue Room at Milton Magna, Christmas 1954.'

~ page 456

My initial thoughts were that it doesn't quite stand up to its predecessor, and while it's true I didn't fall in love with the characters as I did with Charlotte, Penelope, Harry and Aunt Clare, the more I think about it, the more I found I liked it. Definitely worth a second or third reading to soak up all the details, perhaps this time with my extremely high expectations put to one side.

Many thanks to Rik at Quercus Books and Eva Rice for the opportunity to review The Misinterpretation of Tara Jupp

Hester Clara says

I really enjoyed this book, and came close to giving it five stars, but I found the ending slightly contrived and twee. That aside, I wasn't able to put this book down, and found all the characters genuinely likeable. The descriptions of the period and the great houses were convincing, and I felt like I was part of the Jupp family.

Nicola says

Oof. One to file under 'not my thing', I think. Just... way too cosy and slow-moving for my taste.

Plus, the audio book narrator's decision to affect a (*terrible*) Westcountry accent is making me uncomfortable. I'm *from* the Westcountry. We *don't sound like that*.

Annabel says

Take one big happy family; add some horses, a big country manor in Cornwall, plus doses of first love which doesn't go easily. Shake it up and relocate to London; mix with rock'n'roll and serve with love again. This is the essential recipe for Eva Rice's new novel, a thick and satisfying feel-good read.

It's the story of Lucy and Tara, third and sixth of eight children in the Jupp family. Pa is a country vicar, Ma died some years ago. Lucy is a beauty who loves old buildings (Pevsner is her bible), whereas Tara can sing but prefers horses. Sneaking a ride on their neighbour's steeds and becoming friends with poor little rich girl Matilda, the daughter of the Manor, will change Tara and Lucy's lives forever, ending up with Tara becoming a pop star at seventeen in the ready-to-swing London of the early 1960s.

Lucy and Tara are strong young women who want to experience life in full. Lucy's relationship with her husband may be troubled, but Tara's coming of age and first real romance with photographer Digby, (obviously based on David Bailey) is fun. Matilda continues to feature too, becoming a mainstay in their lives.

This is a big-hearted novel about achieving your dreams, and while it may not spring any big surprises, the characters are rounded and compelling to read about. My only quibble was that it ended just as the 60s were about to really take off, and I'd have loved to read more.

Eims says

A coming of age story set in sixties England. Tara is a talented singer, from a large, messy but loving family. Her sister, Lucy is beautiful and quietly wild. It is very much a comfort read, the type you would happily curl up with on a rainy day with a nice cup of tea.

It's a story of first loves and working out what matters to you. A very enjoyable read.

Molly says

I loved *The Lost Art of Keeping Secrets*, it's a fantastic book and one that I was sad to put down. So I was happy to discover that *The Misinterpretation of Tara Jupp* features several of the characters from *Secrets* and with that in mind I bought it and jumped right in.

Tara Jupp is one of my new favorite characters, she is so utterly herself that you really can't help but like her. She is not a highly sophisticated young lady who strides around London with ease, but is instead a very countryside girl fresh from Cornwall who does her best in odd situations. Also the fact that in her youth she was an adamant reader of 1940's pony books and is comfiest in Jods and an old blouse was fab.

Returning characters come in several different shapes and forms, with some only showing up as a brief cameo or mention while others have a more fully fledged out role. Tara's family are an interesting lot with masses of children knocking around the place and her father the mildly terrifying vicar. They all bump along quite happily and make for some fun reading through their interactions with one another.

As for the plot, I enjoyed it a great deal, I won't give any spoilers but to me it was very much a story about relationships and the complications that come with them and how life is never easy and often confusing, but it's usually worth it in the end.

Roberta says

Romanzo carino ma perdibile, almeno dal mio punto di vista. Godibile l'ambientazione inglese, anche se mi domando sempre che gusto c'è a leggere libri di questo tipo scritti da autrici contemporanee quando ce ne sono moltissimi scritti e pubblicati nello stesso dopoguerra (pensiamo solo a Nancy Mitford). Ammetto che qui siamo negli anni Sessanta, era *The Lost Art of Keeping Secrets* il romanzo ambientato nel dopoguerra, e questo ne è il seguito, ma solo parzialmente, dato che alcuni dei suoi personaggi secondari sono ripresi dal romanzo precedente.

Bella e curata l'ambientazione ma non posso dire altrettanto della trama, anche se resta godibile. Un buon romanzo di intrattenimento.

Ellie says

Magical, beautiful, compelling, comforting...there are not enough positive adjectives to describe this book! I was rather sceptical, having adored *The Lost Art of Keeping Secrets*, and re-read it many times, but this did not disappoint.

Tara and her family are such interesting and endearing characters and the settings are fantastic. Rice's storytelling ability is incredible and I wish she would write more books. The plot covered a short period of time, but in such beautiful and intricate detail, that it felt dreamy. It was lovely to see/hear just enough of characters from TLAOKS without spoiling the impression left by the end of the first novel.

In short, I loved it.

Sarah says

Cute. But my copy had a lot of typos in it and I feel like it could have used just one more continuity editorial pass too. Also, I think I might just be "over" cute awkward coming of age type novels at this point in my life, dammit.

Blair says

I think *The Misinterpretation of Tara Jupp* is Eva Rice's fourth novel. I might be wrong about that number, but in any case, it is the long-awaited follow-up to *The Lost Art of Keeping Secrets*, which was published in 2005. I believe this book was originally slated to be published under the title *The Dragonfly Summer*, and it appears to have been delayed so many times I had started to think it would never see the light of day. I'm still not sure why, exactly, it has taken so long for this book to be published, but I was delighted to spot a review of it in a magazine and snapped it up as soon as I could (although that somehow ended up being two months after it came out!)

Tara Jupp, one of eight siblings growing up in 1950s Cornwall, is (unsurprisingly) the central character of this lengthy novel: it's basically her life story, although her older sister Lucy and Lucy's childhood best friend Matilda also feature prominently. As a horse-mad teenager, Tara is perfectly happy with her idyllic country life, but her impressive singing voice leads to her being noticed by the manager of a record label. Afterwards, she is offered the chance to record and perform her music in London, receives a glamorous makeover and becomes caught up with the 'it crowd' of the time, and all the while various family dramas and private emotional issues bubble away in the background. It is obvious from the beginning that Tara is narrating her story from a perspective long after these events took place - she occasionally refers to 'what happened afterwards' or something that was said or done 'much later'. The book is divided into three parts: the first concentrates on Tara's childhood, with much of the drama focused on Lucy and Matilda; the second, and longest, deals with her move to London and rise to fame; the third, which is quite short, is about the aftermath of that, and wraps all the loose ends of the story up.

In a number of ways, this novel is very similar to *The Lost Art of Keeping Secrets*: in fact, a number of the characters from that book actually make appearances in this one at various points (I was quite excited to discover this, even though it's been years since I read *Lost Art*), so the stories are obviously very closely interlinked, and you get to discover what happened to those characters after the events of that book. The author has also used a number of historical figures, from architecture historian Nikolaus Pevsner to Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones, as characters in the novel. And it's very, very meta - for example, when two characters are having a conversation about another character who's writing a book, and they talk about how dangerous it is to use real people as characters...! There are constant knowing references to literary devices that are actually used in the book, and Tara occasionally addresses the reader directly, although it's not exactly clear what kind of account this is supposed to be. If you ask me, it sometimes gets a bit too clever for its own good.

The problem with Tara's 'future' narration was that it made me feel disassociated from what was happening - like I couldn't really get close to the character, because she was describing a past version of herself, yet not really giving any clues about what kind of person she was in the present day, whenever that was actually supposed to be. Somehow, though, I really loved the first part of the book, perhaps because it was more of an observation of the two older girls than a story about Tara herself. The Jupps' upbringing and Tara's

relationships with her brothers and sisters, her idolatry of Lucy and Matilda, the wonderful settings (especially Trellanack, the ancestral home of Matilda's family)... It was all very romantic and magical. It was when the action moved to London that I started to lose interest and have doubts about the plot. Once Tara was supposed to be (at least halfway) 'grown up', I stopped believing in her. I was more invested in Lucy's story, which is really more of a subplot, than Tara's. I didn't like (view spoiler). When I reviewed *Lost Art*, I wrote that my main problem with the book was its predictability, and that was also an issue here. It was glaringly obvious who Tara would end up with and - while I'm not going to pretend the romantic bits didn't move me at all - there wasn't much suspense, nothing to really root for (other than for Lucy to be happy... and I don't think that was the point).

Something else that annoyed me was that I found quite a few spelling mistakes, errors of repetition and incorrect punctuation (lots of missing commas!) in the Kindle copy I was reading. 'Two sizes two small' and 'your' instead of 'you're' were the worst I spotted, but there were lots altogether. Given that this book took years to publish, you'd think those could have been weeded out!

If *The Lost Art of Keeping Secrets* was, as I wrote when I reviewed it, 'the literary equivalent of a huge slice of chocolate cake', *The Misinterpretation of Tara Jupp* was more like a packet of chocolate biscuits - sweet and pleasant enough, but not the indulgent treat I was hoping for. It started with a lot of promise, and after the first few chapters I was expecting an epic life story that would span decades and take in Tara's whole career. Unfortunately, and despite the lengthiness of the book (is the print edition really only 320 pages? **Edited to add** - checked in a bookshop and it's 584, contrary to what Amazon says!), it didn't turn out that way, and although I still cared about what happened in the end, I found myself losing some of my sympathy and interest in the characters. I quite liked reading this - it's pretty absorbing, especially at the beginning, and a decent bit of escapism when you want to get away from the real world - but I can't pretend I wasn't a bit disappointed.

Vanessa Wild says

A delightful coming of age tale set in the rock 'n' roll 50s and swinging 60s about the life and times of Tara Jupp, a budding singing star.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I loved the easy style of writing and the way it was told in the first person - I really felt Tara was speaking to me personally. The story just flowed along seamlessly and had me eagerly turning the pages. I thought the characters were well drawn and believable, especially Tara and her sister, Lucy. The whole atmosphere of the book caught the era perfectly. It also vividly depicted the differences between the fast pace of life in swinging London and the sleepiness of living a countrified existence in Cornwall.

I can only add I was hooked from the first page and I couldn't put the book down. I found it an engrossing, entertaining and absorbing read. If, like me, you enjoyed Eva Rice's *The Lost Art of Keeping Secrets*, you will not be disappointed by this one - I didn't want it to end!

Alice says

Mlle Alice, pouvez-vous nous raconter votre rencontre avec Londres par Hasard ?

"BakerStreet a eu la gentillesse de me proposer Freddie Friday et j'ai eu la surprise de recevoir également

celui-ci. Étant donné que j'ai beaucoup aimé le premier, et que je garde également un bon souvenir de l'Amour comme par Hasard, j'avais hâte de découvrir celui-ci."

Dites-nous en un peu plus sur son histoire...

"Tara vit avec son père, vicaire d'un petit village et sept frères et soeurs. Elle découvre le monde dans l'ombre de sa ravissante soeur Lucy en rêvant de musique et du jeune Inigo..."

Mais que s'est-il exactement passé entre vous?

"La plume d'Eva Rice est fluide, ses personnages sont d'une grande richesse et les situations mises en scène souvent fantasques et drôles. On ne s'ennuie pas en compagnie de ses livres. Sans être une suite à proprement parler, on retrouve en plus, ici, et avec grand plaisir, des protagonistes de l'Amour comme par Hasard. Dès le début, Tara nous harponne avec ses espoirs de petite fille, et on a de cesse de tourner les pages pour savoir ce qu'elle va devenir et si ses rêves vont se réaliser. En revanche, je ne sais pas si c'est voulu, mais je n'ai pas du tout accroché avec sa soeur, je l'ai trouvée égoïste et prompte à accuser les autres de ses malheurs, même s'il est évident qu'elle a des excuses. Enfin, l'univers musical et historique est parfaitement dépeint et particulièrement fouillé. J'ai du mal à croire que le lecteur pourrait ne pas trouver un élément ou l'autre pour le ravir. Moi, en tous cas, je les ai tous aimés."

Et comment cela s'est-il fini?

"Franchement, je ne sais pas si c'est un livre qui va me marquer longtemps, sûrement moins que Freddie Friday d'ailleurs, mais je dois dire que je me suis délectée de ma lecture qui a juste la bonne dose d'un petit peu tout: Londres, musique, personnages déjantés, famille, amour et amitié... Je vous le conseille les yeux fermés."

<http://booksaremywonderland.hautetfor...>

Rebecca says

The long lost novel I've been waiting for now for an eternity has finally appeared as if from nowhere! Overall I enjoyed the book but felt that I was divided by the characters and lesser plot lines (the horses...). I became extremely interested in some areas but others in my mind were just padding the story out. On the one hand I was joyous whenever an old character appeared, but underwhelmed by some of the subs like Lucy and Raoul, to the point where I was racing through these parts to get back to more interesting bits. I was also getting tired of how Rice kept dropping in literary references as a lazy descriptive method, but hey what do I know, I was still completely suckered in by the 'will they? won't they?' which worked so well in 'Lost Art...' I just didn't quite fall in love with this second offering like I did the first. The ideas and characters were all there... just a little lost amongst a jumble of other minor tat ;) So I'm sitting on the fence for now, I think it will take another read later for me to make up my mind properly.
