



The Worshipful Lucia

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Lucia and Mapp's adventures in Tilling continue in LUCIA'S PROGRESS, previously published in the U.S. as THE WORSHIPFUL LUCIA. In this volume both Lucia and Mapp stand for election to the Town Council, and Lucia speculates in gold shares. While re-decorating Miss Mapp's house, Lucia discovers and hide the remains of a Roman Villa. Excitements ensue!

The Worshipful Lucia Details

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Petra CigareX says

Geez, was this written by an upper middle-class chap for the amusement of other upper middle-class folk after having read Jane Austen and Mrs. Gaskell? This is by no means the wonderful, sly, comedy of manners that Austen wrote so exquisitely, nor the lovely involvement of the world of Cranford that Mrs. Gaskell (when not feeling socially and politically motivated) wrote about. Angst-ridden social climbers, amusing to his intended audience or those who had aspirations to be that class, but not to me. I don't know why I bothered finishing it.

Susan in NC says

Still a five-star favorite for me, several years after my first read. The endless bickering and gossip of Tilling never ceases to leave me with a great big smile on my face!

In this outing Lucia and Elizabeth Mapp-Flint continue their rivalry for social domination of Tilling, both running for town council and dabbling in the stock market - and the inexhaustible Lucia takes up archeological exploration in her garden and philanthropy. Great fun and silliness among the idle, well-to-do in England in the interwar years.

Ivonne Rovira says

I wonder how how E.F. Benson devised the idea of including Emmeline "Lucia" Lucas and Elizabeth Mapp, both conniving, social-climbing queen bees, in the same book. I can imagine it now: In a moment of leisure, Benson suddenly had a stroke of brilliance: Include Mrs. Lucas and Miss Mapp in the same novel and watch the fur fly!

Elizabeth Mapp has long been the uncontested queen of Tilling society -- at least in her own mind; however, when Lucia takes Mapp's cottage for a two-month holiday, she can no more not dominate her social mileu than a shark can survive without swimming. Before chapter 5 in *Miss Mapp and Lucia*, Lucia has begun her plan to "teach [Miss Mapp] her place." Needless to say, Miss Mapp isn't about to abdicate the throne without a fight, and plots, in her own words, a "romantic revenge on that upstart visitor for presuming to set herself up as Queen of the social life of Tilling." But Miss Mapp is slow to grasp just how tenacious an opponent she has in Lucia. Which of these *femmes formidables* will prevail in this battle for top social billing?

In *Lucia's Progress*, the next book in the series, Lucia feels listless. Having accomplished so much and with her 50th birthday fast approaching, Lucia feels *ennui*: What has she really accomplished? Lucia hits on several schemes to give her life greater meaning. When a tipsy Colonel Benjy Flint reveals that he's standing for Town Council, Lucia decides to run for Town Council of Tilling (a thinly fictionalized portrait of Rye in East Sussex), too. Needless to say, Miss Mapp throws herself into thwarting Lucia's political ambitions. In addition to politics, Lucia turns her hand to archeology (having decided her house is built atop a Roman ruin), culture, philanthropy, sports, and -- could it be? -- matrimony. What are the results? Well, the title of the volume that anthologizes all of the Lucia works isn't called Make Way for Lucia for nothing!

I've loved all of the Lucia books, and *Mapp and Lucia* is probably the best. The clashes between Lucia Lucas

and Elizabeth Mapp deliver laugh-out-loud hilarity. However, be sure to read the books in order -- Queen Lucia, which introduces us to Lucia in her native setting of Riseholme, and its sequel, Lucia in London, in which Lucia takes her snobbery and social climbing to greater heights in the big city, and Miss Mapp, which introduces the calculating, miserly and passive-aggressive busybody Elizabeth Mapp -- before reading *Mapp and Lucia* and its sequel, *Lucia's Progress*. The latter two are paired in an extremely reasonably priced Kindle edition.

Sally says

It's another installment in the lives of Lucia and Mapp and the circle of acquaintances in Tilling, with more of the social manipulations that are the essence of these stories. You could read any of the 6 books that have been grouped into a series called "Make Way for Lucia" as stand-alones, but I have enjoyed reading them in order. I like these E. F. Benson stories as much as I like P. G. Wodehouse Blandings stories, and perhaps even a little more. It is amazing how these can be stories about upper middle class British folks set in the 1920s to 1930s, and still feel like they are current tales. It is amazing how events and behaviors can be so ridiculous and outrageous, yet told so well that they are believable. I'm reading the final book, "Trouble for Lucia" now, but with confidence I can heartily recommend all of them.

Bob says

As is only to be expected, as our characters move toward the late 1920s, they begin to be swept up in the wave of financial speculation that led up to the Wall Street crash of 1929, though it is some sense a plot contrivance to allow one character to get rather richer and one somewhat poorer, which allows certain other events to follow.

It seems noteworthy to contemporary minds that every character in these books, regardless of income, relies on their gardens for a substantial portion of their produce - it goes without saying that is where vegetables come from and if you are rich, it simply means you hire someone to do the actual work of the gardening for you,

Davina says

E.F. Benson has found his way into my heart!

This book was simply brilliant. After so many mediocre stories I have read recently, this was incredibly refreshing. With a huge amount of ingenuity and intelligence Benson tells the story of a little town and its quirky inhabitants, especially two ladies who are bitter rivals and yet always smile falsely at each other. Here you can find intrigue of the most entertaining sort, not the awful pistol swinging, death plotting sort, but just fun, good-old bickering.

Character studies are my favorite and Benson really excels in letting his characters stumble into all kinds of innocent mishaps, bringing out the funniest of behavior.

I do hope I can read a lot more of him. In my opinion this is comedy of the highest order.

Tony says

22. Benson, E. F. LUCIA'S PROGRESS (Originally published in the U.S. under the title, "The Worshipful Lucia."). (1935). ****.

This novel continues the adventures of Lucia and Mapp in the village of Tilling. We encounter all of the usual characters of the village: Mapp, Lucia, Georgie, Diva, Mrs. Poppitt, Lady Ambermere and Pug. In this installment, Lucia is turning fifty-years old and realizes that she has not accomplished a single stellar act in her whole life. She has managed to keep busy with her charitable affairs and in community activities, but she feels unfulfilled. Her attempts to maintain intellectual control over the people in the village seems to be on the wane. Of course there is her music and the various courses she sets up for all the neighbors, but that isn't enough. What finally hits her as a valuable effort is to run for councilperson on the village board. It seems that Miss Mapp – now married – has the same idea, and they plan to run on totally opposite platforms. The subtle humor endemic to Benson's novels continues in the vein of P. G. Wodehouse, but much more subtle. It's a good introduction to the wry English humor of the time.

Recommended.

Ed Lehman says

The fifth volume in E.F. Benson's Lucia series.... and still excellent fun. Lucia the focus of all social groups in the small English town of Tilling once again butts heads...but, in an ever-so English and polite manner, with her neighbor and rival Elizabeth Mapp. Mapp, newly married, leads others to wrongfully believe she is pregnant. Lucia and Mapp run against each other for the Town Council. They decide to swap homes. Lucia discovers Roman antiquities in her new garden-- or does she? Lucia guides many into buying gold mine stocks...which doesn't work out well for Mapp. There is also a surprise wedding at the end. I love this series and sorry to say that there is only one more to read. But then I am anxious to watch the BBC's dramatic take.

June Louise says

"I must put up in large capital letters over my bed 'I am fifty', she thought as she let herself into her house, and that will remind me every morning and evening that I've done nothing yet which will be remembered after I am gone. I've been busy (I will say that for myself) but beyond giving others a few hours of enchantment at the piano, and helping them to keep supple, I've done nothing for the world or indeed for Tilling. I must take myself in hand."

Lucia's Progress continues the comic rivalry between the newly-wed Elizabeth Mapp-Finch and Emmeline Lucas (aka Lucia) as each strives to be the Top Dog in the town of Tilling - persistently outdoing each other. In this fourth book of the series no-one understands why Georgie has gone missing, there is speculation on the stock exchange, rumours about a pregnancy and a Roman excavation, Major Benjy gets himself into a spot of bother, some house-swapping, elections for the Town Council, a marriage and finally a much-desired reward - but who is it for? At the centre of all of these happenings are Elizabeth and Lucia of course, whenever Lucia takes a lead, Elizabeth follows - often with the unfortunate Diva in her wake. Sadly for Elizabeth, whilst things have a tendency to turn out well for Lucia, she seems to come off the worst in everything, and seems to make enemies among the locals because of her bitterness and jealousy.

The nosey-ness of the characters is truly cringe-worthy, but unfortunately realistic, as any resident of a small town will testify: *"This dreadful gossip habit.....if there isn't any news they invent it."* That's certainly true

of the town where I live!

I believe everyone knows a Elizabeth and Lucia. I know several, which makes reading this book more enjoyable. As the reader (onlooker) you know it's all so superficial, but yet some people will go to the greatest lengths to "go places" and get recognised.

"It was bright-green jealousy, just because none of them had ever had a line in any paper about their exploits, let alone a column. And who, after all, had spent a thousand pounds on an organ for Tilling, and got a Bishop to dedicate it, and ordered a thunderstorm, and asked them all to a garden-party afterwards? They snatched all the benefits of their patroness, and then complained that they were being patronized. Of course her superior airs and her fibs could be maddening sometimes, but even if she did let a reporter think that she spoke Italian as naturally as English and had dug up Samian ware in her garden, it was 'pretty Fanny's way', and they must put up with it."

Love the characters, love the rivalries, love this series.

Spencer says

Life is never dull in Tilling. Lucia is turning 50 and having a mid-life crisis, Georgie is battling a case of shingles, Elizabeth is pushing Benjy into running for public office, and Lucia decides to dabble in the stock market. Nothing is more thrilling in Tilling than a competitive political campaign or competitive market investing. It's interesting to read that stockbrokers were advocating "dollar cost averaging" even in 1932. Lucia is on a roll of one success after another, making up for what she feels has been lost time, all to the chagrin of Elizabeth Mapp Flint. The book ends with several climactic events that leave me very eager to get into the final volume of the set.

Lindley Walter-smith says

The second book about Lucia's battle with Miss Mapp, now successfully Mistress Mapp-Flint, for social supremacy in Tilling. Lucia takes up archeology, the money market and politics, and her platonic romance with Georgie comes to a crisis. Just absolutely scrumptious and laced with poison, especially when Elizabeth is involved.

Colleen says

I reread the Lucia novels every few years or so, and they never disappoint. The social maneuverings of Tilling (and, earlier, Riseholme) never lose their fascination. This later novel is not, perhaps, quite as fresh as the earlier ones in the series, but there is plenty to enjoy--marriage, the "wind egg", politics, Roman ruins and most importantly perhaps, the change in ownership of Mallards. If you haven't read the Mapp and Lucia series before, it is perhaps best that you start with Queen Lucia and go from there, but it isn't absolutely necessary.

Ruthiella says

I read this book to complete the category of “Humorous or Satirical Classic” for the Back to the Classics 2015 challenge hosted at <http://karensbooksandchocolate.blogspot...> . This was by far my easiest choice for the challenge, as I have come to love this series; these books make me laugh out loud...frequently. Lucia’s Progress is number five, so I only have one more left, but I suspect that these books will be excellent re-reads, so I am not too sad. In this book, the Mapp and Lucia rivalry continues as Lucia and Mapp (now Mrs. Mapp-Flint) compete for a council seat, Lucia pretends to have found Roman ruins in her back garden, Mapp pretends to be pregnant and everyone one who is anyone in Tilling is thoroughly entertained by the ensuing gossip and backbiting.

Mara says

More Mapp and Lucia rivalry, which is really what makes these books so much fun.

Leslie says

I thought that I had read the entire Mapp & Lucia series but nothing in this 5th entry in the series struck me as familiar. In any case, I continue to enjoy the rivalry between Miss Mapp (now Mrs. Mapp-Flint) and Lucia!
