



Mrs. Roberto: Or the Widowy Worries of the Moosepath League

Van Reid

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Van Reid's Moosepath League series has captivated critics and readers alike with intricate and rollicking adventures set in colorfully detailed turn-of-the-century Maine. *Mrs. Roberto*, the fourth in this deliciously picaresque series, begins as portly, jovial Tobias Walton continues to woo the elegant and wry Phileda McCannon. Soon, however, he and his close friend Sundry Moss are back on the road, whereupon they become unexpected guests at the eccentric Fern Farm.

Meanwhile, the guileless Joseph Thump, charter member of the Moosepath League, finds in his pocket a mysterious card bearing a well-remembered name: Mrs. Dorothea Roberto. Renowned for her death-defying jumps from a hot-air balloon, that shapely lady once captured Thump's heart. Now, certain she is in danger, he and the Moosepath League embark on a search for her that will bring them all together in the tiny hamlet of Iceboro. Filled with comedy, suspense, and romance, *Mrs. Roberto* is the perfect addition to everyone's summer reading list.

Mrs. Roberto: Or the Widowy Worries of the Moosepath League Details

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Jeannette says

Van Reid's books are somewhat unusual and difficult to classify genre-wise. (It's funny - every time I use the expression "something"-wise I think of Jack Lemmon in *The Apartment*). Anyway, I really enjoy them as modern lit. Kind of ambling storytelling -- reminds me of Mark Twain a little.

Cindy says

I think this one is my favorite in the series so far. It was definitely the funniest!

Brian says

Better the second time through. I can't get enough of the Moosepath League.

Carol says

This is the fourth book in a series set in turn of the (19th) century Maine and concerning the adventures of a small club called the Moosepath League. I've now read all four and have enjoyed every single one. They're like literary chocolate chip cookies: not exactly haute cuisine, but delicious and satisfying all the same. In each book the members of the club get caught up in some grand adventure through a series of happenstances and humorous misunderstandings. This book involved two Moosepathians getting embroiled in the mystery of a melancholy pig, while three other Moosepathians struck out to rescue Mrs. Roberto the balloonist from a vague and mostly imagined peril. Along the way the trio get involved with a small-time gang, a bunch of hoboes, and a clever tavern owner. The two groups eventually converge at a fire started by a lightning strike. Van Reid tells his stories with a lot of charm and humor. He also does a good job of capturing the feel of life in the 1890s. And the characters are well written, too.

Hannah says

I loved! this entire series. I can't wait to read the last one and I'm sad that it is the last one. These are hilarious and charming adventure stories about Victorian Maine and the people in them are so good-hearted and generous that you wish everyone you met was a Mr. Walton or a Sundry Moss. And you find yourself wishing you knew 3 gentleman who could always tell you the exact time, the expected weather, and time of the tide that day.

Jane says

Love the Moosepath League and the silliness of these few days in Maine.

Richard Bentley says

I believe we have here a staunch Methodist's view of Maine as it should have been in the 1890's. "The Devil!" is considered a swear; even "Darn it" is looked upon with a frown. The evils of the Demon Rum are alluded to and woven into the plot. This strikes me a somewhat silly, indicating a desire to shield nonexistent families from words they have never heard.

Nevertheless, the books are charming and funny. I have read every book in the series, but I think this is the one I will review, since it is probably the best. The Moosepath League is composed to this point of a Pickwickian leader, three bachelors who don't have a clue no matter what circumstances they experience, one sensible young man who does the heavy lifting, and one female representative whose role to this point is not clearly defined. The books revolve around a series of improbable escapades undergone by the five male members, with the actions of the three bachelors creating all sorts of confusion. So far the female member stands around and wrings her hands.

The three gentlemen, Eagleton, Ephram, and Thump, are certainly amusing, but I wonder how someone could exist into bachelorhood days being so completely naive, unaware, befuddled, and DIM. One gets the impression that these three were reared from birth by she-goats living in a cave until they were old enough to become confirmed bachelors. Fortunately Van Reid manages to insert unbelievable luck into situations where these three are central figures, so while their unconsciousness is often (to me) painfully embarrassing - I find myself muttering "What Morons!" often - things manage to stagger to a finish. And they are not the only ones that proceed through life without a clue in this series; another has apparently been perpetually amazed from birth by any and all events.

Characters in the series are well presented (including the above), with a sweetness that is not sticky, emotional moments that are simple and touching, and proper behavior that is not unduly stuffy but still manages to uphold the sacred (and ridiculous) precepts of the fanciful late 19th century New England.

The book's story is precipitated by the confused but well-meaning behavior of the bachelor trio, who in this case seek to rescue a feminine ascensionist (who parachutes from a balloon "wearing an attractive pair of tights") from an imagined fiendish plot, leaving a trail of misunderstanding and often chaos wherever they go, and spins into several subplots which finally merge, not completely satisfactorily, at the finish, leaving you hanging as usual for the next book of the series.

The test of a good book is, as I see it, whether or not you pick it up and reread it again and again; and this series stands up well under the test. Highly recommended.

Cliff says

I did not enjoy this quite as much as the second and third books in the Moosepath League series, but its still good.

Terri says

Mrs. Roberto is my favorite of the Moosepath League books!

Mandolin says

Like reading a satisfying blend of works by Charles Dickens, P.G. Wodehouse, Washington Irving and Arthur Conan Doyle, this installment of the chronicles of that wonderful society, The Moosepath League, takes the reader on another exciting adventure through the ports and forests of early 20th century Maine. From the shady realm of the Weary Sailor saloon (where you should beware of falling pianos!) to the calm meadows surrounding the great Kennebec river (where, despite their serenity, dastardly plots revolving around pigs and secret lovers still occur), the brave adventurers make their mark once again on Maine's history. What a delightful book! It leaves the reader hungering nicely for the final installment of this great series.

Queenie Francie says

Mrs. Roberto is an exotic and mysterious woman. And The Moosepath League are the opposite. And they are perfect together! I love this series!

Amanda says

I am still thoroughly enjoying the Moosepath series books. I love all the twists and turns they take, and am a sucker for truly well written books. This one I have to say is probably my least favorite so far. Most of the book takes place with Mr. Walton and Sundry one one adventure, and Ephram, Eagleton, and Thump on another adventure. I rather enjoy when they are mostly together, or at least come together more throughout the book. Phileda is not in the book very much, and I would have liked to see her join them on an adventure soon after her joining the club. However, I still enjoyed the book and the resolution at the end.

Joni says

Hilarious! A very fun read.

'jean says

I really enjoy this series. Adventure in a very clean, civilized manner. Oh if only the world were still so civilized....

Dollie says

I love these Moosepath League books. Very few books made me laugh out loud, but these do and I enjoy the stories very much. I live in Maine and I love history, so I love learning some of Maine's history as well.
