



William the Fourth

Richmal Crompton

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There is only one William. The loveable imp and his band of Outlaws have been harassing his unfortunate family and delighting hundreds of thousands of readers for years. Here, William invents a water race where competitors have to run with a mouth full of water, without swallowing it or spitting it out. It's just a shame he doesn't have time to think before speaking to (and drenching!) Mrs. Adolphus Crane during the race!

William the Fourth Details

Date : Published November 1st 1995 by Macmillan UK (first published 1924)

ISBN : 9780333662281

Author : Richmal Crompton

Format : Paperback 232 pages

Genre : Humor, Childrens, Fiction, Short Stories, Classics, Comedy, Young Adult, Adventure, Chapter Books

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From Reader Review William the Fourth for online ebook

Em*bedded-in-books* says

My childhood staple. I never tire of William and his out of the world antics. This is my umpteenth read, still I enjoyed it. You have to read William to know who he is. I cant do justice to his world and friends in a measly review.

Jake Collins says

I'm starting to find the William stories extremely samey; it's quite beyond me how the series managed to continue with regular releases for fifty years. Already there are chapters which clearly reuse ideas from the previous three books, for example William has now, on two separate occasions, accompanied two separate aged relatives to boisterous entertainment venues and been surprised by their loss of inhibitions.

I found the decision of William's family to have Ethel's mangy old cat put down just because it made too much noise completely disgusting. In the future I am hoping to see more made of William's well-meaning but hapless side, and also of his boyish adventures with his fellow Outlaws, of whom only Ginger has really had a decent look-in so far.

Stuart says

Wonderful fun - and a huge nostalgia trip as I started reading "The Weak Spot" where William becomes a communist and redistributes his brother's wealth, a story I remember vividly from childhood. They are all beautifully constructed vignettes, almost Wodehousian, where a small event spirals out of control thanks to William's imagination, enthusiasm and misunderstanding of the adult world. Unlike most children's fiction I still find them satisfying to read as an adult.

Thomas A Andrew says

Was given this book as a child, this character is hard to hate..

Janani K says

William makes a night of it - is typical Willaim-ish . An ok set of other stories.

Farseer says

More William stories. They are quite funny, but better enjoyed in small doses because, while Richmal Crompton has a wonderful sense of humor and a good eye for satire, sometimes her ideas are too similar. We know by now what kind of thing she likes to make fun of, and some stories become predictable because of that. Still, William often manages to surprise us with his ideas, and many good things are to come.

notgettingenough says

Early last year I came upon the dregs of the library of a very wealth Swiss family. The dispersal of the expensive chattels of the estate, including the better books, was undertaken by one of those auction houses that specialises in the disposal of rich history. But the dregs of the books, as well as other very minor bits ended up in the stock of one of the sellers I frequent at the open air book markets in Geneva. A few of the items, though valueless, had the emblem of the house upon them, which is why I could tell what they were.

Rich or not, this was a family which had loved reading over hundreds of years and here were items from the 1920s to 1970s or thereabouts, reflecting their interest in English literature for young and old. Some of it I bought out of sheer curiosity, authors like Barbara Pym I'd never read, but perhaps I should. William I bought because I adored these books as a kid and haven't read them since the 1960s.

They had aged well then - this early one was first published in 1924 - and fifty years later again they are still standing up as fresh, fun and elegantly written. Apparently an attempt is being made to rehabilitate Crompton as a writer for adults. I must dip into that: if they are anything like as good as her books for children, they'll be a pleasure to snort over, taking care not to spill one's cup of tea while doing that.

Most of the stories are strong - I see one or two complaints on GR that they are repetitive from book to book, but children want that. If they are going to reread the same book over and over, why not stories that are the same but different?

I particularly love the one where a big company opens a sweet shop in the village, undercutting Mr Moss with whom they have always shopped. Come Saturday they take their money to the new shop, get served by a girl who doesn't care and thinks having to sell to them in h'penny lots is ridiculous. As they walk along chomping on their lollies, they pass Mr Moss's shop. He is very sad, quite unlike his usual jolly self. He can't put his prices any lower, but, just like Amazon, the new shop has the financial power to sacrifice short term profits for the long term gains of putting Mr Moss out of business with the cooperation of the locals. He stresses to the boys that they are doing the right thing, of course they have to go to the cheaper shop, but vague ideas appear in the minds of the boys.

William and his gang start realising that it isn't necessarily good to buy cheapest. They want Mr Moss to be happy. They talk about how when they buy from Mr Moss he cares, he is always interested in what they buy. He welcomes their purchasing a h'penny worth at a time. They are sure, now that they think about it, that his sweets taste better too. But what to do? Start a campaign to make people buy from Mr Moss, but how can they, they have no weight, why would anybody notice?

Ah, but William, as usual has a plan. And as usual, no matter how many plans go awry, his followers fall into the next without a moment's hesitation. The Duke is going to be in town to open a Sale of Work. When he appears on stage to do that, unbeknownst to him, he has a big sign on his back advertising Mr Moss's shop. As he wanders around the Sale, the locals summon the Vicar to tell the Duke what's on his back, a large crowd following him around due to the unlikely sight. Just as the Vicar explains and takes the sign off

to show the Duke, William and his cohorts appear, each wearing placards with creative spelling announcing the various benefits of Mr Moss's sweets.

The Duke can recognise a ringleader when he sees one. He asks for William to be brought to him. William in his tripping over his tongue enthusiastic way explains about Mr Moss and the Amazon-like attempt to close him down and how much they want to help and that nobody would notice them unless, he thought, they could put their sign on an important person who would be decent enough to care.

Well, the Duke's been to more Sales of Work than he cares to think about and this is the first bright moment he's had for many an appearance. He tells William and the others that they must discuss this further over ices. The eager captive audience of lads listens to his tales of adventure like big game hunting and together they discuss Red Indians and pirates. Then the Duke, with boys in hand, goes to visit Mr Moss. He buys a pound of sweets for each boy and he makes a standing order for himself of cokernuts. Instantly Mr Moss is known as supplier of cokernuts to Royalty. The Amazon shop closes down, Mr Moss is reinstated as the place to go to.

And of William?

Rest here: <https://alittleteaalittlechat.wordpress.com/2014/07/10/the-royal-sweets-delivery/>

Michelle says

This review is about the audio version of the book; it is the 5th William audio book I have listened to and is just as good as the others. The books concern a small boy and his friends getting into trouble and is very light and entertaining. I read an interview with the author and she said that the books were never intended to be targeted exclusively for children; it just ended up that way. I recommend the entire series, it is perfect for children and adults who want to read about a more innocent time. The narrator is very good and creates different voices for the characters using the correct tones of irony, hysteria and sarcasm as needed.

Pippa says

More fun. These books are getting me through chemo!
