



Bearded Tit: A Love Story with Feathers

Rory McGrath

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Bearded Tit is Rory McGrath's story of life among birds. From a Cornish boyhood wandering gorse-tipped cliffs listening to the song of the yellowhammer with his imaginary girlfriend, or drawing gravity-defying jackdaws in class when he should have been applying himself to physics, to quoting the Latin names of birds to give himself a fighting chance of a future with JJ - the most beautiful girl he had ever seen.

As an adult, or what passes for one, Rory recounts becoming a card-carrying birdwatcher, observing his first skylark - peerless king of the summer sky - while stoned; his repeatedly failed attempts to get up at the crack of dawn like the real twitchers; and his flawed bid to educate his utterly unreconstructed drinking mate Danny in the ways of birding.

Rory's tale is a thoroughly educational, occasionally lyrical and highly amusing romp through the hidden byways of birdwatching and, more importantly, a love story you'll never forget.

Bearded Tit: A Love Story with Feathers Details

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From Reader Review Bearded Tit: A Love Story with Feathers for online ebook

Emma says

I picked up this book because I also like birds and it was nice to learn more about them from McGraths ramblings. For me the funniest thing about this book is the title so I was a little disappointed it wasn't more entertaining. I did like it though.

Bridget says

3.5, charming and sweet. Now I want to go bird watching

Dorothy says

This is a light and humourous memoir, not only of a man's life and experiences in love, but a wonderful essay on birding and what it has meant to the author's life. So skilfully written that I didn't know I was learning, but indeed have found it has enhanced my enjoyment of watching the birds from my window. I'm now trying to decide who to entrust this to next....

Andrew says

Picked this book up from a RSPB pile in Wales and seemed to recall reading about it a while back, truth be told I wasn't sure what to expect but was hoping for some sort of witty collection of birdspotting memoirs...ultimately I wanted information delivered in a fairly light way as although I enjoy nature I find text heavy books which present facts sometimes a little short on euthisasm.

This book delivered on this front presenting a backdrop of a love affair with a person alongside a love affair with birds!!...the book itself was great fun and one thing I can say about it is I started noticing birds a lot more whilst reading it...whether they were urban pidgeons, magpies or the ducks that seem to have taken refuge in a makeshift pond in a flooded area nearby.

I'm glad I picked this book up as it did all I hoped it would.

Stefan says

A very funny and interesting book. Definitely recommend!!!!

Mark says

Well, who would have guessed that Rory McGrath would a) have a deep-rooted interest in birds; and b) would write a book about it in quite a sensitive way. He may come across from his TV work as a bit of an oafish funnyman, but this book shows there is much more to him than just that. His recollections and reminiscences of his earlier days are quite good to read and he does inject his trademark humour where possible, but its not just about humour. His love of birds and nature is expressed quite eloquently throughout the book.

His tales of his times at Cambridge university and his blossoming romance with the mysterious JJ are quite poignant and heartfelt, particularly when she disappears out of his life to go on honeymoon - a quite unexpected development. His tale then fast-forwards through to the recent past and his birding exploits with his current wife and trying to persuade his reluctant teenage kids to show an interest in bird-watching as well. (view spoiler)

His attitude towards professional twitchers is bang on as well - why let those who try to belittle your own enthusiasm with their superior knowledge get you down? I like birdwatching as well, but don't take it to extremes, and Rory's gentle level of interest is just right.

On the whole, this was an unexpected pleasure to read and I now see Rory in a different light.

Kate Millin says

A mixture of autobiography and information about various birds, most of which can be seen in the UK. It is an interesting concept of chronicling Rory's discovery of the joy of bird watching and the information he learns about the birds. It is funny, but also a bit bitter sweet in places.

Brian Robbins says

Like so many celeb books on a subject - intensely irritating. Too much of the celebrity as opposed to the subject. Didn't finish it. Blood pressure rising too rapidly.

Jim says

Surprisingly, for Rory McGrath, this book is very likeable. Even more surprisingly, it's almost believable. Almost. But then the story is a frame on which to hang McGrath's love of the birds of Britain, allowing him to write passionately about them while pretending to write passionately about one particular bird who'd captured his young heart at Cambridge University.

I've always found birds of the feathered variety kind of boring, but McGrath brings them to life in chapter after chapter, probably climaxing in his ode to the peregrine falcon. Reading it, I too could become A Worshipper. His other climaxing, to be honest, I wasn't so sure about (in a variety of ways) but it's his one-sided love story with one particular bird that carries the book along in the first half. This apple of his eye dominates the first half of the book. You're allowed to project your own image of what she's like, the ideal, pert, gamine, English rose of possibly your own dreams. Unfortunately, however, the picture of a young Rory isn't much different from the fat bloke who used to be on the telly. Still, he's a good enough raconteur in print to get away with the story of their doomed romance.

The second half of the book is more concerned with real bird watching, and loses its momentum a bit. Although it's well written and amusing, it becomes a bit laboured if you don't find twitching as satisfying and fun as Rory and his friends so clearly do. I found myself skipping some of the later chapters, but that doesn't detract from what was overall an entertaining and likeable read.

Chris says

This is a very unusual book and difficult to describe but I will do my best to do it justice.

Rory McGrath is a British comedian and a household name in the UK, this was his first book published in 2008. It tells the story of his lifelong fascination with birds but rather than any sort of dry, technical tome the book is rather a story of his youth spent as a student in Cambridge and how throughout his experiences birds played an important part.

McGrath imparts interesting tidbits of information about birds throughout the book but does so as part of the story meaning it is never dull or meaningless. I learnt quite a lot from reading it and was also engrossed in his student era antics. As you might expect the book was also funny in places.

Overall it was enjoyable and not easy to put down. After a while it did become a tad repetitive and I found it jumped backward and forward quite a lot making it difficult to keep up at times but overall impressive for a first book.

David Manns says

Well this was an unexpected pleasure. This charming little book is about Rory McGrath's adventures in birdwatching. No, stop yawning, this is actually a very funny, informative and in the end quite touching book. McGrath takes us from his days at Cambridge, where his fascination with a girl in the local bookshop leads him to learn all the Latin names of the birds of Britain to impress her. He falls head over heels for her but it all ends badly and then there's a leap forward of 25 years or so and we catch up with him again with his second wife and their forays into the world of 'twitching'.

McGrath also ropes in his chain-smoking, hard drinking friend, Danny, to try and get him to stop smoking and take up bird-watching instead. Easy to read, wittily written and with loads of really quite informative stuff on British birds, this is well worth a read. There's even a twist at the end which reveals McGrath to be an inveterate romantic.

Recommended.

Naomi says

This book wasn't at all what I expected. Although, I wasn't quite sure what I was expecting as the blurb is rather vague.

Bearded Tit is an autobiography written with McGrath's most important bird experiences in the forefront;

they seem to revolve around the women in his life, something that I find quite quaint.

Initially I found the autobiographical style a bit tedious; surely I would have picked up an autobiography if this is what I'd wanted, I want to know about the birds! But I think this book really opens your eyes to how much birds and nature impact your life, how you can remember specific moments with a specific bird. For a person that's interested in birds, this book was actually a bit of an eye opener to how nature has had a big affect in my life without me being aware of it. There's something magical about discovering new species and seeing birds for the first time and I think McGrath captures that excitement in this book.

Unfortunately his writing style is a bit cliché and faux-youthful for my liking. A bit, "Oh no this is sounding too serious, better add in a swear word." Or it could be that I'm just not too familiar with this sort of style.

Johnpingham says

Started off well; a few laughs and bird-related memories. First half is basically a drawn out love story, which at least has some structure to keep you interested. Second half is a series of anecdotes loosely relating to birds and birdwatching. Quickly got boring.

Leslie says

I hadn't heard of Rory McGrath so came to this book without preconceptions of any kind, except assuming it was about bird-watching. It was a delightful surprise to encounter a funny, pleasant guy telling a story about his school days and the present, with lots of self-deprecation, amusing anecdotes, poignant revelations and even quite a bit of interesting tidbits about birds. It really works as a memoir and has a happy ending, my favorite kind. Although the title may suggest that bawdy humor will set the tone that is actually not the case. Very enjoyable.

Helen Farrow says

An excellent book - quite moving in parts & amusing too. Don't have to be a bird watcher to enjoy it but the descriptions of familiar Norfolk bird reserves & bird sightings added to the story for me. One of the rare books I've read twice & will probably read again.
