



LGBT Reading Group



December 2007/January 2008



The Read... Fair Play

Translated for the first time into English, this book portrays a love between two older women, a writer and artist, as they work side-by-side in their Helsinki studios, travel together and share summers on a remote island. In the generosity and respect they show each other and the many small shifts they make to accommodate each other's creativity, we are shown a relationship both heartening and truly progressive. This illustrated book was written when Jansson was in her mid seventies, is translated by Thomas Teal and introduced by Ali Smith. ISBN 978-0954899530



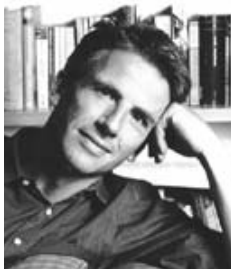
The Author... Tove Jansson

Tove was a Finnish novelist, painter, illustrator and comic strip author. By far, her best known works are the *Moomin* story books. Born in Helsinki, she was part of the Swedish-speaking Finnish minority and all her books were originally written in Swedish. In 1966 Jansson won the Hans Christian Andersen Award for her contributions to children's literature - her Moomin books have been translated over 30 languages worldwide and are the second most widely translated works of Finnish literature. The Moomin Museum in Tampere displays much of her work and there is also a Moomin World theme park in Naantali. She lived in Helsinki with her partner, artist Tuulikki Pietilä, and died in 2001 of cancer.

Our Opinion ... This slow paced book is about the relationship between two intelligent, artistic women existing together, rather than exciting things that happen to them. A lot of mundane things happen (just like real life!) which left some readers feeling that this book lacked momentum but it was agreed that, with perseverance, the quirky moments and delightful incidental characters made this quite an amusing book.

Precisely written, this book is made of snapshots from Jonna's life with Mari - they live together, yet separately, in a remote island house in Finland with the Baltic ocean (and the Russian military) creating an atmospheric backdrop, with few neighbours but several unusual friends. There is an autobiographical feel throughout the book, and the subject of two older women who have been together a very, very long time was one not often covered before. Easy-to-read with short chapters it never specifies that Jonna and Mari were lovers, but it's understood without doubt that their partnership is one of love, companionship and creativity.

What Next? Lucky Dip!



This month, members of the group dipped into the lucky bag to pick a different title from the back-catalogue of gay writer Patrick Gale. Next month, we shall each review our selection to the rest of the group.

In 1962 on the Isle of Wight, Patrick was born into a family of prison governors. His first two novels, *The Aerodynamics of Pork* and *Ease* were published by in 1986 and the following year he moved to the north coast of Cornwall and began the love affair with the county that has fed his work ever since. Patrick now lives on a farm near Land's End with Aidan Hicks, plays the cello and runs writing and reading holidays for gay men.

www.galewarning.org



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