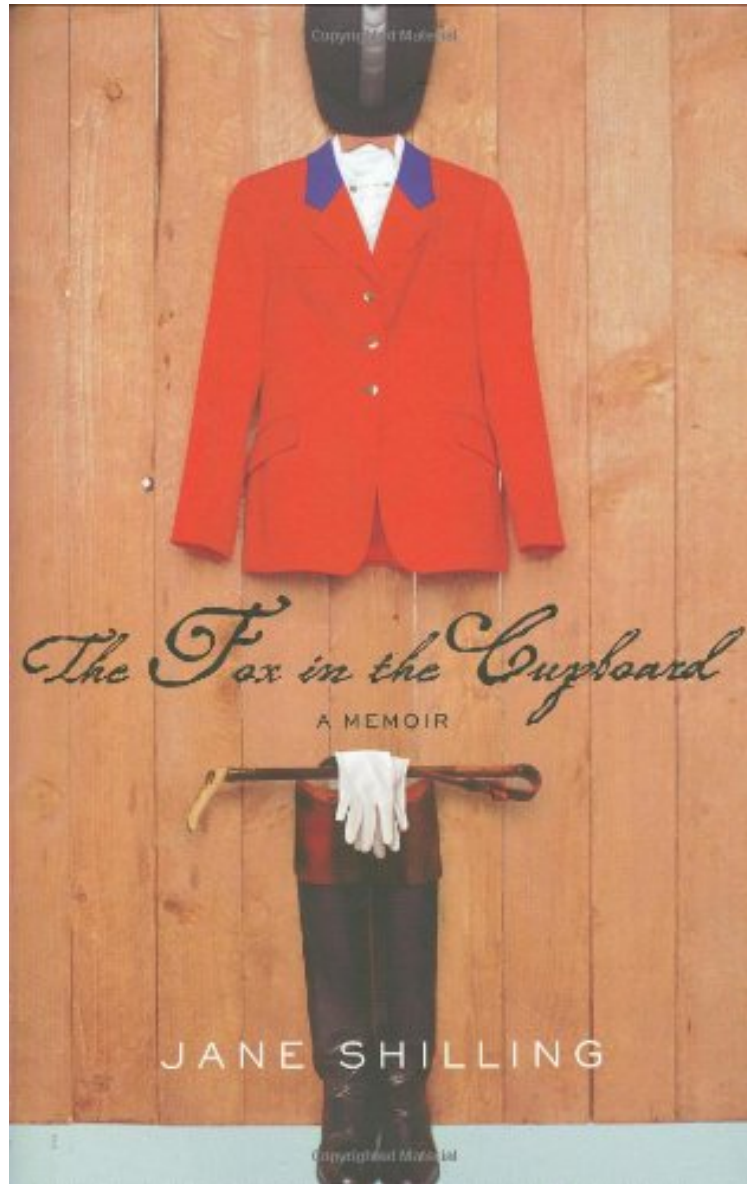


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The Fox In the Cupboard: A Memoir

Jane Shilling

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Jane Shilling : The Fox In the Cupboard: A Memoir before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Fox In the Cupboard: A Memoir:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Funny book that helps you relive your horse riding experiences.By KFHCheck out the UK reviews to get some better insight on this book, the ones that I saw there are all 5-star reviews and I agree.Even a few paragraphs of this book can make you feel like you are in England on a horse wondering if you

really can jump the next ditch. The author's descriptions of getting up in the dark and cold to get her horse ready also makes you feel like you are there with her (and makes me even more grateful that the Woodbrook Hunt Club that I ride with does not require manes to be braided before every hunt.) If you ride to hounds, this will clarify memories of your own hunts. For non-horse people the book might be only 4-star, but if you ride then this is an interesting as well as entertaining book. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. An absorbing look at the contemporary world of fox hunting. By Rivercat As an American horse-mad child I consumed all the Pullein-Thompson and "Jill" pony books I could get my hands on, but the culture of riding to hounds, with its arcane language and fastidious customs, remained opaque and perplexing. Jane Shilling is an outsider herself, bringing the reader along on her journey as a middle-aged single mother attempting to learn to ride and join a hunt. While the politics of fox hunting cannot be avoided, Shilling wisely does not make them the center of her story, but rather lays out the situation as she observes it and ultimately lets the reader decide for herself.

What does a London-based single mother do on her holidays? With a couple of weeks unexpectedly free and no chance of going away, Jane Shilling decided she would pursue a childhood ambition and learn to ride. A teacher -- Mrs. Rogers -- was easy to find. What she hadn't reckoned on was that Mrs. Rogers was a master of foxhounds. So began Jane's odd, late-blooming affair with foxhunting: the beginning of a passion that was to take her back to the scenes of her childhood and transform her life in ways that were unexpected, often enchanting, and frequently uncomfortable. "The Fox in the Cupboard" is a vivid account of discovering a hidden, beautiful, and frequently comic world of horses and hunting in a small corner of England. It is a book about searching for the place where you belong, about embarking on an adventure at the very point in your life when you thought it was too late. It is also the story of a journey between the shifting worlds of town and country, childhood and adulthood, and a chronicle of the extraordinary characters the author met along the way.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . In this splendid memoir, London Times columnist Shilling details her passion for foxhunting, a slow romance that begins midlife with a desire to ride, which she painstakingly learns to do, then escalates: she buys her own horse and becomes an avid rider and devoted hunter. The lure of foxhunting, a demanding and highly regimented sport with packs of hounds trained from puppyhood, isn't an American penchant (and foxhunting with hounds was recently outlawed in Britain), but Shilling brings the world of the hunt to vivid and bloody life. She lovingly and breathtakingly describes every detail, from the dressing of horse and rider and the wild determination of the hounds to the thrill of the chase, right down to the capture of the "talismanic" brush (the tail of the hunted fox). In telling the history of foxhunting, the breeding of hounds, Shilling's hunt club, her move from the city (London) to the country (Greenwich) and the transcendent emotions she feels, Shilling shifts seamlessly between past and present, personal and political. Readers might find Shilling too glib on the violence of the hunt, which she insists is neither as cruel as bullfighting nor as violent as other means of "controlling" foxes. Few may come away sharing Shilling's hunt politics, but none will fail to appreciate the provocation of her arguments nor fail to enjoy her evocative tale of her love affair with the English countryside in all its feral glory. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist When the author, a British single mother looking for a new hobby, took up the sport of foxhunting, she had no idea she would wind up in the middle of an international controversy. A sport with a long and venerable history (it dates back at least to 1327, when the rules were first codified), foxhunting came under criticism a few years ago from animal-rights activists who claimed that the hunt was not only cruel to the animals but also a barbaric and uncivilized activity, demeaning to humanity. Eventually, early in 2005, the sport was outlawed in Britain. She may have come in at the end, but Shilling quickly grew to know and love foxhunting and its quirky, eccentric subculture. Her book is an eye-opening introduction to the sport--not a defense of foxhunting but a thought--provoking acknowledgment of a vanishing part of British history. David Pitt Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Anybody who wants to know why the English are so crazy on the subject of foxhunting -- both those who are for it and those who are against -- can hardly do better than to read Jane Shilling's funny, touching and graceful memoir, which will also tell him (or her) a lot about the well-known fact that the English are horse crazy as well, and about the abiding (and apparently changeless) charms of rural English life."-- Michael Korda, author of "Horse People"