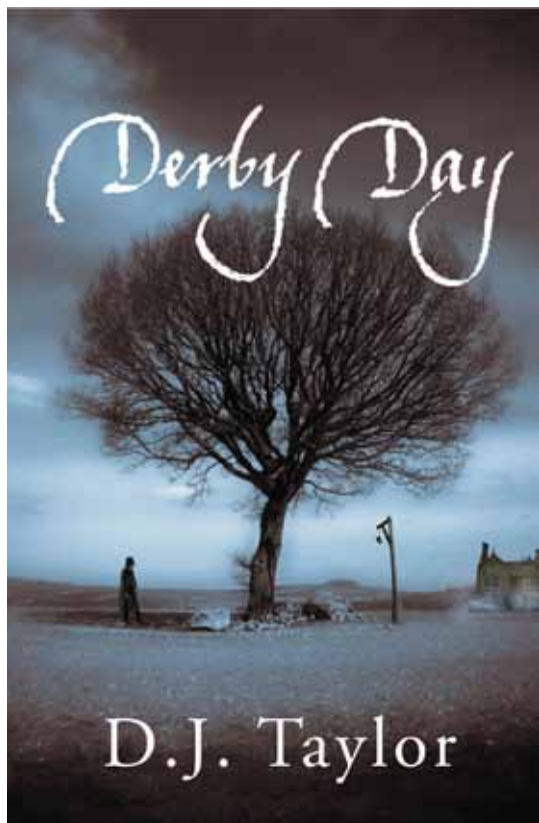




The Man
Booker
Prize
2011

Reader's Guide



Other novels by D.J. Taylor

Great Eastern Land (1986)

Real Life (1992)

English Settlement (1996)

After Bathing at Baxter's (1997)

Trespass (1998)

The Comedy Man (2001)

Kept: A Victorian Mystery (2006)

Ask Alice (2009)

Derby Day

D.J. Taylor

Chatto & Windus / Random House

Price £17.99

www.themanbookerprize.com

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About the author

D.J. Taylor was born in Norwich in 1960. He is a novelist, critic and acclaimed biographer, whose *Orwell: The Life* won the Whitbread Biography prize in 2003. His most recent books are *Kept: A Victorian Mystery* (a *Publishers Weekly* Book of the Year), *Bright Young People: The Rise and Fall of a Generation 1918-1940*, and the novels *Ask Alice* and *At the Chime of a City Clock*.

Derby Day

In the heat of June all England seems to head for Epsom Downs. Aristocrats and beggars, society beauties and street girls, punters and thieves all stream along the dusty roads, heading for the greatest race of the year. Hopes are high and nerves are taut on Derby Day. Many have waited and schemed for this day all year. Even in the depths of Winter, when the wind whistles through foggy London courts, the ale-house talk turns to the race. Across town in the clubs of St James's the rakish Mr Happerton plays billiards and plots with his crony, Captain Raff. While in Lincolnshire, troubled Mr Davenant broods over his finances and waits for his daughter's new governess to arrive at Scroop Hall. Taylor's evocative novel is rich with the hustle of Victorian England and memorable characters. Uniting them all is the champion horse Tiberius, on whose performance many a destiny depends.

Discussion points

Do you agree with the reviewer who wrote "Taylor wears his research lightly but there is no doubt how much effort he has expended". Leyla Sanai, *The Independent*

How does the novel and its characters provide an insight into Victorian society?

Would you describe *Derby Day* "as a pitch-perfect pastiche of a Victorian novel"?

What risks to you think D.J. Taylor takes with this novel?

Why do you think D.J. Taylor didn't give Happerton a Christian name?

How sympathetic do you find Rebecca and do you agree with her behaviour at the end of the novel?

Themed reading

Thackeray *Vanity Fair*
Wilkie Collins *The Moonstone*
AN Wilson *The Victorians*

Useful links

D.J. Taylor's website

<http://www.djtaylorwriter.co.uk>

Publisher's website

<http://www.vintage-books.co.uk/>

Round up of reviews

http://www.theomnivore.co.uk/Book/7135-Derby_Day/Default.aspx