

It's the Little Things

Erica James

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A gripping novel about how friendships survive the best and worst of times from the bestselling author of SUMMER AT THE LAKE.

Dan and Sally Oliver and their friend Chloe Hennessey are lucky to be alive. Three years on, after surviving one of the world's biggest natural disasters - the Boxing Day tsunami - their lives have changed dramatically.

Dan and Sally are now parents. Dan is enjoying being a stay-at-home father taking care of their young son, and Sally is the breadwinner and loves her job as a partner in a Manchester law firm. The arrangement has so far worked well, but when Dan starts to question whether Sally has got her priorities right, the cracks in their marriage begin to appear.

Dan and Sally have everything Chloe wishes for in life - a happy marriage and a beautiful child. Dumped by her long-term boyfriend just weeks after the tsunami, she's been on a mission ever since to find the perfect father for the child she craves. When she meets Seth Hawthorne, she thinks she may have hit the jackpot. But is Seth the man she thinks he is?

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS is a moving, compelling story of how a life can change in a heartbeat.

It's the Little Things Details

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
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From Reader Review It's the Little Things for online ebook

Sue says

Chloe, a doctor, and Sally, a high-flying lawyer, are close friends. Sally is a dynamic risk-taker, married to the peaceable Dan who stays at home with their delightful small son Marcus. Chloe is still rather hurt by rejection from her last boyfriend, and reluctant to start another relationship. Then she gets to know Seth, who seems to be perfect in just about every respect... except that he is harbouring a secret.

Chloe, Dan and Seth are all very likeable people, but I couldn't quite bring myself to believe in Sally, who, despite being a lawyer, behaves increasingly more stupidly as the book continues. And there are a rather large number of minor characters, some of whom I couldn't keep apart in my mind.

A bit slow-moving at first, but as the tension increases, so does the pace. Enjoyable light women's fiction.

Tanis says

I usually enjoy a light beachy read. But not this one. This was trite and predictable and full of snobby cliches.

I thought it was dreadful and repetitive. It might have made a passable short story for a magazine but no more than that.

Definitely won't be reading any more Erica James novels.

Andrew says

This was a very enjoyable read about the effect the Boxing Day Tsunami was still having on the personal lives of people caught up in it 3 - 4 years later. The lives of the people involved will never be the same again and this was a time of great transformation. Good interrelationships within this book with a few twists, and in particular a big one right at the end! Do tend to like Erica James's writing style.

Aileen says

Chloe Henessy is 37 and a GP at the local surgery where her Dad previously worked, Chloe along with her friends Dan and Sally are grateful to be alive after being caught up in the Boxing Day Tsunami. Chloe is single after being dumped by her Ex Paul after her Tsunami ordeal. Paul rings and asks her to meet up but will she?

Dan and Sally are married with a 2 and a half year old son Marcus, Sally is the breadwinner and Dan the Househusband, Sally works too hard. Sally doesn't know that Dan is still having dreams about the Tsunami. Are they really happy in their marriage? Or is Sally hiding

something?

Chloe envies Dan and Sally's life, Chloe meets Seth Hawthorne but do they start a Romance? Or are they friends? Has Seth told Sally everything?

I really enjoyed this book, it was easy to follow, I couldn't put it down and definitely would recommend.

Komal says

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS

BY: ERICA JAMES

BOOK REVIEW:

It is my first book by Erica James. I picked this one from my local bookstore. When I saw a little kid on the cover, my hormones (blame the bump!) kicked in and I got tempted to buy the book. The blurb made me feel that it was going to be a fantastic read and I was right!

I won't say that I was immersed in the story from the very first chapters. It took me a while to get a grasp of the characters and the situation, mainly because it was not a usual run-of-the-mill, chick lit, where boy meets girl and they live happily ever after. Set in the premise of Boxing Day tsunami, it takes us onto the journey where Dan and Sally, a married couple, survive the big chaos but soon find themselves being engulfed by the tsunami that they somehow unconsciously created and get destroyed by its far-reaching affects on their marriage and their child, Marcus.

I kept thinking why Dan keeps on tolerating Sally's wrong attitude towards him. I particularly hated Sally for having the nerve to betray Dan's trust and have a messy extra-marital affair which eventually not only destroys her marriage but also her high-flying career as a lawyer. I also could not comprehend how can a mother ignore her child, and be such a bad parent (the way Sally was to Marcus), but that is where I admire the author for giving the readers a real heroine - a believable character created intelligently. I have to say Sally is one fictional character I hated so much, for her selfishness and mean attitude towards others.

Coming to the other aspects of the story, there is the strong bond of friendship between Sally and Chloe, which undergoes a metamorphosis as the two friends are thrown in the situations, where they get tested for their loyalty and their priorities in life. The readers also get to see the ups and downs of Chloe's relationship with her boyfriend, Seth (a vicar!). It is so amusing to see the unusual dynamics of their relationship as their religious concepts are totally different from each other. It kept me wondering whether they will be together in the end or not. Will Chloe face her inner fears and overcome them? Will she be able to trust Seth after what Paul did to her?

The cast of characters presents three-dimensional flawed human beings who sometimes, without their knowing, succumb to their desires and the readers get to witness how they face the consequences of their wrong doings/actions or false decisions. There is so much depth and meaning in the story which comes forward beautifully by the expert writing of the author.

Erica makes sure the reader is fully absorbed throughout by presenting us with a vast array of genuine

characters and her smart way of writing. The chapters are fast-paced, situations are threaded well together and come after one another with such a smooth flow that the reader remains fully absorbed till the end of the story. "It's the Little Things" is a perfect example of an excellent theme and plot, superbly presented by the author. Highly recommended!

Written by: Komal Mansoor aka "The Review Girl" @ komzreviews.blogspot.com

Ozone-nut/ Zoe says

One of her better books. Not the greatest writing ever, but generally an easy, quick read, mostly believable characters, a good one to bury yourself in on a cold wet weekend when you don't want to have to use your brain too much.

LindyLouMac says

I have enjoyed reading the novels written by Erica James since her first one 'A Breath of Fresh Air' was published in 1996. With the exception of a couple (Gardens of Delight and Hidden Talents) that are still sitting on my bookshelf, plus Love and Devotion which I still have not obtained a copy of, I have now read all her novels. I regard her work as a thoroughly good read where you can immerse yourself in the story, not great literature but so much better than some of the novels regarded as 'chick lit' or 'romantic women's fiction'.

It was interesting to read at the end of the novel Erica James notes as to why she had written this novel. Her starting point was the Boxing Day Tsunami of 2004 an event she herself witnessed and survived. She always felt that one day she would use this experience in one of her novels, not writing about the actual event but a story of how lives could be changed as the result of surviving such an ordeal.

I think she has succeeded and written a very readable novel around this theme.

In her words "We humans have an incredible ability for surviving the seemingly insurmountable, but it's always the little things – the daily irritations of every day life – that prove more challenging"

It is three years since four friends, Dan and Sally Oliver, Chloe Hennessey and her boyfriend Paul survived the Boxing Day Tsunami. We catch up with the lives they are now all living in the countryside not far from Manchester, Sally a successful Lawyer in Manchester, Dan a stay at home father and Chloe a local GP. Dan and Sally appear to have a happy marriage and a child, two major things Chloe lacks and desires in her life having broken up with her boyfriend Paul. Chloe thinks she may have found the ideal man when she meets Seth Hawthorne, but it is complicated!

As the story line is a realistic one it is easy to become immersed in the lives of the protagonists and find oneself feeling emotions regarding their behaviour. For example Sally Oliver is a most irritating and thoroughly unpleasant young woman, why did her husband Dan stupidly put up with her behaviour for so long. Even the other main protagonists Chloe Hennessey and Seth Hawthorne I felt I wanted to shake more than once!

I suspect that these were just the sort of reactions to these characters that Erica James wanted us to have. Anyway in my opinion she has produced yet another delightful realistic novel of romance, duplicity and misconceptions in the 21st century.

Kerry says

I wanted so much to enjoy this book and I desperately wanted the story to kick in and show it's potential which it did have according to the blurb.

The Plot and main characters

Sally and Dan, Sally is a workaholic wife and mother who often leaves Dan her ever laid back and in some cases wet husband at home with their young son.

Chloe is Sally's best friend and the local gp. Paul is Chloe's ex boyfriend. Seth is the local vicar and love interest of Chloe. Basically Sally Dan, Chloe and Paul survive the boxing day tsunami. When they return Sally discovers she is pregnant and Paul leaves Chloe. This book is set 2-2an a half years later and things have fell apart.

There were numerous things which grated on me about this book. If you hadn't noticed the main one was Sally. she was so selfish and I know the book aimed to show that some people are not maternal but seriously you don't need to mention it every other sentence.

A whole range of charcters are thrown into the story without further development or adding anything to the story for example the young girl who find's herself pregnant.

The Seth/Chloe on/off will they wont they was annoying and childish.

Chloes abortion was thrown into the story in the last few chapters and added nothing to the story.

The Tsunami also wasn't given enough lime light and the characters could simply have been involved in a car crash or other minor crisis.

I wont be harsh as this is the first of James's books I have read and a friend has suggested that I would enjoy others.

Maia says

Erica James is a slight read, and yet also nearly always an immeasurable pleasure. Her stories are grounded in a narrow circle and, though her writing is less than great (for a pre editor, there are cringe-worth moments), her characters are nearly always believable. More importantly, you believe the author's voice--you believe that she believes what she is writing about, and cares about her characters. So that you want to care, too.

This isn't her strongest. The whole Tsunami thing didn't work for me because I felt it to be rather gratuitous (it could also, say, have been 9/11) and though her author's explanatory not at the end was interesting, it still didn't convince me that she a) had anything very personal or original to say about the tragedy or b) that the tragedy itself really had left such a huge psychological or emotional impact on her characters--or, even, their story. I pretty much feel that the ways she set it up, the story could have been the same--unchanged--without the Tsunami in the background.

Another problem I had was that I found Sally entirely unappealing, despite how hard James works to show her in light of her awful growing up. It still does little to redeem her qualities, or to excuse the appalling amorality with which she conducts her affair. I can buy, say, that a career-obsessed modern woman may not have a huge lot of 'natural' maternal instincts. I can't buy, however, that once her son is born and the bulk of his care is on her husband's shoulder--therefore, leaving her to only enjoy him--she'd be as callous and unfeeling as James depicts her. A woman like that shows such a huge lack of empathy that a part of her must

be sick and/or psychotic.

I also wasn't thrilled by GP (Clare) and vicar (Seth) romance. Seth is too cookie-cutter romance novel material and it strains belief that a true agnostic/atheist such as Clare would really envision the rest of her life with a man of the cloth.

Lastly, there was a sort of judgmental thread throughout the book in regards to abortion that, in this day and age, was less than thrilling.

So in all, not my favorite Erica James book, but still a warm read and glad to have read it. She still has a special touch and I always look forward to her novels.

Melanie says

That was somewhere between "Days of Our Lives" and "Home and Away" being smashed together with a British Accent, but smack in the middle of bad. I hung on for the ending and was sorely disappointed in its predictability.

Penny says

The 2nd Erica James book that I've read and like the 1st one I was surprised. It was different from my expectations based on the back cover information but I really enjoyed it. Her characters are all really believable and I can actually get emotionally involved with them. I'll definitely be reading more of her books.

Joyce says

This was a light but good read. Maybe not as well done as some of hers, but I would still recommend it. I have read most of Erica James books, she is an English author who places her books in English settings. She does very well with women who are past the 1st blush of romance & have some "life experience." Maybe that's why I like her.

Leslie says

Well done. I enjoyed the story - was frustrated by the characters which meant I was invested in their future

Dale Harcombe says

I like the novels of Erica James usually and this was no exception. It involved me in the lives of Chloe, Dan and Sally, survivors of the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami. When Seth comes on the scene and him and Chloe

start to become involved the reader knows Seth has a secret but I doubt they will suspect what it is and no I'm not going to spoil it by telling you. If at times I became really annoyed with the selfish (in my opinion) attitudes of one or two of the characters it was because I was so involved in the story so that's a good sign and hold firm views myself and some of the behaviour challenged those views.

This novel has a lot to say about the way men and women relate and view their roles, especially when roles are reversed with Dan as the one staying at home looking after their child, Marcus, while Sally goes to work and works long hours. It also says a lot about men and women's expectations of each other and how they may change according to changed circumstances. A good read.

Mrs G Smith says

Another great read

A fantastic book which I could not put down. Lots of highs and lows but a great read none the less.
