



The Playgroup

Janey Fraser

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Puddleducks Playgroup has been run successfully for several years. Now, with an opportunity to prove herself Gemma Merryfield can't wait to take over running it in September. But the arrival of the new head of the infant school, Joe Balls soon tempers her enjoyment. Ex-banker Joe has been employed to bring the school back up to scratch, and that includes interfering with Gemma and her playgroup. Gemma adores her unruly group of children, and she can even find affection for the parents, but Joe's interference is the last thing she needs.

Meanwhile, Nancy is in turmoil. Her only son has just started playgroup and her husband has taken a temporary posting to Vietnam. Even before he left, there hadn't been much hope of conceiving her much-wanted second child. And with Danny gone for most of the day, what on earth is she meant to do now? Does she have the strength to find herself again, and maybe make some friends along the way?

Little do any of them realise what a tumultuous term it is going to be...

The Playgroup Details

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From Reader Review The Playgroup for online ebook

Theresa says

I loved this book couldn't put it down i loved the story line. The only thing i could find wrong they was few spelling mistakes. With been a parent myself i could understand what parents were going though in the book and in some ways could relate to them an excellent book for people with children. It had funny parts and serious parts and all came together perfectly.

M.D. Bowden says

I've given this four stars as I found it quite a compulsive read, and I thought the characters were interesting/likeable once you got to know them. I found some things about this read annoying though - the way it suddenly left off at a suspenseful moment and shifted to another persons story, I didn't find it created suspense, instead I found it annoying, and sometimes distasteful considering the nature of the story (childhood illness). I thought it was over dramatic and level of education the kids in reception were taught seemed too advanced. However I liked the romance and was left with a warm fuzzy feeling at the end. Overall an enjoyable book, if you don't take your books too seriously! Recommend for mums and woman who want to have kids.

Susan says

As a granny to a 4 year old. I could identify with the children and playgroup setting. Nearly 500 pages so a good read but had a bit of a slow start. The initial chapters did rather drag with too much emphasis on the children and their activities at the playgroup and I kept wondering when we were going to get to the main storyline involving the adults. Intelligent chick lit with well drawn, attractive characters, and entertaining story lines which kept me guessing as to how it would turn out. An undemanding comfort read but an entertaining one.

Kat says

Janey Fraser is better known as the popular author Sophie King. I have enjoyed her books under this name so when I found out she was doing another book but under a different name I was pleased. It was a good book with lovely characters, but I wasn't keen on some of the writing as there was quite a bit of bad grammar and this was off putting and the writer sometimes used words which I didn't think fitted the context. I would certainly read another from this author.

Danielle says

Janey Fraser also writes under the name Sophie King, even though i have read a couple of her books under

the name of Sophie King. This is the first book i have read by Janey Fraser.

I really enjoyed the book and couldn't put it down. The book Starts of with Gemma Merryfield taking over the running of the local playgroup as the current leader is on maternity leave.

Gemma quickly becomes attached to some of the children who attend the playgroup, and some of them in return become very attached to her. Ex banker Joe turns up as the new reception head and quickly rubs Gemma up the wrong way. But a number of events happen including a child disappearing on a school trip and when a child falls ill, they decide to put there diffences aside and put the children first.

All in all i really did enjoy this book apart from the odd spealling mistake i found it hugely enjoyable and very much looking forward to her next book.

Teresa says

This is my second book by Janet Fraser and I continue to be amazed at how she can have such a large ensemble of characters, each with their own storyline (or more), and not only not confuse the reader, but make the characters and various plot lines unputdownable!!!

Gemma is the interim playgroups teacher. She loves her job, loves her students. She loves to teach through play. Joe is the new head of he primary school. He is a former banker who is all about numbers and structure. Of course they clash. Add to the mix various colorful mothers of students, students (one shrouded in some mystery), two exes and a serious illness.

Grab a cup of tea (coffee, wine, whatever), get comfortable and enjoy!

Jyoti Babel says

Meet Gemma Merryfield, the in-charge of the "Puddleducks Playgroup". The book starts with a typical day at the playgroup. There are anxious parents who worries whether their kids would be fine at the play school, there are late parents- who are never in time to drop their children at the play school and then there is a celebrity Mum who isn't quite what she seems. And then there are these kids, some excited, some cranky and some shy and their 101 questions about everything they can think of, which Gemma and her assistants tries their best to handle.

Gemma loves her job but behind her happy demeanor, she is hiding a secret- a secret that only few close ones know about. Soon, it would change her life. But, what it is?

Apart from her personal problems, Gemma has Joe Balls to work with and share a bathroom with! Joe Balls, the former- banker- turned teacher has a few surprises of his own. He thinks Puddleducks put too much emphasis on fun and games, and not enough on numbers. They do not see eye to eye in most matters, but when one of the children falls dangerously ill and another disappears, Gemma and Joe have to set aside their differences and work together. It is not all fun and games at 'The Playgroup'.

If one has small children, I guess they would be able to relate to the story more. As for me, I did enjoy reading it, yet I would have liked it more, had it been 50-70 pages shorter. The second half of the book was more happening than the first half. In fact, for the first 100 pages it was all about kids and the play group which was kind of too much for me. Yet, it was a fun and light read with balanced elements of humour, romance, suspense and fun. The writing style is simple and yet keeps you interested. There is always some suspense to keep you glued and keep wondering what would happen next. It dwells on a number of parents-kids issues, from raising kids - the naughty ones and the shy ones to nurturing an ill kid, the decisions often mothers take about their career when raising a kid and how a kid can make or break a relationship. There is also the right amount of romance if all the kid's thing is too much for you.

Louise says

Have you been a nursery nurse/teacher or been a parent who's had a child at playgroup? Then this book will bring back memories of what happens at Puddleducks Playgroup with Mrs Merryfield and Bella and Jean and the new Reception Teacher Mr Balls. It goes through the first terms back after the holidays and the different children as well as the staff lives and how some are entwined. Started at 11am, It was finished by 9pm. I just couldn't put the book down and had me laughing in parts of memories as a parent and also in my job. A well done novel by Janey Fraser. Would love a sequel to when they are in Reception.

Sarah says

Enjoyable light read with good characterisation, although I could predict the ending good journey to get there. Intelligent chick lit! Loved the depiction of the children and the playgroup - recognisable characters. Also thought the way some parenting issues were raised was subtle and as a parent to three could recognise some of the feelings; embarrassment by our children's behaviour being just one! If only all/more preschool teachers were like Gemma.

Jess says

A fun story,ideal for readers that like young children as it centres around a playgroup and the lives of the children and families who attend there.

Puddleducks is the feeder playgroup to the nearby infant school.

Gemma Merryweather has taken over as the supervisor of the playgroup whilst its previous leader is on maternity leave.

Over in the infant school Joe Balls takes over as the new head of foundation after the previous head suffers a serious heart attack.

Gemma and Joe set off on the wrong footing and do not see eye to eye,at all.

As term begins we get introduced to the new children and their families. There is Nancy and her little boy Danny,Lily and her famous mother,Brigid and her boisterous son Billy and Annie who befriends Nancy.

This is an enjoyable book,with a few surprises thrown in along the way.

Rebecca Sigsworth says

I was really hoping this book would be a great read, unfortunately it wasn't as good as i'd hoped. Although, having worked in nurseries that part of the story is accurate. The ending was very predictable which is always disappointing. I found the plot sort of went from moving on and sticking with the same thing for ages so each part of the chapters either made me stick reading or want to move on. So overall an average read.

Claire Hill says

Well I have missed being chick lit world after reading some different gene and this book brought me back to what I love best.

This is the first book I have read by this author and so glad I did and will looking out for further books.

So so related to this as being a mother of two girls and my youngest will starting in this year into pre school and I will be the mother with the child that screams don't leave me !!!!! But I also have worked in a school to so I reacted to the main characters Gemma and Joe.

Gemma is the Playgroup leader and this her first year and so ready for this but seems to keep hitting hurdles in the form of Joe Balls the new head of reception they both have different approaches to teaching but over time they come round to each other ideas and get on the same path. Both characters have pasts in ex husbands and wives so I left that spoiler out as it needs to be read . The book also hits a subject of mothers with different issues with parenting shows that friendships are the best support and advice ..

If you are a mother or teacher in a school and have not read this book then you should as you will not be able to put it down..

Paula Sealey says

Gemma has just taken charge of The Puddleducks Playgroup, who have close ties with the local school.

There, Joe has just become the new head of Reception years and has firm ideas on how the playgroup should be run. Clashes occur, but everyone comes together when two children at the group suffer tragedy.

After the initial, rather confusing chapter, I had to read a few more before I really gained any interest in the characters. Even then, I wasn't gripped by the story lines and some of the characters, like Joe, were rather unlikeable. Just an okay read for me.

Sarah says

The book follows three main characters:

Gemma - The new puddleducks playgroup leader.

Joe - The new head of the reception class.

Nancy - The parent of a child attending puddleducks.

I originally bought this book because I work in childcare, so thought that I would be able to relate to it, and I was right! The happenings of the story remind me of working and accurately depicted what it is like to work in a nursery, and I imagine that it would also bring back 'nursery moments' for many parents.

The story makes for a nice read and did me a few laughs. It's just a shame that it took a while for the book to get going, as the first half was just getting to know the characters. But there really were a few unexpected twists and turns in the story that surprised me and made it worth the buy.

Would I recommend this book? Yes. But only to those who have a genuine interest in parenthood/ working with children.

Fiona Wilson says

I was looking for some lighthearted books to read and came upon this author. I immediately bought all of her books and this is the first one I read. I was expecting a nice simple read, but it was so much more than that.

Working in childcare I love stories set in childcare establishments. This story made my job look totally mundane in comparison. This isn't a simple story about a playgroup. There are complex characters, some mystery, and a whole load of hilarious happenings thrown in.

This was a good read which I really enjoyed
