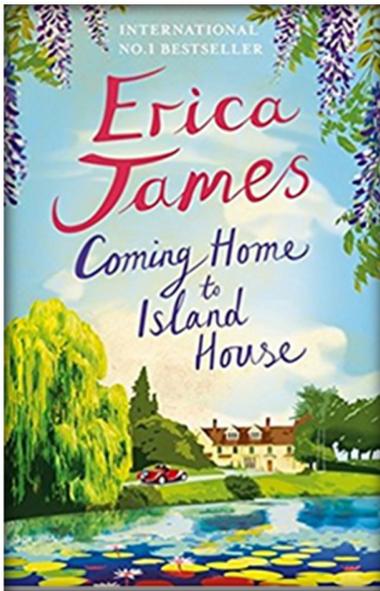


LoveReading Reader reviews of
Coming Home to Island House
By Erica James

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.



Jan Kirkcaldy

This book really surprised me as it was full of elements that normally annoy but definitely not in this case. Based around a bizarre will set up to try and reunite his family, Jack Devereux's sudden death creates a strange scenario for his much younger wife, Romily whom he had recently married. A capable, independent woman who wrote successful crime novels, she soon found nothing could have prepared her for the task in hand. Now adults, his two sons, daughter and a niece had to live amicably in their country house for a week before claiming their inheritance.

Set between 1939 and 1940, it soon became compulsive reading, finding out who was where in the world and what they were doing. This can be a distraction but it all came together in an interesting way as they reconnected with childhood friends. With the possibility of war never far away and latterly briefly touching on its early years, what happened in all their lives and those of the local villagers became very real. I could visualise what must have been going on at the time. A really good well researched story.

Humaira Kauser

I was hooked right after reading the blurb- a book definitely up my alley. I was a bit put off between the twenty-seven year age gap of Romily, the main character and her husband Jack but I put that aside and learned to love them; a bit like the age gap between Jane Eyre and Mr Rochester. I liked the character development; they felt more real as you read on.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading Erica James's book. I loved how most of the

chapters were short so it felt like you were whizzing through but still soaking it all up. I didn't want it to end- good thing for me. I've now added a few of her books to my reading list.

Phyllippa Smithson

This will interest fans of Lucinda Riley – family relationships, conflicts and realisation that life is too short. Just a little light weight for me.

Jack has found love for the first time since losing his first love and wife over 40 years previous. Now married for the second time to a woman who is much younger, Romily, he has found someone he genuine loves, and the feelings are mutual.

His three children from his previous marriage, together with a niece who he adopted, have flown the nest having completely dissociated themselves from Jack based on his domineering parenting and aloofness. When Jack suffers a fata stroke, his siblings return to the family home to learn of the terms of the Will. And what they learn has significant implications on the relationships between themselves, with their new step-mum (who they see as a threat) and on what they understood was their relationship with their father and Uncle. It's good but for me, not that good.

Dana Captainino

Romily Temple had not been married to the enigmatic Jack Devereux for long when she is left reeling from his untimely death.

Jack's everlasting wish was to reunite with his children and for them to reunite with each other. *The initial instruction from Jack is that the family members live together at Island House for seven days - if anyone was to leave before the week was out then so their chances of claiming any inheritance would be gone. **Not an easy or simple aim.***

It is up to his widow Romily, a renowned author, and traveller, to encourage this to happen. However, first, she needs to win over their acceptance in her role as stepmother. One by one she gets to know each of them and they begin to reignite their relationships with each other. All of this pans out against the rumblings of Europe at the onset of World War Two and this deeply influences the outcomes of many of the central characters. Romily is a complex character too - heartbroken by Jack's demise will she be content with staying at Island

House forever? An interesting read.

Annette Woolfson

This is the story of a family that has grown apart and the dying wish of a father to bring them back together again.

It begins in the summer of 1939 when novelist, Romily Devereux-Temple, returns from a book tour to Europe eager to start her new life with husband Jack and to meet his grown-up children. Fate, like war, intervenes and Romily finds herself trying to fulfil her husband's wishes. This is the first novel I have read by this best-selling author but I must say that I was quite disappointed. The characters were very stereotypical and the storyline predictable. It is one of my favourite periods of history and I was really looking forward to reading it, however I am sure Erica's fans will love it. It just isn't my style.

Victoria Goldman

I smiled my way through 'Coming Home to Island House', with its uplifting writing and gentle humour. Not many books give me a warm feeling inside, but this one certainly did.

Author Romily Temple, who is used to leading an independent adventurous lifestyle, and her dysfunctional stepfamily are thrown together unexpectedly after Romily's husband Jack falls ill. His family have grown apart over the years. Not only do they not know Jack married Romily but they hadn't even met her - so this is a shock when they arrive. Each member of the family is very distinctive, with their own little quirks and beliefs, creating a diverse array of characters. It's their diversity that keeps this story flowing, as they learn to accept one another for who they are - and as Romily copes with her new role in life.

This book is about family dynamics and sibling relationships but also political uncertainty at a time of war. The story takes place mainly in the UK, but also covers the situation in Germany and Italy, highlighting the plight of Jews as the Nazi movement rises in Europe. In many ways, the book's theme is war itself - between family members and also countries - and the impact it has on people's lives.

I highly recommend Coming Home to Island House if you're looking for an easy read - perfect for cold winter nights with a mug of hot chocolate at your side. Go on... treat yourself!

<http://off-the-shelfbooks.blogspot.co.uk>

Rosie Watch

I was really excited when I saw this title appear, I have always enjoyed Erica James' books and was delighted to be selected as a reviewer. I loved the book from the start when Romily Temple drove into the village to when she drove out again in the closing pages. It was such an uplifting and heartwarming story. There was a wonderful mixture of love, humour and characterisation. The way the various family members developed and evolved under the influence of the main character was beautifully portrayed. I rather wish we all had her sensitivity and broadminded attitude to life.

*In the opening paragraph one gets the wrong impression that she might be somewhat vacuous and after Jack for his money and his house, yet her obvious love and care for all those she comes in contrast with is so brilliantly written. Even the loathsome Arthur turns a corner under her influence. **This book is certainly a brilliant addition to Erica James' repertoire and an absorbing and wonderful read. I really wish I hadn't had to read it in a hurry, I loved it.***

Gill Wilmott

*I have unfortunately just finished reading 'Coming Home to Island House' by Erica James. I say unfortunately because I would have liked it to go on and on! The characters are so well portrayed that you feel you are reading a family history, and therefore as the book ends at Christmas 1940 that there must be more to tell! The story is in essence of a newly widowed crime writer who tries to fulfil her husband's last wish of bringing his antagonistic family together in harmony, while coping with her own grief at losing the love of her life. There are though many other characters also involved with scenarios of village life interwoven. It invokes the atmosphere of the time with rationing, evacuees, a rescued Jewish child, and a local RAF base all coming into play. There are inevitably some sad parts of the book especially as it is set in the lead up to and during the first part of the Second World War, but there are many uplifting highlights as well. Not least those showing the family finding their way back together. **I had somehow never come across Erica James before but after this example of her writing I will be seeking out her other books***

for sure!

Emily Wright

With an idyllic setting and a storyline which unfolds at a languid and relaxing pace, 'Coming Home to Island House' is a satisfyingly escapist novel, perfect for a lazy day spent reading.

Romily Temple is a crime author with spirit. Never afraid to defy the conventions and expectations of the 1940s, Romily's previous pastimes include car racing and flying. However, when Romily falls head over heels in love with Jack Devereux, she soon finds herself facing a far greater challenge. On his death bed, Jack asks Romily to bring the Devereux family together at Island House, the family home. With war looming, can Romily help to heal the rifts which have kept the Devereux children away for so long?

Island House is located in the village of Melstead St Mary, a setting which perfectly evokes village life in 1940s Britain. I was immediately reminded of Miss Marple's home, St Mary Mead, and I can't help but think that the amateur sleuth and Romily would have got on famously. Erica James pulls together all of the family's experiences of wartime to create a captivating view of how the war affected everyone, of every social class.

The complex family dynamics which unfold throughout the novel are both intriguing and sincere; readers will recognise themselves or family members in the interplay between characters. As well as the Devereux family, the minor characters, including wise solicitor Roddy and housekeeper come mother hen, Mrs Partridge, are a delight to meet and get to know.

Edel Waugh

*This is a story about families, the ups and downs, heartbreaks and breathtaking moments. The story is based around Romily and Jack, an unconventional marriage based upon the opinions of the locals in the village, but there is much more going on with them under the surface. When tragedy occurs and family members have been pushed together again at Island House, limits are pushed and emotions are running high. This was a beautiful epic story of one family with a very strong couple at the helm. I loved Romily's character, she had the right amount of common sense with a good dose of empathy even though her entire life changed and she had to share her home with some people who did not feel much love towards her. **This is a feel good story with lots of***

moments that leave you with a lump in your throat. A must read!

<http://edelwaugh.blogspot.ie/2017/11/coming-home-to-island-house-by-erica.html?m=1>

Karen Cocking

A family drama with happiness and heartbreak in equal measures. With excellently drawn characters and a fully immersive storyline, this will be one of my favourites.

'Coming Home to Island House' is set between August 1939 and December 1940. Author Romily Temple-Devereux is very much in love with her new husband Jack however her life changes drastically when she unexpectedly finds herself having to deal with his estranged family; a family that comes with a lot of baggage and they bring their old hurts and grudges with them.

As ever with Erica's books, the characters are superbly brought to life with all their flaws making them so realistic. Jack's three children all feel hard done by on account of their father's lack of attention over the years and when they are forced to spend time in each other's company, they will either pull together or grow further apart.

For me, Romily was the star of the book. A no-nonsense but sympathetic character she did her best for the family that she found herself saddled with. She was not adverse to taking risks but perhaps her biggest test was to come at Island House.

This story is very much based on family and all that it endures – with times of joy and heartbreak. The story was exceptionally well told and there wasn't a moment when I wasn't immersed in the lives of the Devereux family – the drama and unexpected turns often bringing a lump to my throat. I loved it and can highly recommend it.