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LoveReading Reader reviews of **The Perfect Gift** by Emma Hannigan

headline

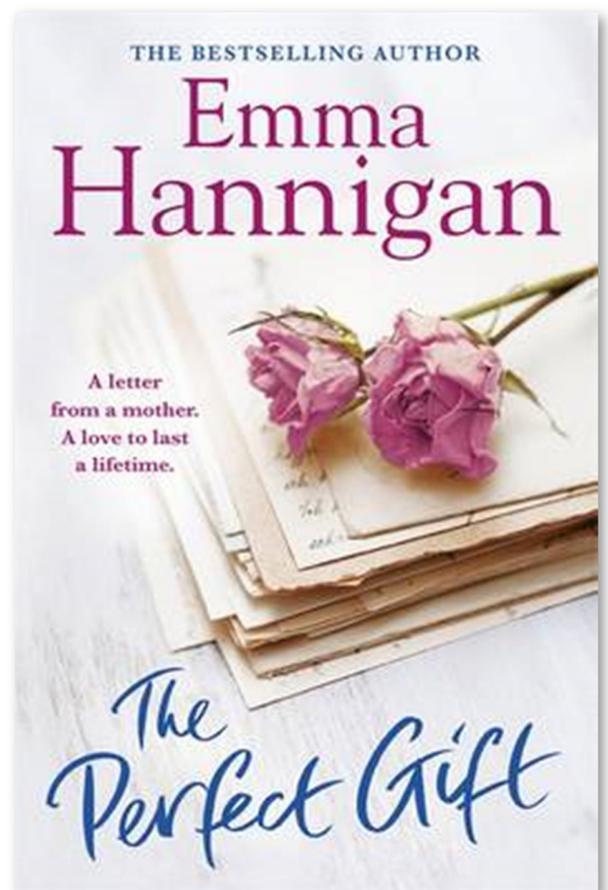
Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.

Joan Hill

'The Perfect Gift' is a beautifully written and emotional novel about family love and support of each other. Secrets set free offer peace from torment, new beginnings and hope for a brighter future.

Roisin has always known that her adoptive parents Keeley and Doug took her in as a tiny infant. They surrounded her with love and soon her younger sister Liv was born into their family. Every year Roisin receives a birthday card from her biological mother. This year it is her thirtieth birthday and she eagerly opens the card. What she reads in the accompanying letter changes everything. She takes stock of her life and looks back to the astute advice her birth mother has given her. Changes are afoot not only in her life, but also in the lives of her mother and sister. Dark secrets will be revealed as the family put right the wrongs of yesteryear.

Living nearby is Nell, a reclusive lighthouse keeper living a shadow life of guilt, regret and sadness after the premature death of her beloved daughter. Then one day she finds a vulnerable young runaway called Mouse sheltering from the weather and decides to take her in. Her life begins to open up like a flower. At last she begins to enjoy life again and they bond, sharing stories of their lives



before they met each other.

'The Perfect Gift' is a heart-warming novel about mothers and their daughters learning that it takes trust and compromise to find their rightful way in life. I really enjoyed this novel and thank Lovereading and Headline Review for my copy sent to me in return for an honest review.

You can follow Joan on Twitter: @JoanHillo7

Sophia Ufton

Loved the story, this is the best book I have read in a long time!

Every year Roisin has received a birthday card in the post from her birth mum who she has never met. She grew up with adoptive parents Keeley and Doug and never wanted for anything! Then on her 13th birthday she gets a letter that shakes her world! Read now to find out what happens! You won't be disappointed

Janet Gilliard

*I loved this book. The story of three women and how their lives are linked. It starts with a letter from a mother to her daughter. The book grabs you from the beginning and doesn't let go. I really enjoyed this despite a few of the plot twists being fairly obvious. **A good book to curl up with on a cold night and transport yourself to a lighthouse and bakery in rural Ireland.***

Jan Kirkcaldy

The captivating beginning immediately caught my imagination and I was instantly wondering what was going to happen to a baby and its dying mother. *The real story though begins in a seaside village in Ireland where a successful young business woman Roisin runs her cafe and basically everything centres around her, her parents, sister and family. There's plenty happening in their lives to keep your attention with which nearly everyone can feel some connection – though hopefully not all. You could say most human life is there – not necessarily believable but very readable.*

Roisin the adopted daughter who'd returned from France, her sister Liv and her young children, seemingly traumatised but by what, their B & B running parents, Keeley and Doug. All become more interesting throughout as does a wealthy reclusive woman living in a lighthouse who suddenly befriends a young

woman who arrived on her doorstep out of the blue. They and all the other characters appear real and worth keeping an eye on. With a touch a crime, love, heartbreak, retirement blues and even IVF there's plenty going on and adds up to a perfect escapist read. Ideal for a holiday or when you feel you need one. I found it a typically Irish family tale by Emma Hannigan, almost old fashioned despite modern day references and a small French connection thrown in for good measure. Easy to work out, not a challenge just **perfect relaxation material. I thoroughly enjoyed it.**

Clare Turner

For lovers of Maeve Binchy et al - a warm and engrossing story of women's lives.

This very readable book is concerned with the intertwined lives of five women and the secret that links them.

It tells of one summer which changes the lives of Roisin, who was adopted as a baby but who every year receives a card signed by her birth mother, of her adoptive mother and sister, of the reclusive Nell and of a young runaway who proves to be a catalyst in revealing the secret. But the underlying theme is the power of the bonds between the women and the strength of female love.

Emma Hannigan, admirable for her brave fight against cancer and for her relentlessly upbeat attitude, is a story-teller from the Maeve Binchy stable; like Ms Binchy she is warm and welcoming, sympathetic and kindly towards her characters and manages to restore one's faith in human nature. No matter that this novel contains much that is far from believable and that it is full of stereotypical characters and sub-plots, from the beautiful, good, talented and entrepreneurial Roisin to the sinister German villain. What counts is that it is fast-paced, engaging, filled with hope and inspiration and impossible to put down.

I look forward to her next with eagerness!

Nikki Clark

Such an endearing read - perfect - I loved it!

This is a truly adorable story; I loved the quaint coastal village setting, the close-knit community feel and the lovely, lovely characters: women, doing their best to get by and get on in the world, almost never putting themselves first and

dealing with the burden of their past, present and future. The story unfolds with plenty of drama and emotion and heaps of warmth as the strong female characters find themselves in situations that push them well beyond their comfort zone to the point of letting go and moving on.

Emily Wright

Emma Hannigan weaves a web of secrets to create a delightful novel that is rich in optimism, along with a sprinkling of her trademark poignancy which left me with a tear in my eye.

Like any small community, Ballyshore, on the west coast of Ireland, holds many secrets.

Nell is the lighthouse keeper, who keeps herself to herself and watches the storms of life from her observatory. Mouse, a young runaway, desperately needs a guiding hand. She seeks shelter at the lighthouse, and an unlikely bond develops between the pair. Gradually, Nell confides in her guest, sharing the secret that she has kept locked within her heart for many years.

Róisín runs a thriving café and delicatessen in Ballyshore. Thirty years ago, her adoptive parents were given the gift of a family. It has never been a secret that she is adopted, but when Róisín receives a letter from her birth mother, she never imagines that there is someone very close by who can share with Róisín the precious gift of knowing who her birth family are...

I thought this novel was a joy to read; strong female characters who I felt I knew like friends blended with a cosy setting I was very happy to escape to each time I picked the book up. A multi-generational story of hope and how the unconditional love of a mother is the perfect gift anyone can give or receive, 'The Perfect Gift' is a magical read to brighten your day.

Julie Wragg

A heart- warming summer read for fans of family sagas.

Every year Roisin receives a special birthday card; an inspirational message full of love from the birth mother she has never met. Roisin appears to have it all - a loving adoptive family and a thriving local business, but her success is built due to the effort to hide pain that Roisin has never shared with anyone. Life is suddenly made more challenging by the unexpected threat to her livelihood, her stressed sister, the thoughtless actions of her recently retired

father, and the appearance of the attractive Claus who may just be about to turn her mother's head.

Nell lives a solitary life in a lighthouse and it suits her just fine until a bedraggled teenager seeks shelter and makes her rethink her way of life and the importance of letting people in.

All the characters have to find their own way through their problems and trust that the love of others will help them through.

A gentle, comforting read about the mother and daughter relationship and the power of love. As in Emma Hannigan's other books the uncovering of past secrets is the main thrust of the story. Some difficult issues are raised but within a very safe and neatly tied up by the end way providing a heart-warming summer read for all fans of Irish family sagas.

Edel Waugh

I really loved this story about a young woman called Roísín who owns her own business and is doing great in her professional life but her love life needs work. Roísín is adopted, and there has always been a mystery around her adoption as she knew very few details, but each year her birthday comes around and she receives something in the mail from her birth mother.

*What I loved about the book was how real the characters felt and the situations they found themselves in, more than once I found myself holding back tears or bursting out laughing unexpectedly. This is also a bit of a mystery story as we are left with a lot of questions until the end when the entire story comes together perfectly in a very satisfactory way. **This book was sheer joy the entire way through.***

If you love Maeve Binchy and Marian Keyes books then I think you will really love this touching and funny story.

<http://edelwaugh.blogspot.ie/2016/01/the-perfect-gift-by-emma-hannigan-review.html?m=1>

Carolyn Huckfield

I reviewed an earlier novel by Emma Hannigan last year and said that this was the novel that should push Emma Hannigan into the A list of contemporary Irish novelists. I have been proved right with her latest novel and the proof is here in 'The Perfect Gift'. We move from the beautiful and moving prologue to a

fast paced and humorous story which eventually leads us to the same discovery that Rosin makes. This is a moving and very emotional story about mothers and daughters. When the stories are finally told it feels like this is the right time for all the secrets to be revealed.

This is the best novel yet from Emma Hannigan. Parts of the story made me feel like crying but the outcome is so positive and shows how the friendship between these women is central to the positive outcome of the novel. It makes me think of my friendships and how important it is to nurture them.

Rebecca Whymark

As always an excellent family saga!

*Yet another excellent novel from Emma Hannigan. Nell is living at the lighthouse with secrets she daren't share and Roisin lives her life never quite letting go of the past until all the pieces come together so everyone can live happily ever after. The trials and tribulations of a family brought to life in a touching way. **I love the depth of the characters, you feel like they are family from the first chapter. An easy read that I couldn't put down, twists and turns every step of the way.** I can't wait to read another of Emma Hannagan's books.*

Celeste McCreesh

Róisín is a very successful woman who owns her own business ~ Nourriture - Food for the Soul. She is almost thirty and ever since she could remember Róisín has received a birthday card in the post from her birthmother whom she never met. Róisín was adopted when she was a baby and brought up by Keeley and Doug, her adoptive parents but on her thirtieth birthday she receives a letter that's going to change her world forever and especially for Keeley who's raised Róisín as her own is reminded that she is also been holding onto a secret of her own for thirty years.

Meet Nell, she lives in a lighthouse keeping watch of her past that she rarely goes to but when one day a runaway arrives seeking warmth and shelter, Nell takes her in where she learns the young girl has had a bad start in life. Nell decides to take her under her wing and they begin to bond. Will Nell be able to right the wrongs of her past??

I didn't just like it, I really LOVED it. It is a very bittersweet and heart-warming read. I really enjoyed Emma's book which I read in a couple of days. This story had it all a little bit of humor, love, betrayal, family, protectiveness to more sensitive and hard-hitting issues - I found I had a little tear in my eye at the end along with shedding a few along the way, so grab this book, curl up on the couch and prepare to have a few lump in your throat moments too. It definitely didn't disappoint. Now, I'm off to make an attempt of these Chocolate Truffles for my Mum and I to gorge on.....

Catherine Dugmore

As with all Emma Hannigan's books as soon as you turn the pages you feel like you want to meet the people and visit the places. She has an amazing way with words to draw you straight into the book.

A very emotional and uplifting story of friendship, family life and surprising unexpected secrets. The story revolves around Roisin, (who has a secret) her wonderful Nourriture, Food for the Soul Food (and much much more. You truly want to visit for a coffee! You actually feel like you are there and want to meet and make friends with all the characters. Roisin is a business woman, brought up by her adoptive parents Keeley (who has a secret) and Doug. Keely and Doug own a B and B, they encounter two guests who have a bit impact on Keeley's life.

Rosisin receives a letter each year on her birthday from her birth mother who she has never met. On her 30th birthday, the letter she receives changes her life. Also, things start to go wrong with her business and it feels like her life is taking a turn for the worse.

Then pops up Nell who lives in a lighthouse and you wonder how this character fits in with the story. Nell lives alone but takes in an unexpected lodger she names Mouse - the bond that develops between them is wonderfully touching. Nell has a secret.

The story comes together beautifully at the end tying up all loose ends perfectly. A highly recommended truly beautiful read.

Ruth Paterson

Another heart-warming page turner from Emma Hannigan. The book is centred round five women who between them heal old wounds by creating new friendships and learning about themselves

along the way.

I enjoyed "The Perfect Gift" from beginning to end tears, laughter and all.

The characters are lovable and believable. Two business women, one mother struggling to cope, a reclusive old woman and a young teenage run away. Some of the ties that bind them together are clear; mother, daughter, sister and adoptive parent but the other ties are mysteries the "gifts" the characters have to offer each other that unwrap as the book unfolds. Reading this makes you wonder what secrets people keep to themselves and how important friends and family are to share our anxieties with.

Another gem of a book, worth keeping on the shelves for a second read in the future. Emma Hannigan fills a Maeve Binchy shaped hole in my book shelf and I am delighted that I have discovered her books.