



Home for the Holidays

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Joe Lawson has a thing for his new neighbor Hannah Napier. As a single dad, he shouldn't be thinking what he is about her. Still, that doesn't stop them from getting close. And the way she connects with his kids, it's as if they're a family.

Turns out it's too good to be true. Seems Hannah has plans that don't include staying in Melbourne. Joe won't stand between her and her dreams, even though letting her go is nearly impossible. The holidays are looking grim, with him and his kids missing Hannah like crazy. But it is the season of surprises, and Hannah may have one for them!

Home for the Holidays Details

Date : Published November 2009 by Harlequin Books

ISBN : 9780373715992

Author : Sarah Mayberry

Format : Paperback 256 pages

Genre : Romance, Contemporary Romance, Contemporary, Category Romance, Harlequin, Holiday, Christmas

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From Reader Review Home for the Holidays for online ebook

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

I ended up loving this book. It was so well-written and the emotions and the characters were real life and genuine. I just adored Hannah. I loved how she was down-to-earth, a tomboy who was more into working on motorcycles than doing her nails, wearing dresses, and primping. She was tough and strong, but genuine. I could understand her pain of being betrayed by her sister and her ex-fiance', but it was also good that she was able to move on from it and live her life. I liked how she interacted with Joe's kids. She wasn't trying to insinuate into their life, or usurp their deceased mother's place.

Joe was great too. He loved Hannah for who she was, and he wasn't trying to change her. I loved how he wanted to do right by his kids and take care of them. He desired Hannah, but she was his friend too. He wanted her to be part of his life and his family. He didn't slight her for his kids, but he loved Hannah and showed that without it overriding his children's needs.

It was so heartbreaking when Hannah had her health scare, and how she tried to extricate herself from Joe's family so she wouldn't hurt them. How they came to her and made it very clear that she was part of their family and they loved her, and they would stick it out until the end brought tears to my eyes.

This is my second read by Sarah Mayberry. I liked the first book I read by her (*She's Got it Bad*), but I didn't like the subject matter, and it affected me in a negative way that affected my enjoyment. In contrast, this book was just what I needed to read. I love books about two souls who find each other, and fit into each other's life so well--their love makes their lives better, and they aren't trying to hurt each other, but manage to heal those wounds that they each have. Plus, I have a soft spot for heroes who are really good fathers. I definitely want to read more of Sarah Mayberry's books.

Roche says

This is my first Sarah Mayberry book and it definitely will not be the last. The characters are believable, the dialogues are natural, and the conflicts are realistic.

I must say, though, that what I liked most in *Home for the Holidays* is its heroine. She is strong, but not annoying. Her issues and concerns are very relatable. Truly someone female readers will be able to identify with. A rarity these days, considering the almost lunatic heroines in many romance novels.

So, thank you, Sarah, for giving me several hours of joy and tears with Hannah, Joe, Ruby, and Ben.

Corrine says

4.5 stars

One of the best category novels I've ever read. The only thing that keeps it from being 5 stars is I would have loved to have more of the ending.

Jess says

If this had stopped before the surprise breast cancer reveal, I probably would have given it three stars, because I liked the story of opposites falling for each other and the building a new relationship surrounded by kids. Alas, it did not stop there and there the breaking up with the dude for his own good was and of course she forgives her sister in the epilogue. Because in magic writing land, nothing is unforgivable. This is not true. And it pisses me off.

Renee says

How does Sarah Mayberry pack so much story into a category romance? It just amazes me. Even with the Super Romance's longer length, this story packs a wallop. I don't know why I haven't yet tracked down the rest of her backlist.

LOVED both Joe and Hannah. They each had their baggage coming into the story, but worked through all of it even while the story took time showing their courtship. Great stuff.

Saly says

Home for the Holidays by Sarah Mayberry was such a wonderful book. I totally loved it and the little girl Ruby was amazing, Ben the boy wasn't that bad.

Joe Lawson has just uprooted both his kids to a new place and new life. Joe worked in oil rigs but since his wife died two years ago he took a desk job but now he has bought a pub to run, which was his wife's dream and has moved closer to his mother. He is still grieving and feeling his way through. His kids are also still recovering.

On his first day he goes to confront his new neighbor about the noise of the bike and instead finds a woman, Hannah, their first few meetings are not that cordial.

Hannah is a mechanic and is living with her mother for some time, ever since her fiancée betrayed her with her own sister. She is still getting back on her feet, and is also in debt. Hannah was never the girly sister and after her wedding fiasco, her confidence has taken more of a hit.

I loved the whole pacing of the book, how Ruby the little girl befriends Hannah, how she takes them to her school function. I loved seeing them heal, how Hannah finally decides to stop being pig-headed and accept the money from her ex. Hannah always dreamed of taking a road-trip and she tells Joe that their current situation is not conducive to start anything.

But once Hannah goes she realizes that her dreams have changed and she comes back, but they still have the children to deal with, how would they feel seeing Hannah as someone who is dating their father and not just as a friend? I liked how realistically things were portrayed. I loved how Joe put his kids first and Hannah as well. The twist in the end was not necessary but I guess it was to show how committed they were to each other.

Rating 4.5

Kay says

4 1/2 Stars ~ Hannah has good reason to be angry with the world. Practically on the eve of her wedding she discovers that her fiance wants to get married but just not to her; he wants her sister. With her life a shambles she's forced to move back home with her mother, and she'll have to work hard to recoup the losses she took on the sale of their condo. When his wife died suddenly in a car accident two years ago, Joe had to make some drastic changes in his life for his two children. Moving to Melbourne enabled him to buy the local pub and give a more stable life Ruby and Ben. The last thing he expected was an instant attraction to his rough around the edges neighbour, Hannah. Neither have been looking for a relationship, but their chemistry cannot be denied and soon Hannah and Joe work towards a future. Until Hannah makes a discovery that will change all their lives forever.

Ms. Mayberry cleverly breathes life into her characters. Hannah is such a strong woman who seems to be always dealt a difficult hand. Yet she straightened her back and insists on carrying on, with every blow sent her way. Joe is a man who adores his kids. Meeting Hannah, he realizes he's ready to start to live again. When bad news threatens to tear them apart, Joe and his kids force Hannah to see how much she's loved no matter what. This is an emotional read that deals with loss on many levels. Once I started reading the first page, the story just took hold and I couldn't put it down until the very end. This is one for the keeper shelf.

Spacklefritz says

So generally I'm not much of a contemporary romance reader. I usually stick to historical romance, urban-fantasy, or paranormal romance, but the reviews were good and I decided to take a chance.

I don't regret it.

This was such a heartwarming and man if I didn't feel my throat clogging up a couple of times.

Joe Lawson is a single dad whose wife, whom he loved very, died two years prior to the book. He's not looking for love, he's not thinking of finding a new love. Not when everywhere he turns he finds a memory of his dead wife. So he and his family moves elsewhere, in a bid for Joe to not be surrounded so much by his memories.

Then he meets Hannah. Motorcycle riding, car fixing, straight shooter Hannah. She's sure as hell not looking for love either, not with what happened to her before, but you know how these things go. You can't fight love.

The two meet and...well it wasn't off to a good start, but you through a series of events their relationship grows into something that can be. Their relationship felt real, and it wasn't insta-lust, nor was it insta-love, which is always a plus, there wasn't any contrived drama but rather real issues that they dealt with, and are stronger for it.

Now kids in a romance is never an easy thing to do (personally I love it when it's done right) but I think Ms. Mayberry captured them perfectly. They're not syrupy sweet, and neither are they obnoxious and my heart goes out to the kids for what they went through. It can't be easy.

All in all, the writing was well done, characterizations were real, and the relationship was beautiful.

Now can I huggles them all?

Ridley says

Joe Lawson has hit a rough patch. His wife was killed two years ago, leaving him with a 10 year old daughter and a 13 year old son. He's just uprooted his family from Sydney to be closer to his mother in Melbourne. Now the jerk next door is revving his motorcycle, threatening to wake up his kids. When he marches next door to give the guy a piece of his mind, he's in for a bit of a surprise.

Hannah Napier was working on her motorcycle in her mom's garage, like she has on many occasions before, when some jerk comes in and scares the bejesus out of her, yelling at her to keep it down. That's some way to meet your new neighbor!

Despite this inauspicious beginning, and a number of other early clashes, these two find themselves inexplicably drawn to each other. Neither is in the market for romance. Joe's still reeling from his wife's death and is completely focused on his kids. Hannah's recovering from her fiancé ditching her right before the wedding for her younger, prettier sister. Not only are they both walking wounded, but Hannah's planning on fulfilling a lifelong dream to take off on a motorcycle tour of the country. They're determined to keep it platonic, agreeing that the timing is all off for them.

Life, of course, has other plans for them. All sorts of delicious unresolved sexual tension ensues, with some amusing false starts, one of which involves a makeout session interrupted by a car horn. Watching these two circle each other, declaring their intent to keep their hands to themselves, and ultimately fail, is a real joy.

Mayberry did make some decisions I didn't agree with. The meeting between Hannah and her fiancé was straight-up bizarre – why would he, and not her sister, be the one to tell her she was going to be an aunt? I didn't see what that exchange added to the story. I also didn't agree with how she handled the road trip, but I won't spoil that.

I found the dialog hokey at times, especially with the children. Ruby, the 10 year old, refers to Joe as Daddy and her late mother as Mommy, which I found odd for that age group. She spoke the precious and cutesy lines of a 6 year old, not a preteen. She did a better job with Ben, making him reserved and moody, like any self-respecting 13 year old boy, but even he delivered some highly uncharacteristic bits of high emotion that set my eyes a-rolling. If you don't like kids in romance, this won't be the book that changes your mind.

These flaws, however, did not sufficiently take away from what was a highly satisfying roller coaster ride. Sexual tension abounds and a surprise twist at the end is a bit of a tearjerker. A solid read, start to finish.

Pamela(AllHoney) says

Joe Lawson is a widower with two children and decides to move his family to Melbourne to be closer to his mother. He is barely moved in when he wonders if it is a mistake after meeting his neighbor. Hannah Napier is a grease monkey with a motorcycle that needs a new muffler. And she lives with her mother. But that is only temporary. She has plans to hit the road and explore Australia.

I've had this on my TBR shelf for a while. I loved the characters, especially the children, Ruby and Ben. The story was a bit heart wrenching at times. But the title is misleading in my opinion. The book is not just about the holidays. I think it is a book that can be enjoyed throughout the year.

Holly says

I really like Mayberry's writing. She's great at blending real-life issues with great romance. I love how she brings her characters to the brink of disaster (in terms of their actions), but always pulls them back before they cross the line. Both characters are damaged, both have baggage and both are wary about moving into a relationship. But that doesn't stop them from going forward.

I wanted to be annoyed with the heroine over her desire to protect the hero, but I understood her reasons too well. Likewise with the hero. Overall an excellent novel, one I would recommend.

Shawna says

5 stars – Contemporary Romance

This is the third Harlequin romance I've read by Sarah Mayberry, and I'm happy to say that so far her books are a strong 3 for 3 for me in terms of earning 5 stars. I'm continually impressed by the level of character development and realistic, honest drama that's conveyed in her stories. And she wowed me once again with this sweet, emotive story of a hot, responsible widower with two kids trying to forge a tentative, yet hopeful friendship (and then inevitable relationship) with his sexy new neighbor.

After losing his wife 2 years ago, Joe Lawson never expected to find love and happiness again, especially with an independent younger woman who's a bold spitfire like tomboy biker and mechanic Hannah Napier, but life is full of surprises and Hannah might be exactly what Joe and his family needs. I loved everything about this story. Joe makes such a swoon-worthy, wonderful hero, Hannah is a strong, yet vulnerable heroine, Joe's troubled, grief-stricken 13-year-old son Ben and adorable, spirited 10-year-old daughter Ruby add depth to the story, the relationship progression between Joe and Hannah is realistically paced, and the romance is steamy, yet tender.

Home for the Holidays is a heartwarming contemporary romance that packs a real emotional wallop and had me shedding a few tears more than once. I highly recommend this engaging, touching Harlequin quick read romance that's a perfect story for the holiday season! 5 stars!

Kristen says

4 to 4 1/2 stars

Home for the Holidays is one of those books that's easy to love. It's a well written and full-of-depth love story with believable and endearing characters. It was more angsty and bittersweet than I anticipated for a holiday read, but the ending was perfect and gave me that blissful feel I was looking for, making the angst and the touch of heartache more than worthwhile. If you're looking for a well written, angsty, moderately

steamy, evenly paced enemy-to-lovers romance with depth and likable characters, then I highly recommend this book.

MBR says

5++ star contemporary family romance from Ms. Mayberry

I don't know how she does it, but Sarah Mayberry is one author who never disappoints. In this Harlequin Super Romance, Sarah Mayberry explores the story of a single father Joe with his two children Ben and Ruby and the second chance at love this family is given, with a few surprises thrown in at the end.

Joe's wife Beth dies in a car accident. It has been two years since then and Joe moves their family to Melbourne to start over afresh. On his first night at their new place, Joe encounters his neighbor Hannah which leaves both of them with mistakenly bad impressions of one another.

Joe, still in love with his dead wife, who hasn't even thought about a woman in ages and Hannah who was jilted by her fiance for her sister who has the dream of travelling all over Australia and fears giving away her heart to another when she is still reeling from the shock of the immense betrayal she faced, never thought for a moment that they both might find in each other what they have been missing.

However, with a family to consider, things do not go as smoothly as one might think. Although Ruby is delighted with the idea of Hannah and Joe dating, Ben doesn't warm up to the idea and goes out of his way to make Hannah's time together with the family a miserable one.

Sarah Mayberry has created such heartwarming characters in each of the lead roles in this novel. I absolutely fell in love with Joe's daughter Ruby, she is such a delight teaching Hannah the highs and lows of the current fashions when she is just 8 years old.

In the end, working through a lot of hurdles fate throws their way, this family triumphs in all the ways that matter. A good read, recommended for those who love a good romance with a dose of family life and second chances thrown into the mix.

Elle Fielding says

4 - 4.5 stars.

Curse you, Sarah Mayberry! Curse you! This is the third book of yours that has had me bawling like a baby at the end.

I loved this book. A huge fan of Mayberry (this is my 19th? book of hers I've read), I'd actually put off reading this one, thinking I wouldn't enjoy it. Boy was I wrong. I loved it. As always, Mayberry manages to write love stories which have depth. Her characters often need to change or grow in small measure before they get their HEA and I love that I feel like I'm right there on that journey with them. This story felt substantial and satisfying and had so much lovely romance and angst. *Sighs happily*. Highly recommend.
