



The Little Things

Jay Northcote

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Sometimes it's the little things in life that make you appreciate what you have.

There are lots of things that brighten Joel's life. His three-year-old daughter Evie is one. His close relationship with her mother, his best friend from university, is another. Joel's boyfriend, Dan, adds spice to his child-free nights, and Joel is pretty happy with how things are. Then one cold and rainy night, everything changes. Joel's life is turned upside down when he becomes a full-time dad to Evie, and his previously carefree relationship with Dan cracks under the strain. Meeting Liam, who acts as if getting hurt isn't a foregone conclusion, shakes Joel to the core. Their attraction is mutual, and Liam makes no secret of how serious he is about Joel. But Joel is wary. He tells himself he's keeping Liam at a distance for Evie's sake, when really he's protecting his own heart. Taking a chance on this new relationship with Liam may seem a small step—a little thing—but is it one Joel can take after losing so much already?

Please note that although this edition has been re-edited for publication, there is no new or additional content.

The Little Things Details

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From Reader Review The Little Things for online ebook

Cadiva says

Jay is re-releasing this with a new cover so I'll be re-reading and reviewing that version :)

When I heard Jay was publishing this one with a new cover I was really happy as its the first of his books I ever read and it remains a favourite.

It's a super sweet and relatively low angst romance about a guy who's muddling along quite nicely when his world gets turned upside down.

Joel does out himself through the wringer a bit but I loved how Liam wasn't just a walk over and did make Joel have to work at fixing his mistake.

I also liked how Dan wasn't an arse, just a bit too young to be making lifetime commitments and how Evie was as by an uber super child but acted like a nearly four-year-old.

#ARC kindly received from the author in return for an honest and unbiased review.

Lenore says

I started skimming on page one. Gave up around page five.

Sara says

If I were rating books on Goodreads this year, I would be giving this five stars. For me to read a tough subject matter, the author needs to be able to pull me through it with enough trust that it will all be okay. This wasn't an easy read, there are a few very tough moments where I had to stop reading because I was not only crying but I was simply too emotional to read another word, and yet I continued. For that alone, for an author to pull me back into a story with such intense emotions deserves the five stars and then some.

The Little Things is different than what you would expect from Northcote, though it's one of his earliest novels. Absent is the adorable fluff or lack of angst as this book hits pretty hard and deep.

We meet Joel as he is picking up his three year old daughter, Evie. We know immediately that Joel is head over heels for his daughter and as they walk home, we begin to learn how Joel, a out gay man, has a daughter.

I loved getting the short back story of Joel and Claire. How they were best friends in college, how they experimented and how the ultimately would up being co-parents to Evie. They are both so young when we meet them and yet they have taken on the challenge of parenting with respect and maturity for their ages. I liked that Joel has a boyfriend, Dan, though I never quite warmed up to Dan maybe because he is younger than Joel at only 19 yrs. so I guess I expected Joel to have someone more on his level of maturity and not someone who picked up other men when out clubbing though it seems their relationship was not exactly exclusive. I mean he did what he could and he was decent and seemed to like Joel enough and though I did

get emotional at their last goodbye... I don't know. I guess I never got invested in Dan because I was waiting for Liam.

He realized he just didn't care anymore, not in the way he'd cared about the guys that Dan had fooled around with before. Something had shifted for Joel, and he suddenly saw with stark clarity that he and Dan had no future together.

We know from the blurb that something happens to take Joel from a co-parent to a full time dad and while I was spoiled by a review about this and when it would happen, I am thankful it didn't lessen the blow because that scene, as hard as it was to read and as much as I cried, needs to be felt. I felt it and I wept for all involved and dreaded the next step Joel would have to take.

I'll spoiler tag the incident, though some may not feel it's needed, I do.

(view spoiler)

I love the way Liam first meets Joel. Though we didn't get his name I was holding out hope HE would turn into Liam and I was so happy when it happened. Joel is at a huge turning point in his life, even bigger than when he found out Evie was coming along and he needs the type of man he can lean on, who he can count on and who he can just be Joel – a man and a father – with.

But I guess that's what I'd really like—to find a person I can have something serious with, something that could last.

The romance between Liam and Joel was beautiful. I loved that they took their time but that everything felt so right, felt as if they'd known one another for much longer that they let their feelings lead the way. That isn't to say that Joel ever lost sight of his daughter. Being the non-bio mom to a son, myself, I know what it's like to begin a relationship with someone who has a child about the same age as Evie. It's not easy because you want that attention from the person you're with but you also have to get that their child comes first. With Liam, he was simply the most patient man ever and sure, it could have to do with his job but he amazed me time and time again with... well, The Little Things he would do for both Joel and Evie.

The Little Things really is a character driven romance about a man who was just getting the hang of his life to have it all change with a clip of a curb. It's a romance about needing to find the person you can be yourself with but still feel that desire to rip their clothes off and mount them like a bull... or at least a tall, dark and curly haired pediatric nurse.

Let me just add... this new cover (view spoiler) is leaps and bounds above the original. This cover would have had me reading the book long before now and yeah, I admit I kinda judged a book BY the cover but I'm okay with that. I think all things need to be read at the right time and this was the right time for me. The cover though, that is SO Joel with his young maturity mixed with his vulnerability that cries out READ ME and really, I hope those of you who haven't, will soon.

Gigi says

Well, I can't do it. I like Dan too much and I can't bring myself to read how Joel tells his daughter her mother is dead. And its 24%. Just too slow and sad for me. I'm glad others enjoyed it, but this one is not for me.

I may try again when I'm in a more positive headspace.

I encourage others to read some of the reviews posted here. Most folks loved this!

~☆~Doni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~☆~ says

The Little Things is Northcote's first novel and has a heavier, more subdued tone than most of her other books. It reminded me a little of her newest novel

which I loved.

Like in *Passing Through*, there's some grief and melancholy here, but the book doesn't drown in these emotions.

Joel, who's 23, struggles to adjust to life as a single parent to his 3-year-old daughter Evie following the death of his close friend and co-parent, Claire. Joel is lonely and feels disconnected from his job as a teacher and his younger boyfriend Dan.

Joel is with Dan the first half of the book. He meets Liam earlier in the story, but doesn't see him again until the halfway mark and the two don't begin dating until 60 percent.

While there is romance in this book, the focus is mostly on Joel and Evie. Kids in romance novels are often unrealistically portrayed and draw too much attention to themselves. That wasn't the case here.

Evie is a self-sufficient, bright 3-year-old, adjusting to losing her mum and occasionally acting out in a way preschoolers, especially ones who've suffered a great loss, do.

While I felt sympathy for Joel, I was angry with him for the way he treated Liam. I didn't understand Joel's reaction, but he owned up to his mistake and because Liam forgave him, so did I.

I didn't love that there was sex on-page here between Joel and Dan, but I also understood the author's decision to include it.

It would be easy to dismiss the ex-boyfriend as a villain, but Dan wasn't a bad guy. He tried but didn't want to be exclusive and wasn't ready for the level of commitment being in a relationship with a grieving, suddenly single father requires.

The contrast between Dan and Liam was strikingly clear. Liam, a 30-year-old nurse, is mature, confident, and steady. He doesn't want to play games and is more than willing to take on Joel, Evie, and fat cat George.

I adored Joel's sister and her unwavering support. I was happy to read that her wish came true at the end too.

I would have loved more time with Joel and Liam as a couple, but the epilogue provided nice closure to this sweet story.

Jewel says

The Little Things is a bit of a sad read. Unlike the other Jay Northcote books that I've read, this one isn't light and low on the angst. Joel goes from being a single, part-time, dad to a full time dad because his best friend who is also the mother of his daughter is killed in a car accident. Most of the book deals with Joel figuring out how being a full time dad works.

In the beginning of the book Joel is dating Dan. It's nothing terribly serious, but Joel does consider Dan to be his boyfriend. Dan is young, though, and isn't anywhere near ready to settle down and have a family. After Claire's accident, Joel and Dan drift apart until they break.

In comes Liam. Liam is such a good guy and is wonderful with Evie and really good for Joel. Liam is a very stable influence. He's a few years older than Joel, has a steady job as a nurse and is ready to settle down. Liam is very interested in Joel and doesn't make a secret of it.

In many ways, Liam is too good for Joel. Well, maybe that is too harsh. Joel is still pretty young and to be a single father, too, is a tough gig. Joel doesn't have a lot of experience with actual relationships and he nearly let his fear cause him to lose Liam.

While *The Little Things* didn't feel all that much like a romance, I liked it quite a lot and I think it shows that the author has more range than just light and fun (which is awesome, too).

Karen says

Finding the right person is hard at the best of times, but when you've got a kid...

it's a whole other level of challenging.

Joel's life isn't quite what he imagined but still he wouldn't change a thing especially the part that gave him an adorable daughter named Evie. He's got a boyfriend named Dan that Evie seems to really like. So while life's not quite what he'd imagined Joel's got a job he enjoys, a boyfriend he thinks might be the one, he shares custody of his daughter with her mom and while it wasn't what he thought it would be, life was turning out to be ok for 23 year old Joel.

But it only takes a moment for things to change and when that moment comes Joel finds that he's suddenly the sole guardian of his beautiful little daughter and that maybe Dan's not the one, as the pressure of full time parenthood begins to shine a bright light on the cracks in their relationship and an accidental encounter with a stranger named Liam gives him more comfort than all the time with Dan possibly could. After yet again encountering Liam, Joel comes to the realization that he and Dan really weren't meant to be and ends things. After encountering Liam yet again Joel gives in to his attraction and he and Liam begin to get to know each other.

'The Little Things' isn't a love story or even a romance in the typical sense of the word but what it is, is a story about finding love and not the magical romantic stuff of fairy tales no this is the love that exist in the everyday world and sometimes it's scary and it doesn't always fit into our lives but if we want it than we find a place to squeeze it in and we work at keeping it.

Joel's got his hands full and truthfully while he may have wanted a relationship between his job, shared

parenting duties and the other demands that life makes on us actually having a relationship is more than a bit challenging but if it's worth having it's worth the effort and he's certainly willing to try but when things change and he's suddenly a full time working parent, Joel begins to think that maybe he's not relationship material...but then there's Liam...Liam's a temptation that Joel just can't ignore and really does he want to? Hell no.

I loved this story. Joel's a real person with real problems. I've known more than one single parent trying to do the juggling act with life where they give everything they've got to their kids, to being good parents and then they're left trying to squeeze just a little something out for themselves from the time that's left and it's hard, seriously freakin' hard.

Partially because of the whole time issue and partially because most single parents have a story to tell and more often than not that story isn't a sunshine and roses story with a cutesy happily ever after. It's a story that has some level of pain, struggle and heartache in it. Sure some people choose to have kids without a partner but more often than not the reason that a single parent is a single parent is one that's not entirely of their own making as was the case for Joel. So by the time Liam came into Joel's life...well, Joel was well into having issues about people leaving his life, so I have to admit I found Joel's treatment of Liam frustrating at times to say the least but as frustrated as I was I could see where Joel was coming from and basically I sat on my hands and growled at Joel to man up.

One of the things that I liked the most about this story was surprisingly...Dan. I admit when I read the blurb I was anticipating not liking Dan...yep, Dan was going to be my bad guy...well, surprise, he wasn't. Dan was 19 to Joel's 23 and he and Joel had very different backgrounds so realistically Dan was an average 19 year old. He wanted to go out and have fun. But he did man up a couple of times when Joel really needed his help and support and he did it of his own accord but I have to admit I honestly can't find fault with a 19 year old who isn't ready for the kind of responsibility that a relationship with Joel would entail so I liked the way Dan and Joel's relationship went. I liked that there was no over the top drama between the Joel and Dan even when things were ending between them.

'The Little Things' was a warm and heart melting story about someone that felt like they could have been your neighbor or mine, an average person that we might all know. It's an everyday story about an everyday person...that any of us could know and sometimes those are the best kind of stories to read.

This is a re-edited, re-released copy of 'The Little Things' and aside from the new cover the book blurb tells us that there are no real changes made to this story.

A re-edited copy of 'The Little Things' was graciously provided by the author in exchange for an honest review.

Truuss says

It was a sweet read. The writing is good. Only to slow for me.
After 45% Joel finally gets involved with Liam. Before that its all about Joel and his child Evie.
How he lost the mother of his child how his relationship ends. His struggles and his life as a familyman.
And "insensible" me just want to read about the interaction between Liam and Joel.

AnnaLund says

Goodreads TOS-compliant review: (I think, let me know when they tell us what the rules are).

"The book I just read is about two (or three) lovely people, written in beautiful language, by a very good and prolific author. I liked it very, very much.

It is for sale on Amazon."

For my honest and true view of the same book, please read ...**MORE**

DISCLAIMER: As of today my reviews will all have this pretty face, so that all and everyone on Goodreads can stay happy and beatific. I'll let you know if I change my mind.

4,5 stars

Sheri says

Personal journey.

This is an in-depth look at a young man's personal journey. If you are expecting a romance story, chances are likely you will be disappointed. While there **IS** some romance, it clearly takes the back seat in this tale. We have to survive a great deal before the romance can begin. It's also quite different from my treasured bookshelf holding my Northcote collection. I absolutely adored her deeply moving story, *Passing Through*, and though this is similar it is also quite different.

We meet Joel a few years after he steps into fatherhood. During his college years when he was still discovering himself, he conceived a baby with his best friend. They are masters at co-parenting despite not having a romantic relationship. Bravo to Joel and Claire for continuing to love one another even when they weren't in love with one another. I truly enjoyed Claire and consequently her tragic accident cut me deeply. Funerals are hard. They are hard to attend and they are hard to read about.

Joel discovered his true self before their daughter was born but barely had a chance to explore his burning sexual desires and dating due to his hectic schedule. Luckily, he still manages to score himself a young, hot, sweet boyfriend. His relationship with Dan is rather spontaneous. Dan is fresh out of school, beginning college and loves to party. Joel has just finished his first year teaching and spends every possible moment with his pride and Joy, Evie. They make it work. They honestly care about each other and want to be together but face challenges from simply being on polar opposite paths. I liked Dan. I didn't necessarily like the conflicting ideas on open and closed relationships, but it was just as much Joel's fault for not expressing his needs and wants. When they separate both were relieved, as was I. And here we have yet another stumble in Joel's journey.

His path finally straightens, levels out and becomes less treacherous. Suddenly, he is swept off his feet. It's not from stumbling but from flying. He finds himself soaring and he's elated with the person that gives him this ability, Liam. I LOVED Liam. Joel realizes he could love him too and panics. People do stupid things when they panic. This stupidity hurts. So here we are, hurting again. I wish that Joel did not have to suffer so much. I wish that his life wasn't so hard. But I adored watching his path change direction. It certainly was not an easy path but it was necessary to take him where he needed to be.

What's to like: Genuine life beautifully written in spite of its ugly truths. There are toddler tantrums and snotty noses. There is funeral planning and picking up the pieces of your life when it's been unexpectedly touched by death. There are single father dating obstacles and family challenges. This is real life. It couldn't get any more honest.

What's to love: Great characters. I loved all of them! How often does that happen? Joel is an amazing father. I loved how he handled Evie in the midst of their turmoil. Liam is absolutely perfect...for Joel. Joel deserves a long spell of happiness. I always enjoy the British 'sprinklings' Jay brings to her stories, it's undoubtedly her unique stamp. And I love the new cover too!

Beware of: Death. Single parenting of a charming little girl. Fate causing two men's paths to cross over and over again, until finally a crossroad intertwines them into one.

This book is for: Anyone looking for a break from routine romance & erotica and wants something exceptional with a rigorous trek to the finale. As well as those readers who do not shy away from death and loss in their books. It was very well written, it contained amazing characters but it was...hard. Life's little things add up to beautiful big things!

Book UNfunk

Deeze says

This started off well and was going along at a nice steady 3 star, but as I hit the half way mark I started to get bored. Everything is slow and drawn out, and it felt like I never really got any where.

At first I liked Joel. He was a good strong character, and I liked the way he and Dan played out. But then Joel seemed to change into a whinny ninny. I hated the way things were so good then suddenly Joel starts getting all sentimental over Dan. The break with Joel and Liam should of added a little drama, but by then I really wasn't interested any more.

While this was a very realistically told story, I find I need a little bit more drama/angst in my reading to keep me interested. I'm afraid I skimmed the last quarter just so I could be finished.

Garrett Leigh says

I love Jay Northcote's style of writing. Easy like a Sunday morning, and British to the bone. Nothing Serious put a smile on my face and I was looking forward to The Little Things from the moment the preorder links went up.

The Little Things is a wonderful book. Joel is a great character, and he's surrounded by a stellar cast. Evie, Liam, Miranda. Even his failed relationship with Dan holds a place in my heart.

The timeline of the book is very real. There is no insta-love here, or 360 flips when it comes to Joel's state of mind. Joel is imperfectly perfect, and I loved him to death.

I said last time that Jay Northcote was an author I'd turn to when I needed something smooth and light, and now The Little Things has proved to me that she's also an author with a real angsty, resonant punch. Wicked

book.

?? ? Michaele ? says

4 Stars

Ky says

3.5 stars

"*The Little Things*" is one of Jay Northcote's first books. If you read any review that it's out there, you will find out pretty easily that this isn't your typical romance. For one thing, the second MC, Liam, doesn't really get in the story until after half of it is over and, for another, the MC that is in the story, Joel, is involved with someone else - Dan - for most of it.

It was refreshing, in a way, that the relationship Joel was in before he met Liam wasn't a toxic one. It was between two people who cared a lot about each other but just happened to be together in a time that their lives weren't compatible. They didn't want the same things out of a relationship so they had to do the right thing and end things no matter how much they still wanted to make it work. Their break up scene is one of the most emotional and tender scenes I've read. It was truly beautiful and for a minute there I was rooting for Joel to make things work with Dan.

Even though the romance has a place in the story, it isn't the main event. What I haven't mentioned yet is that this story has another important character in it: Joel's sweet little daughter, Evie. She was really present in the story and it was apparent that she came first in her dad's life, as she should be. She was only three years old and the author did an excellent job in creating her character and making her talk and act like her age.

"*The Little Things*" finds Joel and Evie in a very difficult phase of their lives. Claire, Evie's mom and Joel's best friend, was in a fatal car crash and they had to deal with grief, rearrange their lives and find a new rhythm. Evie is really small so she doesn't quite understand what's happening and the innocence with which she asks questions and handle things is sombering. I liked the way that Joel was totally honest with Evie about what had happened to her mom, even if I found it a bit weird how much he used the word "*dead*". At times he was brutally honest with her in an effort to make her understand the finality of the situation.

I was okay with Liam not being an essential part for most of the story, I had read some reviews and knew what to expect so it didn't bother me. What I wasn't okay with was the fact that Joel met his boyfriends to Evie before he was sure that it would be something long lasting. He was with Dan for a few months but they were pretty casual, and still Evie knew him and that he was her dad's boyfriend. Then, a little over a month after they broke up, Joel introduced her to Liam. They were barely together for two weeks and Liam was sleeping over and again Evie knew that he was someone special to her dad. Sorry, I'm not okay with that. I think that it's bad for so young kids to have so much change in their lives and to meet one significant other of their parents after the next. I believe that Joel should have waited to be sure it was something permanent or at least serious enough to last for a while before he introduced Evie to anyone, but that's just me.

Overall, the book is really good and even though it deals with loss it isn't totally dark. It has many light and hopeful moments as well as teary ones. It keeps a good balance between light and heavy. I don't really know who to recommend this book to, because it's so different from Jay's other books. Just, if you're okay with

books dealing with grief and don't have a problem with romance taking a second place to something else, then give this one a try.

This review has been cross-posted on The Novel Approach Reviews.

**A copy of this book was kindly provided to me by the publisher via The Novel Approach Reviews in exchange for an honest review. **

Susan says

Sorry to do this...

2.5 stars

First things first: I don't think this book is a romance. Which is fine. Except it's shelved on GR as a M/M Romance. There are 2 guys and a kid on the cover. The blurb alludes to these relationships. But 75% of this book is not about a couple at all. And that pretty much put me in a bad mood. I've had to wait a day or two to write this review because I wanted this irritation to not overwhelm me with frustration as I review the story.

Look, I'm certain that many of you will really enjoy this book. It will tug at your heart strings and I believe that you'll feel for and become attached to Joel. You'll shed tears over his loss and his struggle to move on. You'll find his relationship with his daughter endearing. You'll root for him to find true love. And I totally can see why.

But, as I've said many times before, maybe I'm just dead inside. This book did NOT do any of that for me.

Why not? Well, for one, the book took forever to get going. I skimmed, I fell asleep on a couple of occasions while reading, and it just was dragged down by mundane details that frankly bored me. It wasn't until about the 40% mark did something actually happen. Then the entire middle section got bogged down again by excess details and I just got tired of the "this is how hard it is for a single dad" angle. I think that point could easily have been made in a fewer number of chapters.

I got hopeful and excited once a romance / relationship actually did start to be established. But the entire build-up, angst-up, make-up all got stuffed into the last 25% of the book and by then, I tried to muster some bit of give-a-shit, but it was hard to find.

I actually really do like the character of Joel. I question his judgement dating a 19-year-old kid in Dan and bringing that guy around his daughter. I also wanted to beat the crap out of him towards the end. But, he was grieving and surviving and I guess that's forgivable.

I think the real highlight of the book, however, is Liam. He's sexy, funny, and frankly WAY too good for Joel. It's probably not a good thing when your not-a-romance romance book has you thinking one of the MC's should just find someone else. Just sayin'...

Like I said, I think that many readers will like this book. I, personally, had a hard time embracing it. Because

I'm a fan of the author's first book "Nothing Serious" and wanted to so like this follow-up, I was tempted to bump the rating a bit. But, I just can't stand by a higher rating. I will however add a "Me-Not-You" tag to it, because I have a feeling I'll be in the minority with this one and most of you won't be nearly as annoyed (if at all) by the things that drove me bonkers.

Totally disagree with me? Join the conversation at:
