



Step-Ball-Change

Jeanne Ray

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Caroline and Tom are looking forward to retirement. He's been practicing law, she's been running a dance studio, and together they've raised four great kids. It's time to enjoy the fruits of their labor...Suddenly, though, their empty nest is filling up. Caroline's sister arrives with a load of luggage, a bad-tempered terrier, and a broken heart. A contractor finds cracks in the foundation, and sets up camp indefinitely. And their daughter Kay brings home her fiance, the richest boy in Raleigh--and plans a high-society wedding that could wipe out their savings. Filled with the warmth and wit that delighted readers of Julie and Romeo, this tale of a family caught in a whirlwind of change reminds us that life is what happens while we're making other plans--and that having loved ones along for the ride is the greatest blessing of all.

Step-Ball-Change Details

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From Reader Review Step-Ball-Change for online ebook

Linda M says

So I asked the librarian for a light read. This one is one of the most mindless I've read. Positives--I did finish it. Negatives--I feel less comfortable about the following scenario: So I die. And my descendants want to know more about me. And they check my Goodreads page. And they found out that this is what I did with my spare time.

Sarah H says

After a spate of dreary and depressing novels, this is a refreshing relief. Clever and good-spirited, it's a perfect summer read. What's not to like about a book that blends tap dancing, dog training, wedding planning and home renovations?

Kim says

A few weeks ago, I stumbled upon a letter from my co-in-law (aka the mother-in-law of my child), and being a librarian herself, she sent me a list of books she had recently read that she thought I would enjoy. Mind you, the letter was dated 2004, which was well before in-law status, but did I mention we were best friends back in college?

This was a delightful, read in one or a few sittings book, and I'd recommend it to the following type of readers:

1. Someone with a sister
2. Anyone who likes a good chic-flick now and then
3. Dancers, mothers-of-dancers, or grandmothers-of-dancers...Well, you get the gist.

I actually read this without a thought of it meeting a challenge prompt, but when I looked at my list, here was Week 40. A book you stumbled upon...

Shiloah says

This one seemed promising. The story was based on a family who lived in Raleigh. Love my NC stories. This one was a "meh" rating. It dragged on. It was mostly tedious conversation and not as funny as promised. It felt like a waste of time. After the first 50 pages, I skimmed through the rest and it was just as slow. It's one I've chosen not to finish.

Bark says

This book was charming from beginning to end, never dull, never over-the-top. Having recently read two very lackluster "chick-lit" type books this story was a refreshing change of pace. There was no bitterness, no over the top shenanigans, no ridiculous situations and no 20 or 30-something nitwit heroine.

Instead the story is told from a happily married 60-ish heroine (Caroline) whose life is turned upside down when she receives two phone calls simultaneously from hysterical women. One is her daughter, Kay, who is crying tears of joy because she's become engaged to the catch of the century and the other is from her sister Taffy whose husband just ran off with a younger woman.

Taffy & her nasty little dog Stamp temporarily move in with Caroline and her husband while she decides what to do with the rest of her life. Caroline is less than thrilled with the fact that her daughter is marrying into such a wealthy family especially when she learns that they intend to invite 900 guests. Poor Caroline sees her retirement plans flying out the window.

This story is about life's little (and bigger) bumps and all of the intertwining relationships. I enjoyed the way the author incorporated dance into the story. It read like it was her true passion and added a lot of depth to the characters. There were many touching moments and wise observations about love, romance and marriage. The characters were all terrific and came alive for me and I hated to let them go when the book ended.

This book could have been longer as I felt it all ended too quickly but maybe that's just because I enjoyed it so much.

Tricia says

This was a cute tale. Caroline received two phone calls one night - one from her daughter announcing her engagement. The other was from her sister announcing her husband had left her.

Against the backdrop of Caroline's dance studio and house repairs while Caroline's daughter and sister works out what they want,

Martina says

As a dancer and dance obsessed person, I loved the book. As an avid Jeanne Ray fan, I loved this book. As writer I can tell you how hard it is to be funny without making your story sound inane. I fail at all it all the time. Jeanne Ray doesn't. So if you're looking for a laugh out loud sibling, matrimony, children, life purpose story featuring non-pathetic (for the most part) older adults this laugh out loud novel may be just the ticket.

Kim says

Another good one from Jeanne Ray. She tells great stories about real families and real problems.

bookczuk says

I had a particularly bad string of books, and had an icky taste in my brain. This book was recommended by EycLady who said "Step, Ball Change is one of those books that I hated finishing because I loved the

characters so much. It was actually traumatic for me when I finished it, because I liked the characters so much! I want them to come alive and be my friends!" :)

I looked for a copy at all of my usual inexpensive to free sources and didn't find one, and so I broke down and bought a second hand copy. The next day, a copy arrived in the mail as a RABCK (random act of BookCrossing Kindness) from etherea. Go figure. Rains, pours and all that stuff.

I started reading this on Waltz Day (US only. In other parts of the world the date is written differently, so Waltz day would be 3 April elsewhere, not March 4 as it is here. You can march forth on March forth or you can waltz in 3/4 time. I prefer to dance.)

As for me, I loved the book, too. It's delightful. I always wanted to be part of one of those families that everyone dropped in to see, and where there were always people tumbling in and out of the house. In some senses we do, but it's never like I imagined it would be and Woodrow fix my house. I want to have Taffy cook me supper and Caroline teach me to dance (I'm a total clod.) Luckily, I have the good, solid love for and with my husband that Caroline and Tom seem to share. I look at him and just *know* that I am a better person for being with him, kinder, smarter and happier and that I do more good for the world (ie I pass Woodrow's test). Every single character in this book was real. So often there's an overblown good or bad guy. But every single one was real. And the story is real, as are the solutions to the problems. How absolutely refreshing.

Peggy says

This was a sweet book; a funny and wise book about family, married life, parenting, second chances, and love. It made me laugh at times and sigh at times. The characters were all so different and the author describes them so well that you feel like you know them. It was a pleasure to read this book!

Linda says

The title to this story intrigued me. Step Ball Change, for those of you that don't know it, refers to a part of tap-dancing. For the most part, this is a wonderfully written book about love, fear, coping and growing up. Each character is impressive in his or her own way. And age is not a factor when it comes to changing your life.

It is about family; when kids are always someone's children even when they become adults. And problems abound; those slices of life that we can all identify with. You may still be supporting one of them in one way or another, you are their sometime friend for a shoulder to cry on, and once in awhile they teach you a thing or two.

It is also about those older adults, not quite retirees, and how life is not perfect yet you still have a chance to grow. Relationships wither away, new ones develop, and constant ones get better. You learn, for better or worse, that permanent associations with others constantly evolve.

This contemporary romance is very different from what I normally read. I am going to be honest and say people 40 and older would probably most enjoy it. Caroline and Tom are parents of four adults with a son that still lives at home while he is finishing law school. Their house is a mess after they start to add on a Florida room. In addition, Caroline's sister comes to live with them after finding out her husband is seeing a

younger woman. And lastly, their daughter becomes engaged which, in itself, is a story. Raleigh, North Carolina, is the setting and race factors into relationships. This story is a departure from what I normally read but I enjoyed 'visiting' the McSwain home.

Carolyn F. says

Audiobook.

When I picked up this audiobook I didn't notice the little circle that said "Read by the Author" until it was too late and so started this audiobook figuring I wasn't going to like it. I loved it! Jeanne Ray doesn't do different voices for each character but with the way the book is written and through I don't know what, I was able to tell who was who.

It's about a middle aged, middle income family whose daughter is marrying into a wealthy family and are supposed to come up with half of the reception for 1000 people. I couldn't handle that if it was just cake and punch for that many people, so I totally could sympathize with them. In the midst of this the wife's sister husband has left her and their house's foundation is falling apart.

This book is really a feel good book and I ended the audiobook with a smile on my face. Just lovely. I would recommend this book/audiobook.

Izzy says

Caroline, the main character owns a dance studio. Her husband tom, is a lawyer in the process of retiring. This book follows them through their daily life and all the problems they face, with Caroline's sister coming to town, and a problematic dog, with marriages and contractors. It is a great book, with plot twists and different character types, like fun, or mean and others. The ending is especially great

Carolyn (in SC) C234D says

This was a nice story about a couple (Caroline and Tom) in Raleigh, North Carolina, whose daughter becomes engaged to a very rich man at the same time that Caroline's sister arrives on their doorstep because her husband has left her. Nice characters that you care about.

DeB MaRtEnS says

More fun with the middle aged crowd by Jeanne Ray.
