



Perfect Daughter

Amanda Prowse

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Wife. Mother. Daughter. What happens when it all becomes too much?

Jackie loves her family. Sure, her teenage children can be stroppy. Her husband a little lazy. And providing round-the-clock care for her Alzheimer's-ridden mother is exhausting. She's sacrificed a lot to provide this safe and loving home, in their cramped but cosy semi with a view of the sea.

All Jackie wants is for her children to have a brighter future than she did. So long as Martha, the eldest, gets into university and follows her dreams, all her sacrifice will be worth something... won't it?

Perfect Daughter Details

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From Reader Review Perfect Daughter for online ebook

Anne-Marie says

The descriptions of the pressure and challenges Jackie faces are so well written, it feels real. Wonderful writing and so insightful.

Aletha Annema says

Mocht je de boeken van Amanda Prowse nog niet kennen... ik kan ze aanraden. Ook dit boek had ik zo uit.

Bookread2day says

Amanda Prowse has always loved crafting short stories and scribbling notes for potential books. I have read most of Amanda Prowse's books and loved them all. Peter and Jacks lived in a little Weston-super Mare terrace with a small square kitchen, three bedrooms, and a bathroom and two rooms downstairs. They had plans to decorate the littlest room first. In a couple of years they will be on their feet and get the place real shipshape, replace the windows, get the garden nice, put a new kitchen in and then move upstairs. It was a good plan. But life has other ideas First Martha came along, then Jonty and now their little terrace was bursting at the seams. Too add to the problems Jacks elderly mother has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's and she could no longer live alone.

Michelle Sibley says

Ive really enjoyed Amanda Prowse books however this one i felt was a bit meh. The storyline was a bit like a race track, some parts felt really dragged out while others felt 100 miles per hour which I felt affected the flow of this book and the characters not developed enough. It's still worth a read, in fact it's a great sun bed read but I wouldnt rave about it.

Babs says

This isn't my usual kind of read at all. However I'm currently laid up with a broken ankle, and was looking for something easy to read through the drug and pain haze!

The most I can say about the book was it was OK. The main character, "Jacks" (urgh!) Morgan is a wife, mother and carer to her own elderly mother who is suffering from dementia. The relationship between "Jacks" (urgh!) and her mother was never on the best of terms even when she was little, so it's surprising that "Jacks" (urgh!) takes such close care of her as she does. She has a husband who seems to barely lift a finger, and two children (10 and 18) who expect every little thing handed to them. Then "Jacks" (urgh!) complains

that she's tired and run down. I can't help but think if she wasn't such a doormat then things could be a whole lot better for her!

There's a very odd side-story about a childhood sweetheart who makes a reappearance, which didn't really add anything to the story. There were also a couple of "secrets" which became quite obvious as the book went on and which I was just relieved when they were revealed.

There really isn't a lot to this book. It's fine for what it is - but I don't think I'll be picking up any more in this series. Besides which, the name "Jacks" (urgh!) just grated every single time I read it!!

This review was originally posted on Babs' Bookshelf

Donna Irwin says

The author doesn't hesitate to tackle uncomfortable subjects and this novel is no different. I loved the central character of Jacks and her daydreaming about what might have been while she cares for her family and her mother who has Alzheimer's. She was never that close to her mother and the frustration and impossibility of the situation comes through so well. I was on that cliff too with her!

I didn't think the story gelled quite as well as previous books and the ending was a bit too perfect so four stars not five.

Really well written though - Amanda Prowse really can write.

Susan Kennedy says

It was mainly boring.

Tori Clare says

Dubbed as 'the perfect summer read', I found it anything but. I was relieved to be rid of it. It had felt like an endurance test and I was looking for a medal for finishing it. No one supplied!

Finding a fantastic book is a great feeling, after all we invest a lot of hours in each book. It's a portion of our lives and I have an intolerance of time-wasting. This book felt like a waste of time. I select books carefully and only have myself to blame for this one. The front cover should have alerted me to the chick-lit genre, which I can't abide. In fairness, it did, but having read the reviews, I'd satisfied myself that it was a serious read and would have some literary quality. Nope! The blurb looked encouraging. Old lady with dementia was being looked after in the home of her daughter. The daughter has a husband and kids; her life is tough. It seemed like a fair-enough premise for a novel. I was sufficiently intrigued to take the plunge. I should have spared myself.

I'd been warned it was a weepy. The tissues were ready. The old lady (portrayed as a bit of a dragon) was bound to pop her clogs at some point. The event itself was an anti-climax. No tissues required. I'm bored with even reviewing this book, so I'll wrap up as quickly as possible by saying that if you enjoy serious

literature with good writing and convincing characters, don't bother. My problem with chick-lit (said with little experience, granted) is that elements of the genre spoil what could be a perfectly decent read. This could have been a good book, but we have the horrendous attempts at humour. Cheesy, obvious and embarrassing attempts which just made my eyes roll. Then we have the perfect characters, like the daughter's husband. Sorry, but I've never met a man as accommodating as that. Then we have the side-characters - the unfunny best friends. And which English women refer to their close friends as 'mate'? The lingo was just annoying and unauthentic. All the characters have the same sense of humour, is my next complaint. No diversity of characters at all. All the cheesy jokes/one-liners can come from any of the characters. None of them raised so much as a smile. Then there's always the side love-interest - the rich, handsome male, elusive in some way. P-lease! What has any of this got to do with a woman caring for her sick mother, I wanted to know? Too much silliness for me. Not funny. Not moving. Not at all worth the effort, and not a single sentence that arrested me for its literary quality. Just a mishmash of 'women's stuff'! Is that what chick-lit is? Sighs.

Other than those minor points though, I loved it!! Lol.

Arlene says

Reading books about families will always be touching - knowing about their struggles and triumphs. A truly uplifting and lovely summer read.

Emma Crowley says

It seems like only yesterday I was totally absorbed in Amanda Prowse's last release *Her Mother's Story*. Yet here we are only a few short months later and once again Amanda has provided her readers with another stunning story that hits you right where it matters - direct to the heart. With such a prolific output (this is the author's third release since Christmas and there is more to come this year) you would be forgiven for thinking how can the author maintain the same standard across all her books. But rest assured the quality of writing just gets better and better with each book and *Perfect Daughter* is no exception. Amanda has not shied away from tackling issues which are only going to become more relevant in today's ever changing society. This new book introduces the term 'sandwich mother', a woman doing the best she can to look after her own young family whilst caring for her mother who suffers from Alzheimers. This book resonated with me not thankfully because my own mother has dementia but from seeing from my parents looking after my grandparents when they suffered with the illness many years ago. The author has skilfully written a book which explores so many situations and emotions that you couldn't fail to fall just that little bit in love with the Davies family as they traverse the daily battles of life.

In the prologue Jacks Davies is newly married to Pete, a wonderful future awaits them and their soon to be born child in Weston Super Mare. A recently purchased house with big plans for renovation is their next goal. Fast forward numerous years later and Jacks is still stuck in the same house with no nice conservatory or additions to the house. Oh how her genuine optimism has now left her. She now has two children, 17 year old Martha and the much longed for 8 year old Jonty. Jonty was the hidden gem of the book with his innocence and humour providing light relief and a sprinkling of wit at just the right moment. I certainly developed a soft spot for him and you could see Jacks wished she had more time to devote to him so he wasn't forgotten. But Jacks has pressure from all sides as well as keeping house and raising two children, her

mother Ida is resident in Jonty's old room and suffering from Alzheimers. Of course Jacks would go out of her way to look after the person who raised her, yet was this what she had envisaged for herself at a still relatively young age?

The author portrays the difficulties for everyone in the family of having a person living in the house with an illness in such a realistic way. There was no avoiding the issue or the details of the day-to-day care, Amanda should be applauded for this because I firmly believe if you decide to write about something like dementia or postnatal depression there should be no short cuts or skirting round the deeper emotions. Readers want the truth. Not made up facts and Amanda never shies away from the true nature of the situation. She describes the family as loving the person Ida once was but this new frail person is a shadow occupying their house. I thought this summed up everything perfectly and I'm sure this will resonate many readers. To see someone you love go from a normal happy person regress back to childhood in terms of care needs and to lose their ability to converse and remember things is one of the most heartbreaking things any person can go through. You almost resent the person for who they are now but have to remember the good times you once shared and enjoyed with them.

Jacks was a really well written character and I felt every bit that she was torn in two between her husband and children and caring for her mother. You could see the daily routine was a grind and a juggling act where she rarely had time for herself. Her own dreams and aspirations had slipped away and Jacks wishes her daughter will achieve everything that she herself was unable to do. But my god she did her best to keep things going and the numerous things she went through before the kids even left for school just left me tired reading about them. This may sound silly but what I really loved about her was that no matter what Jonty or Martha asked for she always did her best to have it. Just the small things like when Martha yells for a clean shirt in the morning, Jacks replies it's on her chair or whatever and that is something my mum always did for me. It's the little things that count. The story flips back and forth between the present and when Jacks was a teenager and falling in love and dealing with her parents. At first I couldn't see what the point of this was but as various events unfolded it all helped me to understand why Jacks reacts the way she does. Just when you think no surely the author couldn't throw any more at the family that is exactly what Amanda does. I'm not going into any detail except to say it made me see a different side of Jacks. A side for a chunk of the novel I did not like, simply for the way she reacted. It took her some time to realise she needed to make peace with her past in order to become satisfied with what is ongoing in the present. Even though it is every mother's wish to see their children succeed and to give them everything they themselves might not have it. At times you should really leave it up to the child to see their path and make their own decisions.

This was another excellent read from Amanda Prowse although for me slightly not as good as *A Mother's Story* as I was an emotional wreck after reading that book. I was waiting for the jaw drop moment in this read and it didn't come for me but that is one minor complaint. *Perfect Daughter* is a book that should be on your reading list this Summer, it's not your usual run of the mill chick lit and I welcome that as people need a change. If you want something thought provoking and just that bit different to read over the next few weeks then go for this. You won't be disappointed. For once we weren't reading of a dysfunctional family but rather a normal family battling through everyday problems and that is a relief. This sets it apart from all the other women's fiction out there at the moment. I feel there is another story about the Davies family waiting to be written. Maybe featuring Martha further down the line, well I have my fingers crossed anyway. Amanda is carving herself a successful niche in the women's fiction market and I hope she continues to write in this vein as I have really enjoyed these last few books I have read. Not long to wait until the next release. I'm looking forward to September and *Three-and-a-Half Heartbeats* already.

Liesbeth says

Although well written, I found this book boring and predictable.
And "Jacks" an ungrateful wingebag.
Not Amanda Prowse's best effort.

Susan says

Review on www.novelicious.com

She's a wife, mother and daughter, but somewhere over the years Jacks Morgan has lost herself. Each day is jam-packed with fulfilling the needs of her family and she barely has time to have a cup of tea let alone dwell of what might have been. Her husband Pete may have been there through thick and thin, but he is not much help when it comes to the everyday struggles of having a stroppy teenager and a mother with Alzheimer's under the same roof.

Jacks may not be living the life she always dreamed of but she is determined that her eldest daughter Martha will reach her full potential. However, when a new boyfriend pops up out of the blue, Jacks is terrified of history repeating itself and the last thing she wants is Martha's ambition to be sidetracked.

Amanda Prowse's books allow an insight into ordinary people dealing with difficult situations and in Perfect Daughter we step right into the shoes of Jacks Morgan, who is drowning under her family's demands. I really felt as though I was in amongst the unpacked boxes and half-finished cups of tea described in this novel. A mother with Alzheimer's is hard for anyone to handle, but even more so for Jacks as the flashbacks to her past show that their mother/daughter relationship was strained even before the illness struck. The chapters alternating between time periods worked extremely well and showed just how much her original life plan differed from the actuality. Both past and present were equally riveting.

Interspersed with the mundane day-to-day caring responsibilities, Jacks also has her daughter Martha to contend with. Martha is on the cusp of adulthood and preparing for university (she has even bought a toastie machine). Jacks has high hopes for her daughter and is living vicariously through her, which is a lot of pressure to place on a child, but understandable as history is gradually revealed.

Perfect Daughter is an absorbing read with a character that most women will identify with in some way. With this book Amanda Prowse has scored a hat trick of 10/10 scores meaning she is now firmly amongst my all-time favourite women writers. She is also a reader's dream in that she writes faster than I can read and still manages to maintain her high standards. Nobody's perfect but Amanda Prowse's writing is pretty close!

Rowena Tylden-Pattenson says

Ugh, this was baaaad. I am so glad my reading rate is high at the moment, because I don't think I could stand more than two days of reading this one.

Thinking this was going to be a light chick-flick, I was sorely mistaken. Although, the little blurb on the front didn't have me particularly caught in the first place... it reminded me of one of Cecelia Ahern's books.

Dull and dreary, this plodded along, barely raising any hope throughout its 300-odd pages. And this was supposed to be a mood-lifter?! It was anything but, dragging just as much as Jacks' life.

I think the conclusion is exactly what I would loathe in life. Ugh. Give me high flying adventure any day. Jacks herself, I started off trying to sympathise with, but come the middle of the book and she was going off the rails, it was very difficult to find anything redeeming about her, and it continued to the end of the book for me. I hated how very saintlike she tried to make herself, trying to justify her unpleasant actions through "But I'm so tired" or "the world is all against meeeee". By the end it was just annoying.

I guess the themes would appeal to some, although as a World Book Night read, I think overall I am unimpressed. It reads slowly, without much to keep the reader going if you were to stop and think about it- it's just fairly miserable the whole way through. Not my choice, if I were picking the lineup.

Heather Copping says

Really enjoyed this book, some people may not get on with the way it jumps back and forth nineteen years (namely my mum!!!). I bought this book from a charity shop, it was one of the world book day ones so has been doing the rounds, after I read it I left it behind in a holiday cottage we are staying in, so hopefully more people will get to enjoy this book.

Beadyjan says

I was quite surprised at just how much I loved reading this delightful novel. For me it turned out to be the perfect autumn read, I put on my snuggly sweater and curled up with this book and a mug of hot chocolate and lost myself in the pages and the life of Jackie (Jacks) I fell into her world with a bump and was instantly there, living her life and to be honest I found it a little depressing, yet there were feelings I could really relate to and a deft touch of lightness to lift the gloom which made it sing.

A caring daughter, loving wife and devoted Mum to two kids, Jacks lives a life of what-ifs, her life hasn't turned out that bad, but she often feels she could have done so much MORE with her life - and who can't relate to that? (If you're the one who never thinks this, I take my hat off to you as you're very lucky)

She spends her days struggling to make ends meet, caring for her discontented, alzheimers-ridden Mother and feeling taken for granted, often annoyed by her husband and frustrated by her kids and the monotony which has become her daily routine, and she daydreams about how things might have been if she'd ended up with a different man, the childhood sweetheart, the one that got away.

She has a wonderful, loyal friend Gina who injects a few moments of bright humour into the proceedings but the real sparkle in her eyes is provided by teenage daughter Martha on whom Jacks is pinning all her hopes. Martha is bright, does well at her studies and is going to do all the things Jacks blew the chance at doing and Jacks is planning to experience success vicariously, through the achievements of Martha - the perfect daughter.

The whole story is set in Weston Super Mare, a place I've never visited but through the book I felt I knew it, it has that small town "Broadchurch" feel and in my mind (possibly erroneously) the characters spoke with similar burring accents to the families in this popular tv drama.

What delighted me most is the beautifully compassionate and descriptive writing. This is a romantic novel about everyday life that is SO wonderfully believable and deliciously readable I galloped through it and felt bereft at the ending - all the signs of the perfect read. I will most certainly be reading more by this author who I'm delighted to have discovered.
