**GENTLE READS**

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| **DEFINITION:** With charm and humor, these novels explore the everyday joys, frustrations, and sorrows of lives quietly led. They typically revolve around the activities of a small community of people, such as a small town, a church, or a gathering of friends. The realities of sex, violence, and other passions are downplayed and are never presented in a graphic manner. Although the genre was once largely dominated by British authors, American authors in the vein of Jan Karon are now extremely popular. **See also: Cozy Mysteries under Mysteries.** |

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Gentle reads can be found across many genres, however, they are not likely to be in horror or thriller genres. Relationships and character development are the important factors and the pace is usually slower.   Whereas these stories are not devoid of problems to solve or difficult situations to face, the response is upbeat and positive.   Sex can be hinted at but not graphically described.  The murder in the mystery book usually happens off-stage.  Many of the popular authors of gentle reads write books in series.

**APPEAL:** Gentle reads have a satisfying, if not happy, ending.  Series books allow the reader to become involved with the characters and, along with them, explore the joys and hardships of everyday life.  These books are suitable for a young adult audience as well as the more mature reader.

**READERS:** Gentle fiction readers are looking for a good story with wholesome characters who have positive values.  People who are offended by the portrayal of sex and violence and the excessive use of strong language in today’s popular movies and television programming would be likely to seek a gentle read.

**SUBGENRES:** There are no subgenres listed in our Popular Fiction Tool under Gentle Reads.  However, you can find gentle reads in many categories including cozy mysteries, Christian fiction, historical, literary and women’s fiction, non-fiction and innocent or sweet romances.

**TRENDS:** Publishers are not marketing gentle reads as such but they are marketing inspirational fiction.

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| Classic | Elizabeth Cadell, Miss Read, Barbara Pym, D.E. Stevenson, Angela Thirkell |
| Popular | Nancy Atherton, Jennifer Chiaverini, Sandra Dallas, Richard Paul Evans, Philip Gulley, Jan Karon, Alexander McCall Smith, Joan Medlicott, Sharon Owens, Ann Purser, Ann B. Ross, Rebecca Shaw, Nicholas Sparks |