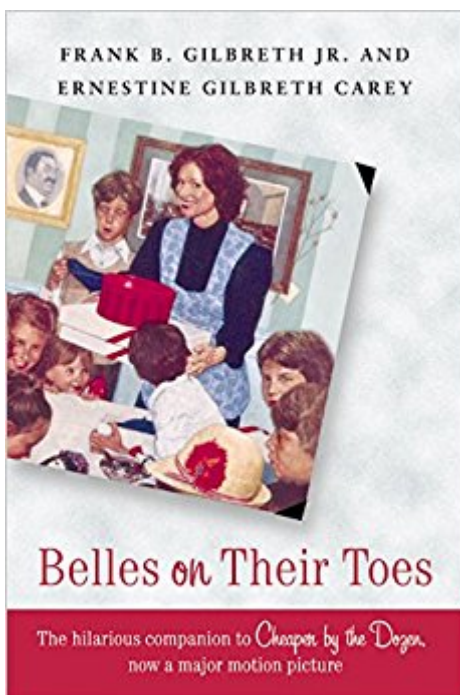


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Belles On Their Toes



Synopsis

Life is very different now in the rambling Gilbreth house. When the youngest was two and the oldest eighteen, Dad died and Mother bravely took over his business. Now, to keep the family together, everyone has to pitch in and pinch pennies. The resourceful clan rises to every crisis with a marvelous sense of fun -- whether it's battling chicken pox, giving the boot to an unwelcome boyfriend, or even meeting the President. And the few distasteful things they can't overcome -- like castor oil -- they swallow with good humor and good grace. *Belles on Their Toes* is a warm, wonderful, and entertaining sequel to *Cheaper by the Dozen*.

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Customer Reviews

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I love love love *Belles on Their Toes*. This is a fabulous book. The digital version is better than my original hard-cover first edition because at the end we are treated to photos of the children, The Shoe, the authors and more. It felt more personal. *Belles* takes up where *Cheaper by the Dozen* ended. The mom is off to Europe to deliver lectures on Motion Study and leaves the children in the charge of the eldest daughter. They pack up and move to their Cape Cod home and await Mother. The adventures are a hoot. I laughed out loud. Often!!! It's the sort of book that you might not want to read in public as folks will ask or at the very least wonder about you. Henk. Henk. Henk. (whack!) The children grow up, go to college and move out and on with their lives. As the younger ones mature we get the treat of seeing a family that seems genuinely happy. The children work together, set goals, grow a garden, date and have fun in a more innocent time. This is one of the books my children loved best as youngsters. I read to them each night a chapter or two, or three -- we all laughed together and enjoyed the exploits of the children. We wanted to be them -- but not with the measles. When I'm having a rough spot in life I find reading again happy books puts me back in a cheery frame of mind. *Cheaper by the Dozen* does that and *Belles* is just as good. Few follow-up books are worth the paper they are printed on. This one is. And I'd even go so far as to recommend you pay retail. But know this: BEFORE reading *Cheaper by the Dozen*, you must have in your possession *Belles on Their Toes*. You'll want to move from one into the next immediately. These two were on my Very short list of "Must have on the Kindle" books. I'm glad they're mine.

It's just my humble opinion, of course, but I think this charming book is even better than *CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN* (which I like.) The first book about the huge Gilbreth family centers around the father - Frank Gilbreth. He was a poor boy who hustled his way to a career as a ground-breaking "time-motion study" engineer and consultant. He was a bombastic, larger-than-life character. Fun to read about, but I sure wouldn't have wanted to live with him. The second book deals with the family's struggles and triumphs after Frank's early, sudden death from a heart attack. Gentle, iron-willed

Lillian Gilbreth was the sheltered daughter of a well-to-do California family who insisted on going to engineering school. She and her husband were partners in business and in raising a large family, although they had very different parenting styles. The first book was dedicated to Father (who raised only twelve children) and Mother (who raised twelve only children.) That pretty much sums it up. Lillian Gilbreth softened (as much as possible) her husband's not-always-benevolent dictatorship and treated her children as individuals. After his death, she faced discrimination as a professional woman, but persevered and supported and educated her family. It's a fascinating look at a woman who was a pioneer in the field of women's rights, although she would never have thought of herself in that way. She was simply a mother trying to take care of her children. Anyone who grew up in a large family will recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the Gilbreth clan and their escapades. It's a fine, well-written, and sometimes hilarious book. What a shame that it has been relegated to kiddie-lit!

If you ever saw the movie or read the book, "Cheaper by the Dozen" you probably wondered what became of this family after their Father passed away. Well, here is the story. Mother stepped up and took over. The children of course, trained well by mother, help her immeasurably as does Tom the "handyman". I took the time to dig up an old copy of Cheaper by the Dozen and read it again before beginning this book and was glad I did. It follows so beautifully the beginning story of this family. And then I googled their Oakland, CA address on Google Earth and sure enough the palm trees are still there!

I haven't even thought about the books or movies in many years. I was looking for some light reading after we read Hamilton. This is an old fashioned tale of life in a very unusual family. I am amazed at how the mother managed to raise eleven children and be the sole bread winner, plus put all of her children through college after her husband died. What a woman. A profile in courage indeed. The children's upbringing helped the older ones manage the younger ones. This is just an incredible family story of solidarity.

It's corny in today's world....but right now I needed a little corny!! I remember seeing "Cheaper By The Dozen" as a movie when I was a kid. I'm a Myrna Loy fan, so between the family saga and her, I really enjoyed it. When I saw this, I grabbed it and am so glad I did. The writing is easy and smooth. The characters come alive. You are transported back in time. Sophisticated? No. But charming. I didn't realize when I was a child watching a rerun of the movie that it was a true story. To see how a

woman recently widowed (no spoiler, it's on the first page) managed to raise 11 children (one passed away prior to her husband's death) in an efficient and loving way -- literally having to "go out there" into the business world just days after his passing to keep his contracts alive, and then prove herself, was inspiring. She, and her husband, had been partners in business (motion study), but due to the times (early 1900's) only he was taken seriously. She had all of the same knowledge, same degrees, and same drive, but faced challenges purely because she was a woman. Her children worked beautifully together due to their routines instilled by their father, and kept the ship afloat while mom was gone often for a month or more. Today, child services would arrest the mother for abandonment! Instead, from the oldest down, the kids "held down the fort" and did so beautifully. Fast and easy read.

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