

Fun and wisdom from a woman's point of view

FORMER Middy reporter Janice Warman, who left the paper to join the Guardian, has joined forces with another writer, Julia Jeffries, for *The Hey Nonny* handbook, dubbed on its jacket 'a survival guide for women.'

An unashamed feminist piece of fun - with words of wisdom too - it derives its title from the Shakespeare song that tells us that 'men are deceivers ever' and having advised ladies to 'sigh no more' concludes

*'and be you blithe and bonny
Converting all your sounds of woe
into Hey nonny, nonny.'*

Will's influence is mighty yet (you might say he has much to answer for) for the song led to the formation of the Hey Nonny Club and its unsung heroines, a broad range of women who have experienced troubles in their lives. Janice herself felt compelled to give up her career in journalism after being told that her baby had a hole in the heart. 'Just when I could reap the rewards I was turning into a feeble creature, just the kind of mother that old fashioned male bosses denigrate.'

Fortunately it turned out to be a false alarm. But even after her boss told her to just take a few weeks off she still resigned.

'For some inexplicable reason, having a baby had, instead of making me more adult, had thrown me back into my own childhood, I felt more anxious, less powerful, more tearful and

Book Review by Mark Gale

constantly guilty.'

The book is packed with more literary quotations than I have had curry dinners. That's part of its charm and I'm glad they include a mention of Arnold Bennett's masterpiece, the greatly under rated *The Old Wives Tale*. It's primarily concerned with the lives of two very different women and the authors seem a bit surprised it was written by a man.

The intrepid authors take in divorce, depression, and menopause to marriage in their capable stride. It won't, they say, provide chicken soup with barley but it will reveal what they found themselves that literature can save your life. There's nowhere you have been that someone more articulate hasn't been before. To quote C.S. Lewis 'We read to know we are not alone.'

Hey Nonny is illustrated by the Independent's cartoonist Sally Anne Lasson and is strong on humour and black comedy. It's a bit heavy for train and beach reading but women in particular will warm to its viewpoints.

The boys no doubt will chuckle and shake their heads...

Hey Nonny is published in hardback by Herman House Ltd, it's priced at £19.99.