

REVIEW: One Candlelit Christmas by Justiss, Burrows, and Brisbin

Written by Sandy M - December 13, 2008 at 1:00 am

Sandy M's review of [One Candlelit Christmas](#) by [Julia Justiss](#), [Annie Burrows](#), and [Terri Brisbin](#)

Historical Romance Anthology released by Harlequin 1 Nov 08

I really enjoyed this anthology. The three stories are full of love and hope during the season of miracles.

Christmas Wedding Wish by Julia Justiss

Meredyth has accepted her fate of not finding love again since the death of her fiance years before, but she still has faith in the Christmas season. She knows she'll be the one to stay on with her younger brother when he inherits his title, so her future seems sealed as chatelaine of Wellingford Hall. Then she meets the older brother of her sibling's best friend, a man younger than herself. Though he shows an interest in her for his wife, she can't bring herself to accept his proposal that doesn't contain the love she hopes to experience again.

Allen has just come out of the throes of angst and depression after finding out the kind of woman his former fiance truly is. Knowing he must marry anyway, he's pleasantly surprised when he finally meets Meredyth. He knows they share an attraction and feels they have enough in common on which to build a mutually satisfying relationship for the future. Then he's more than surprised when she rejects his logical offer.

This story abounds with hope for both the main characters, even though they're looking at it from very different points of view. They enjoy a very nice flirtation, one thinking it's a beginning toward a new life, the other believing it can only be taken for what it is in the moment. It's also full of family, brothers and sisters, good friends all being brought together again for the holidays. Very enjoyable!

Grade: B+

Summary:

Disenchanted with empty-headed society debutantes, dashing gentleman Allen Mansfell decides that, if he must marry, he will choose a lady whose mind and heart he'll have to win over—a lady like Miss Meredyth Wellingford. But for Merry, finding true love will take a miracle...

Read an [excerpt](#).

The Rake's Secret Son by Annie Burrows

Young Harry asks God for a father for Christmas, a man who must be better than his own father who left his mother to the wolves of society, who left Harry himself to be ridiculed and labeled a bastard. By the time he returns home from the church where he made his prayer, God has already answered it. Unfortunately, that prayer is what neither he nor his mother had in mind.

Carleton has returned from the dead and Nell knows her life is about to get worse than it's been in the five years since she found out her young, arrogant husband, who left her on the tails of his making sure she'd be branded a harlot, had died. Carleton himself can't believe he's ended up in Nell's home, he swore to have nothing to do with her ever again. But as they get to know one another during Christmas, they learn how the manipulation of others shaped their lives and how much they lost because of it, but how much they do have now is a miracle.

Another touching story of a little boy's prayer being answered but just not the way he wanted. It was nice seeing Harry getting to know his father, though, after all the details begin to emerge about Carleton and Nell's wedding, the time when everything went wrong. The dichotomy of Nell knowing she can live with her son and husband and do without all the amenities of the nobility while that is Carleton's background even though he'd been away from it for a while in horrendous circumstances is a conundrum they have to overcome. A lovely story.

Grade: B+

Summary:

Before Carleton Tillotson left Nell, the rebellious rake broke her heart. Now he is back, just in time for Christmas, and Nell can't hide her secret any longer—Carleton's the father of her son!

Read an [excerpt](#).

Blame It On the Mistletoe by Terri Brisbin

This novella is my favorite of the book. Julia and Iain knew each other as children when she visited his Highland home. It's been a number of years since they've seen one another and in that time Iain was in a carriage accident in which he lost his parents and other relatives and was gravely injured. He still suffers mightily, he's in constant pain and endures his body's imbalance due to his injured leg and hip.

Julia is the younger sister of Anna, who is now a countess, and she's always made sure Julia has had the best of everything. Her current goal is to see Julia in a proper marriage. But Julia has eyes only for Iain, though he knows there can be nothing between them. Blaming the mistletoe hung around the house keeps their stolen kisses

within social parameters, but that's not nearly enough for them. Determined not to ruin Julia's life because he can't keep her safe, Iain rejects her offer of love and suddenly the world is a very dim place for them both.

A very moving story of love and longing, duty and integrity. The scene at the lake when Iain rescues Julia is simply heartrending. You feel the helplessness each character when forced to do the right thing and their hearts want something else. It was also a very poignant moment when Iain finally decides to take that first step toward hope, faith, and trust. And that was without the mistletoe!

Grade: A-

Summary:

Julia Fairchild has loved Iain MacLerie forever-but the boy she once knew is now a hardened and aloof man. Amid the festivities and warm cheer of yuletide, can Julia melt Iain's guard and ignite the spark that continues to burn between them...? **Read an [excerpt](#).**
