



What Happens Under the Mistletoe

Sabrina Jeffries , Karen Hawkins , Candace Camp , Meredith Duran

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What Happens Under the Mistletoe Sabrina Jeffries , Karen Hawkins , Candace Camp , Meredith Duran New York Times bestselling authors Sabrina Jeffries, Karen Hawkins, and Candace Camp, and USA TODAY bestselling author Meredith Duran come together for a sizzling historical romance holiday anthology.

Stunned by the heat of an unexpected kiss on a cold winter's eve, two strangers from vastly different worlds turn hotheaded principles into burning passion in **Sabrina Jeffries's** delightful yuletide story, "**The Heiress and the Hothead**".

In the snowy Scottish countryside, **Karen Hawkins's** rakish duke has an unforgettable holiday encounter in "**Twelve Kisses**" when the alluring lady he surprises under the mistletoe is not who he expected, but a long-lost love with a score to settle.

In "**By Any Other Name**", Edinburgh is aglitter for Christmastime as **Candace Camp** sends a curious gentleman in hot pursuit of an intriguing lady in disguise—one who refuses to reveal her true identity, though she fears he has already stolen her heart with his kiss.

In "**Sweet Ruin**", will the festive spirit of the season sweep **Meredith Duran's** feisty heroine beneath the mistletoe—and back into the arms of the dashing rogue whose carelessness soiled her reputation and sent her into exile in London?

In this all-new story collection sparkling with sexy charm and heartwarming wit, four beloved bestselling authors reveal the mix-ups and make-ups, the missed chances and golden opportunities that come but once a year.

What Happens Under the Mistletoe Details

Date : Published October 27th 2015 by Pocket Books

ISBN : 9781476786087

Author : Sabrina Jeffries , Karen Hawkins , Candace Camp , Meredith Duran

Format : Mass Market Paperback 400 pages

Genre : Holiday, Christmas, Anthologies, Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Historical Fiction

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From Reader Review What Happens Under the Mistletoe for online ebook

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

Thank you for the gift, swift marvel elf!

Ashley says

Thanks to NetGalley and Pocket Books for the ARC. My honest review below.

As many of my Goodreads friends know, I am a card-carrying Meredith Duran stan. The highlighter feature on my e-reader gets a good workout whenever I read one of her books. Of this particular collection, I read her novella and Sabrina Jeffries'. I'm familiar with Jeffries and own a couple of her books but have never read her stuff before. I might come back to the other stories closer to the holidays.

The Heiress and the Hothead - Sabrina Jeffries

I think I might have enjoyed this a bit more if I were more familiar with the author's current series. It was clear that the folks in this novella belonged to an existing fictional world. That said, it was a fun and cute little read and it incorporated a lot of facts about the harsh lives of mill workers into the story without getting boring or becoming terribly preachy. It was a little saccharine for my tastes at the end, but sort of in the vein of Love Actually, so it wasn't cringe-worthy or anything like that.

3 stars

Sweetest Regret - Meredith Duran

The title of this story in the book doesn't match the one given here on Goodreads, Netgalley, or the publisher's description on ibooks. Hopefully this gets fixed before publication!

Of the two Duran novellas I've read, this is definitely the best and I enjoyed it a lot. She's got such a talent for description and dialogue that is intelligent and period-appropriate, yet still quite natural. Her stories never read like a contemporary novel that's been transplanted to the 19th century and that is quite a rare thing, I've found. I'm never jolted out of one of her stories by something that seems or is anachronistic.

I'm usually not a fan of HRs that center on a big misunderstanding, as this one does, but given the compressed space I'll give Duran a pass since this was a lovely, romantic story about second chances and forgiveness (of ourselves and others!). It captured the holiday spirit without becoming too sappy or sentimental. I'd love for Duran to one day write a really sprawling epic though. I'm greedy that way!

4+ stars

Daniella says

***What Happens Under the Mistletoe* is definitely a must-read if you're in the mood for a good and quick holiday read.** All of the novellas in this anthology are well-written, nicely paced and pleasantly executed. There were some that shined more than others, but all of them were really very enjoyable.

(I guess it goes without saying that I have different parameters for judging novellas than a full-length novel. I'm more lenient to the lack of character development, and the lack of proper build-up in the romance. If you're bothered by these, or if these are your pet peeves, then maybe anthologies are not for you.)

THE HEIRESS AND THE HOTHEAD (SABRINA JEFFRIES): 3.5 STARS

Fans of Sabrina Jeffries who have read her *Sinful Suitor* series will be delighted to witness Lord Stephen finally meeting his match in the form of Amanda Keane, an American heiress. She's also the sister of Jeremy, the hero from book one. (Don't worry, though; you don't need to read the other books to enjoy this novella.)

I loved Amanda. She was strong and fearless without being bitchy and insensitive. And while I never really fell for Stephen—he was too stubborn and narrow-minded for me—I've come to appreciate him by the end of the story. Their arguments were very amusing, and I particularly liked seeing Amanda give Stephen the setdown he deserved.

The sexual tension was obvious from the start. But I do have one complain, though: The climax and subsequent resolution was a bit ridiculous for me. I think that the dramatic and over-the-top devices should be better saved for a full-length novel, where there is more space for its proper execution. But in any case, this was a really enjoyable read. It made me want to read more from the series, and I can't wait for the next *Sinful Suitor* book.

TWELVE KISSES TO MIDNIGHT (KAREN HAWKINS): 3 STARS

This was a novella about second chances. We have Marcus and Kenna who were drawn by fate to meet again after a devastating break-up several years ago.

As a big Karen Hawkins fan, I have to admit, I was really disappointed by this. I had a really difficult time liking the heroine and hero. To be honest, I never warmed up to Marcus (he was too pig-headed and immature), but I learned to respect Kenna by the end, especially when she actually grew a spine and fought for herself.

The angst was rather overplayed, though, and there were several times that I just wanted to bang their heads together and force them to JUST FUCKING TALK ABOUT IT LIKE ADULTS. Sigh.

The silver lining here was actually Tata Natasha, the grandmother of Marcus' best friend. She was so damn funny and amusing that she singlehandedly elevated this from a 2-star to a 3-star rating. I'm definitely going to read the writer's *The Oxenburg Princes* series after this.

BY ANY OTHER NAME (CANDACE CAMP): 5 STARS

Oh, damn. This was priceless. Amazing.

This was just perfect for me.

Mind you, I had reservations about this writer. The last book I read from her was *Enraptured*, and I did not

particularly enjoy that. So when I realised that this novella was actually part of that series (Secrets of the Loch), I had second thoughts. But wow. I'm really happy I read this.

Rylla masqueraded as a man one night, in search for her brother. She met Gregory who eventually saved her from a dangerous situation. And then he found out about her identity.

He stopped short, gaping. "You have breasts!"

"Ohhhh . . ." The girl moaned, covering her face with her hands. "I'm sorry."

"Don't be sorry." Gregory grinned, sitting back on his heels. "They are lovely breasts."

OH GOD I LOVE YOU, GREGORY. HAHAAHAHA.

Gosh, I can't even tell you how much I laughed while reading this. Gregory was so funny and adorable, especially when he was obsessing over finding Rylla's true identity. (Rylla never gave him her real name, so our hero here had to go through so much trouble to be with her.)

He made me melt. Big time.

"You do not find me scandalous? Shameful?"

He reached out and took her hand, lifting it to his lips to kiss each finger. "I find you utterly beguiling."

SWEETEST REGRET (MEREDITH DURAN): 4 STARS

This is another novella about second chances. The hero and heroine were too snarky at each other at first—so much so that I had to question if they were truly in love in the first place. But as the chapters dragged on, I got to understand them and the circumstances that led to their current situation.

I got to give it to Meredith Duran. She writes really well. I could really sense Georgie's longing through her words, and the sexual tension was really palpable.

But in her dreams, she had tasted his tongue. She had felt the hard planes of his belly, the brawn of his thighs. He had lain with her in dreams countless times by now—but never vividly enough to satisfy her.

And Lucas' confession, later? Wow. That was powerful. I totally had *Casablanca* feels over it, man.

"It was love, in Munich."

Lucas and Georgie were not perfect characters, and I'm okay with that. I think they had their own reasons, and that they were justified in their actions.

Overall, this anthology is highly recommended. It's by far one of the most enjoyable set of novellas I've read this year.

Phoenix77 says

'Tis the season for Romance anthologies showcasing the spirit and love of Christmastime. The collection of stories in *What Happens Under the Mistletoe* all bring that wonderful sense of the holiday to four very different couples who all find love in the most unusual ways.

Please read my full review at **[Romantic Historical Reviews](#)**

Susan says

The Heiress and the Hothead by Sabrina Jeffries
Series: Sinful Suitors (Book 1.5)

Stunned by the heat of an unexpected kiss on a cold winter's eve, two strangers from vastly different worlds turn hotheaded principles into burning passion.

I loved this story. Having read *The Art of Sinning*, the first book in the Sinful Suitors series, I was intrigued by Jeremy's sister Amanda. She is an independent woman who owns and runs the family mills in America. One reason for being in England is to find out why their mills are so much more profitable. There she encounters Lord Stephen Corry, younger brother of a marquess, who has made a career of investigating and writing about the terrible conditions of English mills. Their first meeting is quite fiery, as he kisses her under the mistletoe, believing her to be someone else. Stephen had hoped to interview Amanda, but their initial encounter has put them at odds. Still, he won't give up and strikes a bargain with her, where they can both get what they want. Neither had expected the sparks that flew between them.

I really enjoyed the unusual aspect of the story. Both Amanda and Stephen have similar goals, but approach them in different ways. Stephen is focused on exposing the worst and forcing change that way. Amanda looks at the way things are done and tries to figure out how to make them better at her own mills. I loved her strength of will and determination. Stephen was a little harder to like because of his stubbornness and tunnel vision when it came to mill owners, but he grew on me by the end.

I liked the development of their relationship as they worked together on his investigation of the local mill. I really enjoyed seeing Amanda shut Stephen down on some of his deepest prejudices. The more time they spent together the more he realized that he could be himself with her. Amanda saw that Stephen was a man who accepted her for who she was. The heat between them was fierce the closer they got. Neither of them could see a way to bring their different worlds together until a near tragedy opened their eyes to possibilities. The scene in the mill was rather improbable, but the ending was quite romantic.

Twelve Kisses by Karen Hawkins
Series: Oxenburgh Princes (Book 2.5)

In the snowy Scottish countryside, a rakish duke has an unforgettable holiday encounter when the alluring lady he surprises under the mistletoe is not who he expected, but a long-lost love with a score to settle.

A good second chance story. Marcus and Kenna had been engaged years before, but ended the engagement a month before the wedding. Kenna then married another man, but became a widow a few months before the story begins. Marcus isn't too happy to see Kenna at the same house party, as it brings back memories of what they had. That night he kisses her under the mistletoe, thinking that she is someone else. Unfortunately they are discovered, creating a scandal that Kenna does not need at this point in her life.

Marcus has spent the last few years in the diplomatic service, and is currently back in Scotland. Seeing Kenna again brings back the memories of what they had, and though he won't admit it, he has never forgotten her. He's got too much pride to let anyone see that he is still affected by the sight of her, and instead treats her with disdain. Then that kiss explodes between them. Though he won't admit it, he feels partly responsible. When he discovers she plans to ride over to her father's home and ask for his help, his protectiveness kicks in and he tries to stop her.

Kenna was heartbroken by the end of their engagement, and gave in to her father's pressure to marry someone else when it was over. Now that she's a widow, he is pressuring her once again to marry the man of his choice, and she only wants to live her life. The scandal created by Marcus's kiss causes her to ride to her father's to ask for his help in squashing it, even though she knows that there will be consequences. Marcus's attempts to stop her only increase her determination..

Riding off into a pending snowstorm isn't the smartest move, but Kenna's stubbornness won't allow her to admit that Marcus is right. Fortunately, he follows her, and they end up stranded in a cottage together. Forced together they finally have the chance to confront their pasts and see that both had made mistakes. Their conversations were helped along by the rather unique decorating in the cottage, as their similar sense of fun and the ridiculous bring them closer together.

The ending was good as they discover that their time together was extended by the machinations of Tata Natasha. Kenna's father and hopeful fiance arrive and try to force their will on Kenna, but she has finally gained the maturity to stand up to them both. There is also an interesting twist involving the rejected suitor that is the final nail in his coffin. I really enjoyed Tata Natasha's blunt observations about the people around her.

By Any Other Name by Candace Camp
Series: Secrets of the Loch (Book 2.5)

Edinburgh is aglitter for Christmastime as Candace Camp sends a curious gentleman in hot pursuit of an intriguing lady in disguise -- one who refuses to reveal her true identity, though she fears he has already stolen her heart with his kiss.

Fun story. Rylla is distraught over the argument between her brother and father that sent her brother running from his family. After several days of not hearing from him, she is worried that something has happened to him, and is determined to search for him herself. To that end, she disguises herself in boy's clothing and heads out to the gambling dens to look for him.

Gregory is there keeping an eye on his cousin Andrew (brother to Isabel of Treasured), who is not known for his good luck in gambling. While there, he spots a young man who he suspects is going to be the next victim of the men he is playing cards with. When he leaves, Gregory spots a tail and follows just in time to rescue him from a robber. Taking the boy back to his rooms, he's stunned to discover a woman underneath the boy's clothing. He's also quite drawn to her.

This begins a period of cat and mouse, as Rylla is determined to protect herself from scandal by not telling him who she is. Gregory is equally determined to find her. Her attempts to mislead him cause some pretty funny moments, as he initially pursues the wrong woman. Once he discovers her true identity, he agrees to help her find her brother. Rylla is determined to be involved in the search, and her arguments are quite persuasive. It doesn't hurt that Gregory will take any excuse to spend time with her. The chemistry between them is very strong, and Gregory has a hard time trying to behave honorably. Rylla doesn't help, as she is determined to explore her feelings for him. I enjoyed seeing how everything worked out for them.

There was also a secondary romance between Andrew and Rylla's friend Eleanor. The sparks between them were also fun, as Andrew is the irresponsible gambler and Eleanor the daughter of a minister and a woman with decidedly different values. I loved their interactions and the effect they had on each other. Andrew's actions at the end were awkward and sweet and pretty funny.

Sweetest Regret by Meredith Duran

Will the festive spirit of the season sweep Meredith Duran's feisty heroine beneath the mistletoe -- and back into the arms of the dashing rogue who broke her heart two years ago?

Terrific second chance story. Georgie is the daughter of a British diplomat who rushes off a few days before Christmas to deal with a crisis, leaving her to entertain a houseful of foreign guests. To top it all off, he tells her that one of them may have stolen an important letter, and charges her with finding it before they leave. To help her with that task, he has sent for one of his underlings - the very man who broke her heart two years earlier.

Lucas was on his way to England anyway because of a family issue. Stopping in to help Georgie isn't high on his list of pleasant activities after the way she had treated him two years earlier. He'll do what he must and be on his way, making sure that she doesn't get another shot at his heart.

First, I have to say that I disliked Georgie's father from the very beginning. His attitude toward her was very condescending, as though she couldn't really be trusted to manage on her own. The more I learned about him during the story, the less I liked him.

The early encounters between Georgie and Lucas were very contentious. Each of them blames the other for

what had happened in Munich, and the verbal arrows fly fast and furious. As each one looks back to those days, they can't understand why the other behaves as if they are the injured party. When they really let go with their tempers, suddenly they realize that their stories do not match. Actually talking to each other about what happened, they discover that they had been parted by the machinations of Georgie's father.

I felt really bad for Lucas, who had suffered all his life because of who his parents were. Because of that, he was a little too quick to believe the lies that Georgie's father told him, and his pride wouldn't let him contact Georgie to convince her. Georgie has her own insecurities, considering herself rather plain and boring. She certainly didn't think that she was enough to keep the interest of a handsome and charming man like Lucas.

Once they straightened out the truth about the past, it didn't take long for them to make up for lost time. I loved seeing them work together to find the missing letter, while entertaining the crowd of foreign diplomats. I loved their determination to be together now, though Georgie worries about the havoc that her father could cause to Lucas's career.

When Georgie's father returns, he admits to his interference both then and now, claiming he only wanted what was best for her. But Georgie is wise to him now, and displays her own form of making her point. I loved seeing her stand up to her father and his antics. It is even more satisfying when Lucas returns from his family business with his own plans for their future.

Paraphrodite says

A delightfully frothy anthology with some of the best historical romance authors around, a great way to get into the Christmas spirits.

puppitypup says

Historic Romance/Christmas 4 Short Stories

The Heiress and the Hothead by Sabrina Jeffries

A fun read, notwithstanding the improbability of that scene in the burning mill.

Twelve Kisses to Midnight by Karen Hawkins

Not a fun read, too much angst. This is a second chance story where the reason they broke up is too flimsy to support the premise of still being in love with each other.

By Any Other Name by Candace Camp

By far the most enjoyable of the four stories, the writing is effortless, the dialogue quick and witty. Both characters are likeable, and the "girl disguises herself as a boy" trope actually works.

Sweetest Regret by Meredith Duran

Far too much angst in the first half of this "second chance" story.

(The book is clean in terms of language. Each story has an intimate scene, each such scene appearing too early in the storyline for my old-fashioned sensibilities.)

ARC received from NetGalley in exchange for a fair review.

Blodeuedd Finland says

The heiress and the hothead by Sabrina Jeffries

Lord Stephen writes angry news articles about mills. Amanda owns mills. The whole mill thing was not exactly romantic (only North and South can do that.) But they will dance around each other and fall in love. But that smexy scene, seriously. No, not then and there. Ugh.

Twelve kisses to midnight by Karen Hawkins

I have a problem. I forget short stories SO FAST. Luckily I had written lovers trapped by snow cos I can hardly remembering that the story ended Just general feelings now by those words.

So yes former lovers meet, trapped, realises they still like each other. I'd read more of her books.

By any other name by Candance Camp

A woman in disguise is trying to help her brother. And a man finds her fascinating and tries to find out more about her. And that is the story, he searches, he finds, he searches, he finds

Sweetest regret by Meredith Duran

I liked this one. A couple that used to be in love meet again. They are angry. Something went wrong. Everything happens during a house party. Def the best of the novellas in this anthology. A nice holiday feeling too.

Amanda says

[the 'let's have sex before we die in this burning building' bit at the

~Anna**~ A Romance Reader says**

The Heiress and the Hothead- Sabrina Jeffries: 3 stars

It was ok. I liked Stephen and Amanda but some scenes were too far fetched. I like Sabrina Jeffries writing though and I remember reading her books way back when. I should start reading her again.

Laura the Highland Hussy says

Review posted on Got Fiction?

I read this one for the Meredith Duran story, but ended up loving all of the stories!

The Heiress and the Hothead by Sabrina Jeffries -3 stars

This was my least favorite, but only because of a couple things. The hero has been reporting on the substandard work conditions in the mills. He's riled some people, but being a second son, his brother wants him to be more respectable. So when he is invited to stay through Christmas with friends and family, he isn't thrilled. But the American mill owner and heiress he's been wanting to expose for being just as bad as the local ones will be there. So he can't say no.

But she's not that bad. And she's beautiful, and kind, and makes his man bits tingle ;)

I was really into it, until at one point the mill is on fire, and they're trapped, so of course, she's all "Take me I'm yours!" I mean, seriously. A raging inferno is tearing through a cotton mill, and both know those kind of fires rage out of control. But, you know, priorities.

Twelve Kisses by Karen Hawkins-5 stars

I think this ended up being my favorite. A proud Highlander, and his former fiancée get caught in a blizzard, and at one point the heroine actually draws a line down the middle of the cottage pronouncing one side hers, and the other his.

The best part about this story is that the heroine is willing to admit that they were young, and they both were wrong. There's no real Big Misunderstanding. It really is just anger, hurt, and pride keeping them from being together. I loved it, and I loved the ending.

By Any Other Name by Candace Camp-4 stars

This was a sweet romance. Don't get me wrong, there were some steamy parts! But the actual plot and romance were very sweet. The heroine is sneaking out of her house, dressed as a man, and her plan is to go find her brother. He's stormed off after a fight with their father, and Rylla is worried about him.

But at a gaming hell, she is mugged and stabbed. The man who she couldn't keep her eyes off comes to her rescue and finds out she's a woman. She refuses to tell him who she is though, and runs off. Romance and hijinks occur, and to be honest, I liked it a lot.

Sweet Ruin* by Meredith Duran-5 stars

*This story was originally called "Sweet Ruin," but has been changed to "Sweetest Regret." I used "Sweet Ruin" since that's what my copy has.

I loved this story. The short blurb doesn't even do this one justice. The heroine's father is a British diplomat, and he's rushing out on a Christmas party at his own home to help with a crisis. He leaves his daughter Georgie in charge, and says that he thinks someone at the party has stolen some documents from him. She must find them, it's of utmost importance.

But he also has his subordinate Lucas coming in to help. The problem is that Lucas and Georgie have a past. And her father knows this.

Can they find who took the documents without tearing each other apart? Or will being stuck together dredge up their past?

***ARC courtesy of Berkley

Julie says

What Happens Under the Mistletoe by Sabrina Jeffries, Karen Hawkins, Candace Camp, and Meredith Duran is a 2015 Pocket Star Publication. I was provided a copy of this book by the publisher as an XOXpert, the official street team of XOXO After Dark.

Every year a slew of holiday anthologies hit the market ranging from syrupy heartwarming tales to silly and funny capers, all centered around the most anticipated holiday of the season. But, few of these compilations have a star studded group of seasoned authors gathered in one place, like this one does.

If you are a fan of regency period historical romance, then you will recognize these authors and you know you can count on them, which, for me is a huge selling point, mainly because I know there will be no weak entries, and each story is one of high quality and authenticity.

“Sweet Emblem of returning peace
The heart’s full gush, and love’s release;
Spirits in human fondness flow
And greet the pearly Mistletoe.”

-Anonymous

Sabrina Jeffries kicks the party off with a unique tale involving the dangers of mill workers and the horrible practice of hiring underage staff and subjecting them to long hours, little pay, and dangerous work conditions.

Amanda is from America, an heiress, running a successful mill, but has traveled to England to see why their businesses are more profitable. She encounters Stephen, a man on a mission, to report on the unsafe environment of mills. He lumps Amanda in with the worst of the lot, sparking a challenge between them, and a little chemistry too. Can Amanda prove she’s not all the other mill owners? Can she calm Stephen’s hot temper and join forces with him to make positive changes? Maybe- with a little help from the Christmas spirit, a sly kiss under the mistletoe and a little soul searching.

I liked this story because it featured an American, a dedicated business woman, and a little action and

adventure, plus it had a depth to it, something that many regency stories seem to lack these days.

The second, and the lengthiest story is "Twelve Kisses to Midnight" by Karen Hawkins and the third story is "By Any Other Name" by Candace Camp. Both stories are solid offerings, with Ms. Hawkins being the most prominent story included in the anthology.

Closing the book is Meredith Duran's "Sweetest Regret". This story has a touch of intrigue, which is always fun, but the story title suggested some regret is involved, and indeed a young couple in love were driven apart, losing two years together as a result. However, this delightful second chance love story, ends with the couple finally making up for all that lost time. There is some cute banter in this one and I really loved the ending.

Overall, this Christmas anthology is one of the best I've read this year. You really can't go wrong with the group of talented authors gathered in one place.

4 stars

Mary - Buried Under Romance says

Love it for the Meredith Duran story :)

Didi says

3+ Stars

A holiday anthology with four well-known historical romance authors on offer. Why not?

I have never read books of Candace Camp and Meredith Duran before, though I heard of their names. Karen Hawkins however, was one of my favorite historical romance authors and I've read a couple of Sabrina Jeffries series. And nothing could go wrong with holiday stories, right?

Well, this time and especially for me, that assumption is proven right.

What Happens Under the Mistletoe is a collection of entertaining holiday tales set in regency era England and Scotland. Overall it was all fun to read, had quite a few laugh and outrage moments as would happen when I got immersed in the stories.

To recap, here are my thoughts on each individual tale.

The Heiress and The Hothead by Sabrina Jeffries - 3.5 stars

This novella is part of the "Sinful Suitors" series, stories surround the nobles of St. George's Club. Some of its members appearing here, but the book could be read as a standalone.

Younger sons were usually pictured as no good young lords who spent life wasting their non-existing fortunes. So it's refreshing for me that the hero, Lord Stephen Cory - youngest brother of Lord Knightford -

was way far from that detriment. He's a man of principle who had given up his prospect to be a journalist, and fight to better the mills workers life.

His *courtship*, for lack of a better word, with Ms. Amanda Keane, an American mill owner was rather rocky because of their distrust. Gradually, this supposed foes combined their wit and made that change.

Both MCs were headstrong and opinionated, but very likable. I also found other supporting characters here (the house party hosts, guests, and mill worker family) engaging.

What bugged me was one scene (view spoiler) The rationale of that action was a bit bewildering for me. Other than that though, it's a smooth sail for me.

Twelve Kisses to Midnight by Karen Hawkins 2.85 stars

The novella is tied in to "The Oxenburgh Princes" Series and we meet again with the ever meddling, exasperating and witty Tata Natasha. She was not the main character though, neither any of her grandchildren. But the Crown Prince Nikolai was here as close friend of the hero, Duke of Rothesay Marcus Sutherland.

It was a second chance story, another of those misunderstanding over chafed pride that had resulted in misery on both sides. This holiday it was time to turn the thing around.

Admittedly, both characters were not to my liking. A pair of adult who sulked and threw hurtful words to each other. I found the story dragging.

The upside - besides Tata Natasha - was the last chapter where both Kenna and Marcus made the intelligent decision and SPOKE of it without delay. But to be honest, this is my least like story in the anthology.

By Any Other Name by Candace Camp - 2.85 stars

My first time with Ms. Camp is a fun holiday "catch me if you can" romp set in Edinburgh, Scotland. Miss Amaryllis "Rylla" Campbell posed as young lad and sneaked out at night to visit gambling hell to look for his brother. The unlikely hero was Mr. Gregory Rose, who saw Rylla on a card table nearby and flabbergasted by his reaction to the young lad.

I loved how Gregory chasing after Rylla, never knowing her name. Upon deduction, he figured his mysterious lady's name and dragooned his cousin, Lord Andrew Rose, into introducing him to her. What happened was a convoluted comedy as he only gaped, turned and dashed away when Andrew made good on his promise.

Of course this was a HEA story. At least there were two pairs got their happy future here. But I felt that the story ended too rushy, like every loose ends must be tied in here, now. And I found Rylla's parents lack of on page involvement with Gregory's pursuit of their only daughter baffling.

But all in all, this was a nice intro to Ms. Camp's work. I think I might look for her other titles. Who knows.

The Sweetest Regret by Meredith Duran - 3.5 stars

Another first timer reading, and I found I like Ms. Duran style.

The story evolve around the household of Trent, one of British most cunning and sharp diplomat and his daughter Georgina. During his post in Munich, Georgie visited him and got close with his lowly subordinate, Lucas Godwin. Their courtship fell through with Lucas transferred to Paris and her went home to England.

This novella took place two years after that. Having had to host her father's Christmas house party while he's away on assignment abroad. It was a shock to her to find her father arrange for Lucas to join the party to find and take back a missing document pilfered by one of the guests. Little did both heart-broken couple knew that they were victims of one ploy too many.

My issue with this novella was the "misunderstanding and jumping to conclusion" part - though I admit, without them there would be no story. I like the mule-headed and smart couple here. And I grudgingly found myself respecting Sir Trent, though he's not a very nice person. In short, the story was all his machination. Even when Georgie and Lucas evading his wish and made their own, Sir Trent got his wish.

Of all, I think this story somehow left an impact to me because of this grey character! Go figure.

Note:

ARC was kindly provided by the publisher via **NetGalley** for the exchange of an honest review.

Anna's Herding Cats says

Reviewed for herding cats & burning soup.

Amazon: <http://amzn.to/1PJo0ln>

Sweet, spirited full of saucy adventure. Jeffries, Hawkins, Camp & Duran charmed with a lovely Christmas anthology. I love Christmas stories. There's something so warm and cozy about them and the four novellas in What Happened Under the Mistletoe hit just the right spot. Each was the perfect length for a cold winters night in front of a roaring fire. The romances were quick but nicely done. A little heat, a lot of attraction and a dollop of action to keep things interesting. Nicely done!

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### **The Heiress and the Hothead by Sabrina Jeffries**

The Quick Of It: A Christmas gathering. A heated kiss. A hero set on expose the atrocities of mill owners. An American heroine who owns a mill. Realizing you just kissed the enemy? #Priceless

The Yay: Jeffries is always entertaining. I adore her romances and characters. Stephen and Amanda were quite the thing. Poor bloke. He just never had a chance against the pistol that was Amanda. She was a fierce chickie and not about to take any of his crap over the mills. Had him all turned upside down and churned up over all his warring desires. I had fun watching their sharp tongues and seeing the resolve weaken. They may have seem at odds over the mills but really they're both great people who want to make the world a safer place for workers though they definitely went about it different ways. Whew! There's a little heat and a little



danger that brings them together. The only thing that didn't quite work for me was the sex scene. It was just bit oddly placed and had me giving them the wonky eye because really yall? lol But other than that it was a fun little jaunt and tasty holiday treat.

### **Twelve Kisses to Midnight by Karen Hawkins**

The Quick Of It: A compromising run in at a masquerade ball and a winter blizzard seem determined to bring the former lovers--Marcus & Kenna--back into each others lives. Kicking and screaming the whole way. And maybe copping a feel now and again too.

The Yay: I love couples with a past. These two were so similar. Stubborn and fierce. And they let that out on each other which was kinda fun to watch. I enjoyed their dynamic. The battle between their attraction and annoyance with each other. And I'm a sucker for the whole snowed in stuck in a cabin together trope. Especially since this cabin had a bit of a pervy bent to it. Some nice kissin' and a little actual lovin'.

### **By Any Other Name by Candace Camp**

The Quick Of It: When a girl's brother disappears after a family fight what's she to do? Don chaps of course and venture into the gaming hells in search of the lout! Maybe confuse a hero along the way then have one hell of a time shaking him once he realizes, yeah, she's not so much a dude and is rocking some boobage.

The Yay: Gregory and Rylla were fab. There's a little cat and mouse thing going on there at the start when she's pretending to be a guy. Trying to ditch the captivated Gregory much to no avail. It was fun seeing them together--once he tracked down his girl-- as they wandered the night in search of her "lost" brother. A little chemistry and heat at the end and it made for a sweet encounter and a dreamy romance. Definitely plan on reading more from Camp.

### **Sweetest Regret by Meredith Duran**

The Quick Of It: She's been abandoned at Christmas! And forced to play hostess to her father's wild house guests. Including a late arrival who shattered her young heart years ago. Blast her father! Georgie is just having a time of it this Christmas. But chickie is tough and determined to make it a lovely Christmas week for all. And might just find out a little bit about the past she never knew during all the holiday revelries.

The Yay: I love second chance romances and aw these two were great. Add in a little mystery as Lucas and Georgie search for a stolen letter and partake in all sorts of holiday cheer from decorating to jaunts about town and delicious meals and it was just a fun little ride. I loved Georgie. I could so see myself being her. She was determined to show their out of town guests the delights of English Christmas and all it entails. They were gonna see and do it all and dammit they were gonna enjoy it! lol It was a quickie but fun. I'm on board for more Duran too!

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