



Once Upon a Laugh

*Pepper D. Basham , Heather Gray , Krista Phillips , Christina Coryell , Mikal Dawn , Jessica R. Patch ,
Betsy St. Amant , Laurie Tomlinson*

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Ready for a book collection you can't put down?

Eight brand new contemporary Christian romantic comedies are here to keep you company. Some of your favorite inspirational authors have come together in this collection of all-new novellas.

From light-hearted romance to laugh-out-loud love, this set will put a smile on your face and keep you reading long into the night.

Jane by the Book by award-winning author Pepper Basham

She lives by the plans. He talks to imaginary characters. Can they team up to solve a family mystery?

Crossed Out by USA Today bestselling author Christina Coryell

Ruth Erickson always spends her morning break doing the crossword puzzle. Tate Darrow just messed it up. What's that old saying about love and war?

If She Dares by Mikal Dawn

He's a board game champion, but can he win her heart?

Definitely by award-winning author Heather Gray

Dating isn't on her to-do list. Dating a pastor? Definitely not.

Under the Honey Moon by Jessica R. Patch

A honeymoon cottage reunites a pair of childhood friends. Can it offer them a future filled with happily-ever-after?

A (wildly) Wonderful Wedding by Krista Phillips

They may be the worst maid of honor and best man in the history of weddings...

Save the Last Word by award-winning author Betsy St. Amant

When conventional meets creative, who will get the last word?

The Long Game by award-winning author Laurie Tomlinson

Whoever said all is fair in love and war never dealt with small-town football...

Once Upon a Laugh Details

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From Reader Review Once Upon a Laugh for online ebook

Kara says

Ms. Basham's Titus is definitely a favorite character in this collection of stories! He's quite a terrific fellow. :) But all the stories made me giggle a great deal and swoon a great deal more. Super cute! And super fun.

Jaycee Weaver says

Loved it, times eight!

Please don't ask me to choose a favorite because that would be a cruel, impossible task! I'm familiar with several of these authors, but I was happy to discover a couple I haven't read yet. This collection is absolutely wonderful, and I can't recommend it enough for anyone who enjoys a little romance with a lot of humor!

Alexis says

The stories in this book provide more than a good laugh, they provide a heartwarming experience!

Here is my story-by-story review...

Jane by the Book by Pepper Basham: A charming tale about a writer and his muse. The plot was unpredictable in a good way. The dialogue was clever and the characters were engaging.

Crossed Out by Christina Coryell: A clever story about crossword puzzles, puppies, and unexpected love.

If She Dares by Mikal Dawn: What a story! Filled with love, laughter, obstacles, characters that are endearing, and a very sweet ending.

Definitely by Heather Gray: A slow start that avalanched into an amazing, engaging story! The characters were multidimensional and very interesting. The heroine's daughter is adorable and the Pastor that her mama falls for is a true gentleman.

Under the Honey Moon by Jessica R. Patch: Perhaps my favorite story in this boxed set! Loved the characters, plot, and dialogue. Everything about this story drew me in and kept me reading.

A (wildly) Wonderful Wedding by Krista Phillips: Delightful, funny and engaging! The characters are lively, complex and passionate. The plot thickens with every page turn and the story ending is sweet.

Save the Last Word by Becky St. Amant Haddox: A sweet and fun story with lots of homemade adventure that will keep you engaged.

The Long Game by Laurie Tomlinson: If you love sports, humor, and romance then you will love this story! The author delves deep into characterization and paints a vivid picture with words. Every scene drives the

plot forward.

My Overall Review for Once Upon A Laugh: This is a memorable collection of stories by some of my favorite authors and it is well-deserving of a five-star rating!

*The publisher provided me (writer@heart) with a complimentary copy of "Once Upon A Laugh". My opinions in this book review are my own.

Andrea says

4.5 stars! Full of fun, laugh out loud and grin quietly to yourself moments, this collection was a great read. Some very swoon-worthy heroes, strong heroines, and toe-curling kisses can be found in these pages too. The meaningful moments in these stories are what made them feel so real for me though. I loved the back and forth banter between the characters, seeing the truth, and the happy endings. I met some new to me author's in this collection and look forward to reading more from them.

I pre-ordered my copy, as soon as I started reading it, I ordered copies for my mom and my sister! I recommend you get yourself this wonderful collection and have fun reading it!

Sherri says

Jane By The Book, Pepper Basham - 5 stars; I loved both Titus and Jane Cecily! What a sweet romance.

Crossed Out, Christina Coryell - 4 stars

If She Dares, Mikal Dawn - 3 stars

Definitely, Heather Gray - 5 stars! Oh my goodness! I loved this story! I loved the pastor for his patience. I loved Annie for her crazy sense of humor. I loved Beatrice for her honesty. It made me laugh out loud so many times. I can relate to Annie so much. I can just imagine how I would have felt in her shoes. Date a pastor? No way!

Under the Honey Moon, Jessica R. Patch - 5 stars; Enjoyable! I really liked Juliette's sass. Bowie's dedication to following through on his promises was admirable. And I hope other characters are going to get their stories told in later books.

A (wildly) Wonderful Wedding, Krista Phillips - 4 stars; I liked the premise behind the plot of this one. The author made the characters believable and likable.

Save the Last Word, Betsy St. Amant - 5 stars; I love quirky as long as it's someone else's quirks, not mine. So Zoe makes sense to me. She's the perfect match for Ben who needs to realize life is short. Their relationship made me laugh multiple times throughout.

The Long Game, Laurie Tomlinson - 4 stars; High school humiliation is the worst! I enjoyed reading this story and seeing Annie become who she was designed to be.

Beth Erin says

Full review for each novella on FaithfullyBookish.com

These stories are absolutely delightful! I have been looking forward to this novella collection ever since I finished reading last year's Love at First Laugh collection! I'm hoping a few of them release individually so I can purchase print copies because these entertaining stories are perfect candidates for re-reading!!! If any of these authors are not on your radar, check them out because they should be!

Jane by the Book : This story is sweet, quirky, and at times, flat-out hilarious yet earnestly authentic.

Crossed Out : Once y'all fall in puppy love with these characters, hang out with them again in previous Beards and Belles novellas.

If She Dares : Although I'm not a fan of dares, I think y'all will be happy with the results of the little daring contest that erupts between Lia and Garrison!

Definitely : Annie has worked hard to overcome grief and circumstances to arrive in her safe and secure comfort zone... but I think God likes to keep us on our toes!

Under the Honey Moon : I adore this story and I'm looking forward to more Honeyhaven installments but mostly, I want more Tuck (pretty please)!!!

A (wildly) Wonderful Wedding : I love these down-to-earth characters and the humor, heartache, and healing in this series!

Save the Last Word : The way these two empower one another to be their best selves is encouraging and inspiring (as a matter of fact I was inspired to find even more stories by this author).

The Long Game : High school, ugh. This story is completely captivating!

I purchased this collection. The opinions expressed are my own.

Nina Yahnke says

Great anthology!!!

I gave this anthology a 5 star rating because each if these novellas was well-written and highly entertaining. While reading, I discovered some new authors and read some old favorites.

You will love this collection! I don't post spoilers, so I won't say anything more, other than the book speaks for itself.

Toni Shiloh says

The only thing better than laughing, imo, is romance and this novella collection has both! From moments where I doubled over with laughter to ones that made me smile with pleasure, Once Upon a Laugh offers a wide range of romance to satisfy every type of reader.

*Some of the books in this collection deserve 5 stars and some 4. I'd give this a 4.5 if Goodreads allowed it. ;)

** I received a ARC copy from the publisher. This review is my own, honest opinion.

Anne says

Lighthearted, witty, and charming, *Jane by the Book* is Basham's latest rom-com that had me smiling and chuckling during my reading experience. I finished Jane and Titus's story with a deep sigh of satisfaction and perhaps...an audible awww! ?

I received an electronic copy of the book from the author. I was not required to write a review. All opinions are my own.

I'm working on reading the rest of the collection and the stories are equally delightful!

Susan Snodgrass says

I absolutely loved everything about this collection. This set of novellas has some favorite authors for me and I jumped at the chance to read it. So glad I did.

Jessica Patch is at her best here with *Under The Honey Moon*. Love her writing. She has the most wonderful dry sense of humor ever. Christina Coryell is great with her contribution. I devour everything these two write. Pepper Basham is again delightful with her *Jane By The Book*. The others are well told as well. I was thoroughly entertained through this set. Don't miss it! Highly recommended.

*My thanks to the publisher for a copy of this collection. My opinion is entirely my own.

Susan L. Tuttle says

I'll admit that I haven't made it through each one of these yet ... but these authors are wonderful with rom-com:) If you'd like a fun read that delivers on laughter and romance, you can't beat this collection!

Suzie Waltner says

Humorous situations, misunderstandings, and more had me laughing throughout this collection as each

couple finds their way to the beginnings (or continuation) of new (or old) relationships. This is such a fun read that I just could not pick a favorite, so you get a quick snapshot on each of these eight novellas.

Jane by the Book by Pepper Basham: This story had me at Bath, England and an inn with Jane Austen inspired rooms. But those took a back seat once I met the outgoing and a bit eccentric hero of this story.

Crossed Out by Christine Coryell: Grieving and grumpy meets straightforward and pushy in the Smoky Mountains. Can a woman, her daughter, and a dog show Tate that there is still joy to be found?

If She Dares by Mikal Dawn: Adorably geeky (and still a bit in that awkward teenage mindset), Garrison's last-minute solution for Lia's employment situation gives them both more than they bargained for. The boxes! The trip to the Swedish big box store! The racecar! So much to enjoy about this one. But mostly, the burgeoning friendship/interest between these two make this a read not to miss.

Definitely by Heather Gray: Is there anything more sigh-worthy than a man who doesn't give up on a woman? Why yes, yes, there is. It's a man who loves God and listens to his direction to not give up on said woman. Even if said woman has no interest.

Under the Honey Moon by Jessica R. Patch: Sparks fly, arguments ensue, and attraction bubbles under the surface as Juliet and Bowie get reacquainted with each other. But will her first crush, uh, crush Juliet's closest held dream?

A (Wildly) Wonderful Wedding by Krista Phillips: An evil plot to postpone their best friends' wedding is filled with the tension of unspoken words and a shared history (a BIG shared history) and a touch of jealousy.

Save the Last Word by Betsy St. Amant: Sprightly, unorganized, unconventional, and quirky Zoe is pretty much the opposite of ultra-busy, ultra-organized Ben. Yet, she also sees things in him that he hasn't even seen. There are so many humorous moments in this novella. How could there not be with a character who faints when she gets a scare and ends up in situations most people couldn't dream of?

The Long Game by Laurie Tomlinson: I adored Annie and Ryan together. So much chemistry and heat between them but also a mutual respect and appreciation and respect for the other. Ryan encourages Annie to step out from behind the curtain she hides behind and showcase her talent while Annie shows him what loving and encouraging the high school students they teach (and coach) looks like.

Disclosure statement:

I receive complimentary books from publishers, publicists, and/or authors, including NetGalley. I am not required to write positive reviews. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.

Nike Bentley says

I really hope these authors continue to release a set every summer. It's become a highlight for me. I've reviewed each novella individually.

1. Jane by the Book:

Pepper Basham takes us back to Bath and the Elizabeth Inn. Nora's friend Jane was left at the altar four years ago and has found comfort in routine and order at Nora's family inn. Ethan, Nora's fiancé, has requested Jane's help in streamlining The Elizabeth Inn. This is a chance for Jane to share her organizational knowledge and hotel hospitality while researching a mysterious relative whose journal has long fascinated her.

Also invited on the trip is Ethan's friend Titus Stewart, a mystery writer and video game company owner. He and Jane clash, literally and figuratively, upon first meeting, but Titus' curiosity, child-like wonder, and candidness open Jane's broken heart to a different story than the one she has been living.

Mystery, romance, and faith abound in this novella set in historical Bath with loveable, quirky characters.

2. Crossed Out:

Christina Coryell takes us to a diner in small town Tennessee where single mom Ruth works to support her 9-year-old, dog crazy little girl. Broody stranger comes in and threatens to turn her organized, simple world upside down. Tate is everything Ruth is not – introverted, grieving, and a world traveling photographer. A friendship blossoms as the two share crossword puzzles at the diner and Ruth learns to trust and Tate learns to find joy in small things.

A sweet story a bit light on character development but heavy on charm. It was an enjoyable, easy read one could picture easily.

3. If She Dares:

Mikal Dawn introduces us to Lia Walker as she is on her way to her new job as university chancellor's executive assistant. Instead, she finds herself sprawled out on the floor next to Garrison McGarville's feet having taken a corner too fast in her rush to not be late. Garrison shares a last name with the chancellor but is definitely NOT the chancellor. After some awkwardness, it is revealed the chancellor is out for health reasons and Lisa, who quit her job in a blaze of glory, has no income for at least a month as there is no work for her to do in the meantime. Garrison has a problem and Lia needs a job to carry her over until the chancellor returns. They strike a deal.

Geeky, awkward, handsome guys are my zone, and Mikal Dawn delivers with Garrison. Lia is clever and likable. The two play off each other perfectly and my husband caught me reading in bed an hour after I went to bed cause I'd been exhausted. He scolded me, I am still exhausted, but it was worth it.

4. Definitely:

Annie Flamingo is a widowed mother with a perceived lack of finesse, which she proves by spitting water across the table when she realizes she was not at a committee meeting with her pastor, but on a date. Or at least it was supposed to be. The story follows Annie as she lists all the reasons she can't date a pastor – people who date pastors might end up marrying pastors – as Pastor Paul patiently pursues her without being pushy.

Heather Gray writes characters that are loveably flawed and there are a few church characters that were so recognizable (we've all met them) you can't help but smile and/or cringe at their behavior. The story didn't seem to be going anywhere for awhile, but it picks up a bit towards the end and has a powerful message of listening to God's direction in your life and the joy that follows when you stop fighting and see the blessings

set before you.

5. Under the Honey Moon

Honestly, I read the synopsis of this novella and had to talk myself out of hating it before I had started it. I try to avoid stories that hinge on unrequited love when one of the people involved are engaged or married. If this is a hang up for you as well, rest easy – Jessica Patch handled this delightfully.

Charming, full of wit, and thoughtful the small town of Honeyhaven epitomizes lazy southern summers and hospitality. Juliet Miller has just had her 28th birthday as is surprised to find her lifelong love in her driveway upon walking up. She immediately thinks he has remembered the pact he made on her 18th birthday is here to propose. No such luck. Bowie Nichols is not only not there to propose, he's engaged and is there to ask a huge favor – the use of the Honeymoon Cabin – for his own wedding night in a few weeks. Juliet, Bowie, Juliet's siblings and friends are all likeable, honest, and in some cases blunt. Jessica Patch weaves a wonderful story of how you decide what is best for your life, explores the plans we make and the ones we didn't consider but are the ones we should pursue.

6. A (wildly) Wonderful Wedding

Krista Phillips takes us back to Tennessee for Meri and Brandon's engagement and impending wedding – two months after they met in A (nearly) Normal Nanny (from 2017's Love At First Laugh novella collection). This quick engagement-to-wedding has Meri's best friend Danielle remembering her own (failed) quick engagement that left her heartbroken at the altar and sent her into a two year downward spiral. Brandon's best friend has his own reservations about the turnaround time, but initially wishes them well. Until he meets the Maid of Honor.

As Danielle and Drake team up to sabotage the wedding, old wounds flare. People change in five years, but can new beginnings really come from ashes? Humor and grace line every page of this wonderful story.

7. Save the Last Word

Betsy St. Amant Haddox introduces us to unconventional Zoe Armand, model son Ben Marshall, and darling grandma Ms. Marshall. This is a story of embracing who you are, even if it's not who others want you to be and loving and supporting the people in your life for who they are.

Zoe is my opposite and there were things about her that annoyed me, but she is so genuine you can't help but like her and empathize with her and the hurts her parents inflict on her for not being the person they think she should be. I identify more with Ben, but without the familial pressure to follow in his father's steps and commit to a career he has no passion for while living a secret online life.

8. The Long Game

What is holding you back from living your life to the fullest? Laurie Tomlinson takes us to Oklahoma where Annie Jacobs is music teacher at the same school she suffered her hardest and most embarrassing years. She has buried that day fifteen years in the past when she is informed her budget has been cut to accommodate the new football coach's salary. Enter Ryan Collins: high school football legend and Annie's secret high school crush. In an effort to help raise funds for the spring musical, Annie's best friend has entered her into a contest to win \$25,000. The catch? Annie has to kick a field goal in front of thousands of people, which feels a little too close to her most embarrassing moment, but with no other options, she agrees and enlists Ryan's

help to train her.

If you have a soft spot for the arts and know not all athletes are “Joshes” this is the perfect read. Laurie is a master of weaving a falling in love story with depth and nuance. You understand and empathize with Annie’s trauma from that day on the football field and Ryan proves he was and is an honorable man. The characters play well off of each other and it was a little bittersweet to say goodbye to them.

Phyllis says

Jane by the Book by Pepper Basham

A sweet, humorous, faith filled romance
with a touch of mystery

The mystery of the journal haunted Jane. She wanted so badly to know about her namesake from the late 1800s. Especially how the story ended. And once Titus found out about it, he couldn’t let the rest of the story go untold.

Okay. I admit it. Titus is adorable. His exuberance and disarmingly honest manner are just so charming. I love the way he gets caught up in his books and his characters that they are real to him and cracked up at the way that he would just stare at Jane, trying to memorize her features so he could use her as a model for Lydia. I also loved the way he would have a random thought and all of a sudden have to write it down to use later in his writing. He was a mixture of charming and clueless and socially awkward, yet not.

Oh, and did I mention his deep and reverent faith? And the way it was such a big part of his life, not just something that affected his schedule on Sundays. He was also romantic in the true Biblical kind of romance way. I loved the way he explained romance to Jane. Wow!

I had fun reading the mystery and trying to figure out who the mysterious Cecliy was. I had a theory which would have made for a great story but, alas, I was wrong. The answer was equally good, however, so only my pride was disappointed.

The novella was just perfect. The right mixture of humor, romance, tension, faith, mystery. Pepper Basham’s stories never fail to delight me.

This review was originally posted on Among the Reads

I would like to thank Pepper Basham for giving me a copy of this book. This gift did not influence my opinion or review.

Heidi Robbins (Heidi Reads...) says

A great collection of stories filled with sweet romance, humor, and depth that left me with a smile on my face :)

