



## Christmas Secrets

*Donna Hatch*

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Holly has two Christmas wishes this year; finally earn her mother's approval by gaining the notice of a handsome earl with an impeccable reputation, and learn the identity of the stranger who gave her a heart-shattering kiss...even if that stranger is the resident Christmas ghost.

## Christmas Secrets Details

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Author : Donna Hatch

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## From Reader Review Christmas Secrets for online ebook

### Katie W says

I love a good story that starts out with a bang and boy does this one ever! Holly decided to innocently watch for the supposed ghost that appears at her brother-in-law's house each year, but she ends up with a mystery kiss that even curled my toes. I think I was almost as caught off guard as she was.

The flirtatious characters plays a very nice game of round robin, as the different individuals fall in and out of love at an alarming rate. However, once a firm and forbidden attraction is formed, the romantic tension could be cut with a sharp knife. The butterflies were flying rampant in my stomach throughout and the swoon literally oozed out of my kindle from just a glance or a brief graze of the hand.

Not only did I identify with the solid Christmas traditions throughout the story, but I absolutely adored the cast, especially the main characters. Holly is overly eager to please her mother and I love her growth throughout the book. I especially loved that her love interest wasn't stodgy and stiff, but had a ripple of delightful wickedness flowing through his veins, especially considering how society deems he should be. Donna Hatch always delivers a great Regency story, and this one put me in a jolly holiday mood.

Content: mild romance (kissing)

\*I received a copy, which had no influence on my thoughts and opinions\*

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### MJSH says

I've enjoyed novellas by Donna Hatch in the past but this is the first full-length novel I've read by the author. So good! The author really knows how to create a deliciously enticing setting in Regency England with deeply layered and endearing characters. The entire book takes place within a fortnight at a Christmas house party, which doesn't sound all that exciting at first, but excitement and secrets follow quickly as the story begins. Anyone who enjoys sweet Regency romance will enjoy this book.

It is a well-written novel with wonderful dialogue. The plot moves along quickly and the emotions of the characters really propel the story along without a dull moment. Some of the old English Christmas traditions were fun to read about. The author does an excellent job of creating her characters, layer by layer, and revealing their personalities to the reader; for, truly, the characters of this book truly make it shine.

Holly, a young lady yet to have her first London season, is well-bred, well-mannered, graceful, beautiful, soft-spoken, loving, compassionate, but unwilling to stand up for herself against her controlling mother. Her mother has her eye on an earl as her future husband. Will is a young vicar of noble background, struggling to forgive himself for his reckless youth and struggling even more to become the "respectable" vicar. He is on a quest to find a suitable bride. He is loyal, honorable, and dutiful, but also fun, vivacious, and charming. Their relationship starts off with a mistaken kiss and an unexpected physical attraction, but develops into something so much more. The romance is sweet and slow, as it needs to be during Regency era, but meets with much resistance since Holly's mother disapprove of Will and Holly so wishes to please her mother. Holly's mother is an interesting secondary character. Holly and her mother's relationship made me think about my own relationship with my daughters.

The theme of forgiveness is strong throughout the book, especially toward the end.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I was given a review copy through Prism Book Tours. I was not required to write a favorable review. All comments and opinion are solely my own.

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### **Pamela says**

I loved this Christmas Season romance. It had plenty of holiday spirit, and charm. I also loved the two main characters, Holly, and William. They meet at a Christmas gathering, at a manor. The hosts are good friends to Will, and related to Holly. Holly's mother would put Elizabeth Bennet's mother to shame, in Pride and Prejudice. She had married all of her children, to high ranking titles, of the Ton. Her last daughter is to marry a Lord, or a duke. She is most determined. Holly, instead is attracted to the handsome, kind, outgoing, and loving Vicar.. He is of a great family, but a third son. He has money, and friends, but his life will not revolve around huge parties, and the latest fashion. This will do wonderfully for her, but at what cost. ? I just loved Holly, who was as kind, and joyful, as she was beautiful. She wanted to marry for love, not prestige. The Lord invited to the party was handsome, but stuffy, and everything around him seemed to be to perfect. She no longer wanted to live under such close scrutinizing. She just wanted a family, a home , and a reason to help others, while being herself. The book takes you on a merry chase, while enjoying the customs of Christmas, in the Regency Era. I totally loved it. I read it straight through, until early morning. That deserves a five in my opinion. I was anxious to see how it could possibly all work out. I loved the book, and the ending. This was a perfect Christmas romance, with a faith based hint. I will be reading this author again.

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### **Lisa (Bookworm Lisa) says**

The mystery begins for Holly when her first kiss is "stolen" by an unknown entity. She listened to a ghost story and decided to wait for the ghost to appear to her. Imagine her surprise when she was thoroughly kissed instead. Was it the ghost or a mystery man?

This story has quite the cast of characters. The flighty young miss who flirts shamelessly with everyone, the domineering mother, the sought after nobility, the beloved grandfather, the vicar, and the sweet young woman. Each of them has an important part to play in the progression of the story.

This book had me laughing in many places. Holly and William are two people who you really want to see get together in spite of the obstacles in their way. Holly's mother wants her to marry someone titled and Will is "just" a vicar. The book has many tender moments and Holly is trying to figure out the mystery of the kiss that affected her deeply. How can she love a man when she is infatuated with a ghost?

I read this book just after the Holiday Season and enjoyed it. I loved vicariously living the traditions of a Regency Christmas. This book is clean with kissing.

Source: I borrowed this title from Kindle Unlimited.

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### **Suzie Waltner says**

It started with a kiss. One that left an impression on Holly Gray. The only problem is she doesn't know who gave her such a wonderful kiss.

With stories of ghosts and every guest at the Christmas celebration accounted for, Holly can't quite convince

herself that it wasn't a spirit who had indeed kissed her.

Filled with delightful holiday traditions, growing attraction between Holly and one of the guests, a mother set on a desirable match for her daughter, and a few heart-melting kisses, this novella is the perfect book to cuddle up with this holiday season.

Oh, not only does it start with a kiss, it ends with one as well!

Disclosure statement:

I receive complimentary books for review 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.

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### **Jennifer says**

Christmas Secrets, a Regency-Era Romance by Donna Hatch, is a heart-warming historical fiction about family and forgiveness. The Christmas house party drama plays out like a well-staged romantic comedy, filled with misunderstandings and one very lovely ghost.

There are plenty of shades of Jane Austen to satisfy fans of the genre. Will Berry is as worthy a hero as any Knightly with the gravitas of Darcy. As the youngest child in my family, I connected with Holly's struggle to be the perfect daughter. But also appreciated how any major conflict between family members is overcome in light of the season. While the romance is very clean in line with the expectations of the era, simple moments like the touch of a hand become swoon-worthy.

It's been some time since an author made me believe their characters like this, but Donna Hatch writes it so beautifully I was quickly drawn into the idyllic past. My only criticism would be several typos near the beginning, but don't let this deter you from enjoying the story. Many of the tropes are familiar but this makes it almost more enjoyable when these characters do something unexpectedly lovely.

A delightful holiday read for anyone in need of a little sweet romance this season.

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### **Shash says**

What a beginning! A toe-curling kiss from a mystery man...or was it a ghost? And I loved the story from that moment on. Holly is vivacious, passionate, and beautiful – inside and out. Will is kind and generous and has a bit of a roguish edge. I loved how comfortable Holly felt with him, how she could just be herself. I loved them both, and was rooting for them the whole time. One of the biggest stumbling blocks to their relationship was Holly's mother. She was overpowering, and so harsh! I was grateful that they had many others in their corner. And everything came together for a wonderful ending!!

I love Donna Hatch's books! She never disappoints!!

I received a complimentary copy of the book, which I voluntarily reviewed. I have given my honest opinion.

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### **Wanda Luce says**

Heartwarming, magical, romantic, and an absolutely all around wonderful story! I loved curling up in a blanket in my favorite big, cushioned chair and drifting off into this story. In fact, I read it more than once and enjoyed it even more the second time. The hero is the perfect combination of bad boy and saint, and the heroine is warm-hearted and passionate. I found myself transported back in time to the sights, sounds, and smells of an old-fashioned, Regency Era Christmas.

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### **Karen Tuttle says**

#### **Ok read**

I normally love everything Donna Hatch writes. I did love the premise of the story. Actually there was only one aspect that was irritating and almost caused me to not finish. For such a put together sort of girl she was certainly wish washy and fluttery about the kiss. Instead of filling out the various personalities with interaction and background, way too much time was spent on the kiss. It was very repetitive and became annoying. I liked the story and especially Will. I probably would not read this one again.

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### **Richelle ?? says**

What a fun regency Christmas romance. I won't give any spoilers, but Holly's "ghost", I absolutely LOVE him!!! Her mother makes me want to cringe with how she treats Holly, and I feel so bad for her because in her mind she won't get any acceptance or love from her mother unless she acts perfectly and makes a perfect match.....with a titled Lord. She tries so hard to please her mother, but her heart has other ideas.

CONTENT Romance sweet and clean. A proper romance ?

Violence none, language none.

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### **Amy Koster says**

Donna Hatch has become one of my favorite authors. I find her books fun, enjoyable and swoon worthy. Christmas Secrets did not disappoint! What better story than a rogue-turned-vicar, an innocent young woman trying to please her mother, and a ghost?

Holly is such a enjoyable character. I found myself smiling at her humor and antics. I felt sad she felt pressured into obeying her strict mother who stifled her freedom.

I found myself laughing watching Holly try to solve the mystery of the Christmas Ghost. The author does a fantastic job recreating traditions of that time period. I always feel I've stepped back in time. This story has some sizzling romance while remaining clean and fun.

A perfect holiday read you will not want to miss!

\*Please note I received a complimentary copy. All opinions expressed are my own.

## **Carrie Schmidt (Reading is My SuperPower) says**

I can always count on Donna Hatch to weave a delightful tale with vivid characters and swoony kisses. Christmas Secrets does not disappoint.

Holly & Will have some great chemistry but their characters go much deeper than that too. Holly has to deal with a host of family expectations, particularly from her mother. Will is fighting to prove he really is a redeemed rogue. Not only is he a rogue-gone-good, he's now a vicar ... so his whole livelihood depends on his redemption being true and lasting. A secret kiss between Holly and her 'ghost', the result of a parlor game dare, challenges both of them.

My favorite aspect of Christmas Secrets (besides the kisses, of course, because Donna Hatch writes some fabulous kisses, y'all) is the traditions tucked into the story. You get a sense of the history behind them as well as an atmosphere brimming with everything we love about Regency/Victorian Christmases. This added some nice layers to the story as a whole.

Bottom Line: Christmas Secrets brings a Regency-era Christmas to life with tradition, history, family dynamics, and of course romance. And, after all, a book that starts and ends with a kiss is the perfect choice for those cold wintry days. You will fall in love with Will and Holly and their Christmas – secrets and all!

(I voluntarily reviewed a complimentary copy of this book)

first seen at Reading Is My SuperPower

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## **Heidi Robbins (Heidi Reads...) says**

I loved this wintery holiday romance! I felt like there were three facets to the story that resonated with me- the romance, the holiday traditions, and the family dynamics. It was enjoyable getting to know the characters, their flaws and strengths, and how they interacted with each other. Holly's sister teases her but as the story progresses she shows more depth of character as she helps Holly. Her mother is a difficult person- hard to please and motives woven with selfishness and maternal devotion. I liked her father best of all since he reminded me of my own, thoughtful and quiet yet strong- when he speaks, people listen, and his word is final.

Will was charming and I liked that while he wasn't perfect, he had a good heart and tried to do his best. He took joy in participating in the Christmas traditions of old England and I loved learning more about the history of those practices. I felt like I gleaned more details in this book than others in the same genre and setting. Participating in the activities with open pleasure is something Will and Holly have in common, and it was sweet to see them turn from their initial interests and realize how well they are suited. Their chemistry is great and the author skillfully builds the anticipation of something more between them. Highly recommend to fans of Regency romance and holiday themes!

(I received a complimentary copy of the book; all opinions in this review are my own)

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### **Kathy \* Bookworm Nation says**

This was a charming Christmas Regency. I loved the cozy, wintery setting with enough Holiday touches to get me in the Christmassy mood. I thought it had a fun plot and likable characters. I always enjoy Ms. Hatch's books and am always impressed with her storytelling. I felt transported back in time and loved the fun old Christmas traditions that were woven into the story. Holly was a likable heroine, very much trying to please her mother and be a proper young lady. I loved the moments though when she was herself and spoke her mind. The "Ghost" was also a likable character (don't want to give away his identity haha). I liked how their relationship unfolds and very genuine and real. Overall, a great story and sweet romance.

Content: Clean

Source: Kindle Unlimited

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### **Aimee (Getting Your Read On) says**

This was the perfect "after Thanksgiving, getting in the mood for Christmas" book to read this weekend! This regency romance started things off just right with a Christmas kiss by a mysterious stranger. I love when books start right off with the kissing! ha. Holly receives the kiss in the dark and has no idea who her mysterious stranger is but she cannot forget that kiss.

Holly has been under her mother's thumb for so long, always abiding by her wishes. It was awesome to see Holly stand up for herself when she finally found something worth standing up for. It made me so proud of her.

This book is on the shorter side but perfect for this time of year. I loved the Christmas traditions that filled this book! I finished it wanting to play my Christmas music, turn on the fireplace and drink hot chocolate. And that my friends, is a happy place to be.

Content: kissing, clean

- I received a free copy of this book. All opinions expressed are my own.

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