



## A Plain and Simple Christmas

*Amy Clipston*

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## **A Plain and Simple Christmas** Amy Clipston

In the tradition of her widely popular Kauffman Amish Bakery series, author Amy Clipston tells the tale of Anna Mae McDonough who was shunned by her family four years ago when she left her Amish community in Lancaster County, PA, to marry an 'Englisher' (non Amish) man and move with him to Baltimore. Now, eight months pregnant with her first child, she longs to return home for Christmas to reconcile with her family, especially her stern father, who is the religious leader for her former Amish church district. So Anna Mae writes a letter to Kathryn Beiler, her brother's wife, to enlist her help. Kathryn asks her husband, David, if she should arrange Anna Mae's visit. David cautions her that a visit would cause too much stress in the family and instead suggests they visit Anna Mae and her husband in the spring. However, Kathryn arranges the visit anyway, believing in her heart that it's God's will for the family to heal. When Anna Mae arrives in Lancaster for Christmas, the welcome she receives is nothing like what she had hoped for.

A book filled with love, the pain of being separated from one's family, and the determination to follow God's will regardless of the outcome, A Plain and Simple Christmas is an inspiring page-turner that will keep you guessing what happens next ... right to the very last page.

## **A Plain and Simple Christmas Details**

Date : Published (first published September 3rd 2010)

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## From Reader Review A Plain and Simple Christmas for online ebook

### Mary O'Brien says

Do you believe in Christmas miracles? Anna Mae McDonough is hoping to get her Christmas miracle this year, raised Amish, she left home three years ago to marry her English husband. Now, 8 months pregnant with their first child, Anna Mae dreams about reuniting with her family. She knows this will be very difficult because once she left, she became shunned.

Anna decides to write her sister in law, her brother's wife, Kathryn to ask for her assistance. Kathryn's husband is against this idea. He doesn't want Christmas to be ruined for his parents. Going against her husband's wishes, she arranges this meeting anyway, believing this is what God wants her to do.

Arriving in Lancaster, Anne didn't receive the "open arms" she was hoping to. Her mother was ever so happy to see her; however her father wouldn't even look at her. Now, Anne is wondering if she made a mistake. She is beginning to question her place in her family. Will she receive the Christmas miracle that she is hoping for or will her dreams come crashing down?

I couldn't put this book down. It was shorter than other books I read, however just as enjoyable. I can't imagine having to choose between the one you love and the family and way you were raised. In this case, Anne didn't choose one or the other. You can't help who you fall in love with. She was shunned because she left.

I was so excited for Anne to reunite with the rest of her family. I was a little worried about how it was going to go to be honest. The first encounter with her brother and sister in law, Kathryn went well so I thought. Her brother seemed to open up as soon as her saw her.

I wish I could say that the second encounter with her family went just as well but I can't. The next night her parents were there. Her mother took her in with open arms; however her father couldn't stand to look at her. In fact, he ordered his wife to get in the buggy. Anne was ready to throw in the towel but Kathryn said to give it one more chance and come the next day for Christmas Eve dinner.

That is exactly what they did. However, that didn't go as planned either. I was so upset with Anne's father. I don't understand how he can just act as if his daughter wasn't there. It took Anne's husband confronting the man to change anything.

Who would have thought that Anne would give birth in her parent's home? Who would have thought that her father would apologize for his behavior and welcome them back into their lives? Not only did Anne receive a Christmas miracle, but she received two! She was reunited with her family and gave birth to their first son.

This story was an emotional roller coaster of emotions. I found myself yelling at my book one minute and crying a river the next. Family is extremely important. The bond between a parent and their child should never be broken.

## Paula-O says

I am not sure when I read this book but when starting to read noticed , "I had already read", did not review or put on goodreads. I love to read christmas stories so have been reading those lately ,getting ready for the season.

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## Kay says

A sweet Christmas story. I enjoy many Amish stories but this isn't my favorite. Dialogues are cheesy at times.

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## Brenda says

Anna Mae McDonough left the Amish faith three years ago to marry her husband Kennan. While she doesn't regret her decision, the impending birth of her first child has her wanting to reconnect with her Amish family. Thing is when she left three years ago, she was put under the Bann and some harsh things were said by her father who is also the Bishop for their community. Will the spirit of Christmas and the impending birth of her child help bring her family back together?

I read this book in one sitting, and easily connected with the characters in this book. I thought the Amish in this book were a bit more liberal when it came to the shunning of Anna Mae, and it was so very easy to understand why she wanted to reconnect with her family after being away for four years. I was a bit surprised that Kathryn went against her husband David in helping set up Anna Mae's visit. I was so glad the author included a glossary for the words the Amish used, because there were several that I wasn't familiar with. Since I have read a few of the Kauffman Amish Bakery Series books it was nice to reconnect with the characters from those stories, although this book could easily be read as a stand alone work. Even though this book was pretty predictable I found it an enjoyable read that certainly has put me in the mood to start reading a few more Christmas stories!

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## Lindsey (Books for Christian Girls) says

**{Merry CHRISTmas everyone! Every Monday, Wednesday & Friday in honor of our Savior's birth there'll be a new Christmas book review! With a couple giveaways sprinkled in, it's going to be so much fun! Let's start!}**

About this book:

*"Just in time, or just too late?"*

*In the tradition of her widely popular Kauffman Amish Bakery series, author Amy Clipston weaves this tale of Anna Mae McDonough—shunned by her family four years ago when she left her Amish community in Lancaster County, PA, to marry a non-Amish man in Baltimore.*

*Anne Mae has longed to return home the holidays, but she worries her visit will cause too much stress. With*



## **Lisa says**

This Christmas story gets off to a slow start--the central conflict, about whether a young Amish woman who married an "Englisher" and so was shunned by her family will be welcomed if she and her husband go home for Christmas--is repeated a lot in the first 25 pages of this 125-page story. After that, it becomes pleasant but inevitably predictable. The story doesn't have room to develop some characters who just come across as mean and unyielding. Not really worth it.

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## **Celestria says**

I've read several of Amy Clipston's books and liked them all, but this one was a disappointment. Very boring. (And it was upsetting me the way Kathryn went behind her husband's back like she did after he'd repeatedly told her no about inviting Anna Mae for Christmas!)

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## **Bekah says**

This was my first book by this author and I really enjoyed it. I know that there is another book after this one and I will definitely be reading it sometime. Perhaps I'll save the second one for next Christmas!

What I Liked: There were several things that I enjoyed about this story. The book was very well written and I was drawn into the lives of these characters.

Another thing that I really liked were the strong marriages in this book. Kellan was SO incredibly sweet and kind to Anna Mae and always treated her with kindness and respect. David and Kathryn's marriage was also really strong. That's something I appreciated with this book.

I really liked the storyline of this story. Anna Mae's desire to restore the relationship with her family and Kathryn's desire to help her arrange a visit was very neat to read. I enjoyed reading the letters between the sister and sister-in-law. Their close relationship was very sweet.

What I Didn't Like: Although I really enjoyed this story, it lost a star for me with all the deception in it. I especially didn't like how Kathryn went behind her husband's back and went against his wishes. Deception is a sin, and I didn't like how Kathryn felt it was "God's will" to go against her husband like she did and invite Anna Mae and Kellan for Christmas. But, I think that's the only thing I really disliked about it, though.

I give this sweet Christmas story 4 stars and I look forward to reading the second book in the series sometime in the future!

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## **Angie says**

Nice Amish Christmas story involving a daughter who has been shunned for marrying outside of the faith wanting to come home for Christmas and make things right with her family. There is much drama and

heartbreak but it ends on a happy note.

I enjoy Amish stories and the simplicity of their lifestyle. I actually visited the town Anna Mae was from this summer, so I loved being able to picture it in my mind.

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### **Natalie says**

Such a sweet Christmas story about love and forgiveness. The main character has been shunned after marrying a man who is not Amish, but wants to come home for a Christmas visit. Her father is the bishop who has never forgiven her for her choice.

I really liked how this all came together. Anna Mae and Kellan were really sweet together. (I would love to see a story about their courtship!) I also enjoyed learning a bit about how the Amish celebrate Christmas.

Kathryn was so sweet to orchestrate the meeting and I was glad she was able to stand up to her husband David who was against the meeting at the start.

Another well done Amish novella by Amy Clipston. I'm happy I found this author. :)

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### **Betty Strohecker says**

This is a wonderful story, good at any time of the year, but especially as we enter the Christmas season. I love reading Amish literature and always learn so much when I do. This time I learned more about the practice of shunning, which has very specific guidelines regarding people who choose to leave the Amish faith and community. Anna Mae, the youngest of five siblings, has followed her heart and married an Englisher. She left her Amish home and family in Lancaster County, Pa., and followed her husband to his home in Maryland. Although she has stayed in contact with some members of her family, she has not seen any of them in three years. Now, as Christmas approaches and expecting her first child, Anna Mae reaches out to her sister-in-law, expressing her desire to come for a visit and hopefully mend relations with her family. What makes this separation so much more difficult is that her father is the district bishop to her home community, taking her departure as a direct challenge to his ability to lead his people.

This story is heartrending and heartwarming, one of faith, hope, and forgiveness. I thoroughly enjoyed Amy Clipston's way of drawing the reader into the feelings of her characters. They are all very real, with understandable emotions and fears. I definitely want to read more by this author.

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### **Kav says**

Short but sweet! A moving coming home story. The perfect plot for a Christmas setting in my humble opinion. Clipston captures the emotions of her characters so well that they can't help but rub off on the reader so this is an angsty, infuriating but ultimately joyful read.

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### **Lanette says**

I didn't like this one... too cliché and not as many of the bakery characters I've come to know.

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### **Joleen says**

Contemporary Christian fiction book about Anna Mae, an Amish woman who fell in love and married a non-Amish man. Her father, being a bishop, had to set the example of discipline. Anna Mae is shunned.

But her life with her very loving husband, Kellan, in Baltimore has been idyllic, except that she misses her extended family. This year her greatest desire is to be reunited with her them in Lancaster County. This proves to be harder than she'd hoped.

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Pretty good novella that surprised me. (view spoiler)

Of the two novellas in *A Kauffman Amish Christmas Collection*, this was one best.

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### **Audrey says**

Anna Mae wants so badly to be reunited with her family. Three years ago she left the Amish faith to marry an Englisher. Even though she is happily married the shunning is painful for her. Finally she writes her sister-in-law and asks if she could make arrangements for her to come home for Christmas. At first there is discord but at last peace and harmony reunite the Byler family. This is a very special story. It brought tears to my eyes while I listened.

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