



The Christmas Dog

Melody Carlson

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Betty Kowalski isn't looking forward to the holidays. She just can't seem to find Christmas in her heart. There's church, of course. But who can she bake for these days? And who would care whether or not she pulled out the Christmas decorations? Her new neighbor just adds to the problem. He's doing home improvements that don't appear to be improving much of anything. These days when Betty looks out the window, she sees a beat-up truck, a pile of junk, lots of blue tarps, and--horror of horrors--an old pink toilet. But when a mangy dog appears at her doorstep, the stage is set for Betty to learn a very important lesson about what Christmas is all about. This contemporary Christmas story is a timely yet gentle reminder that God can work miracles through something as seemingly insignificant as a little brown dog.

The Christmas Dog Details

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From Reader Review The Christmas Dog for online ebook

Kathleen says

A heartwarming tale of a stranger, a grandmother, a granddaughter, and a loving dog. Enjoyable Christmas read! I love Melody Carlson books they always make me feel warm and fuzzy inside!

Sarita says

This was a cute story.

The lesson learned was not to judge people just on appearance, we need to look deeper, get to know a person before branding them.

Hannah says

4.5 stars

While a lot of the story was still predictable, I loved watching a little dog's presence be the catalyst for the characters to wake up and start treating each other better. If you're looking for a good cozy Christmas story, pick this one up! No romance, either.

Mayda says

It might take a whole village to raise a child, but it only takes one small dog to bring peace and understanding to a neighborhood. Betty and her neighbors distrust and fear their new neighbor, and Betty considers moving, just to avoid him. But her pastor tells his congregation that they should love their neighbors and so Betty tries. But is it not until a small and very dirty stray dog appears that real communication begins. This delightful Christmas story is a quick read and happy tale. There are problems to be solved, but the Christmas spirit of goodwill can't be stopped, especially when it's a canine who is spreading it.

Jean says

I've been on a Christmas story reading binge lately, and Melody Carlson's The Christmas Dog may be the best I've come across this year. It captures the spirit of the Yuletide season without being heavy-handed or preachy.

Betty Kowalski is a widow living alone. She has been happy in her neighborhood until a new neighbor with some dubious home improvement ideas and questionable social skills has her contemplating moving away for good. Still, her minister's sermon about loving one's neighbor nags at her conscience, and she struggles to become more open-minded.

It is nearly Christmas, and Betty has two surprise visitors. The first is a straggly stray dog that she believes to belong to her neighbor Jack. The second is her granddaughter Avery, a 23-year-old “runaway” who has yet to figure out what it means to be an adult.

This scenario felt like a real-life story to me. The characters were well developed, and their problems and challenges could be those of your neighbor, or mine. Betty, Avery, Jack, and even Ralph, the dog, have opportunities for change and growth. There are quite a few roadblocks along the way, many of their own making, but the pieces seem to come together by Christmas Day – as they should in a proper Christmas “tail.” This could be set in any other time of year and across racial and religious lines. It’s about people setting aside their fears and misconceptions of others and taking the time to get to know them. When given a chance, they find that their shared humanity can bring them together.

5 stars

Kristi says

3.5 stars - I am not frequently a fan of Christian fiction. When it comes to holiday reads I don't mind a bit of it, as long as it isn't too heavy handed. It can be good to be pulled out of all the commercialism of the holiday.

I enjoyed reading this book. It was nice to believe in modern day miracles for a little bit and to witness three people in very different stages of life and grappling with the troubles those entail really transform and hold each other up. Some of the "lessons" were a tad heavy handed, but suitable to the situation and not unexpected. I enjoyed a break from the formulaic holiday romances I have read recently. That isn't to say that the ending of this story is surprising, it was pretty clear as soon as the "The Christmas Dog" made the scene.

Those sensitive to frequent mentions of praying may wish to choose a different title, but that was the only recurring reference to Christianity in the book. There was also a good chunk of a church sermon, which was rather heavy handed, but served as catalyst for the plot so did not bother me, nor was it really unexpected.

The Kindle formatting of the title was fairly good. There were a few spots with extra line breaks and a few areas where parts of a word would be in subscript or superscript, but I did not find it terribly bothersome.

Nora St Laurent says

Melody Carlson is such a talented and diversified author, so when the opportunity came to receive a review copy of her new Christmas book, I jumped at the chance to read it! Each of Melody’s books has its own voice and style. That’s what I love about her writing. The Christmas Dog is no exception. Melody writes this book in the point of view of Betty Kowalski, an elderly woman who’s preparing for a 50th Anniversary party for her friends right before Christmas. Out of the blue, her granddaughter, Avery, shows up and wants to help with the party decorations.

Betty discovers a little dog at their back door while Avery is visiting and wants to give it to the pound and would have if Avery hadn’t asked to keep the dog.. Betty’s never had a dog and this one is dirty. Avery tells her grandma that she will take care of everything, and not to worry. Could she trust Avery? Avery was so

happy about the dog, Betty gives in.

Betty remembers what her mother says," I do remember my mother once telling me that kindness builds bridges."

This reminds Betty of her pastor and his recent sermon. She remembers, "How was it possible to love someone so completely disagreeable and inconsiderate and downright evil? Really, she thought as she stood up, even Pastor Gordon would be singing a different tune if he was forced to live next to Jack Jones." Now her granddaughter was here and wanted to keep this dog. God was doing a work on her, Betty could sense it.

God moves in mysterious ways and will stir our hearts to do His will if we let Him. Melody has penned a heart warming story that will leave you satisfied and get you in the spirit of Christmas cheer and ready to pass on God's love.

Disclosure of Material Connection:

I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising"

Nora St.Laurent

The Book Club Network www.bookfun.org

The Book Club Network blog www.psalms16.blogspot.com

Book Fun Magazine www.bookfunmagazine.com

Laura says

3.5

Sweet little Christmas read. I liked how the main character was a grandma with a fixed income who grew to recognize the God given blessings in her life. Also, just for the record, I loved how Betty made oatmeal, toast, and canned peaches for dinner. ?

Rachel says

Even though this novel was chosen as December's book of the month for Christian Fiction Devourers, the Goodreads group I'm the most active in, I had originally planned to skip this one because I just don't read a lot of books whose main plot point is that it's Christmas, and besides, even the title sounds cheesy. However, because Melody Carlson was also the featured author of the month and my library has more of her Christmas novels than her other types of novels, I ended up checking it out anyway. So, considering I had rather low expectations of this novel, upon actually reading it, I was pleasantly surprised. For such a short novel, and a Christmas novel at that, it was fairly well written, and there was a decent amount of character development also. It was cute how the stubborn stray dog brought Betty and her neighbor to a better understanding of each other, but overall, I felt that the novel was just too short. I wanted to see more development of some of the relationships: between Betty and her granddaughter Avery, between Avery and her parents, between Betty and her children, and between Betty and her neighbor. The story had so much potential, but by focusing so much of the plot on the dog, the novel had to end once the dog had a permanent home and Betty had realized God had sent the dog, and so, by being so against the dog, she had been rejecting God. Overall, I found this

to be a pretty solid three star read.

Beth says

This sweet story, while nothing spectacular, was fun to read. I love that the main character was frugal and mindful of her income, yet still enjoyed certain things. I also love that while she fretted, she had a big heart and was willing to rearrange her finances to help others. It is so caring and gave me food for thought for the new year. Something about the dialogue never quite rang true for me, sometimes it just didn't feel realistic. The granddaughter seemed way immature for her age, but I think I'm not a good judge of that. I had graduated college and gotten married by age 23, but that's not everyone's story (to be honest, getting married that early wasn't what I thought would be part of mine, ha!), so I take back my initial judgment on her. In fact, that is the heart of the story, not to judge others by first appearance - give others a chance before making a snap judgement or by holding them to some set standard. There's always a story behind every person. I appreciated that reminder.

Not my favorite Carlson, but still a fun one time read with a positive message.

Nat K says

"Love had come scratching at Betty's door in the form of a little brown dog, and she had completely missed it..."

What's not to love about a book that has a cute doggie on the cover. Aww...

A short and sweet Xmas tale that brings home what the Christmas Season is about. Betty Kowalski is a pensioner who's saddened by the changes in her neighbourhood. A bit on the lonely side, she's feeling a bit blue with Christmas coming up, and life isn't helped by the feud she's having with her neighbour, the mysterious Jack Jones.

Into their lives comes a little bundle of matted fur who doesn't seem to belong to anyone, but certainly wants to stay.

This is a really sweet book, which has a happy ending. And that's as it should be. We do learn lessons along the way, such as not judging a book by its cover, and how appearances can be deceiving. Sometimes you just need to scratch a bit below the surface, to discover that someone is actually a gem, and that a dirty little dog, is actually an adorable little cutie pie. And both have a lot of love to give.

"I think Ralph is a Christmas dog, and I think he's going to give himself to whoever he feels needs him the most." ??

?"Many thanks to GR friend Linda for this book recommendation. It was utterly delightful! Linda's review can be found here <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...?>

Linda Klager says

A delightful book! I love Christmas stories! An older woman named Betty was feeling low. She lived by herself and was getting irritated with a new neighbor and a dog that showed up. Betty and another neighbor both had bad thoughts about this new neighbor and their dislike for him. This led to much ill will between the 3 neighbors.

In the end Betty found the love of Christ and her Christmas became the best one ever. Oh, how I loved to hear this!

Staci says

Sweet Christmas story in which a dog brings together two family members and two neighbors.

Lisa Gatts says

I loved,loved,loved this book!!!! I love reading. With that said I also collect Kindle books.I am NEVER reading just 1 book at a time. Usually I have 5-6 books I read at once because I never know what type of mood I'm gonna be in or what will interest me at that moment.Once I started this book ththrough it totally held my attention from beginning to end."The Christmas Dog" just couldn't stop reading it. There is nothing not to like about this book.I LOVED LOVED LOVED it!!!(By the way have I told you how much I LOVED this book?)So the book is about a woman named Betty who has an eccentric neighbor. She is suspicious of this fella who moved in shortly after her previous neighbors (an older couple) passed away, around the same time. This new neighbor(Jack)moves in. Jack is not a very considerate neighbor. He plays loud music and operates his power tools at odd hours too.Then there is the fact that he is not a very responsible pet owner.She believes the brown scruffy dog that arrived about the same time he did deserves far better than Jack and she really wants to give him a piece of her mind. Betty also has a granddaughter Avery who went missing from her parent's house and suddenly shows up at her door.This story had lovable characters, and was truly a heartwarming Christmas tale.Actually this is the 1st Christmas book I have ever read and I am so glad I didn't miss it.Now what are y'all waiting for?Get your 1-click on hurry!!

♥ Sandi ♥ says

Cute book - quick read - during the Christmas season - reminding everyone to have faith and give the benfit of doubt to others. Centered around a Gramma living alone, her family, her neighbors and a stray mutt, that just keeps returning.
