



Bespoke: A Tiny Christmas Tale

Amanda Dykes

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Alternate cover edition for this edition.

A Secret. A Bicycle. A Promise...

While the elusive Secret Symphony of Giovanni St. John captivated the world's fascination, it left his daughter closed away in the Silent House – she, the one who holds the fullness of truth about the ninth symphony. Now Aria St. John is determined to not only break free of the loss that has defined her, but to honor her father through one final gift in his last days.

On the tiny Isle of Espoir, only one man can help in her quest: James Shaw, the village blacksmith... and the lost friend of her childhood. Will they be able to overcome the tragedy that separated them before it's too late?

The little tale that was born in hopes of sending a single real-life bicycle to a missionary in Asia, Bespoke was hidden away in the Espoir Archives after sharing the joy of funding nearly fifteen bicycles.

Bespoke: A Tiny Christmas Tale Details

Date : Published July 2015 (first published November 15th 2014)

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Author : Amanda Dykes

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From Reader Review Bespoke: A Tiny Christmas Tale for online ebook

Beth says

Famed composer Giovanni St. John's Secret Symphony captivated the world. His daughter Aria St. John knows the truth about the secret ninth symphony, as well as the loss that accompanies it. Determined to break free from the tragic loss she suffered years ago, Aria concocts a gift that will bring her healing and honor her father in the final days of his life. On the small Isle of Espior, only one person can help her – the village blacksmith and her once-treasure childhood friend. Can they come together to create this one last gift for her father, or will the loss of years ago come between them?

Imagine my intrigue when a short story that I presumed to be all about bicycles was also about music – symphonies, in fact, and the daughter of a famous composer, who has come home with her father toward the end of his life. The mystery of the ninth Secret Symphony in the prologue was soon eclipsed by the sheer sweetness and charm of Bespoke.

Shorter fiction is often tricky for me. Because of its brevity, sometimes I'm left feeling bereft of some key element that longer fiction provides. As a shorter piece, Bespoke hit the mark– enough is revealed about the characters to spark my interest and the resolution feels complete. I wanted to know more because of the beautiful writing, not because it lacked in any way.

Impressed by the ease and intelligent manner in which the story flowed, I couldn't help but be drawn into the lives of Aria and James, her friend from years ago. While there is a romantic note to the story, first and foremost, this little tale is full of hope about overcoming pain from the past and forgiveness that brings grace and healing when they are needed most.

Though this is set during Christmas, I think it can be enjoyed at any time. I will definitely be looking out for future work by Amanda, and I would be one happy reader if she ever publishes a full-length novel.

Kiersti says

Truly a treasure of a Christmas tale, Bespoke wheeled its way into my heart and nestled there to stay. James and Aria quickly became real to me--their heartaches, their hopes, the promise their story holds for healing and redemption of past wounds...not to go back to being the same as before, but to be remade into something new and even more beautiful from the ashes of the past. Such a picture of the way God redeems us and our world! Bespoke is a lyrical, tenderly moving novella I hope to come back to Christmas after Christmas, and Amanda Dykes truly a gifted storyteller. I hope we see more from her pen soon!

Regina Jennings says

Aria St. John was a child prodigy until an accident ended her career. Her father, a world-renowned conductor, has never recovered from her loss and struggles with his own place in the world... a world that places unbelievable demands on him.

When Aria and her father return to the Isle of Espoir, James Shaw is there to meet her. The local blacksmith and her childhood friend, James may possess the skills to bring Aria's song of healing to a triumphant finale.

Lyricaly written, this little story has a gentle pace, a rich setting and earnest, true characters. You will be glad you spent time with Aria and James and will be left watching for Amanda Dykes' next project.

Hope says

What a delightful surprise to find a Christian writer who is also a wordsmith. I was completely drawn into the story. But a randomly inserted Bible verse shows that Dykes is falling into the error of most CF authors (of putting crosses on shoes as opposed to making excellent shoes). I am surprised that I am one of the only reviewers who found the whole bicycle/music theme difficult to understand or appreciate. It seemed very contrived.

This story had tons of potential and I wish Ms. Dykes much success in her writing career.

Elizabeth says

This tiny story about music is quite possibly the quietest books I've ever read. I leaned in to hear every single word. Beautifully written.

Joleen says

Bespoke by [Amanda Dykes](#)

Characters

Giovanni St. John: symphony writer

Aria: his daughter

James Shaw: Village blacksmith

Location: Isle of Espoir, halfway between England and France

Bespoke means anything commissioned to a particular specification. It is also the name of the metalworks forge owned by James Shaw; no longer a foundry where a terrible accident occurred fifteen years before.

With Aria St. John's return to their small island James has to face that nightmare once again. But as *Silent Night* so eloquently encourages, with the dawn there's redeeming grace.

I think Amanda Dykes is rapidly rising as a favorite author for me. I've only read two very short stories by her, but I can tell she will do great things in the literary world. Her writing is expressive and powerful, not giving away too much so the reader is afforded the opportunity to weigh it's substance.

So much to ponder in so short a story. Loved it!

An aside: The name of the isle (Espoir) means *hope*...something all three main characters need. I love that the author allows us to discover that. (Pfffft...and now I undiscovered it!) ?

Jocelyn Green says

This novelette worked its way into my heart almost as soon as I began reading it. Brief enough to read in a few stolen moments during the busy Christmas season, the story has a depth and richness to it that left me surprisingly fulfilled and satisfied by "the end." The author writes with lyrical pen and heartfelt care for her characters and their tale. I found Bespoke to be a musical story rich with redemption. Amanda Dykes is an author to watch.

Olivia says

"Promises are for keeping, you know."

This is one of the best Christmas novellas I've read!! I've been disappointed by several I've read in the past couple years-they move too fast and are just downright cheesy. But this one was unique, fascinating, and believable despite its short length.

James and Aria are such lovely characters. Everything with the symphony, the bicycle, and a promise that must be kept from years gone by really made my day. It is completely clean-one kiss at the end-and brings to life many lessons.

A perfect story to read as Christmas nears!

Staci says

Sweet and unique Christmas novella.

I eagerly await a full length novel by this author. :-)

Brittany says

Beautiful writing! This is definitely a whimsical tale where bits and pieces of the past are slowly revealed as the current story plays out. Bespoke is also a fairly short tale, just right for a quick evening read during the cold winter months. I enjoyed this charming story and look forward to reading other works by this author.

Dana Michael says

Precious Christmas Story

I think this is the first story that I have read from this author and I was extremely impressed. It's a short story but it was so precious. It was about a daughter who had an accident as a little girl and enlisted the help of her

friend to make something special for her ailing father for Christmas. I enjoyed it so much and definitely recommend it.

Amber Stokes says

All the rumors you might have heard are true...this is a lovely little tale! Only a few characters are featured, and yet the author weaves their lives into a braid of tender emotion, loss, and hope. The setting is unique and described beautifully, definitely perfect for Christmas Eve dreams. And I love the inspiration behind it all: the desire to spread the deepest love through bicycles. It has my own wheels spinning, making me want to touch lives in unique ways with what I have right now.

Heidi Robbins (Heidi Reads...) says

This is such a sweet novella perfect for holiday reading. I quickly fell in love with the characters and was immersed in the story. Highly recommend!

Lori Benton says

A little story with a big heart, *Bespoke* captured me with its polished, intelligent prose and characters both winsome and layered, and held me in its spell with a poignant yearning—to uncover the painful secrets of the characters' past and see the unfolding of a future shining with the promise of joy. Amanda Dykes is a fresh voice in fiction and *Bespoke, A Tiny Christmas Tale* sings with a timeless song of rebirth.

Rachel McMillan says

As soon as I read this, I knew that it would become a Christmas tradition! Marrying the eerie beauty of classical composition with a quaint little town --just pitch-perfect ---and filled with snow, holly and hope, Dykes proves her craft with every poetical line.

Part love story, with fable-like essence and all faith and charity, "*Bespoke*" is that rare, cherished glimmery find that tastes like embers popping in a hearth and like the winnowed music of a crisp winter's night.

Radiant.

Love this author and her work and cannot wait for more.
