



The Mistletoe Effect

Cate Ashwood

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Although Christmas is his favorite time of year, all is not merry and bright for Danny Ellis. After being laid off and facing eviction, he's eager to make a fresh start. When a friend mentions an opportunity in Sin City, he packs up and heads west. Unfortunately, plans run awry when his truck breaks down a little more than halfway there and he's stranded in the cold with no money, nowhere to stay, and no way to get to Vegas.

'Tis the season, but not for Merrick Holland, who loves being a part of the community in the small town of Rowley Bridge. Christmas has been a little tainted since his father died three years ago, and when people start to deck the halls, he withdraws. When Merrick finds a man asleep inside his bakery one morning, rather than call the police, Merrick makes him a cup of coffee, and after hearing his story offers him a job and a place to stay.

The two men strike up an unlikely friendship, but with Christmas only three weeks away, could a little holiday magic bring them together??

The Mistletoe Effect Details

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From Reader Review The Mistletoe Effect for online ebook

Wax says

Cute and heartwarming (though slightly unbelievable) story about a rootless man traveling through town who finds a home. Honestly, I really did like the story and the characters, it was just too short to really get the best feel for them.

Tamika♥RBF MOOD♥ says

4.5 stars

Definitely one of my top reads this year!!! Call it the quintessential holiday read, Christmas read or straight sugary fluff, but what you won't do is call it bad. This was pure romance!! Sugary sweet amazing-ness for Danny & Merrick. I don't read many Cate Ashwood books, but I might start if they leave me happy and content!! My one downfall is that it isn't longer. I know, I ask for a lot from these authors, but this book could have been 50 pages longer, or Christmas never ends in Rowley Bridge for me.

This is Rowley Bridge in my mind!!

Danny is down on his luck. He's at rock bottom people, and just trying to drive cross country to Las Vegas for a job. Things don't go according to plan. His truck breaks down in this cute little picturesque town. It's Christmas in a few weeks, and having not eating a full meal in weeks Danny breaks into a bakery. Unbeknownst to him, it was the best thing he could have done in his whole life. I think meeting Merrick gave Danny more stability than he could ever know. Both guys are lonely, and have dealt with tragedy. At such a special time in the year, they both are dealing with internal strife. Ashwood popped my heart right open with these two. I love them from the first interaction to the last one. I am super happy with this book, and it's definitely put me in the baking mood!!!!

Merrick is such a great guy. I really appreciated him opening up his doors, arms, and heart to a complete stranger. It puts a little faith back in humanity for me. Everyone thinks Merrick hates Christmas, but in actuality the holiday is a reminder of his father's death a few years back. He doesn't hate it, but it brings sadness to his life. I think him meeting Danny was the best thing for him as well. His true nurturer side came out, and it allowed him to pick himself up and also got him back into the spirit of life. I really think him being with Danny also gave him reason to live again. He wasn't doing much but working, he didn't seem to have a social life at all, not even a pet. Hell, I expected a pet in a situation like this, but was surprised that he didn't have one.

I read this book in one sitting. I couldn't put it down, and maybe the ending was rushed. If anything, I'm a little peeved at that seeing as the rest of the book was gloriously paced. They fit together so well. I would not

mind seeing these two together again in the future. I think Cate did an amazing job with the atmosphere and characters. I will definitely shelf this on my comfort reads shelf, I can see myself grabbing this to make me happy in the future, or in a week. LOL. I highly recommend this book friends, really great holiday read!!!!

? Todd says

Every single thing about this one was just so *precious and perfect* . Too much so for my tastes.

I really wanted to / tried to enjoy this one more, but overall...

The biggest conflict was the truck breaking down and the rest of it **felt like powdered sugar-coated UST** to me, which I felt could've been covered in waaaaay fewer pages.

So at **around 2.75 **is-it-over-yet** stars**, this one was **not really for me**.

Catherine says

Well that was just the cutest! It left me with a smile on my face and my heart full of Christmas cheer. Okay, that could be the eggnog, but still...

Ele says

This was just lovely! **Warm, fuzzy, completely angst-free but with the right amount of feels.**

What we have here is a homeless guy who breaks into a bakery , and the bakery's owner who has sworn off Christmas. See how this could have easily been an angstfest? Except it wasn't. It was just...sweet. Like cookie glaze.

Danny is just passing through the town where Merrick lives, and his time is limited since there's a job opportunity waiting for him in Vegas. In the meantime, it doesn't hurt to stay and help the kind baker who gave him a temporary job, and a roof over his head.

I loved how Merrick isn't your typical holiday grinch who just loaths everything Christmas. Merrick is just having a hard time with this time of the year because it reminds him of his father's death. He's very pleased and happy when Danny brings the holiday spirit with him.

"...since Danny had come bursting into his life he found that Christmas felt less like a sad

celebration, like Danny had taken his tarnished heart and made it new again. Christmas felt new again."

I loved the quiet times the men spent together in the middle of the night getting to know each other, baking, or icing cookies!

And right where I thought that the angst was about to make an appearance...well, it didn't. The "resolution" was sweet, honest, and swoon worthy.

This is very much insta-lovey which usually isn't my cuppa, but hey....it's Christmas!

Recommended for a sexy, sweet and angst-free Christmas read.

~Review cross-posted on Gay Book Reviews.~

Susan says

3.25 stars

A cute Christmas story.

Danny is driving to Las Vegas to get a job, when his car breaks down. He hasn't slept or eaten in days, so when he accidentally finds out the door to the little town's bakery is open, he sneaks in. After he eats some cookies he falls asleep on the couch.

This is how Merrick, the owner of the bakery, finds him the next day. Merrick sees a young man in desperate need of a break, so he offers him a place to stay and a job.

The two become fast friends, and it's not long before the sexual tension is getting to be too much for them...

These guys were adorable. I especially liked Danny. He felt young and carefree, despite his hard life.

I did notice that some things didn't quite add up in this story. Like how Danny hasn't eaten in several days, except for the cookies he found, but can immediately work the entire day without fainting. Or that Danny hasn't showered in days, but he is not in a hurry to get clean and change out of his clothes at all. I would think at least Merrick would tell Danny to get clean instead of having him bake cookies all day.

But other than that, this was a lovely feel-good holiday read.

Ami says

Danny is stranded in the small town of Rowley Bridge on his way to Vegas for his new job after his car dies on him. Hungry, broke, and cold, Danny breaks into a bakery, Mabel, and eats the gingerbread cookies. In

the beginning he plans to leave before the owner comes. Unfortunately too tired, Danny ends up sleeping there (holding the cookie jar!) and that's how Merrick (the owner) finds him in the morning. Instead of reporting the cookie bandit (haha) to the police, Merricks offers Danny a temporary job until Christmas, so he can have enough money to go to Vegas.

We know how *THAT* ends up *lol*

I loved this one. I loved the younger Danny, who despite not really living his dream life, doesn't let himself down and can still brings back the magic of Christmas to Merrick. And I loved gruff Merrick, who is willing to open his home (and later his heart) to give Danny a chance. Plus this is also rather slow-burn, they don't immediately work on their sexual attraction so I enjoyed everything that builds up until that first kiss.

It is definitely a perfect holiday story -- it has all the ingredients: being stranded in a snow, an idyllic small town with kind and welcoming people (and their Christmas lights!!), getting back the Christmas spirit, and a kiss under the mistletoe.

If only Ashwood adds one more chapter, like an Epilogue, maybe the next year Christmas to see how Danny and Merrick's are celebrating their Christmas tradition and first year anniversary, I will be so much happier ^^

Sigh. I love holiday romance this time of year.

Eugenia says

Hot and sugary! 3.5 Stars.

A not-quite wholesome Christmas treat. Zero angst, lots of calories. A quickie novella to curl up with regardless of the weather.

~☆~Dœni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~☆~ says

~4.5~

This book is a warm chocolate chip cookie. It's a shot of Kahlúa in your coffee. It's a heated blanket and fluffy pillows and a kiss. It's pure romance.

Forget the angst. *The Mistletoe Effect* drips with sweetness and holiday feels.

Danny has nothing but a few bucks to his name when his truck breaks down in a small Colorado town. Danny's heading to Vegas for work, but he's cold and hungry and the bakery looks so inviting. Danny eats all the cookies and falls asleep in a comfy chair. That's how Merrick finds him.

The rest is adorable moments of the men baking and laughing together. Danny brings the Christmas spirit back to Merrick's life.

This story made me happy. It made me believe in love at first sight. There was enough sexy to balance out the sweet, and no drama—NONE.

I'm rounding down because the ending was a little abrupt (still a tentative HEA though).

***J* Too Many Books Too Little Time says**

4.25 Stars!

This one jumped up to my second favorite holiday read, hitting pretty close to being my favorite. Here are my top 3 as of now:

Walking on Thin Ice
The Mistletoe Effect
Kiss and Ride

Cate Ashwood is a favorite author of mine for sure.

This one was just what I come to expect in a holiday read.

Sweet
Angst-free
Made me smile
Full of holiday cheer
With a bit of spice ;)

Liam Elliot says

I don't know why I'm reading Christmas books. We haven't even hit pumpkin spice season yet. Although that probably makes me more favorably disposed toward them. Honestly, by the time Christmas actually happens every year, I'm like, couldn't we just do Halloween twice? Pretty please?

This was *adorable*.

There's very little conflict. There's no angst. There could have been, because both characters have had a rough time, but it's basically just sugar cookies, rainbows, and lollipops as far as the eye can see. Or I suppose that should be gingerbread cookies, twinkle lights, and candy canes. Ugh. I think this book put me in the Christmas spirit. *shudder* Quick, someone get me a Voinov book so I can rid myself of this pesky optimism and faith in humanity I seem to have accidentally acquired.

Bottom line, if you're looking for something short and too sweet, this is it. Just be prepared to have the urge to decorate cookies or trees and drink hot chocolate afterward. *YOU'VE BEEN WARNED*

Sheri says

If you require ALL the happy in your holiday stories, this one has you covered. It's bursting with good feelings and you just know everything is going to be okay. It begins with a stumble as Danny finds himself in a sticky predicament. He was clinging to the end of his rope and the last thread finally snapped. He's stranded in the middle of nowhere on his way to a fresh start in the Sin City. Hungry and cold, he slips in the backdoor of a charming bakery in the small town he's stuck in. When the owner catches him asleep with the crumbs of his crime next him, he surprises them both by offering him a job.

The holiday season is Merrick's busiest time of year and he could use an extra pair of hands. Danny starts helping at the bakery straightaway and things quickly fall into place. Instantly they realize they fit quite well together. Merrick is lonely and still recovering from the loss of his father. He has his bakery and he lives and loves his job. Danny has a natural artistic gift he's given up hope of utilizing. When Merrick gives him an opportunity to let his creativity flow, he opens a dam inside Danny. When the time comes, Danny doesn't want to go but how can he stay? This was only a temporary detour to the wonders awaiting him...right? Sometimes luck takes us exactly where we are meant to be but it takes courage to seize the possibilities of 'what if'. And if a traditional sprig of green allows that burst of bravery, bring on the mistletoe!

What's to like: Smooth writing with clean editing delivers a lovely holiday story. Happenstance meeting turns into an easy friendship, which in turn becomes a fragile romance. I really enjoyed the slow and steady build of their relationship. Nothing felt forced, it was a pleasant and enjoyable ride. There are times when that is exactly what I'm looking; when I don't want to hold my breath or grab the tissues. It was sweet and tender and left me with a bright smile on my face and what's not to like about that?

What's to love: I love it when two people bring out the best in each other. Those wonderful qualities that have always been there but needed a catalyst to bring them forward. Danny is depressed and ashamed of what little things he owns. Merrick reminds him that most of our best assets are not *things*. Danny is brilliant and sparkles when he allows himself to shine. Merrick gives him the nudge he needs. When Merrick's father passed away all of the lights dimmed in his world. He never realized how deeply it changed him until Danny gave him a priceless gift. Now, if he can only convince him to stay maybe he can return the favor.

Beware of: Sugary and sweet. If you are searching for any turmoil, move along. Since this novella is fairly short, things flow quickly. I didn't have any complaints with the speed of their relationship but be aware that it's swift.

This book is for: The hopeless romantic that believes in fate and has a sweet spot for the power of a mistletoe kiss.

4 stars

Book UNfunk

Elena says

2.5 stars

I'm starting to think I'm too cynic to enjoy sugar-sweet Christmas stories.

I gave it the benefit of the doubt when Merrick decided to offer Danny a job after Danny broke in and fell asleep in his bakery; I chalked it up to Christmas spirit when he brought Danny home the same day he met him; then a few days later Danny asked Merrick to borrow his truck without any further explanation and disappeared for hours and it didn't even cross Merrick's mind that Danny could have stolen his truck or something. Not that Danny had done it, but you'd think Merrick could have considered the possibility, at

least for one second.

There was nothing realistic about this story and I know realism wasn't the point but, like I said, I might not be wired to appreciate this kind of books.

R * A Reader Obsessed * says

3 Sugary Stars

Well that was definitely sugary sweet and all things nice.

Down on his luck Danny has been granted a huge reprieve, despite breaking and entering a bakery. Surprisingly, he's not arrested for that, plus eating too many cookies. Instead, he's fortuitously offered a job and shelter to get back on his feet so he can get to his new job in Vegas.

Though the holidays serve only to remind Merrick of what he's lost, he still embraces the meaning of Christmas, as it boosts his generosity and sympathy towards Danny. Luckily during his busiest time of the year, Danny's a fast learner and has a flare for decorating. It doesn't hurt that he's nice and cute too.

Of course Merrick and Danny hit it off, as they bake their way through the holiday rush. In a few short weeks, they both realize what they've been missing and only wish that things could be more. Could it really be that simple?? Yes. Yes it can.

With barely a smidge of turmoil, this was easy, feel good, with a nice dash of sexy. Merry Christmas!

books_and_brew says

So cute! Loved this Christmas themed story :)

On to the next!
