



Merry Ex-Mas

Sheila Roberts

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Christmas in Icicle Falls...

Cass Wilkes, owner of the Gingerbread Haus bakery, was looking forward to her daughter Danielle's wedding?until Dani announced that she wants her father, Cass's ex, to walk her down the aisle. Seriously? Even worse, it appears that he, his trophy wife and their yappy little dog will be staying with Cass....

Her friend Charlene Albach arrives at their weekly chick-flick night in shock. She's just seen the ghost of Christmas past: her ex-husband, Richard, who left a year ago when he ran off with the hostess from her restaurant, Zelda's. Now the hostess is history and he wants to kiss and make up. Hide the mistletoe!

And bring out the hot buttered rum, because the holidays aren't easy for Ella O'Brien, either. Ella, newly divorced, is still sharing the house with her ex while they wait for the place to sell. The love is gone. *Isn't it?*

But watch as Christmas brings all kinds of surprises....

Merry Ex-mas, ladies!

Merry Ex-Mas Details

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From Reader Review Merry Ex-Mas for online ebook

Gail says

I love the people in Icicle Falls. The book was a fast paced and enjoyable read. It had a few twists and turns in it that I hadn't expected. I loved the video on UTube and I can relate to Jake's problems. I loved the ending and can't wait for spring for the next book in the series. Thanks again Sheila for a wonderful book. This is an amazing book. One that you will want to read every Christmas. Sheila has a way of telling it like it is. She will make you laugh and make you cry. You can never go wrong with a book by Sheila Roberts. Get yourself a copy of any of her books and you will love them all.

April says

Imagine spending the festive holiday season with someone you despise – or at least thought you despised – you Ex-husband. Ummm, not so fun. That is what Cass Wilkes, Charlene Albach and Ella O'Brien find themselves dealing with this season. Each woman's story is very different, however, and their close friendship is a soothing and healing balm as each works through their personal demons to find that light at the end of the dying, dead Christmas tree tunnel.

Sheila Roberts has long since been one of my absolute favorite authors. Her stories are amazing in the fact that with each one, her characters are like real-life friends. Each time I read one of her tales, I feel as though I am sitting at a cozy kitchen nook with a hot cup of coffee, fresh from the oven coffee cake, covered in cinnamon, sugar and lots of gooey icing and chatting with old friends. I am struck with how "at home" I feel with the stories and the characters that she creates. I especially cannot miss one of her holiday stories; they are essential to kicking of the season for me.

In Merry Ex-Mas, we meet three very different women. Cass, whose daughter has decided to get married on Christmas and include Cass's ex-husband in on the big day; Charley (Charlene) whose cheating ex-husband re-enters the picture, claiming that he would more or less sell his soul if only Charley would take him back; and Ella who is sharing a house with her ex-husband until it sells and who cannot seem to shake her attraction and affection for her ex. Along with the main characters, there are several secondary characters that play a very important role within the story as well. Though I enjoyed each of the characters, I found myself really loving Ella, even at the times that I wanted to tell her to cut the mama cord. She is young and truly thought she found her soul mate, until her mother decided to plant a little seed of suspicion, leading to her divorce to inspiring country singer, Jake. The chemistry that these two have is amazing and I truly loved the interaction between them. Cass I was torn with.

While I really liked her, there were a few times when I wanted to yell at her to not be quite so self-focused. That is not to say that she was a complete self-absorbed witch, which is the furthest thing from the truth. She just had a few, shall we say...issues. Charley was an ambitious woman who tries desperately to close her heart and keep it safe. It was her story that had me bouncing around emotionally and never knowing exactly where I stood.

With the three stories interwoven together, the transitions from each woman's point of view were seamless and perfect. From the first page, I quickly found myself engrossed within the story and found it very difficult to put the book down for any reason – including a little thing known as sleep, lol. Another aspect of Merry Ex-Mas that I loved was the fact the each of the characters ran a shop/business within the town of Icicle Falls: Ella, a clothing boutique; Cass a bakery, and Charley a restaurant. Each person playing a vital part of the day-to-day running in this lovely little town.

Oh! Did I mention that there are also recipes included in the back of the book?! Mmmm...yummy recipes that are used within the story itself. My favorite is Cass's Red Velvet Cupcakes! I cannot wait to give this a whirl – as well as an in-depth taste test!!

If you are looking for an amazing novel that has a touch of the Holidays and a lovely cozy feel to it, Merry Ex-Mas is one not to miss!! I do want to mention that this is the second book in "Life in Icicle Falls" series, however it is easily a standalone read. The characters in the first book, Better Than Chocolate also appear in Merry Ex-Mas, however they are part of the secondary cast and you will never feel as though you are jumping in the middle of something and feeling lost. Sheila Roberts has an amazing and true gift for storytelling and I anxiously await her next novel!

Hsiau Wei says

This book tell the story of three women; Charlie, Cass and Ella who is besties in life who is struggling with their own personal matters. Charlie is separated from her husband when she found him having an affairs with her previous restaurant manager found that her husband is back in her life albeit "forcefully" asking for her forgiveness and another chance. Cass' daughter is getting married and wanted her Daddy to walk her down the aisle which Cass found a little too hard to take in given that her ex husband is mostly an absentee father most of her daughter' childhood years. Not enough of that, as the B&B is fully booked, she is being put in a very difficult position to have her ex husband in the house together with his trophy wife. Ella on the other hand, is still living with her ex husband. Jake after their divorce as they are short of money and neither party is willing to pay for the share of the other half for the house that they are sharing. Ella, who is still in denial of her feeling for Jake, is determined to sell their house and split the proceeds so that they can move on. But deep down, she is not ready and so is Jake.

This book tell the story of heartbreak and second chance... about love and family in the spirit of Christmas. I like the main characters in this book very much. To be truthful, they are very lovable what with their faults and not. I felt the coziness in me while reading this book and the author has truly delivered a book that is really suitable for the season.

Heidi says

For three women in Icicle Falls, the holiday season isn't exactly starting out with a strong dose of holiday cheer and love. Cass' Thanksgiving starts with her daughter's announcement that she is engaged and planning to have her wedding on Christmas Day. Dani's hastened nuptials mean that guests may not find accommodations in the small town, and the last thing Cass wants is to have her ex-husband and his new bimbo wife staying at her home. Charley has put the pieces of her life back together after her husband cheated on her with one of their restaurant employees. She has a successful restaurant with tasty home cooking and loyal customers. When her ex-husband unexpectedly shows up asking for another chance, her head says no but her heart wavers. Ella and Jake are still young and their marriage that was supposed to last forever is over thanks to Ella's meddlesome mom and accusations that Jake was cheating. The pair are now divorced but forced to live in the same house while it is on the market, as neither can afford to make a house payment and rent. The problem is that living together is stressful and neither is willing to accept the fact that perhaps they made a mistake. As the holiday season approaches, the three women must come to terms with their ex-husbands. Can the holiday season be saved or will bad feelings and exes derail the good will and cheer?

What I Liked:

*The setting, Icicle Falls, drew me into this novel. I like reading books that feature a cozy small town setting with close friends and a warm and inviting atmosphere. Ms. Roberts' fictional town is just the right place. It has appealing shops with names like: Gingerbread Haus Bakery, The Breakfast Haus, Zelda's Restaurant and The Gilded Lily (clothing store). These small stores are run by the main characters and they are those eclectic and delightful shops that you love to pop in and browse. There is just something perfect about a small town where everyone knows everyone that makes you smile.

*I enjoyed the three stories. Each woman is struggling with a different aspect when it comes to her ex. Cass has spent years resenting her ex-husband, Mason, for not being there when they were married and then not being there once they split. While he is good about sending the child support, she feels that she has shouldered the burden of rearing their three kids on her own. Now that her daughter's wedding preparations are in full swing, she is angered by the thought of him not stepping up to help with the expense, even though she doesn't ask, and then she is angry when he does pitch in and buy the wedding dress she is mad that he is stealing her thunder. Obviously, she has a lot of unresolved issues. Charley, too, is furious with her husband for cheating on her and then when he pops back in begging for another chance she starts to consider taking him back, but what if his intentions are not what they seem? Ella and Jake are a case of poor communication and misunderstanding. They are a couple torn apart by a meddling mother in law and they both put their pride ahead of their relationship. Each woman is at a different point in her life grappling with a marital struggle. While a good portion of the book is not particularly uplifting because there is a lot of anger and resentment, I liked that it portrayed real women dealing with real relationship issues.

*As I mentioned, there is a lot of negativity in the book, but I like that in the end the important things come to light and the women realize the value of good friends, family, love and communication. You don't get to choose your family sometimes, and in laws can be especially problematic, but in the end what matters is family and friends. I liked that this book brought forth this positive message and ended with a warm feel good tone.

*I loved at the end that there were some tasty recipes included!

And The Not So Much:

*I picked this one up expecting fluffy read throughout, so I was a bit disappointed to find there was quite a bit of negativity and conflict. I didn't particularly enjoy experiencing each woman's bitter resentment toward her ex-husband but, on the other hand, it was very realistic. There was a lot of bickering and some out and out fights with rude hand gestures and such. Needless to say, all of these bad feelings put a bit of a damper on my feel good holiday read.

*This book features numerous view points, and I had a bit of trouble keeping everyone straight in the beginning. I also did not like the way the voices shifted. The view point would change from one paragraph to another with nothing to indicate the switch. I was reading an ARC copy so perhaps the final copy had something in place to indicate the changing of narrator's such as a small symbol or something. For my read, though, the sudden shifts were a bit jarring and it took a few sentences sometimes to realize that the focus had moved to another character.

*I was frustrated to find that Charley's story didn't have a happy ending. It is kind of left hanging and there was indication that her story would continue in another volume, but I wanted for her to have a bit more closure and good feelings at the end. I liked, though, that this book stays realistic. I kind of expected for all the woman to find love again or get back with their ex-husbands since this was a Christmas read, but it holds true to reality. Sometimes people aren't meant to be together and it is best to establish good will and move on. This book has some happy love stories and in other cases a coming to terms with the past and looking forward to a more positive future.

Merry Ex Mas was a good solid read that portrayed real women dealing with the fall out of ruined marriages. Even though there was more negativity than I was hoping for in my holiday read, it maintained a true to life format and focused on women coming to terms with their anger and bitterness. I think picking this up at anytime during the year other than when you are in the mood for an uplifting holiday book would make it a better read. It does feature a wonderful cozy setting and strong friendships. In the end, this book is a reminder to appreciate the importance of love, friends and family. So if you are looking for a book that is

completely light and fluffy and has a feel good tone throughout, Merry Ex Mas may not be the right book for this holiday season, but if you want a read that deals with the difficulties that ensue when a marriage dissolves you should read this one.

Favorite Quotations:

"Exes were a part of life. She'd put on her big-girl panties and cope."

"Really, Ella, you can't decorate in Early American Garage Sale. What will people think?"

"I know he looked as innocent as a man going to the bank in a ski mask."

"Food. It was the centerpiece of life. From dinners of state to family gatherings, sharing food was an essential part of human connection. And it was the spice of love."

"There was no recipe for a perfect family, though. Unlike flour, sugar, butter and eggs, people were unpredictable and often uncooperative."

"She was going to bang her head on it until her brains feel out. Brains for dinner, hahahaha."

I received a copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. I was not compensated for my review and all opinions expressed are my own.

Posted@Rainy Day Ramblings.

Victoria says

1) Ok, so Cass, with the daughter getting married, surprise, 3 weeks to plan! First, tell your daughter that with 3 weeks to plan, THERE WILL BE COMPROMISES, and also the budget isn't what it could be because THREE WEEKS TO PLAN. Second, slap your bratty daughter across the face the first time she complains that you can't make a wedding appear out of your ass. Third, if you can't afford a wedding and your evil rich ex-husband can, then FREAKING TALK TO HIM and don't bitch both when he doesn't and when he DOES pay for things. Fourth, if your daughter decides to get married with three weeks notice because ah mah gaaaahd my boyfriend is moving like 45 minutes away? SUGGEST LIVING IN SIN.

2) Girl with the country "maybe he'll make it this year" singer ex-husband? Ew, girl, ew. He was awful. But apparently you like that sort of thing. If a man ever sang to me, I would be running far, far away ala Forrest Gump.

3) Girl with the burned-down restaurant or whatever - you were barely even IN the story, and your ex-husband was obviously evil / dumb / not gonna happen from the beginning, so whatever.

Sarah says

3 Stars

I enjoyed it more than the 1st book in the series. I did find Danni, the bride to be a bit on the demanding side and I felt there were a few too many storylines going on. But I did like most of it and I do plan to continue with the series.

Challenges:

♥ Candyland Quarterly Challenge - Task #17. Lollipop Woods – A forest of rainbow lollipops, which resemble trees. Read a book with a colorful cover or a LGBT book

♥ Anti-Stress Holiday Challenge #5

♥ AMMP Rocking Around The Christmas Tree - Challenge #15. Frosty the Snowman - Read a Main Page
Genre: Fantasy or book with magical elements; OR a book where one of the words in the title ends with "Y."

Gail Hollingsworth says

If you love small town America, especially at Christmas, you'll truly love reading Merry Ex-Mas. Set in the fictional town of Icicle Falls, this story follows 3 women and their interactions with Ex-husbands during the Christmas season. Cass is the town baker and she is planning her daughters Christmas wedding, baking her wedding cake and housing her Ex-husband and his new young bride because all the hotels are booked. Her friend Charlene is dealing with her Ex back in town wanting to get back together after he ran off with another woman. Add to the mix Ella who is divorced but still living with her Ex while they try to sell their house and you have a delightful mix of fun, trials but best of all humor! I was drawn to the premise of this book because at one time my husband's Ex stayed with us overnight because of a family crisis. You will enjoy reading the stories of these women and following along with how each situation resolves. I enjoy EVERY book I read written by Sheila Roberts. She writes with a great sense of humor and best of all continues the stories of the characters of Icicle Falls in several of her books.

Marcia Haskell says

"Christmas in Icicle Falls... Between Yuletide traditions, winter sports and mistletoe hanging everywhere, Christmas is the best time of year in Icicle Falls, Washington. But this year it's not so merry-for three of its residents, anyway.

Cass Wilkes, owner of the Gingerbread Haus bakery, was looking forward to her daughter, Danielle's, wedding...until Dani announced that she wants her father, Cass's ex, to walk her down the aisle. Seriously? And, since every B and B is full, it looks like he, his trophy wife and their yappy little dog will be staying with Cass.

Her friend Charlene Albach arrives at their weekly chick-flick night in shock. She's just seen the ghost of Christmas past: her ex-husband, Richard, who left her a year ago, running off with the hostess from her restaurant, Zelda's, to start a new life (and restaurant) in Seattle. Now the hostess is history and he wants to kiss and make up. Hide the mistletoe!

And bring out the hot buttered rum, because the holidays aren't so easy for Ella O'Brien, either. Ella, who's newly divorced, is still sharing the house with her ex while they wait for the place to sell, and they are still fighting over all the things they fought over when they were married. The love is gone. Isn't it?

But Christmas has a way of working its magic. One of these women is about to rediscover love, another is going to remember what's important in life and the third will find a new dream in the new year. Merry Ex-mas, ladies!

Between Yuletide traditions, winter sports and mistletoe hanging everywhere, Christmas is the best time of year in Icicle Falls, Washington. But this year it's not so merry-for three of its residents, anyway."

THIS REVIEW IS INCOMPLETE

☆?♥☆ Unsolved Mystery ☆♥?☆ says

4.5! Ohh, so close to a 5 star!

Two things that threw it off. It was *almost* perfect.

Ian says

3.5 Stars

Three divorced women face a difficult Christmas.

Cass's daughter is getting married and she wants her father to walk her down the aisle. The same man who has been an absentee father for more than a decade. When he swoops in with his check book and his young and beautiful wife, Cass faces feelings of jealousy and inadequacy.

Ella is living in the same house with her ex-husband. She wants to just sell the house and get on with her life but is struggling with her feelings for a man she still loves. A man who insists he never cheated on her despite evidence to the contrary.

Charley's ex-husband cheated on her, took her money and set up house with the other woman. Now he's back asking for forgiveness and a second chance.

Merry Ex-Mas is a short and sweet Christmas novel. It doesn't particularly do anything new, it's not a challenging read but it does follow the one cardinal rule of Christmas books. It has an optimistic and upbeat message. It's a light and entertaining book.

Kaye says

Icicle Falls, Washington, is home to three divorced women; talented strong women in their own right. They've all been hurt by their ex-husbands but are now moving on. Well, for the most part moving on.

Ella, who was sure her husband Jake was cheating on her, jumped into divorcing him. He's still living in their house for financial reasons. He's hoping to make his big break into Nashville with his songwriting. Ella's sure she just wants their house to sell so they can move on. She's even starting to see another man but the magic of Christmas time, a little bit of eggnog and a very persuasive Jake might have her re-thinking her position. Jake and Ella were my favorite characters!

Charlene, "Charley" to her friends, definitely wants nothing to do with her Ex, Richard but when he shows up in town all remorseful and making a huge effort to get her back, Charley starts thinking maybe he has changed. Leopards can change their spots. It is possible, right?

Cass, mother to three kids and owner of The Gingerbread Haus bakery has enough to do just to keep the business running, take care of things at home and deal with her still simmering disgust at her ex hubby and his new trophy wife. When their daughter, Danni, announces her engagement at Thanksgiving and sets the wedding date for the weekend before Christmas, Cass is just about undone with worry. As if that weren't enough, Danni wants her father to walk her down the aisle. It's not like he's been there for her for years. It annoys Cass that her Ex can seem to pick and choose what to do as a father. To top that off, Danni wants him, his new wife and his mother and sister to stay with Cass. They will all have to come up with a way to get through the festivities without killing each other or some having a big blow-up.

I enjoyed the story, the three strong women and the rest of the characters, the setting and the realistic dialogue. Roberts did a good job with her themes of love, forgiveness and finding out that family is indeed the most important thing of all. This was my first experience with Sheila Roberts and I'm sure it won't be the last. 4****

Disclosure: A review copy of the book was provided by Netgalley/Harlequin MIRA in exchange for my honest opinion.

Donna McBroom-Theriot says

The minute I read the title of the book, I knew it had to be a great book. Merry Ex-Mas? I wasn't disappointed. Having long been a fan of Ms. Roberts, I expected no less than a great story and she delivered it - on a Christmas Platter.

“Once in a while, if a woman is really lucky, the perfect day she envisioned turns out to be just that.”

What I liked about the book? I loved the town's name – Icicle Falls. And, just as you'd expect, the places in the town follow suit, Gingerbread Haus Bakery, Zelda's, and Breakfast Haus (pancakes). Ms. Roberts paints a picturesque town that comes to life as you are transported to the town through her words. The cover of the book is also captivating.

“...ex-husband. That man, that self-centered, undeserving rat who'd tried to lure the kids away this weekend with a trip to Vail, who...No, no. No thoughts about...”

The author creates family drama that leaves you laughing and crying. Imagine a close-knit town, with a close circle of women friends, either unmarried or divorced, all with exes. Imagine again, the drama that ensues when they all show up on the prospective doorsteps of their women, hoping to woo them back. All over town, doors can be heard slamming, words being yelled, drinks flying, dishes breaking. Just thinking back to the scenes makes me laugh.

“...hard with her ex-husband strutting around town, pretending to be the world's best dad. It was going to be hard to greet his bimbo trophy wife with good cheer. And she didn't even want to think about dealing with her ex-mother- and sister-in-law.”

And, in the midst of all the chaos, a daughter announces her engagement and plans a wedding, complete with her mom's ex and his bimbo wife being guests at her house. Throw in some dog poop, and ice falling off roofs on to guests and the excitement begins. And, once it begins, you just never know where it will end.

“...kitchen when a cold gust of wind blew in the door. She looked up to see who the latecomer was and

received a shock that made her heart jump and the tray slip from her hands, sending dishes and glasses to shatter on the floor. Oh, no. It couldn't be..."

What I didn't like about the book? Well, it ended (stomping feet here). I need more – as in another book.

"We brought vitamin C," Samantha said, handing over a holiday box of Sweet Dreams Chocolates. Chocolate, the other Vitamin C, and a girl's best friend. "This takes care of me. I don't know what the rest of you are having," Cash joked."

From a technical standpoint? The book boasts a wonderful winter wonderland of a town with great, well developed characters and plot lines The book had a great beginning and had plenty of excitement throughout to keep you guessing and turning the pages, before it wrapped up nicely – but leaving you wanting more.

"Food. It was the centerpiece of life. From dinners of state to family gatherings, sharing food was an essential part of human connection. And it was the spice of love. How could you not fall in love when you were gazing across the table at someone?"

Merry Ex-Mas is full of chaos, love, laughter, betrayal, and tears; and we all know that makes for a fantastic read!

Angela Holland says

I have not read the first Icicle Falls book yet but it is not stop me from reading this one nor did I feel lost. As with the other two books I have read of Sheila's so far I enjoyed this one as well. There were times I did not want to put it down, times I got mad at a character because they would not wake-up so to speak, and even found myself smiling at something that happened in the story. Sheila has a way a writing that you feel at home in the town and with the characters she is writing about. I like how she takes the real problems her characters are having and turns it around in the end for a nice ending. Things may not always turn out the way you want them to but Sheila has a way of showing you how to make the best of it. This was a fun holiday read and I am happy I got the chance to read it. I look forward to reading the rest of Sheila's books I have on my shelf. I highly recommend this and all of Sheila's books to you for you to read and enjoy.

Anna says

Icicle Falls, Washington is an idyllic town that draws tourists for the Christmas holiday. It keeps the shop owners busy meeting their demands. For Cass Wilkes, owner of Gingerbread Haus Bakery, she is extra busy with the announcement her daughter wants to be married right before Christmas. And to top it off, she wants her father, Cass's ex-husband, to walk her down the aisle. Cass tries tries to put on a good front, not wishing to disappoint her daughter, but dreads socializing with her ex and his trophy wife. Ella O'Brien, who runs her mother's clothing shop, is still sharing a home with her ex-husband until they find a buyer for what was once their dream home. They still have feelings for each other, but can't seem to get past the hurts they've bestowed upon one another. Charlene Albough, owner of Zelda's Restaurant, is shocked when her ex-husband shows up begging for forgiveness and a second chance. They divorced when he left her to move to Seattle with the hostess of her restaurant. Can Cass, Ella and Charlene find joy and new beginnings this Christmas?

A light, fun Christmas story with quirky, likeable characters who made me want to visit Icicle Falls.

Anna's Herding Cats says

Reviewed for herding cats & burning soup. (posting 12/4)

Amazon: <https://amzn.to/2KGVaDO>

Ahhh! I wanted a warm fuzzy Christmas comfort read. Merry Ex-Mas was not it. It was a bit depressing, really. It was my first from Roberts and while I didn't hate it I really didn't love it either.

The Gist: A group of girlfriends who have been unlucky in love are having to deal with their ex-s. One ex coming back for their daughter's wedding (with new wife in tow), one ex wanting a second chance, and a young couple recently divorced and wondering if they've been too hasty.

Overall I liked the ladies. They have some real shitty people in their lives, though. From exes to parents to kids who take advantage. It made me sad for them. And I really wished they would stand up for themselves and tell everyone to fuck right off with their assholeishness. But I did like that the ladies had each other. That they cared and supported each other even when it hurt. A nice support system.

There were a lot of characters. The three main ladies dealing with their exes but also a handful more of their friends who were part of "the club". Then families. It was a lot to keep track of and while I felt for the ladies and their struggles there were so many storylines and so many characters that I didn't really get attached to any of them in particular.

I didn't hate it, though. It was an easy read and I kept coming back to see what would happen next so there's that. And it was a quick read taking me less than 24 hours for a decent sized book. So I'd be willing to read more from the series, I think. Hopefully one that's a little more uplifting.

And just a note for authors everywhere. "Vegetarians" who eat fish aren't really vegetarians to begin with but they're called pescatarian. Not fishatarians. Please, yall. Please. lol
