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*A story from the Dreamspinner Press 2017 Advent Calendar collection **Stocking Stuffers**.*

Dear Ruth,

I'm not in the mood for Christmas. After a romantic relationship went up in flames, I returned to my hometown in rural Kansas. Then my mother passed away. I'm really busy with my job as fire marshal—and now with my mother's advice column, which I reluctantly took over. There's a sexy newcomer down the street, a guy with a young daughter and an unfortunate disregard for fire safety. He seems to want to be friends, but that creates problems that may be too hot for me to handle. The last things I need right now are flammable holiday decorations and too much holiday food. How am I supposed to give good advice to others when I can't seem to get my own life straight?

—Bah Humbug in Bailey Springs

Dear Ruth (2017 Advent Calendar Daily - Stocking Stuffers) Details

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Author : Kim Fielding

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From Reader Review Dear Ruth (2017 Advent Calendar Daily - Stocking Stuffers) for online ebook

Lissa says

This story was cute. I don't normally associate Kim Fielding with "cute" - oh yeah, she definitely has emotional moments in her stories, but usually her stories are so full of angst and drama. And that...was missing here. Maybe it's because I always have such high expectations from Kim Fielding (some of her books are on my favorites shelf, and I am extremely picky about my favorites shelf!), but this story just left me wanting more.

It was a good story. I liked the main characters. I liked that it was set in Kansas (which almost never happens in fiction). But that emotional connection that I almost always make with Kim's stories just wasn't there for me this time.

Like I said, it was cute - quite cute, actually, and I did enjoy reading it. But I wanted more. ;)

Eli Easton says

This is a fun Christmas romance. I loved how serious and clueless Bryce was, and how focused on his fireman responsibilities. "You want me to check the vent on your oven?" . As always with Kim Fielding, the story is well-written and endearing. What a great start to the Dreamspinner Advent Calendar for 2017.

Optimist ?King's Wench? & MANTIES Champion says

Unicorn Gang Bang Jizzmas Review!

You have one of those authors that every time you read something by them you feel a sense of relief that *someone* (ANYONE!) else shares your perceptions of the world? Maybe even makes you feel validated somehow? *That's* how Kim Fielding's writes make me feel.

This story wasn't overly Santa jizzy but it was poignant. It also hit that "making your own family" sweet spot of mine and I loved how it was formatted with each chapter having a Dear Ruth letter at the beginning. As a regular reader of Dear Prudie the advice column angle drew me in and I found myself increasingly invested in Bryce and Noah's tale and wondering if either would take the sage advice.

If you like a quaint and charming holiday story set in a small town "Dear Ruth" is just the right level of sweetness.

A review copy was provided.

Susan says**3.5 stars**

Awww, this was cute.

Bryce is a fireman in a small town. He's not quite sure what he's still doing in the little town since his mom just passed away. But he seems to be attached to the people now. When one of his mother's friends asks him to take over his mother's 'Dear Ruth' column, Bryce doesn't know what to say. Who would want advice from a 38 year old gay man?

Well, it turns out he is quite good at giving people advice, so the column is a success once again. It helps that no one knows who Ruth is these days.

When Bryce meets Noah and his cute daughter Harper, he is immediately smitten with the friendly dad. But Bryce doesn't quite know if Noah is gay/bi, so he decides to just keep his distance and remain friends..

This was a very cute holiday story. Bryce was a wonderful character to read about and I loved reading about the advice he gave people. Especially since he could use some advice himself.

This was a nice comfy read from the Advent Calendar.

An ARC of Dear Ruth was generously provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

This review has been cross-posted at Gay Book Reviews.

Natalia says**3.5 stars****Don Bradshaw says**

A sweet Christmas short. Gah, if Bryce got any more dense he'd be a rock! The give and take between Noah and Bryce was fun to read.

Kim says

How about a hot but lonely fireman for Christmas? If you're in the mood for some holiday cheer, this may do the trick.

Oh, and if you enjoy Easter eggs? The town where this story takes place has also featured in another of my short stories and one of my novels. Can you figure out which ones?

Tess says

3.75 stars

Ami says

3.75 stars rounded up

Fire Marshal Bryce Reynolds returns to Baily Springs after a failed relationship. Then his mother suddenly passed away, and Bryce is asked by his mother's good friend and editor-in-chief for Bailey Springs newspaper to take over his mother's advice column. At first Bryce is reluctant, but then maybe it will be a good way to deal with her death as well as giving Bryce a distraction from this sexy new neighbor of his.

THIS is the kind of holiday story I love. Why? Because it involves small-town community, a little crush and pining, as well as the joy and hope of Christmas. Bryce is unsure if Noah is gay – especially since he has a kid – and he really doesn't know how to deal with this crush of his. Of course, Bryce is also a bit clueless considering Noah has been trying to be 'more than' a friend (and we, as a reader, can see it).

With a fire marshal, a single father, and a cute daughter, a slow progress in the low level of steam, I think the only thing missing from this story is a pet! Oh, and I wish I can read Bryce's answers to the questions to the Dear Ruth column, since some of those cases are good.

A Guest Review for The Blogger Girls

The ARC is provided by the publisher for an exchange of fair and honest review. No high rating is required for any ARC received.

Ann says

3.5 Stars for Dear Ruth

Kim Fielding has a recipe for holiday story gold with Dear Ruth. A charming small town, a deputy fire chief

who loves his mother, a handsome neighbor with a cute daughter and a two way crush that can only end in love because it just has to. I love when two dudes are crushing on each other and pretty much everyone can see it but them. Especially when it isn't too drawn out and one of them finally makes "the move". Bryce has been unlucky in love, so he's not sure he's a great fit for taking over his mother's advice column, Dear Ruth, after her sudden passing. Turns out he's very good at it, but also crap at taking his own advice. Good thing Noah, the hot neighbor, isn't crap at taking good advice, and an HEA is inevitable. I loved how each thought the other was his ideal but couldn't see it in themselves. It made the mutual attraction realization that much more charming and downright adorable. The epilogue was perfect and totally believable for the new family and I loved it.

copies of the DSP Advent Calendar were provided in exchange for honest reviews

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

~3.5~

A fire marshal secretly posing as Dear Ruth needs to take his own advice on matters of the heart.

Bryce is slow on the uptake, so his handsome new neighbor has to resort to less than subtle clues to make Bryce see the light. Bryce is convinced Noah is straight because he has a daughter. Meanwhile, it's obvious to us that Noah returns Bryce's crush.

A sense of loneliness permeates this quiet story. I enjoyed reading the Dear Ruth letters. No steam at all, but the ending is truly heartwarming.

Sheri says

I'm not much of a newspaper person. I suppose that has to do with the fact that I'm not much of a news person. When my hubby became a first responder years ago, I found I had to tune out the news for my own sanity. However, whenever I make the post office run to snag our office mail, I flip over the paper and look for the 'Dear Abby' column first thing. I love it! I adore the solid and straightforward advice and find myself nodding along in agreement and sometimes shaking my head in disbelief. When I saw Fielding's holiday advent addition of 'Dear Ruth' I knew I'd enjoy it. Yep. I was right.

Bryce is the small town fire chief and he's finding the Christmas spirit elusive this year. His mother passed away recently and the pain is still sharp in his chest. He's been saddled with taking over her advice column in their local paper and finding it especially difficult to direct people when he's a bit lost himself. Then his new neighbor shakes and rattles his equilibrium even more. He's attracted to Noah but doesn't think it's reciprocated. Or maybe he's just distracted and not picking up the signals? Sweet, small-town romance around the holidays...yeah, Fielding definitely knows how to report the hot story here.

What's to like: Of course, it goes without saying that I enjoy the writing, I enjoy everything that comes from Fielding's bookshelves. A little sass, a dash of sweet and a dose of spice...it's a marvelous combo. Being a small town girl myself, I always enjoy a quaint quiet setting. Despite its novella size, I found the story

complete and fulfilling. And then we have the characters...

What's to love: The characters! I can't think of a Fielding creation that I haven't adored and Bryce & Noah were no exception. I enjoyed the setup and the column advise seeking style but it was the characters that make this story light up. Bryce is protective, loyal and terrible at flirting. Ha! I loved the way he wanted and craved and then stumbled and fumbled when his wishes came true. We don't get into Noah's head as much, but it's easy to tell he's funny, sweet and loving. And Harper! What a doll and a great addition to the short story. Put 'em all together and what do ya get? A great read is what!

Beware of: With only fifty or so pages, diving deep is hard to do. But if you are looking for a full novella, I believe this fits the bill. For a firefighter's tale, the heat factor is fairly low. However, I'm still wearing my smile that resulted from the final pages.

This book is for: If you're looking for an easy HEA with a hearty reality check and don't mind children in your stories, you should pick up this holiday treat.

Book UNfunk

Annika says

This was a very sweet start on this year's calendar and everything you need to get you into the Christmas spirit. I loved how Fielding created such depth to the story with such few words. It drew you in, you felt like you were a part of the town, gossiping with the rest of them.

I loved Harper, she was great fun and I wouldn't mind to read more about her and her fireman obsession (some start young) ;)

A copy of this book was provided in exchange for an honest review

Sara says

5 Hearts

Oh this warmed my heart so damn much and I LOVED IT!

I loved Bryce. I loved how he loved his mother and how much he misses her. I loved how he reluctantly took over her Dear Ruth column and did such a fabulous job at it. I love that he's a runner. I love his crush on his

neighbor and how awkward both he and Noah are at times. I love that 99% of Bryce's thoughts are on fire safety. I loved Noah and his daughter Harper, she's an amazing young girl. I LOVED LOVED LOVED how Bryce thought about Noah's body. I loved that Bryce is slow to realize that Noah is interested and I love how Noah goes about all of it. That end was perfect and that epilogue made me tear up with pure joy.

Yup. I loved this one! *swoon*

The *Jizzians* and the *Grumpicorns* are at it again! We Unicorn's are reviewing the Dreamspinner 2017 Advent Calendar every Sunday, Jizzmas gang bang style on the blog. Check out the rest of the reviews for this story here, to see which side of the Jizzmas celebration the uni's claim.

Manfred says

Kim Fielding writes great stories and I honestly can't remember rating one of her books with less than 4 stars. However, this one was a major disappointment for me.

It felt like a good concept for a story needed to be finished in a rush to have it available for the holiday season. Bryce is a firefighter (gay and single in a small town), who has a major crush on the single dad who just moved in next door.

There were several funny ideas in the story - like the "Dear Ruth" column in the local paper that Bryce "inherited" from his mother, but at the end, there was no space or time to develop those or give the characters depth. The whole story felt rushed, on my tablet it was less than 50 pages which was an additional surprise, because with a price of roughly 4 Dollars I definitely expected more.

It is one of those books that you can spend 99 cents on and then read it in a sitting of less than an hour and that would be perfectly fine, however as it is it felt more like a rip-off, so 2 disappointed stars from me.
