



The Christmas Singing

Cindy Woodsmall

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After Gideon coldly broke her heart, can the warmth of the season revive Mattie's hopes?

Mattie thought her childhood sweetheart adored her until he abruptly ended their engagement on Christmas Eve.

Three years later, will learning the truth behind his rejection restore her Christmas joy – or open the door to even deeper heartbreak?

Spend Christmas with the Amish in this story of love, romance, heartache, and restoration.

Experience the holidays with the Plain folk and discover the power of second chances in this touching story from the author of the *New York Times* bestseller, *The Bridge of Peace*.

Gideon Beiler has loved Mattie Eash since they were children. But when faced with unexpected circumstances, he makes up an excuse to end their engagement. He doesn't want to lie to her, but he believes that telling Mattie the truth will be more hurtful.

Brokenhearted, Mattie moves from Apple Ridge, Pennsylvania to Ohio, where she pursues her longtime dream of becoming a cake decorator. She finds a new beau—a man offering the secure relationship Gideon has denied her.

When Mattie is forced to return to Apple Ridge, she and Gideon must confront the suffering created by his dishonesty – and address the powerful emotions that continue to bind the two childhood friends.

The Christmas Singing Details

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Meagan Myhren-bennett says

THE CHRISTMAS SINGING

By Cindy Woodsmall

Three years have passed since Gideon's betrayal broke Mattie's heart. Mattie's moved on leaving her parents, friends, and Gideon behind in Pennsylvania. Living near her older brother in Ohio Mattie's bakery is successful and she has a new boyfriend, one that will never break her heart! But in a moment of forgetfulness Mattie's bakery is gone – destroyed by a fire.

As Mattie waits for the insurance to settle up, she returns to Pennsylvania to visit with the family that she left behind. But it seems that everywhere Mattie goes Gideon is there too. Mattie is conflicted by her feelings for Gideon – she's still drawn to her childhood friend and yet angry at the way he broke off their relationship.

Gideon is still drawn to Mattie, but he knew that she couldn't handle learning the true reason he broke up with her. Gideon felt lying would be kinder to Mattie than telling her that he had Leukemia and he may not survive.

When Mattie learns the truth she loses her temper with Gideon, he didn't trust her enough to make her own choices because he thought she was fragile. Because of Gideon's deception Mattie chose Sol. But Mattie realizes that she chose Sol because he was safe and that she didn't love him. But because of her commitment to Sol Mattie feels she must return to Ohio.

Is it too late for love? Will Mattie follow her heart or will she choose safety?

The Christmas Singing is a lesson in truth. We cannot protect the ones we love with a lie. Lies always hurt and the hurt is worse when the truth is made known. Truth is the most important foundation for any relationship!

I received this book for free from WaterBrook Multnomah Publishing Group for this review. 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

Michelle says

Every once in a while, you open a book, and the characters that emerge from the pages are living, breathing and believable. They take your hand and guide you through a story, making you laugh, making you cry, and always make it hard to turn that last page. Gideon and Mattie from Cindy Woodsmall's *The Christmas Singing* are those kinds of characters.

The story opens with Mattie, she's the equivalent of the Amish Cake Boss. She's moved to Ohio, after discovering Gideon in the arms of another woman. Her life with him had once been filled with "passion and

gusto”, but now her shattered heart is on the mend. She’s the successful owner of a cake shop, and is involved in a “comfortable” relationship with Sol.

But then tragedy strikes, and her store is burned down. She heads back to Ohio for the Holidays and is forced to confront Gideon. As the truth of his betrayal comes to light, will it mend the hurt, or bring more pain?

I give this book five stars, and it is a must for your bookshelf this holiday season. One cold afternoon, curl up under a blanket and let the warmth of Gideon and Mattie’s story warm your heart. It is a quick and easy read that will bring a little joy to your day.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free 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.

Leah says

This was a sweet Christmas story. I liked the main characters in this story, and I liked that the main characters from the first book were in this one too. I was surprised by his, Gideon's, secret, and the ending was sweet. It made me smile. Also, I enjoyed reading about all the cakes that Mattie baked. They all sounded so delicious.

Coranne says

Sweet. This is the word I would use to describe this story- sweet. It is a shorter story- it comes right around 200 pages and is easily read in one sitting.

The pacing in the story was excellent and the story was well told. I found myself rooting for all of the characters. I loved that Mattie was a cake decorator- that doesn't seem to be a typical Amish character (from what I read). It was fun to read about all the cakes that she made. I especially enjoyed the recipes from the cakes mentioned in the story.

Cindy Woodsmall does a wonderful job creating an excellent story in so few pages. The characters are likable and although the story was predictable- that didn't take away from how enjoyable it was. This would make an excellent stocking stuffer or present for a family member or friend.

Christie Brumley says

I always enjoy a great Amish romance set during Christmas. It's heartwarming and gets you in the Christmas spirit. The Amish lifestyle has always been fascinating and these books make you long for the simple things in life.

Mayda says

Mattie has a pretty fulfilling life. She has her own cake shop and she enjoys making special cakes for people, but there is something - and someone - she avoids even thinking about. She came to this town to start her shop, where she had relatives, running away from her home when the love of her life broke up with her. Dire circumstances forced Mattie to return home, and she must face Gideon once again. But Gideon has not been truthful with Mattie, and he, too, must account for what he did and for what he didn't say. Author Cindy Woodsmall has penned a short but meaningful tale about relationships and forgiveness. Good intentions to protect someone sometimes backfire, and you end up hurting the one you wanted to spare. A cautionary tale yet entertaining.

Rachel Brand says

GENRE: AMISH ROMANCE

PUBLISHER: WATERBROOK

PUBLICATION DATE: NOVEMBER 4, 2011

RATING: 7 OUT OF 10

Believing that her boyfriend Gideon Beiler had betrayed her, Mattie Eash had fled from Pennsylvania to Ohio one Christmas. Now settled into her new life with her Ohio relatives, she has opened a cake shop and has a successful career as a cake-decorator, and a lukewarm relationship with reliable Sol Bender. But when a catastrophe drives her back to her home community in Pennsylvania, she finds herself face to face with Gideon again. As she prepares cakes for two of her friends' upcoming weddings, she's forced to spend time with her old boyfriend, who is building the home that one of the couples will move into once they're married. Their encounters make Gideon wonder why he gave Mattie up all those years ago, and whether now would be the good time to tell her the truth about why he broke up with her. Will Mattie be content to reconcile with Gideon, or have past hurts hardened her heart too much to allow her to forgive him?

This is your typical Christmas novel. The storyline has been done many times before, which makes it comfortable and reliable for the reader, but Cindy Woodsmall inserts a few changes here and there to make the story fresh and original. This has to be the first time that I've read a novel in which an Amish character makes and decorates cakes for a living, and I was equally surprised to read about another character that frequently went on hunting trips. I found it particularly refreshing to read about Mattie making a living for herself as a single woman. Most Amish novels don't go into much detail about the lives of the women who have to support themselves because they don't marry young and don't wish to stay at home and be a burden to their parents. Often crafts are shown to be hobbies that Amish women indulge in when they've finished with the day-to-day tasks of cooking, cleaning and raising a family, but there are many Amish women who do make their living from crafts such as quilting, sewing and in Mattie's case, baking and decorating cakes. So it was encouraging to see Cindy revealing this often forgotten aspect of the lives of Amish women, and single women in particular.

I'm not going to deny that the story of a couple who have been separated for years being brought back together by a great catastrophe isn't somewhat predictable and sometimes over-done. I'm not a massive fan of storylines that are created out of a lack of communication between a couple, but this is partly because I'm

fortunate to be a relationship in which there is a lot of communication between both partners. The reason why communication-driven plots are so popular in the romance genre is that it is one of the simplest and most common causes of problems between couples. Mattie and Gideon's story also contained another plot point that I've witnessed a few times recently in romantic fiction; that of one person discovering that they have some sort of medical problem and breaking up with their significant-other in an attempt to protect them from suffering alongside them in their illness. While I struggled to relate to Gideon and Mattie's relationship problems in this story, I'm certain that the issues of keeping secrets and failing to communicate over misunderstandings will strike a chord with many other readers. If anything, I hope that someone will read this book and come out of it with the revelation and understanding that secrets should never be kept between two people who love each other, and that no matter how difficult it is, communication is key in order for a relationship to survive.

In all honesty, I wish this novella could have been longer. In discussing this book with my book group a lot of us felt that the shortness of the book limited the amount of time that Mattie and Gideon spent together on the page, and we really wished that we could have read about the day that they spent in each other's company towards the end of the book. But this is the general issue with novellas – they're short and sweet, but sometimes it just feels like there's something missing. One thing's for sure with *The Christmas Singing*, and that's that I'll be looking out for more of Cindy's novels now that I know what her writing is like. A novella isn't always the best example of an author's work, but it's often a good indication of whether you'll like their books.

So if you've never read any of Cindy Woodsmall's novels before, *The Christmas Singing* may be a good place to start. It does contain a well-used storyline, but the characters refresh it and make it into something new and original. This is the perfect book to get you in the Christmas mood, especially if you enjoy romantic tales of reconciliation.

Review title provided courtesy of Waterbrook.

Kav says

This slim little book packs a wallop and proves that Cindy Woodsmall can do concise without losing out on the depth and detail she is known for. Mattie is such a fun character -- and very different from your typical Amish heroine. Love her dreaminess, her klutziness, the way she can turn disaster into something fun and light-hearted. Except for her broken engagement that is. She knows how to harbour a grudge and I honestly can't blame her since she thinks one thing while the reality is far different.

I spent my time being alternately irritated and enamoured with Gideon. Honestly --he's...he's...just like a man!!!! Thinks like a man, acts like a man and believe me that isn't always a good thing! So there's fireworks at times, angst a plenty, but Woodsmall weaves it all together with some wonderfully heart-warming, light-hearted moments as well. A great combination for a Christmas read -- though there's not a lot of Christmas in the read. LOL. It's not as seasonal as I thought it would be, but that didn't detract from the story at all. In fact it makes it more universally appealing. Definitely not a book that has to be read only at Christmas.

Faye says

An Amish romance from Cindy Woodsmall, just in time for Christmas!

Short and sweet, yet not sappily so, *The Christmas Singing* is sure to please. I read this sweet story in less than a day and enjoyed every minute of it. The pages turned steadily as I found myself fascinated and entertained with Mattie Eash's world.

Mattie Eash is a young Amish woman with a gift for decorating cakes. But after her bakery burns to the ground and she goes home for the holidays, she comes face to face with her childhood sweetheart, Gideon Beiler. Gideon broke her heart years before when she found him with another woman--an English woman. But Gideon has his secrets. Meanwhile Mattie plans her life with her current flame, Sol, a solid young man, who is an avid hunter. Lovers of Amish romance will eat up Ms. Woodsmall's charming tale of love in Amish country.

I really enjoyed reading about Mattie's beautiful cakes, I could almost taste them they sounded so good! Not to mention the fact that there are recipes in the back of the book!

Cindy Woodsmall is a gifted writer, who brings all of the Amish charm, while also including the real feelings and struggles. I like to say that when I read Ms. Woodsmall's books, I relax but never fall asleep!

Overall a very well done Amish romance that I highly recommend. The pages turned steadily for me and I completed it in less than a day :) A very well written book indeed.

Final Rating: 4.5 out of 5

I received this book from the publisher free of charge in exchange for an honest review :)

If you could please head over to my blog and rank my review, it would be much appreciated :)

Mary Beth says

Mattie had finally picked up the pieces of her life, the life she had broken by her first love Gideon. or that is what she's been telling herself. Life is comfortable for Mattie, in which she's just too content too mess with at this point in her life. She moves to Ohio, in which she lives with her brother and his family at first. She gets her business, "Mattie Cakes" off and running, her dreams are coming true. She's doing really well, her business is booming til one day an accident forces her to return home and face her past.

This was my first Amish-Fiction book, I received the ebook version and read it on My Kindle Fire. I received it in exchange of an honest review. I really liked this book was a very easy for me to pick up and read, really light & fun. if it wasn't fir being a busy mom I could if easily finished in a day or so. but instead since I'm a busy mom it took me about a week. I liked this book and hope to read more of Cindy's books among other Amish related fiction.

Paula says

A heartwarming Amish romance!

Cat says

Hmm, never read an Amish story before; I'm not much into romances of any type, but felt attracted to read this one. I work in a library and know quite a few women who enjoy these stories, so I thought I'd take a look. I don't know any Amish personally, but having visited Amish shops, I'm hard pressed to believe an Amish bakery would produce such fancy creations as in the book. Mostly I've found tasty, but plain pies. Story line was ok, just didn't strike me as plausible either. The Amish community is so tight it's difficult to imagine there being any secrets from anyone....Eh, it's going to be read by it's loyal readers!

Michele says

I really enjoyed this book! Great story of love and courage.

Lori says

This is a beautiful Amish holiday love story!

Theresa says

The Christmas Singing gives the reader exactly what they would expect - a heart warming story that is perfect for reading during the Christmas season. I needed a heartwarming story to curl up with, and believe me, it didn't disappoint. I found myself both charmed and captivated and was happy with the ending - it turned out exactly the way I wanted it to. If you love Amish or Christmas stories, add this one to your reading list. You won't be disappointed!
