



All I Have to Give

Melody Carlson

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Anna and Michael have been trying for years without success to have a baby. Now in her late thirties, Anna has given up on the hope of motherhood after heartbreaking miscarriages and shattered dreams. As Christmas nears, she has to consider the possibility that it might be time to empty out the nursery and convert it to a guest room. Amidst her heartache, Anna secretly struggles with strange health problems that have her very worried. But, as often happens at Christmastime, there are miracles in store for Anna and Michael. As each tries to give the other the perfect Christmas gift the magic of Christmas is working its way into their lives. And what each of them unwraps for Christmas will surprise everyone.

All I Have to Give Details

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From Reader Review All I Have to Give for online ebook

Mandy J. Hoffman says

MY REVIEW:

Every so often I enjoy a good sentimental story and while this had that element, and also the sweet "Gift of the Magi" twist to it, I finished it feeling frustrated by the lack of depth and the abrupt ending. Some of the main themes in this story were left hanging with out a conclusion. And while I liked the main character and the general storyline, she and others were allowed to get away with behavior that was un-biblical with out consequences. It is a short book filled with emotional tug and some sweet gestures - a quick reading fix - but with out purpose and encouragement. I was able to put the book down with out having been uplifted or challenged in any way. I enjoy Melody Carlson's writing - what was written was good writing - but the overall story is sadly lacking impact. If you want a book that's strictly "Christmasy" and emotional then you might enjoy it, but if you want a story that is going to uplift your heart, too, this is not for you.

Rebekah says

This was a sweet story... And hard to put down as I really wanted to see what happened. As the book went on I kind of guessed what would happen. I was annoyed that the one family situation was never resolved, but I still enjoyed the book.

Bekah says

Cheesiest book ever! Hoping for some holiday spirit but no such luck. Completely predictable and flat. Big eye roll followed by a yawn.

Just - The romance reader says

Such a touching and heartfelt book. The message was awesome. It was an emotional read that really helped put me in the right frame of mind about the real meaning of family and Christmas, in perfect time for the holiday season. Melody Carlson is near the top of my list of favorite authors!

Emily says

Meh. I've liked Melody Carlson's other books, but this one was just so depressing most of the way through, not to mention super predictable. (I saw the gift of the magi theme coming a mile away.) It obviously had a happy ending, but that didn't make up for the way the rest of the book dragged. There were also some major unresolved issues.

Dawn says

This was cute. I had figured out where it was going very early on. It's a semi- retelling of OHenry's Gift of the Magi.

Tara Alemany says

A fan of the author, but not this title

I've read a number of Melody Carson's books at this point and enjoyed her characters and storylines consistently, until this book. I had to start it twice and then made myself continue reading that second time.

For a Christmas story, there's too much negativity in it. Not just hard things, but wrong thinking. Instead of feeling uplifted by the story, I felt ill-at-ease with these characters.

As a modern-day reselling of a classic Christmas tale, I thought it would be heart-warming, but it was not. Ms. Carson has many other fine stories to choose from. If you're interested in reading her work, which I do recommend, I'd suggest picking another title.

Angela says

While I expect these cozy Christmas romance stories to be somewhat predictable this was almost annoying so. It was glaringly obvious from the start what was going on. Also there is a side story with the main character's sister that not only doesn't fit in the context of the story but isn't resolved. The story is modeled on The Gift of the Magi short story by O'Henry which I never liked for it's bittersweet "no one wins" ending. If you dislike similar tales, avoid this one.

Rayni says

[I don't know how many books I've picked up lately that has ovarian cancer in it. I have Stage IV ovarian cancer & like Anna, waited until the new plan year to pursue treatment for it. At least we have insurance. I am currently slogging through the treatment for it. I have had breast cancer, also. And we've fought with inf

Eustacia Tan says

This is a little strange, but for once, I wasn't very impressed with a Melody Carlson book. To me, this book felt way too rushed, as though it was written in a hurry with little thought for characters.

All I Have to Give is a re-telling of the short story "The Gift of the Magi". But in this case, Anna is prompted

to make a sacrifice for her gift (and generally make it the 'best Christmas ever') by a cancer scare. There was a legitimate reason, but I thought that if she was afraid, the first thing she should have done was to check with the doctor. I could actually see the ending by Chapter 5.

In addition, the characters weren't very well thought-out. There was quite a few characters, each with their own issues. For example. Anna's sister Meredith has her own problems. But since this book is so short (just over a hundred pages), there isn't enough time to flesh out the characters. And so, they never really came to life for me. Unlike Christmas at Harringtons, the characters weren't endearing enough. It was basically a "give give give" fest, without enough motivation on the why.

That being said, the book does have potential. If the book was longer, and delved into the characters lives, it would have been a whole lot better. I don't really care that the plot was predictable, but what I really wanted were characters I could identify with.

Unfortunately, I didn't find it here. That meant this was merely a "so-so" read, rather than a fantastic one

First posted at Inside the mind of a Bibliophile

Jody says

All I Have to Give was my first holiday book of the season, and also marks my first book for the Christmas Reading Challenge! It was a very enjoyable story that I zipped through in an evening, and it succeeded in helping to get me in the Christmas spirit – which was the intention! So, overall a successful reading venture.

The story opens with sisters Anna and Meredith chatting about their respective marital issues as they clean up from Thanksgiving dinner, and proceeds to follow Anna's attempts at creating "the best Christmas ever". Despite her greatest efforts to have a happy holiday, Anna's health and various family issues threaten to ruin the festivities. But as with any good holiday story, the good persevere, and miracles are waiting to occur.

I really liked all the characters in All I Have to Give, and found the story relatable and believable (sometimes this is not the case with holiday stories). It's very nice to see romance and marriage portrayed in a realistic manner for a change. My one complaint with All I Have to Give would be that it's a little predictable. It's loosely based on the traditional Christmas story The Gift of the Magi, so some obvious connections are hard to avoid, but one of the major plot points was pretty transparent as well. This doesn't really take away from the spirit of the story though, and I thoroughly enjoyed reading All I Have to Give, and would definitely try some of Carlson's other books.

Krystal says

This was just a dumb story and totally predictable!

Hannah says

[if she managed to stay pregnant and actually have a baby! (hide spoiler)]

April Suter says

All she has is her worry, home, husband, family and classroom. Anna prepares for Christmas as this is the year that it is going to be the best Christmas ever. She sells her treasure to meet this goal even when her husband is acting odd. She may be having a health scare or is she?

Debbie says

"All I Have To Give" is Christian women's fiction and a re-telling of "The Gift of the Magi." Anna tried so hard to have a "perfect Christmas" that she almost ruined it with her attitude. While the characters always had a motivation for the way they were acting, I was on the borderline of being frustrated with them. Anna thought she had cancer and basically just gave up before even confirming it. She strongly suspected her husband of infidelity (with little evidence) and yet this didn't seem to impact her "grand gift" plans for him. I felt like there was a missed chance at a deeper message of giving even when hurt and how this would inspire the other family members in their troubled marriages. Instead, everyone thought she had a perfect life (even when they knew she didn't feel that way about being childless) and a perfect, untroubled marriage. The story wrapped up quickly after the gift-giving and didn't resolve some of the serious issues brought up in the story.

The Christian element seemed to be a few statements along the lines of "but Christians shouldn't do that!" (about divorce). There was no bad language. There was no sex. Overall, it's a nice, predictable story.
