



## The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap

*Donna Kauffman, Kate Angell, Kimberly Kincaid*

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For friends Clara, Abby and Lily, only one thing is more delicious than the Pine Mountain holiday cookie exchange – finding the right man before they ring in the New Year!

**Where There's Smoke...**

**USA Today bestselling author Donna Kauffman**

When flames from a recipe gone disastrously wrong send hunky firefighter Will Mason to pretty Clara Parker's rescue, the sparks really begin to fly! And once Will gets a taste of Clara, he aches for more than just a little sugar from the famously single food columnist. . .

"Donna Kauffman writes smart and sexy, with sizzle to spare!" --Janet Evanovich

**The Gingerbread Man**

**National bestselling author Kate Angell**

Folks have always told fun-loving Abby Denton that her anatomically correct Gingerbread cookies are. . .impressive. But those erotic cookies have nothing on the sexy stranger Abby saves from a snowy country road. Could Lander Reynolds be the Christmas treat she's truly been longing for?

"No fan of the genre should miss Angell's surefire romances." --*Booklist*

**Sugar And Spice**

**Kimberly Kincaid**

When caterer Lily Callahan goes up against hotshot pastry chef Pete Mancuso in the bake-off of the season, the stakes are high--and scandalously passionate. Will the gorgeous gourmand steal Lily's heart--and the top prize in the Christmas cookie competition?

"A mouth-watering, heart-warming, toe-curling holiday romance!" --Amanda Usen, author of *Luscious*

## **The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap Details**

Date : Published October 7th 2014 by Kensington (first published January 1st 2013)

ISBN :

Author : Donna Kauffman , Kate Angell , Kimberly Kincaid

Format : Kindle Edition 417 pages

Genre : Romance, Holiday, Christmas, Anthologies, Contemporary, Contemporary Romance, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit



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## From Reader Review The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap for online ebook

### Kathy Altman says

*Where There's Smoke* by Donna Kauffman:

Just as *Where There's Smoke*, there's fire, we all know where there's Donna Kauffman, there's a rollicking, sexy read chock-full of charm and sparkle. Kauffman's characters are adorably human and so very magnetic. Clara is clumsy, Will is endearing and the two of them together make for a sweet and genuine story.

*"I want to take you out. On a date."*

*Of all the things he could have said, she hadn't expected that. And he'd blurted it out, like a wet-behind-the-ears kid who'd have to borrow his dad's car keys. Completely at odds with the rugged, handsome guy who had a bit of a swagger and came on to her like it was the most natural thing in the world. It was incredibly endearing, and connected so directly to the part of her that still felt dorky and awkward as she tried to find her way in the big bad real world, that she realized no amount of rules and restrictions was going to keep him from finding his way into her heart.*

That's no lie about the sparks, by the way - Kauffman knows how to set a book on fire. Her imagery is as vibrant as always, her story craft exceptional. She wrote the prologue and epilogue, by the way, and never have I craved an after-the-story glimpse of the characters as I did with *The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap*. Oh, and the chocolate-chip cookie recipe at the end? SO worth your time!

*The Gingerbread Man* by Kate Angell:

*"It was the cookies." He pressed his palms to his eyes, as if pushing back the image. "I was several miles down the road when I remembered the box lying on the seat beside me. I cracked the lid and found a dozen gingerbread men with candy-cane erections."*

*He lowered his hands and gave her a look of frustration and disbelief. "I took my eyes off the road and stared at the gingerbread men a moment too long. I couldn't believe what I was seeing."*

*He doesn't look pleased, Abby thought, digging her hands into the pockets of her jacket. And she'd worked so hard to get her G-men to stand at attention.*

LOL! I love that. This novella is marvelously full of the unexpected. The nature of Abby's business, Lander's reaction to her part in his accident and the awww-inspiring ending are all delightful twists in this irresistible romance. Abby and Lander both find Christmas bittersweet, and the way they help each other cope with the sadness is simply heartwarming. You'll be thoroughly charmed by Lander and how he repays Abby's kindness, and by Abby's sweet practicality - not to mention the overall mischievous tone of the story. Oh, and Angell gets extra points for featuring a stubborn, scruffy cat who snores. The humor adds a sassy slant and the sexual tension is deliciously maddening. The resolution may be a tad rushed but it's oh-so-poignant, and carries the promise that this accidental love affair is meant to last.

*Sugar and Spice* by Kimberly Kincaid:

Already Pete Mancuso is not Lily Callahan's favorite person. Add risk-taking and rule-breaking into the mix and Lily is just not impressed - above all else, she values caution and predictability. But soon Lily realizes that taking chances can pay off - and in deliciously unexpected ways.

*"Are there any rules you find sacred, or are you equal opportunity about breaking them all?" Although she meant the question seriously, Lily couldn't deny the curl of forbidden curiosity winding through her in anticipation of his answer.*

*Pete stepped closer, turning her curiosity on its ear. "Are there any rules you're willing to break, or are you equal opportunity about following them all?"*

*For a second, they stood there, inches apart, and Lily wanted nothing more than to press up on her toes and kiss him, really kiss him, until they both were breathless.*

Lily also discovers there's a lot more to Pete than she could ever have imagined. Pete, meanwhile, can't resist getting the always-in-control Lily hot and bothered - and not just in the kitchen. Before long he can't resist Lily, period. Oh, it was fun, watching these two get each other stirred up. The competition lends a wonderful urgency to the story, and I was both touched and fascinated by the way the characters' personalities and pasts played into their recipes. Kincaid writes with her usual playfulness, compassion and skill - she's always a joy to read. *Sugar and Spice* indeed - this is one sweet treat you really shouldn't resist.

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### **Brian says**

I borrowed a copy of this book from my library.

A truly delightful combo of three stars in the contemporary romance writers' seen.

If I had to choose the best of three, I would choose Ms. Kincaid. Why? I have become captivated by her works and I am endeavoring to read as many of her works that I can. Do not take this as affront to the other two authors: it is not.

Sugar and Spice by Ms. Kincaid.

To avoid spoilers here is my take: Lily Callahan, heroine, is a baker working from home. The hero, Pete Mancuso, a glorified baker(chef) , works at La Luna restaurant. Enter a contest to win \$10,000.00 dollars which brings these two together(kind of). But alas, the twisting and turning by of the story by this author makes this read fun. Also, there is some sizzle and fireworks.

Go forth and read.

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## Pat says

### The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap

I have read anthologies before, but never one that three authors contributed to the same story. It was very entertaining! Best friends Clara, Lilly and Abby are together for the annual Pine Mountain Christmas Cookie swap. It's a fund raiser for the community center, and well attended each year. The best friends have each supplied a tin of their specialties. Abby is presenting her "anatomically" correct gingerbread men her signature cookie, Lilly is a professionally trained pastry chef, and trying out recipes to submit to a contest she hopes will launch her career, and Clara who is dangerous in the kitchen is presenting a loaf from Lilly. The evening ends with the friends going in different directions in a heavy snowfall.

### Where There's Fire..... Donna Kauffman

Clara Parker known for her amazing lack of skills in the kitchen ( she has the fire dept. on speed dial) is heading to a bookstore in the next town to find some help in the form of a cookbook for her latest column in the newspaper. At the bookstore she sees there is a book signing going on. Attempting to see, she literally falls to the front of the line, and on top of the signing table. There in all his glory is a shirtless guy in turnout pants signing firefighter calendars ! Plus.....he's a close friend she lost touch with in college. The story involves a fire in her kitchen, lots of attempts at cookie making and some very sizzling moments...not necessarily in the kitchen!

### The Gingerbread Man.....Kate Angell

The snow is coming down thick and fast but Abby Denton is used to driving up the mountain to her little cabin in all weather. While thinking about her start-up mail order cookie business, Abby suddenly sees a car off the road in a ravine, headlights shining. No cell service, so she realizes it's up to her. After a harrowing rescue, she brings him to her cabin to recover. Upon regaining consciousness, he tells her he had lost control and driven off the road after glancing at a box of cookies he had purchased on his way through town. They had peppermint penises! Uh oh! Abby and Lander are stranded, no power, no water, just each other for the duration of the blizzard. Abby misses her Gram this being the first Christmas without her. Lander decides what little time they have, he will make memorable for her. A thank you for saving his life. Little does he know how far Abby has crawled into his heart.

### Sugar and Spice.....Kimberly Kincaid

Ms. Kincaid is known for her very enjoyable novels about chefs , and their adventures in the kitchen and.....elsewhere.

This story is no exception. Lilly Callahan is a trained pastry chef, who works out of a tiny excuse for a kitchen. She has entered a cookie contest being presented by the Pine Mountain resort. If she wins, she gets prize money, and recognition, both needed to fulfill her dream of her own pastry shop, and people to fill it. She has to win. Pete Mancuso well known "bad boy" pastry chef is also entering. He wants to leave the job he has, and work for a famous chef in his very popular French restaurant. He has to win to get his name to the top of the list. Two very different styles of baking, planning, and presenting are thrown together, when they are paired for the first round. The competition becomes more than cookies when they both realize the heat between them is not caused by the ovens.

I thoroughly enjoyed this anthology, and it's a great holiday read. I have to confess I was a little confused by the prologue, so many people, names and conversations. But all became clear as I read on. I am a huge fan of Kimberly Kincaid, but loved the introduction to Donna Kauffman and Kate Angell. Will have to read more by these authors.

I received this novel from NetGalley for an honest review.

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## **Blue Falcon says**

This review is of “The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap” an anthology of three interrelated stories: “Where There’s Smoke” by Donna Kauffman; “The Gingerbread Man” by Kate Angell; and “Sugar and Spice” by Kimberly Kincaid. The stories will be reviewed in the order they are listed in the book.

Story #1: Where There’s Smoke” by Donna Kauffman.

The Story: The book begins in the town of Pine Mountain, in the Blue Ridge mountains, just before Christmas. Here, Clara Parker, a food columnist for the Pine Mountain Gazette and her besties, Abby Denton and Lily Callahan, both bakers, are participating in a local tradition; a yearly Christmas Cookie Swap. Clara is going through a rough time; she broke up with her boyfriend and was fired from her previous job-as a romantic advice columnist-before saving her bacon and getting the job as a cookie-writing columnist. Now, Clara has to solve one teensy little problem: she has to learn how to bake.

Clara takes a trip to a bookstore in a neighboring town. There, she finds a book on baking-and an old friend, the former geek, now chic, Will Mason, the hero of the book and a hunky firefighter who is doing a signing for a calendar that he is the cover model of.

Will saves Clara from a fire-not much of one but a fire, nonetheless-and they reminisce, reconnect, fall in love and have their Happily Ever After.

Upside: Not much.

Downside: Neither Clara nor Will were particularly interesting or deep characters. Ms. Kauffman’s writing style is very wordy, almost unnecessarily so.

Bottom Line: I was very disappointed in “Where There’s Smoke”. I’ve heard a lot of good things about Ms. Kauffman, but this was not her best effort.

Story #2: “The Gingerbread Man” by Kate Angell.

The Story: The book begins at the mountainside cabin of Abby Denton, the heroine of the book. Abby has just rescued a man named Lander, the hero of the book from an auto accident; an accident Abby had a part in. (You’ll have to read the story to understand that statement.) Abby and Lander are stuck together due to a blizzard. While stranded together, Lander helps Abby deal with her feelings about this Christmas-the first without her beloved Grandmother-and Lander and Abby become close and make love multiple times.

When Abby receives a long-wished gift-a trip to visit the historic homes of Philadelphia during the holidays-Abby finds out two things: Lander’s surname-Reynolds-and the fact that he’s rich. More importantly, Abby discovers that Lander loves her as much as she loves him, and they have their Happily Ever After.

Upside: The book has a slight romantic comedy bent to it which is endearing. Abby and Lander are both

strong, developed characters.

Downside: The end of the book is a little rushed and clunky, perhaps because it's a novella as opposed to a full-length book.

Sex: A few scenes that aren't overly hot.

Violence: Only in the past tense; both Abby and Lander suffer injuries in his auto accident. Their injuries are more annoying and painful than serious.

Bottom Line: "The Gingerbread Man" is a better story than "Where There's Smoke". Which is kind of damning with faint praise.

Story #3: "Sugar and Spice" by Kimberly Kincaid.

The Story: The book begins with intros to the heroine, Lily Callahan, a baker who works out of her home, and the hero, Pete Mancuso, a chef who, for the time being, works at La Luna restaurant. Both Lily and Pete enter a contest given by the Pine Mountain Ski Resort, with a first prize of \$10, 000.

Lily and Pete become reluctant partners early in the contest. They have conflicting ideas of cooking: Lily is a by-the-book planner and Pete is more improvisational. As the competition continues, Lily and Pete go from reluctant partners to lovers and more. They both have reasons for wanting to win, but only one of the 10 finalists can win. I won't reveal who won the contest, but in the end, Lily and Pete are both winners, because they found each other and have their Happily Ever After.

Upside: A lot of it. "Sugar and Spice" was the best book of the three in the anthology. Ms. Kincaid did the best job of writing real, relatable characters with depth and passion. Technically, "Sugar and Spice" is the first book of 7 total-five full-length and two novella length-books in the "A Pine Mountain Novel" series.

Downside: My only issue is that the book was too short.

Sex: One fairly hot sex scene and a hinted at one.

Violence: None.

Bottom Line: Grading the novellas as a whole, I'd give "Where There's Smoke" 3 stars, "The Gingerbread Man" 4 stars and "Sugar and Spice" a high 4 stars. None of the books in "The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap" are exceptional, but all are above-average to very good.

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### **Anna (Bobs Her Hair) says**

3 Stars...Love, Cookies, and Christmas

Very light reading, yet cute (if you enjoy ultra light feel-good contemporary romances). Kincaid's short story "Sugar and Spice" was the best of the three stories.

Review to come

### **Anna's Herding Cats says**

Aaaannnd...craving cookies. Lots and lots of cookies. The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap was a great little Christmas collection surrounding the lives of three girlfriends, a winter storm and, like I mentioned, cookies galore! It's sweet, sassy and even a little steamy and just what you need to get in the Christmas spirit!

### **Where There's Smoke by Donna Kauffman--3 stars!**

Clara is a hot mess when it comes to all things baking and Lord help her she's just landed a gig as the Christmas cookie columnist for the local paper and things get off to a very hot start as she starts her cookie baking adventures. Enter firefighter Will who swoops in and saves his old college friend from a glorious cookie disaster. I'm always a fan of second chance romances and loved that these two knew each other years ago and were good friends once upon a time. It really made their instant connection and relationship believable and pretty cute. Will. Gah. He's all kinds of sexy firefighter goodness and spends a good bit of time shirtless. \*girly swoon\* He's just a sweet guy. Clara I had a little harder time with. She's having a rough go lately but really instead of feeling completely sympathetic she came off a bit whiny and oy I am not a fan of whiny so it was hard to connect with her. It was still a cute read though.

### **The Gingerbread Men by Kate Angell-- 4 stars!**

Gingerbread men with candy cane erections. ::gigglesnort:: Kate Angell is freaking brilliant! The Gingerbread Men was a sweet, fun and heartwarming read that kicks off with naughty gingerbread men causing all kinds of havoc and landing one sexy hunk of a man on Abby's doorstep during a fierce winter storm. There was a very intimate feel to this one and you could really believe the emotions thrumming through Abby (the x-rated cookie maker lol) and Lander were feeling and the bond between them. They've both suffered losses recently and it was really touching how Lander helped her through her sadness and grief of her first Christmas without her Grams. Getting her to talk and decorate and remember the good times. I did think there was a touch too many mentions of her grandmother but really it was just moving seeing how much he cared and wanted to do for her. There's also an awesome kitty who really brought a sweet little element to their story. All in all a great read with a really wonderful ending that left me smiling.

### **Sugar and Spice by Kimberly Kincaid-- 5 stars**

Once again Kincaid wowed me. Sugar and Spice was sweet and sexy, heartfelt and delicious and topped off with the excitement of a life changing competition. Basically... it was pretty damn perfect. Lily and Pete are up against each other in a huge Cookie Competition hosted by the local resort and the two are amazing. I loved watching them compete, get to know each other and butt heads a little bit because omg they are such opposites. He's a cocky go by the seat of your pants pastry chef (and holy cow pastry chefs are HOT) and Lily's a hardcore planner that follows all the rules. I was really pleased with what a deep connection was forged in so few pages and how quickly I grew to care about them both. They really grow as characters and it was just lovely watching them come together in and out of the kitchen. Kincaid truly rocks a foodie romance novella. If you haven't checked her out yet you need to. Pronto.

Alright so now that I've talked about all the good there is one thing I had trouble with that I think bares

mentioning. The prologue and epilogue were difficult to get through. Too many names thrown at me. Too much back and forth activity/conversation. It was just confusing and made me feel a bit scattered and really didn't seem necessary overall. It would have worked great with just the three novellas in my opinion. So, just a heads up, if you're struggling with it hold tight. The novellas are totally worth it.

Reviewed for herding cats & burning soup

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### **Karielle at Books à la Mode says**

*\*\*Note: I only read Sugar and Spice, the short story by Kimberly Kincaid in this anthology, as part of a virtual book tour. Although my review primarily reflects my opinions on Kincaid's story, it broadly covers the other stories based off their summaries and the prologue and epilogue as well.\*\**

Lily might not have gone to a fancy culinary school in Philadelphia, but she'd still been around enough chefs to know Pete's suave, I-know-best type. She hadn't spent the last month refining her skills and perfecting countless cookie recipes just to be upended by an overly confident pretty face.

Even if Pete's smile had threatened to knock her knees out from under her.

Lily sticks to the rules. That's just her thing; whether it be a recipe or a "type," she adheres to her own restrictions, and seldom strays very far. Pete, rebellious and charming, is the exact opposite. The fun-loving chef takes tremendous risks both in and out of the kitchen, which is why when he and Lily come face to face in a cutthroat Christmas cookie competition, something's going to simmer... if not explode.

Sugar and Spice is the last of the three stories in The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap. It's short and sweet, exactly the kind of Christmas romance quickie you want to read when you're in between holiday festivities and can't sit down and concentrate on something heavy. Kimberly Kincaid's voice is frank, but she manages to make her characters sentimental. I love the honesty and realness she breathes into Lily as a character. Even though there isn't much character development and obviously with such short length, there isn't much complexity or texture either, Lily is easy to sympathize with and love, which is why readers will relate to her frustration upon meeting Pete, who's trouble from the moment she sets eye on him. Not only does he happen to have the most bone-melting smile she's ever seen, but he'll also be her competition... but then again, who said there's anything wrong with sleeping with the enemy?

Pete's daredevil personality is matched with an equally troubled past, and as Lily is the first and only girl to ever coax him to comfort, both realize there's something there. The concept is cute, but it's inevitable that a Christmas romance would be tacky. The entire story is unrealistic (they just happen to run into each other, they just happen to be partners, the media just happens to love them on TV, resulting in even more duo time... blech) and extremely predictable but I'm not too disappointed by that. After all, this is a cute, cheerful holiday read, one meant to lift your spirits and indulge you in a sugary, spicy, contemporary Christmas fantasy.

While I didn't read the other two stories in the anthology, I did peruse the prologue and epilogue; love how

the three best friends' stories all come together! Sugar and Spice was a decent read, but I didn't like it enough to go back and read the other stories; the epilogue, as hurried as it was, was more than enough of an indicator of each of the women's fate: a far-fetched, optimistic happily-ever-after.

### Pros

Very quick read // Light tone // Fun, festive, and spirited // Warm and cozy—a feel-good story for a feel-good season! // Likable characters // Each romance story is integrated into the others, and the characters all involve each other

### Cons

Way too predictable // "Happily ever after" is really cheesy // Ending is rushed and unrealistic // Not much chemistry because short stories leave little room for relationship development

### Verdict

The warm, heartfelt romance that blossoms in the midst of a tense, frenetic Christmas baking contest in Sugar and Spice makes for both a merry, diverting holiday quickie that'll make you smile, and a sizzling, intense affair that will make you blush. I liked how the preceding stories in the anthology are all incorporated into Kincaid's contribution to the collection because it draws three otherwise disengaged women together, but the story itself isn't anything noteworthy. As light contemporary romances go, it's quick, unmemorable, and has both its hot moments, as well as its dull—I enjoyed myself keeping the holiday spirit in mind, but otherwise, I wasn't that impressed.

**Rating: 6 out of 10 hearts (3 stars): Satisfying for a first read, but I'm not going back.**

### Source

Complimentary copy provided by publisher, via tour publicist, in exchange for an honest and unbiased review (thank you, Kensington and Tasty Book Tours!).

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### Krissys says

The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap (Pine Mountain .5) by Donna Kauffman, Kate Angell, Kimberly Kincaid Author: Donna Kauffman, Kate Angell, Kimberly Kincaid Title: The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap Series: Pine Mountain Cover Rating: Book Rating: Buy This Book:

Where There's Smoke by Donna Kauffman When flames from a recipe gone disastrously wrong send hunky fire-fighter Will Mason to pretty Clara Parker's rescue, the sparks really begin to fly! And once Will gets a taste of Clara, he aches for more than just a little sugar from the famously single food columnist...The Gingerbread Man by Kate Angell Folks have always told fun-loving Abby Denton that her anatomically correct Gingerbread cookies are...impressive. But those erotic cookies have nothing on the sexy stranger Abby saves from a snowy country road. Could Lander Reynolds be the Christmas treat she's truly been longing for? Sugar And Spice by Kimberly Kincaid When caterer Lily Callahan goes up against hotshot pastry chef Pete Mancuso in the bake-off of the season, the stakes are high - and scandalously passionate. Will the gorgeous gourmand steal Lily's heart - and the top prize in the Christmas cookie competition?

There's no way to go wrong with this book, three fantastic authors and three wonderful stories that will melt

your heart. The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap is a perfect book to read during any season but it is a delicious treat to savor for the Christmas holidays when you want to warm more than just your toes! The three stories Where There's Smoke by Donna Kauffman, The Gingerbread Man by Kate Angell, and Sugar And Spice by Kimberly Kincaid are packed full of sugar sweetness and comedy that will keep you smiling to the end. I really enjoyed this book so much that I read it twice just so I could experience it all over again. Donna, Kate and Kimberly have done a fantastic job bringing us another holiday novel to fall in love with!

Until next time book lovers...

Krissys Bookshelf Reviews received a digital copy in exchange for an honest review from Netgalley. All thoughts, comments and ratings are my own.

If any of Krissy's Bookshelf Reviews has been helpful please stop by to like my post or leave a comment to let me know what you think. I love hearing from you!

Thank you so much for stopping by!

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**Nicole R says**

- ✓ Three best girl friends
- ✓ Small, snowy winter mountain town
- ✓ Cheesy, predictable, completely implausible romance
- ✓ Three smoking hot men
- ✓ Pure Christmas bliss

I have been waiting 12 months for this. There is nothing I love more than over-the-top cheesy, contemporary, Christmas romances. The main characters have to be gorgeous, they have to fall in love in a week (max), and they have to love everything Christmas related. This anthology hit all of these and more. I don't read a lot of

anthologies but really enjoyed how these three stories all shared a prologue, epilogue, and took place at the same time with similar characters making an appearance in each. It was like a mini-trilogy in one book.

Clara, Abby, and Lily are best friends in a Pennsylvania ski town whose Christmas's are shaping up to be less than ideal. But a little Christmas spirit and a lot of dreamy man can make that better!

- After a very public breakup, Clara loses her job as a relationship advice columnist for the local paper. To save her job, she agrees to write a column about baking cookies. The only problem is she cannot bake! She promptly sets her kitchen on fire but a firefighter from her past may save her kitchen, her cookies, and her love life.
- Abby was raised by her grandmother who passed away mere months ago. She is dreading Christmas, which was her and her grandma's favorite holiday, but Abby is attempting to go through the motions. When she finds a car in a snowy ditch not far from her mountain cabin, she pulls a man from the wreckage and they spend several days holed up in her home until the storm passes where the mysterious stranger reminds Abby that Christmas can still be fun and full of love.
- Lily has one dream: to own her own bakery on Main Street. When the local ski resort announces a high profile competition with a \$10,000 prize, Lily sees this as her chance to make her dreams come true. But, will a handsome, overly-confidence pastry chef from the city ruin her dreams or help her make new ones?

This book is exactly what I was looking for and now I am off to start my next Christmas book!

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### **Hazel \*Craves the Angst Reviews\* says**

Find This and Other Reviews At Craves The Angst.

The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap is a Contemporary Romance written by authors *Donna Kauffman, Kate Angell, Kimberly Kincaid*. I received this eARC from the authors in exchange for an honest review through *Tasty Book Tours* .

#### **4 Super Sweet Stars!**

***Light and Fun! A Truly Enjoyable Read.***

#### ***The Review:***

This book is broken into three different parts written by three different authors but flows from one story to the next, concentrating on three friends, each of which find romance between the holidays and sugary sweets.

I loved each story. All the female leads were strong and independent and owned a confidence that made each one shine. Their male counterparts were hot, bringing a bit of spice to the stories. The romance was sweet, the conflict light and fun and the settings charming and realistic.

Though all three stories were really well written and enjoyable to read, my favorite was the last one, Sugar and Spice, written by *Kimberly Kincaid*. I loved her writing style. Since baking was the theme, I really liked her use of kitchen words to describe feelings, settings and characters. I adored the hero, Pete, who was a bit tragic with his shaky past but who was confident and delectable. The heroine, Lily, was sweet and entertaining. The story was fun and romantic as they baked off to win a cookie competition, each with their own separate goals but never falling victim to the competition.

#### ***The Wrap Up:***

I love holiday books, where there's a bit of drama but nothing so intense as to bring the spirit of the season down. And the best part is, this book can be read at any point of the year so you get to experience a bit of wintery holiday cheer all year long! Loved this one!

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## Anita says

### Average Rating for this anthology: 3.5 Stars

First of all, thanks to everyone who voted in my very first My TBR List. I'd been looking forward to reading *The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap* even if it wasn't the book I had personally put a vote in for. Nonetheless, despite it being two months past Christmastime, it still doesn't hurt to read a holiday-themed romance collection--especially one that has to do with cookies!

Even though I was less enamored with Kate Angell's *The Gingerbread Man*, it was still entertaining to a point. And so, overall, I DID enjoy this anthology a lot and am ecstatic that I discovered one new author I'd be interested in pursuing: Donna Kauffman's *Where There's Smoke...* was immensely enjoyable.

*Now onto the stories:*

*The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap* collection features three best friends during the holiday times and their respective love stories. We first meet them during a community center cookie charity auction and the three of them talk about their holiday plans and whatnot.

#### • *Where There's Smoke...* by Donna Kauffman -- 4.0 Stars

Very enjoyable and fun! I'm glad to have found another new author to enjoy.

Clara is an accident-prone, bumbling news journalist with ambitious goals of writing human drama stories about the people of her town around Pine Mountain. Having just been "dumped" by a man she'd thought she'd been starting a romantic relationship with, this particular incident is witnessed by her boss--because Clara is currently the writer for the relationship columns at the paper, of course, this very public display in which she is "dumped" is not good for business.

However, pleading with her boss to give her a second chance, she lands an opportunity writing several features for a cookie baking column... the only problem is, Clara doesn't know the first thing about baking. In fact, any kind of incident involving the kitchen tends to lead to getting the fire department on speed dial for damage control before she burns down her house. Fortunately for her, an old best friend has just set foot back into her life and he just happens to be a fire fighter.

*Where There's Smoke...* was enjoyable the whole time through, making use great use of a dorky girl and her old college best friend as a great romantic synopsis. And while I'm typically not much for the "bumbling idiot girl = cuteness" device, Clara actually came off quite endearing. But probably because she wasn't entirely helpless in a kitchen given the right amount of schooling and help.

Will Mason isn't entirely unique as a main romance male character, but given his back history, he's given more personality--and that is what I loved about this couple. Despite being a muscular, sexy-as-sin fire

fighter in the present, Will is described as having been cute, but adorably lanky, having not quite grown into his own skin yet when he and Clara first met years prior to this story.

The relationship presented between the two was cute and sweet, and given that they were both best friends first before a brief separation and now a heart-warming reunion, I really, honestly DID enjoy watching them fall in love.

• ***The Gingerbread Man* by Kate Angell -- 2.5 Stars**

Potential that just missed the mark.

Abby has a secret side business that no one but her best friends know about--she makes and sells erotic-themed baked goods on the internet. For now, she mostly does business with women wanting party favors for bachelorette parties and the like. But Abby is determined to bring her secret business into the public. During the community center cookie charity auction, she has entered her anatomically correct gingerbread men as part of the cookie swap.

Somehow, the little tin of erotic cookies ends up in the hands of a passing stranger who is merely looking for directions to Philadelphia. And because of these cookies, our handsome stranger, Landon, gets distracted while driving in the stormy, snowy weather and ends up in a ditch. This is where Abby finds him on her way home and being that the snow storm was only going to get worse as the night went on, she makes the decision to bring him back to her home until the roads are clear and safe again.

To be honest, this story had a lot of potential, what with a romance taking place where a couple is stranded in a fairly isolated cabin, buried in winter weather and snow. On top of that, there are anatomically correct gingerbread men to contend with. I was looking for something fun and quirky and cute.

Instead, while the story wasn't really all that bad, it was also kind of boring. The writing style was also awkward--sometimes a little too wordy, and sometimes a little too dramatic. And, of course, both Abby and Landon were the stock-standard romance novel hero and heroine as well--perfect for each other, perfect as individuals... just absolutely flawless people who end up having great sex and falling in love for no reason other than because the author dictates.

Nonetheless, this was enjoyable in it's own way. Just not my favorite of the three stories.

• ***Sugar and Spice* by Kimberly Kincaid -- 4.0 Stars**

Cute, inspirational, humorous, and everything I typically expect from Kimberly Kincaid!

Lily is married to her baking and has time for nothing else. Her cooking process is just as meticulous as her ideals in life--straight-laced, unwavering, planned and strategic to a T. While she has her own cake business, her tiny kitchen is just not big enough if she wants to expand her clientele and so she knows that her next step is a storefront with a larger kitchen. Participating in the Pine Mountain Resort Christmas cookie baking contest seems just the means to get where she needs to go, with a monetary reward enough to start up a decent sized bakery.

But Lily finds herself going head-to-head against a charming, suave, and sexy chef with ambitions of his own--to leave his current position and make a name for himself, good enough to become the next chef of an upscale restaurant in the city. Pete's cooking style is professional and skilled, but at the same time, grand and

risky and too spontaneous for Lily to handle. When the two of them meet in the kitchen, it's quite the showdown, even as a simmering attraction begins to build.

Kimberly Kincaid has a writing style I enjoy--relaxed, humorous, fun. So even if I haven't entirely enjoyed all of her works, I still pay attention to anything with her name on it. *Sugar and Spice* certainly did not disappoint, with a short, to-the-point love story with a cute build-up, great characters, and a lovely Happily Ever After™. Lily and Pete clashed with each other so badly, both in personality and as chefs that it was extremely entertaining and fun to read, proving the whole opposites attract theory in some form.

Perhaps because this was a tried-and-true romance formula written well with likable characters. Perhaps because I wasn't expecting more from this story (or this entire anthology) than sweet little love stories. I ended up immensely enjoying this little story of a couple falling in love through competition.

In a word: It was fun!

#### **Final Thoughts:**

Short and sweet little romance anthologies are always lovely, and being a hopeless romantic for fictional romances, I don't turn them down. *The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap*, though actually a holiday-themed collection, still makes for an enjoyable read during the February Valentine season.

Sometimes these little gems just hit the right spot, because they're exactly what you're looking for, and don't usually pretend to be anything more.

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#### **2016 Reading Challenges:**

- Goodreads Reading Challenge
- BookLikes Reading Challenge
- Bookish Resolutions Challenge - **New-to-me Author #5 & #6**
  - February My TBR List meme
- Mount TBR Challenge

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#### **Susan says**

Where There's Smoke by Donna Kauffman

When flames from a recipe gone disastrously wrong send hunky fire-fighter Will Mason to pretty Clara Parker's rescue, the sparks really begin to fly! And once Will gets a taste of Clara, he aches for more than just a little sugar from the famously single food columnist

Really fun second chance story. Clara is the advice columnist for the newspaper and loses that job after a very public breakup with her boyfriend. She saves her employment by agreeing to do a series of Christmas cookie columns. There's just one problem - Clara is a disaster in the kitchen. While in a bookstore looking

for a simple cookbook, Clara runs into Will, her best friend from her freshman year in college. Will had had to leave school when his dad died and went on to become a firefighter. He's in the bookstore signing hunky firefighter calendars for charity. They are happy to reconnect.

Will had had a massive crush on Clara but never had the courage to try to move beyond their friend status. Now that he's seen her again, he's determined to make up for lost time. He just happens to be nearby when she sets her kitchen on fire during a baking attempt and comes to the rescue. With her house uninhabitable he offers to let her stay with him.

I loved Clara. She is rather klutzy, and doesn't have much in the way of self confidence, but she knows what she wants in life. She is determined to make this column work. When she sees Will again, she immediately remembers the good times that they had and that she had felt normal with him. She also discovers that she's even more attracted to him now, but figures that a guy like him has better prospects than she is. She's also hesitant to take a chance on ruining their revitalized friendship.

Will was great. He was determined to make the most of this opportunity with Clara. I loved the way that he understands her and sees past her klutziness. It was really sweet to see how he helps her with the baking parts of her column. His feelings for her keep growing, and he has a constant inner debate over how hard to push.

I loved seeing them grow closer over the days she was staying there, and how each of them was so hesitant to take a chance. The attraction keeps building, and so does the connection. I loved seeing Will finally take the leap. What he said to her was so romantic and sweet. I also loved that Clara was able to see that he loves her just as she is. The ending was fantastic.

### The Gingerbread Man by Kate Angell

Folks have always told fun-loving Abby Denton that her anatomically correct Gingerbread cookies are ... impressive. But those erotic cookies have nothing on the sexy stranger Abby saves from a snowy country road. Could Lander Reynolds be the Christmas treat she's truly been longing for?

Hot and sweet story of unexpected love. Abby has just started her online business of anatomically correct gingerbread men. Her contribution to a local charity cookie auction is purchased by a stranger who then disappears into the night. Driving home to her isolated cabin in the beginnings of a blizzard, she comes across the stranger's car in a ditch, with him unconscious behind the wheel. A harrowing rescue attempt has Abby taking the man to her cabin to recover until the storm passes.

There's an instant connection between Lander and Abby. When Abby finds out that the sight of her cookies distracted Lander long enough for him to lose control of his car, she feels really guilty, but she can't deny the attraction she feels for him. Lander feels the same pull, but it's a distraction that comes at the wrong time.

Both Abby and Lander are dealing with the pain and sadness of the loss of someone important to them. Abby's grandmother has recently died and she's having trouble getting into the Christmas spirit. Lander understands how she feels and makes a vow to help Abby through this time. I loved his sensitivity toward her feelings. It was really sweet to see how he ignored the pain of his injuries to put up her tree and help her decorate it. Helping her also helped him through his own grief over the death of his father just before Christmas the previous year.

I loved the building of the attraction between them. It was fun to see how Lander used touch and looks to

tease Abby as they got closer to giving in. The scenes between them were great. I really loved seeing them fall for each other and ached for them as the time they had to part grew closer. Lander was determined to see Abby again. I loved the ending and Lander's big moment.

Sugar And Spice by Kimberly Kincaid

Series: Pine Mountain (Book .5)

When caterer Lily Callahan goes up against hotshot pastry chef Pete Mancuso in the bake-off of the season, the stakes are high -- and scandalously passionate. Will the gorgeous gourmand steal Lily's heart -- and the top prize in the Christmas cookie competition?

Excellent story of opposites attracting. Both Lily and Pete have entered a Christmas cookie bake-off and both are determined to win. Lily is a highly organized, follow the rules kind of baker, who has spent the last month testing various recipes, looking for the best ones to use. Her dream is to use the prize money to open her own bakery. Pete is a bake by the seat of his pants baker, who hasn't met a rule that isn't worth breaking. Pete wants to use winning the contest to get the recognition needed for his dream job.

Lily knows Pete from his non-relationship with her friend Grace, and doesn't have a very good opinion of him. When she runs into him at the resort and realizes that he's competing also, she takes a momentary hit to her confidence. The biggest thing Pete takes away from their encounter is the instant attraction he has for her, and the knowledge that he can't do anything about it.

I loved seeing how both of them show up for the competition ready to take each other on, only to end up having to work with each other during the first round. Their differing methods create instant conflict when they can't agree on how to proceed. They eventually work it out but not without some issues along the way. Luckily for them, they manage to move on to the next round. An unexpected result of their partnership has the people running the competition asking them to do some other appearances together as their chemistry has viewers tuning in.

Over the next week they grow closer with the more time they spend together. Lily sees that there is more to Pete than the cocky pastry chef is willing to share, and what she sees, she likes. I really enjoyed seeing them work together at the community center, and how they came up with a plan to raise even more money at the fundraiser. I especially loved Pete's treatment of the boy Lucas, and how and why he understood him. I liked seeing how Lily was able to get Pete to open up to her about his past and the effect it had on her. The attraction that was building between them finally boiled over, and what they had was amazing.

When the final competition came, it required each of them to connect their pasts and their presents. With her happier childhood, it wasn't such a stretch for Lily, but Pete really had to face down some of his ghosts. I loved the bit of meddling that Lily did, though she worried that she may have gone too far. The influence that they had on each other, and the love that they felt, came out in a surprising way during that last competition. The way it turned out was perfect, and I loved the final result.

The epilogue was a grand wrap up of the three stories, with all three couples back at the community center where it all began.

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### **Jillyn says**

The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap is a collection of three stories that all center around three good friends around Christmastime. I'm not always a huge fan of these kinds of romantic reads, but I was definitely (and pleasantly) surprised with how much I enjoyed this book. It has just the right amount of steam, romance, and Christmassy atmosphere to make it an enjoyable December read.

The first thing that drew me in, admittedly, was the cover & title. It sounded cute, and the cover is just as adorable. It's simple, but effective, and would catch my eye on a holiday display.

The first story is called Where There's Smoke by Donna Kauffman, and I adored it. This story takes a look at the clumsy Clara Parker, who despite being unable to cook is given a job for the paper writing about Christmas cookie recipes. When a sexy fireman named Will shows up to save the day, Clara has to decide if she can open her heart again to this hero. I loved this story. I thought Clara was relatable- not TOO clumsy, but definitely not graceful and notoriously known for being single. And Will? Absolutely dreamy. I'd like one of him for Christmas too. Their relationship was cute and quirky and I was cheering for them all throughout the book.

The middle story is The Gingerbread Man by Kate Angell. Even though this was my least favorite story out of the three, it is still worth a read and is far from bad. Abby is known in her town for making gingerbread man cookies that are, well, anatomically correct. She even added a box to the cookie auction, but was a little surprised when a stranger was the one who ended up bidding on the risque treats. It isn't long before Abby saves a stranger from a snowy road- but could he be what her life has been missing? This was a fun read- with gingerbread man fun bits, how can it not be? I just wasn't as connected to Abby and Lander as I could have been, so I wasn't as invested in the story.

And the final, and possibly best, story is Sugar And Spice by Kimberly Kincaid. Lily is a caterer who takes her cooking, and her job, very seriously. Entered in the holiday bake-off against a seriously sexy and competitive pastry chef named Pete, their passion becomes hotter than the kitchen that they're baking in. This was fun and steamy to boot, and is the perfect thing to heat up a cold winter night.

All in all this is a solid collection of stories that are great to read during the holidays. Romantic and fun, this is a great pick for those of you who love romance stories without the smut. Thanks to Netgalley and Kensington for my chance to read this. This review can also be found on my blog, Bitches n Prose.

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### **Julie Barrett says**

The Sugar Cookie Sweetheart Swap by Donna Kauffman, Kate Angell and Kimberly Kincaid  
Wanted to read this book because it's 3 books in one and it's all on the same theme-Christmas sugar cookies. I love to bake and experiment. Recipes included.

Where There's Smoke by Donna Kauffman

Clara Parker has a job to do for the paper, cookie recipes and a column up til Christmas. Her friends Lily and Abby would help but they are busy with their jobs as well.

She buys a new cookbook and runs into her old college friend, fireman now, Will. Next day he checks in on her to discover her house on fire.

He saves her from trying out a recipe from her new book. She is now a guest at his cabin and together they learn about one another again and treasure what they've found.

She agrees to have Christmas with him and she does trust him. Hot steamy sex scenes.

#### **The Gingerbread Man by Kate Angell**

This portion of the saga is about Abby Denton and she is a baker and sells her atomically correct gingerbread men online.

Lauder is on her coach - she had saved him after the car accident where earlier he came to the town's center for their annual cookie swap and purchased the gingerbread men.

All he can recall is a peppermint stick penis! The blizzard will keep them snowed in for days and she knows how to use the cabin fireplace for cooking. He's concerned because of all the handicap equipment in the bathroom...

He's got bruised muscles in his chest from her dragging him up the hill and she's hurt her big toe. As they decorate the tree they find out a lot more about one another and remember their holidays of the past.

Bubble and glass blown ornaments are my favorites. never knew of the Austrian tinsel. Games of naked scramble and hot steamy sex...

She gave him a box of candy out of the dozen that was meant for her grandmother as a Christmas gift when he left. He remembered her wish and we wait to see if it will come true this year.

Such imaginations when it comes to decorating the cookies!

#### **Sugar and Spice by Kimberly Kincaid**

This part of the book is about Lily Callahan and she's a professional baker with a very small apartment to bake in. Clara is there to help her and she learns of the \$10k cookie contest. That would be enough for her to have a real business.

Peter Mancuso is the one who had dumped Clara but he didn't see it as such, just a different business side to their lifes. They are both competing in the cookie contest and there is a twist to the rules. They are paired and will be working through the first phase of eliminations.

They pretty much wing the recipe...the resort has the numbers in from the viewing audience and their segment was a lot higher than others and make a deal to keep them in the competition, maybe a kiss here and there on camera to boost the charity donations...

Especially liked how the very beginning is-the three woman and the book has each of their stories and the ending is them all together again and especially loved the recipes!

I received this book from The Kensington Books in exchange for my honest review

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#### **Dorothy Morawsky says**

WOW!!! Three books in one, all the same storyline, but three different authors, what an amazing job. Donna Kaufman, Kate Angell and Kimberly Kincaid you really did an awesome job compiling this book.

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