



Home for Christmas

Lily Everett

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Home for Christmas Lily Everett
Tis the season for family and love...

At least it's supposed to be. For Libby Leeds, however, the holiday season is just another reminder of things she'd rather forget. When she left Sanctuary Island as an orphaned child, she never thought she'd go back except in her dreams, dreams she's kept alive by writing monthly column of her fictional small-town life, until her publisher sends her back home for the holidays.

Owen Shepard is a fallen hero, wounded in action rescuing three of his fellow soldiers, but after a whirlwind of media attention, all this charismatic Army Ranger wants is to get back on his feet and make it to Sanctuary Island to be with his daughter in time for Christmas. What he didn't expect was to be put on a crash course with a columnist hiding her past. Will the magic of Sanctuary Island at Christmastime allow them to find healing together?

Home for Christmas Details

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Author : Lily Everett

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From Reader Review Home for Christmas for online ebook

Dorine says

Rated 3.5 - Sweet romance lovers will enjoy this story of forgiveness and finding extended family to cherish when we least expect them.

Elizabeth “Libby” Leeds and Owen Shepard are new characters in the SANCTUARY ISLAND series. Libby’s grandfather is Dabney Leeds and Owen’s sister is Sheriff Andie, so they have ties to the community. An entertaining holiday commences with these newcomers, including cameo appearances of characters from previous books, along with a few surprises.

Libby Leeds is a very unusual heroine because she has been living a lie and you’ll wonder how she’ll be redeemed. I enjoyed her story and her character development. Owen Shepard is a war hero and although he was severely injured, he has great hope to return to his team in Afghanistan. But first, Owen must do rehabilitation on Sanctuary Island at the therapy stables and spend Christmas with the daughter he has never met.

Determined to give the daughter he’s just getting to know the best Christmas ever, Sergeant Shepard agrees to spend the holiday with acclaimed magazine columnist Libby Leeds and her family. Libby has no idea that the life and lie she has been living is about to be exposed when she admires a video of Sergeant Shepard’s story. When her boss springs the idea on her that she’ll be hosting the famous war veteran at her non-existent home in Sanctuary Island, Libby can do nothing but tell the truth.

Libby’s boss is a shrewd businessman and although he’s angry about her deception, he convinces Libby to continue living her lie until the holidays are over when he’ll force her into retirement. Libby’s only concern is the money she needs for her uncle’s care with early onset Alzheimer’s, so she’s determined to keep her job. Can Libby convince Owen, her boss and her fans that she’s really America’s best loved hostess? Can she make her fictional life her dream come true? Not without a few mishaps that will endear Libby and her extended family to you along the way.

I love the SANCTUARY ISLAND series so I was very excited to read this fourth novel. I think because I’ve read all the books in this series, I was having a bit of trouble believing that none of the islanders questioned Libby’s authenticity. Her fans thought she lived on Sanctuary Island, so I thought someone on the island would have read her columns and wondered where she lived. To anyone reading this book without reading the others first, I don’t think that will be questioned.

My favorite features of this series is the quirkiness of the people and the islanders’ values. Although there was humor in this novel, I felt that some of the sparkle was missing. I can’t pinpoint exactly why I felt that way. Maybe because the characters I was most attached to didn’t have appearances in this novel, or that I didn’t have an emotional connection to either of the leads initially. I missed the scenes with the wild horses and I don’t remember much page time involving the therapy stables. Maybe I just needed or wanted more, and that can’t be a bad thing. I guess that’s it – I wanted more details about the couple’s interactions with others prior to the family dinner so that I felt more of a connection to them.

Even considering my nitpickings, I’m still mesmerized by Lily Everett’s talent. I gobbled up this book like candy and the family dinner was entertaining. Ms. Everett’s magic is creating unusual characters who are lovable, deserving and endearing. HOME FOR CHRISTMAS is a great story for small town romance lovers,

filled with holiday preparations, unexpected guests and a super sweet ending to melt your heart.

Read my reviews of books 1-3 in the SANCTUARY ISLAND series: SANCTUARY ISLAND, SHORELINE DRIVE and HEARTBREAK COVE at my site, The Zest Quest.

Reviewed by Dorine, courtesy of Romance Junkies and The Zest Quest. Digital ARC provided by the publisher through NetGalley.

Lady Heather says

"A copy of this book has been provided by the publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review"

4.5 this could only happen at Christmas Stars!

This was a wonderfully sweet and charming Christmas story.

Every character in the story is in need of a Christmas miracle whether it be forgiveness, reconciliation, acceptance or love.

The author did a beautiful job of intertwining the various characters stories and bringing them all together at the end for a heart-felt HEA Christmas.

Even though this is the forth book in the series, it can be read as a standalone.

Nadia says

Home for Christmas is exactly what the title suggests, basically like every touchy-feely contemporary romance ever. You have the scarred hero, both physically and emotionally, whose eye was inexplicably caught by the shy, homely heroine, who has issues of her own. And they're both home for Christmas.

The book is very predictable about everything, from plot to the characters, and it's mostly the reason why I couldn't get into it. The writing while engaging, relies a lot on telling rather than showing to get the story going. And it was soooo cheesy!

You can tell I'm not the biggest fan this book will have, but read and decide for yourself.

Thanks to St. Martin's Press for providing me with an ARC via NetGalley.

Sue says

Home for Christmas by Lily Everett was another enjoyable trip to Sanctuary Island for me.

Libby is a writer and a story teller...only everyone who reads her work thinks her stories are real. Including

her boss. When he comes up with a holiday plan on Libby's 'home' on Sanctuary Island that includes Libby's 'family' and an injured soldier, Libby has no choice but to come clean. The charade must continue though when her boss gives her an ultimatum, and Libby heads back to the place she hasn't been in years. Owen is on Sanctuary Island recovering from injuries and getting to know his young daughter. He has issues of his own, and the strong attraction to Libby is as unexpected as she is unreachable. After all, she already has her 'family'. Will either of them find peace on Sanctuary Island and the real family they long for?

The central plot to Home For Christmas is not really believable. Despite this, Lily Everett drew me into Libby and Owen's lives and made me care about what was happening. Libby truly is a story teller, with her own dreams unrealized. I liked her, I liked how open she was about almost everything and that she had her secrets, but didn't want to have secrets, and at the right times opened up. She is very enthusiastic in all she does! Gabe is an Army Ranger with lots of challenges ahead of him. He has big decisions to make, and while I didn't always agree with what he was doing or thinking, I understood him. The attraction and chemistry between Libby and Owen is palpable and was intriguing to follow along when they had to try to rein themselves in because of the situation. I truly hoped they could find a way to be together, because I could easily sense they were both hurting and could only be good for each other. Libby and Owen's characters develop well through Home for Christmas, and Gabe in particular really grows. This was heart warming and hopeful.

I loved the secondary characters! They all fit well in with the plot without overwhelming it. I really enjoyed Libby's grandfather, because I felt like underneath that gruffness there is a lot of feeling. It was great to see some characters from previous Sanctuary Island books and catch up with them. Owen's daughter is a sweet little thing who will at times makes your heart want to break and at all times fill it with love.

The setting of Sanctuary Island, the snow, and the season are all well described and I could feel Christmas in the air! It's a place I'd love to be!

Home for Christmas is part of the Sanctuary Island series, but in my opinion can easily be read as a stand alone.

I'd recommend Home for Christmas to any romance reader looking for a holiday read!

Carole (Carole's Random Life in Books) says

This review can also be found at Carole's Random Life in Books.

Well, this was a disappointment. I have read Lily Everett before and really enjoyed her work so I decided that this would be the book that I would read leading up to Christmas this year. I just knew that this would be a great read. Unfortunately, this book really didn't work for me. I am not sure if my reading tastes have changed since I last read this author or if it is just this book but this wasn't the enjoyable reading experience I had hoped it would be.

Libby Leeds has been living a lie. She is a well known author with a column that is supposed to be non-fiction but her life looks nothing like that column. She gets caught with her deception when her boss invites a well known hero to her home in Sanctuary Island for Christmas dinner. She is then forced to reconnect with family and do her best to be the woman the world knows from her column.

Owen was wounded in action and has been working hard to get back into shape so he can return to duty. He has recently discovered that he has a young child who is now living with his sister in Sanctuary Island. He is headed to there to get to know his child and get therapy. He accepts the invitation to have dinner with Libby since he wants to share the perfect Christmas with his daughter.

I didn't like Libby or Owen. Libby is living an absolute lie. Owen seems to only be able to focus on going back to active duty. Libby is even pretending to be married for a good portion of the book so this romance just never worked for me. I honestly didn't see a lot of chemistry between them. This is a very tame romance and I just didn't feel the spark that I would have hoped to see.

I think that my biggest issue with the book was that so much of the story seemed pointless. Once Libby opens up to Owen, I didn't see the point of continuing with the charade. There is a secondary romance that added nothing to the story and only contained a few short scenes. I found that I was often bored while reading this book and had to read passages more than once because my mind would wander.

I would say that the best parts of the book included the scenes with Libby's grandfather and Owen's daughter. Those two characters were the highlight of the story and I would have really liked to see a bit more of them. The book does have a very strong Christmas theme with just about everything Christmas making an appearance at least once.

I will not be recommending this book to others. I think that this was a rather forgettable story that was a bit too sweet for my tastes. I won't hesitate to read more from Lily Everett in the future.

I received an advance reader edition of this book from St. Martin's Press via NetGalley.

Initial Thoughts

This was a bit of a disappointment for me. It was overly sweet and I found myself rather bored at times. I couldn't connect with either of the main characters and much of the plot seemed pointless. Caitlyn and Grandpa were the highlights of the story. There was a whole lot of Christmas worked into the book which is another plus.

Emily (Mrs B's Books) says

My thanks to NetGalley and St Martin's Press, for providing me with a free copy for an honest review

Although this book is part of a series, it can most certainly be read as a stand alone book.

Libby is a journalist who writes a column in a magazine about her life on sanctuary island, only, the life she writes about is fictitious.

But as her little white lie has to come out to her editor, the man tells her she has a choice. Be fired or, host a family christmas for a wounded soldier just like in her column with his daughter.

The attraction between Libby and Owen is there from the beginning when they meet on the boat to the island, and stays there until truths are exposed and other relationships are formed.

It's a white Christmas, clean family feel good book that has a lovely HEA that is perfect to read sat next to a

roaring fire whilst the rain lashes down and the wind howls outside.

Kim says

I'm enjoying an early Christmas season with some lovely festive reads. This is part of a series that I haven't read- but I will definitely be looking out for more in the series on Sanctuary Island. It's another American small town series- which always draw me in. You get to fall in love with the characters and as it's a small town you soon get to know the locals.

Libby has been persuaded to create the perfect Christmas for a wounded soldier and his family- even though she can't cook! Owen is trying to rebuild a relationship with his young daughter and is hoping that they will have a Christmas to remember full of magical moments.

Owen thinks Libby is married- but they have an attraction between them. Will it get resolved and will they find happiness together?

It is a really atmospheric book- drawing you into that delightful Christmas bubble. The cover is so inviting - making you want to go 'Home for Christmas'.

With many thanks to Net Galley for a copy of this book.

Elizabeth says

I fell in love with falling in love at Christmas! I believe this is my first ever book by this author and it won't be my last. I thought Libby was an amazing character - spunky and a little on the shy side at first. Then she met Owen, a vet rehabbing on Sanctuary Island and the story was on! Throw in a child and you have a Christmas full of love, humanity and forgiveness. Lots of secondary characters were inspiring and very real. This is a wonderful entry into the holiday season and I highly recommend it!

Thank you to NetGalley and St. Martin's Press for the opportunity to read and review this book.

Julie says

Home for Christmas by Lily Everett is a 2015 St. Martin's publication. I was provided a copy of this book by the publisher and Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Home for Christmas is a sweet and emotional story of family, forgiveness, healing and hope.

Libby is a writer on assignment for the publication she works for and while she tried to weasel out of it, her boss has given her an ultimatum, so for better or worse, Libby returns home for Christmas. Her assignment? To give war hero Owen Shepard a heartwarming Christmas with his family on Sanctuary Island. Can she pull it off and still maintain her false persona?

I haven't read all the books in this series, but have immensely enjoyed the ones had to chance to read, thus far. This one is just a little bit different from the others, in that the characters featured here, Libby and Owen, only had familial ties to Sanctuary Island, and the story is more focused on the entire family and not just on

the romance between Owen and Libby, making this one fall more into the women's fiction or chick-lit genres that some of the previous installments.

The storyline involving Owen's daughter, is very sad and emotional. Owen has only recently discovered he is a parent and is having trouble adjusting to that type of responsibility. I got very frustrated with him and his fixation on returning to the army, which would mean abandoning a little girl who desperately needed him.

Libby was sort of an enigma, living a lie, and struggling to cope with the reality of her situation. Her family dynamic is certainly interesting and creates a lot of drama.

Since the story deals with a lot of rather heavy family issues, the romance is not all that steamy, but that seems more fitting somehow in this case. I enjoyed the way Libby and Owen rose to the occasion to do the right thing for themselves and their individual families, and managed to forge a family of their own in the process. So, while this one was not exactly what I was used to from this series, I still thought it was a strong addition to the Sanctuary Island collection.

So, if you like contemporary or women's fiction, emotional and touching holiday stories, and happy ever afters you will want to add this on to her holiday reading list. 3.5 stars

Toni FGMAMTC says

3.5 stars

Libby writes a column about her life in a small town. The problem is that it's all make believe. No one knows the real her so when a big story falls into the lap of her fictional life, she's backed into a corner.

Owen is that big news. He's a wounded war hero that has won the hearts of the nation. This Christmas he will be united with his daughter for the first time. What he wants for the future is uncertain.

He's unsure about what awaits him on Sanctuary Island. He's been semi-running from his past. She has no idea how she's going to pull off this character she's suppose to be in front of a live audience. This is a funny mix up story told from different points of view where the coverups keep building and the players go to crazy lengths to keep things rolling. Everything that can go wrong does, but it also goes very right. It's a story of family, forgiveness and love.

I recommend Home for Christmas to those looking to really get in the holiday spirit. It's sweet, funny, thoughtful and endearing.

*****Copy given in exchange for an honest review*****

Fangirl Moments and My Two Cents

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Lily (Night Owl Book Cafe) says

Libby Leeds has made a name for herself by sharing heartwarming stories of her perfect home life on Sanctuary Island as a world famous cook. Problem is Libby has not set foot on the island since she was a little girl, she Libby definitely isn't famous, let alone can she cook. Libby needs money for her uncle who took care of her after her parents' death because he is having an early case of Alzheimer's and the places that is perfect, is also costly.

Owen Shepard is a wounded war hero who is returning to Sanctuary Island in order to recover from his injury and meet his daughter for the first time. Libby's editor insists that Libby plays the part of the famous cook and cover the story of Owen Shepards long road back under false pretenses.

This was an odd story. I wasn't sure how I felt about the premise as a whole. Libby pretends to be someone who she is not in order to get money for her uncle. She writes a letter to Owen saying she wants to host a Christmas dinner for him and his daughter at her home (Owen just happens to be a fan of Libby's writing), but she doesn't know how to cook or how she is going to pull this off.

Off the bat their relationship is built on a lie. I can't understand the extend of damage this lie could really cause, but she was taking advantage of both Owen and his daughter – despite being a good of heart – that left me feeling a little questionable about the romance.

Owen would have been easy to like, but his determination to get back into duty and leave his daughter was again behind a little frustrating at times.

I wish that Nash had his own book, I felt like there was a lot more to his story, but his relationship with Ivy gets resolved fairly quickly in this book.

What I did enjoy is Libby's grandfather and how misunderstood, he was as a person and who he really is, just an old man that wants his family together on Christmas – and the two do not seem to realize his loneliness for a while.

Overall, this was just okay. I had a hard time getting behind the romances and the characters. I understood that there were good intentions behind both Libby's lies and Owen's need to run off and leave everything behind, but it just didn't completely work for me. It still ended up being a cute story, I just felt like it could have been better. The premise wasn't my cup of tea.

I received this book for free from Publisher in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

Kathryn says

Libby Leeds writes for a magazine, all about her wonderful life on Sanctuary Island where she is an

exemplary cook, wife and possibly mother! All is well with the world except... Libby doesn't actually live where she says she does and her editor has said she must provide a wonderful Christmas for a returned soldier/hero (Owen) and his daughter. Libby has to agree, because she needs to pay for the care of her Uncle Ray who is ill.

Libby does have a grandfather and cousin on Sanctuary Island so she has that going for her, but will that be enough to get her through. As for Owen he wants to connect with the 9 year old daughter Caitlin. He has never met her before. It's somewhat unsettling for Caitlin because for the first time in forever she has found security with his sister Andi and Sam her partner. (Heartbreak Cove #3). Now she is frightened that Owen will whisk her away or leave her and Sam and Andi won't want her.

As December begins they all find themselves settling in, taking risky steps towards and away from each other. At times all seems lost and that past hurts and family dissonance from the past will win.

I really liked all the characters, I enjoyed seeing Libby finding her feet, finding her place once more and winning through. I liked the struggle that Owen goes through, overcoming injury and then ultimately making the choice that a soldier/hero must make.

Another character we get to see a little beneath the veneer is Dabney Leeds. A somewhat grumpy old man, who has wrapped himself up in himself and harbored the hurts of the past. But... he has some surprises coming to him as well as a few of his own.

This story of forgiveness, second chances, love and family is a perfect Christmas story. While it is #4 in the Sanctuary Island series it could be read as a stand alone. If you don't like your stories heavily sexy then this will suit you. For me, it brought alive the perfections and imperfections of the magical season of Christmas.

Heather says

Having read several novels from the Sanctuary Island series, I was looking forward to another one. Especially one that centered around the holidays. All of these novels are contemporary small-town romances with endearing characters that are difficult not to like. Although there were a few points where I thought the plot was a bit difficult to believe, like how no one knew Libby was from the island or that she was the granddaughter married to a grandson? Overall though, the book was a great feel good holiday romance sure to appeal to most readers.

ARC received in exchange for an honest review.

Kris - My Novelesque Life says

HOME FOR CHRISTMAS
(SANCTUARY ISLAND: #4)
Written by Lily Everett
2015; St. Martin's Press (320 Pages)
Genre: series, fiction, holiday, Christmas, romance, small-town

RATING: 3 STARS

"Tis the season for family and love..."

In the previous novel, *Heartbreak Cove*, newcomer Sheriff Andie Shepherd is trying to build a quiet new life on Sanctuary Island when she learns she has a ten-year-old niece, Caitlin. Caitlin's mother has died and Andie's Army Ranger brother, Owen, has gone missing so she is all that Caitlin has left. With horse trainer, Sam Brennan they managed to give Caitlin the confidence and love she has always needed.

Just as the little family starts to settle into a routine Owen Shepherd has been found wounded, after trying to save his fallen soldiers and is now coming home. With all the publicity surrounding him all he wants to do is get on his feet and get to know the daughter he never knew he had. Before he even arrives on the Island he meets Libby Leeds who does not want to go to Sanctuary Island as her own past is too difficult to face. Yet she must face it or lose her job and reputation. Can the two help each other heal and give Caitlin the Christmas she deserves?

My two favourite novels of Sanctuary Island have been book 2 and 3 and when I finished book three I could NOT wait till we had Owen's story. However, I just couldn't like Libby and her story line in this book. I did enjoy Owen and Caitlin getting to know each other and finding a place for one another in their hearts. I will read the next book but I would need it to be a ★★★★ to continue the series.

I received an eARC from NETGALLEY

My Novelesque Blog

Claire Robinson says

5 - "At least we still have Christmas." Stars!

I have been waiting for *Home for Christmas* pretty much since I finished reading it's predecessor *Heartbreak Cove* back in February, and Lily Everett didn't disappoint, the wait was worth it.

Sergeant First Class Owen Shepard's reasons for being on *Sanctuary Island* bring this emotional and warming Christmas story right into your heart as you are reading it. Having joined the Army and spent the intervening years fighting overseas, recovery from almost fatal injuries on his last tour, as well as learning he has a young daughter he never knew about mean there are more than a few decisions he needs to make about his, and now his daughter's future. We met the spunky Caitlin back in the previous book as she moved to *Sanctuary* to live with his sister, until Owen was free to return home.

"You can't change what you did in the past but it doesn't have to overshadow your entire future."

Caitlin's early years were not spent in the most loving or nurturing of environments and because of that she is a very insecure and nervous little girl, the upheaval of losing her mother, moving to a new home and now meeting the father she never knew existed, brings about more than a few emotional moments, especially as it isn't initially all rainbows and sunbeams between them.

Libby Leeds was the perfect connector between the two of them, although in an untenable situation pretty much of her own making, she goes out of her way to make the first Christmas together for Owen and his daughter as special and memorable as it can be. Their own blossoming chemistry, as well as the side stories with her cousin Nash and Sanctuary's Police Dispatcher Ivy, kept this story moving along really well, it was a busy book but not overly so.

"It's hard not to sense magic in the air. It's hard not to believe in miracles."

It was also impossible not to fall in love with this book. I love this author, she manages to bring a community together in each of her books, without detracting the focus from the main characters, it makes you feel welcomed and at home, and what could be more perfect at Christmas-time!

"This is magical."

ARC generously provided via Netgalley, and it was a pleasure to provide the above honest review.
