



## Christmas at Carnton

*Tamera Alexander*

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**A Christmas novella to launch a brand new three-book series . . . The Carnton Novels** Amid war and the fading dream of the Confederacy, a wounded soldier and a destitute widow discover the true meaning of Christmas - and of sacrificial love.

Recently widowed, Aletta Prescott struggles to hold life together for herself and her six-year old son. With the bank threatening to evict, she discovers an advertisement for the Women's Relief Society auction and applies for a position - only to discover it's been filled. Then a chance meeting with a wounded soldier offers another opportunity - and friendship. But can Aletta trust this man?

Captain Jake Winston, a revered Confederate sharpshooter, suffered a head wound at the Battle of Chickamauga. When doctors deliver their diagnosis, Jake fears losing not only his greatest skill but his very identity. As he heals, Jake is ordered to assist with a local Women's Relief Society auction. He respectfully objects. Kowtowing to a bunch of "crinolines" isn't his idea of soldiering. But orders are orders, and he soon discovers this group of ladies - one, in particular - is far more than he bargained for.

**Set against the backdrop and history of the Carnton Plantation in Franklin, Tennessee, *Christmas at Carnton* is a story of hope renewed and faith restored at Christmas.**

## Christmas at Carnton Details

Date : Published October 3rd 2017 by Thomas Nelson (first published October 2017)

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Author : Tamera Alexander

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## From Reader Review Christmas at Carnton for online ebook

### Tricia Mingerink says

This is a really good prequel start to the upcoming series by this author set at Carnton (and I simply can't wait for them after this sneak peek!).

This one is set during the Civil War, though most of the focus of this book is on the damage that war caused on the home front for the women left behind. This author is so good at focusing on the small details to bring home that overall pain of that time. Like the women reading the newspaper, searching for and finding their husband's name among those killed. A new widow still grieving the loss of her husband and also being tossed out of her foreclosed home. The little boy looking forward to getting a train for Christmas like his father promised him--a father that died on the battlefield.

This is a tough book. Many of the themes are very subtly done and would be easy to miss except for small moments here and there.

Hopefully we'll see more of the characters introduced here in later books!

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### Megan says

"Christmas at Carnton" by Tamera Alexander is a sweet Christmas novella that will get you in the Christmas spirit. "Christmas at Carnton" is the second book I've read by this author. It's a novella to start off a new "Carnton" series. It is a longer novella at a little over 200 pages. It's the perfect read for a cozy winter's night.

"Christmas at Carnton" reminds me of a great Hallmark movie. Its characters are real, flawed people who you grow to care about. I especially like our heroine, Aletta, who is recently widowed with a young son and another child on the way. On top of that she loses her job and home. She has a strong faith that shines despite her hardships. She prays for others, helps people even when she is barely making it herself, and shows a great deal of courage. She is a wonderful picture of strength amidst great hardship.

"Christmas at Carnton" is an excellent story. I appreciate how Ms. Alexander puts a lot of history in, so you really feel like you've learned something while reading a great book. This tale shows the hardships women faced during the Civil War as well as Southerners. Being from the North, I don't know as much about the South and their side of the story. They are real people with hopes and dreams, some good and some bad. Most of the people Aletta knows don't even own slaves and they see the War as being more than just about the issue of slavery. Bravo, Ms. Alexander, for shining light on the lesser known stories of the War and making history come alive!

Content: I would give this book a PG rating. There is talk of a man banishing his wife's doubts that he desires her and then lying in bed and talking with her after the fact. There are hints that a woman who is behind on her mortgages is giving a man at the bank favors of a sordid nature. The word Negro is used, but not in a derogatory way.

Rating: I give this book 4 stars.

Genre: Christian Historical Fiction; Romance

I want to thank Tamera Alexander, Thomas Nelson and the Fiction Guild for the complimentary copy of this book for review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I express in this review are my own. This is in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's CFR 16, Part 255.

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### **Cheri says**

*Come on weatherman,  
Give us a forecast snowy white.  
Can't you hear the prayers  
Of every childlike heart tonight?*

*Rockies are calling,  
Denver snow falling,  
Somebody said it's four feet deep.  
But it doesn't matter,*

*Give me the laughter;  
I'm gonna choose to keep  
Another tender Tennessee Christmas,  
The only Christmas for me.*

-- Songwriters: Amy Grant and Gary Chapman

This is a novella, a prequel story meant to tug at your heartstrings, and it succeeds. A story that is partially about the loss and cruelty of war, set in a bygone era, on the Carnton Plantation, which really exists, in Franklin, Tennessee. It is also partially a love story, a story of love, and loss, and opening your heart again to all the possibilities of life.

The details of wars change over time, place, but the despair, heartbreak, and worry by loved ones at home remain fairly constant. This story takes place as Thanksgiving is about to take place and continues through the holidays that follow.

Recently, before I read this, I'd seen 'Ken Burns: America's Storyteller – American Sampler' (PBS) which, unsurprisingly touched on his Civil War Series. Included was a narration of a letter written by a soldier, Sullivan Ballou, a Major in the Second Rhode Island Volunteers, to his wife during the Civil War.

Reading this story felt a little like listening to the reading of that letter. The reflections on the past, the uncertainty of the tomorrow, and the fears for the future, yet, it never felt bleak.

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### **Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says**

I chose to read this book from my picks because it mentions the Battle at Chickamauga, Chattanooga and some other places. The Chickamauga Battlefield is about 15 minutes from our house here in Chattanooga

and this is one of the places me and my dog used to hike, dad would come with us a lot as well. I wanted to add some pictures of us but they are all on cd's unfortunately.

At the Battlefield there is a lot of land and trails into the woods where you can hike or ride your horses. We would go on the horse trails a lot because they have some steep ones and I loved walking up those hills and we would sometimes get to meet the horses and people along the way. We would hike from 2 to 4 hours, that is how big the Battlefield is but you could easily hike longer than that. They have monuments all over the place, even in the woods. There is also a visitor center where you can buy different things.

This story takes place at the Carnton Plantation in Franklin, TN. I have never been there myself but it's still there.

Aletta Prescott lost her husband, Warren to the war. Now she has to leave their home as she has no money to pay for it. She has a six-year-old son, named Andrew and a baby on the way. I felt really bad for her to be kicked out of her house that she lived in with her husband for so many years but that's the way it goes.

Luckily, Aletta gets a job as a cook at the Carnton Plantation and a room to live in for her and Andrew.

She's also helping with the Women's Relief Society auction to help the troops.

Captain Jake Winston gets sent to help the women after he is wounded in battle. He was one of their sniper's and a hit to the head stopped his career as his long vision sight was ruined.

It's a bitter sweet story of people helping people and finding love and friends in time of need.

\*Thank you to BookLookBloggers for a print copy of this book.\*

Mel ♥

MY BLOG: [Melissa Martin's Reading List](#)

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### **Karen says**

A lovely start to a new series!

Set on the Carnton estate in 1863 just outside of Nashville, Tennessee, in the middle of the Civil War. I love how this author ties together real people and places with her own set of fictional characters, making it feel so authentic. Her characters struggle with real-life problems--foreclosure, widowhood, single parenting, loss of income, poverty, pregnancy, loss of health--something many can relate to today even. They question their faith, but come out stronger for it, learning to trust that God has a plan for them despite difficult circumstances, especially in Aletta's case. "...even though she didn't know what the future held, she knew who held it."

The group of women who gather to bring support to the troops are inspiring too, as they rally around each other and unite in their purpose; they were fighting on a battlefield of their own, as Jake realizes. The romance is sweet and tender, and though it develops quickly, not unrealistic due to the circumstances. Some

interesting history, plus delicious recipes are included at the end too.

I look forward to this new series with a little tie in to the Belle Meade stories. Readers who enjoy historical Christian fiction with a romance will want to add it to their reading list.

(An e-book was provided by NetGalley and Thomas Nelson publishing. All opinions are my own.)

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### **Hannah says**

An excellent shorter Christmas story. Aletta is a young widow in 1863, partway through the Civil War—facing the birth of her second child, the loss of her job, and foreclosure of her home, all at the same time. For a novella this book is pretty chunky, which makes me quite happy! (Oh, if only it would be published in one of those darling mini hardcovers!...)

Jake has a new future to find after a head injury leaves him with impaired vision and an inability to shoot. It's devastating to the sharpshooter to realize he's no longer useful for the war effort. His general orders him to a house party as an ambassador of sorts, or as a sort of thank-you to the women's aid group so the general can show his gratitude by letting them meet one of the soldiers. He definitely didn't expect to run up against a fetching young widow and her energetic son and to feel his heart stirred by thoughts of home and family for the first time.

Aletta's son Andrew quite steals the show for me, also. He's such a vibrant and typical six-year-old.

There is so much I enjoyed about this book! Very good job, Mrs. Alexander. And I can hardly wait for that real-life love story we'll be getting next year, in the first book of the series.

Thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for a free review copy.

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### **Jennifer says**

3.75 stars.

This was a superbly crafted novella by Tamera Alexander. I don't normally enjoy shorts or novellas since most of them don't contain fully developed characters, settings, or plots, but this one sure did. I was completely immersed in this Civil War era tale, the historical details making this story come alive, and the characters in it were a delight. The angst was just right, not too drawn out but quickly resolved between two adults, and there was no OP drama whatsoever. There wasn't any unnecessary angst either, just realistic fears and qualms that anyone who had half a brain would have. The message of God's provision was uplifting and I am really looking forward to the next installment of this series.

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### **Beth says**

Christmas at Carnton is a lovely introduction to the Carnton series upcoming from Tamera Alexander. Though it's called a novella, it's actually a quite complete story, with very little feeling rushed or glossed

over. Perhaps in comparison to one of the author's full length books, it's short, but happily it's a full story. Aletta is an admirable lead, pressed into hard circumstances as a widow in the middle of the Civil War. The mother of a precocious six year old and a baby on the way, her determination to find a way to provide for herself and her children is compelling.

Jake, a wounded Confederate soldier, is tasked with helping the Women's Relief Society with their auction, however, he is doubtful that it will do any good. Though at first I felt a bit cool toward his character, he goes through plausible changes of heart that really endeared him to me. His sweet way of dealing with Andrew, Aletta's little boy, warmed my heart for sure.

As usual with this author, the historical details are wonderful. I love that there are real historical figures included in the story, and I appreciate how careful Alexander always is in her Author's Notes to explain what is based on fact and what is more fictionalized. She has provided great set up for the first full-length book in this series, and I am already so eager to read it. If you have a bit of room on your Christmas reading list, definitely consider adding this gem. In fact, if you enjoy historical romance at all, add it to your list.

I received a complimentary copy of this novel from the publisher. I was not required to post a positive review; this review is my honest opinion.

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### **Trisha Robertson (Joy of Reading) says**

See full review at: [www.joyofreadingweb.wordpress.com](http://www.joyofreadingweb.wordpress.com)

Bundle up and get ready for a Christmas story you won't soon forget! With the perfect setting and dynamic, resourceful characters Tamera has set the perfect backdrop for a perfect cozy Christmas story and the introduction to her newest series.

The next book releases in 2018 and I am excited to read more about Carnton Plantation and discover more about the people who called the beautiful plantation home.

Aletta's husband has died, leaving her and their 6-year-old son, Andrew to survive the civil war on their own. With the mortgage due, groceries to buy, and winter clothes needed for Andrew how will she manage to make it? With prayer and hard work, will Aletta find employment at Carnton Plantation? Will it be enough to save her home and see her and Andrew through Christmas?

Captain Jake Winston is a well-known and decorated sharpshooter, but an accident causes him to be sent to Carnton Plantation to assist in the Ladies Aid Society. He is less than thrilled about the assignment, but determined to make the best of it and sets out to help with the work at Carnton.

With 256 pages and 23 chapters, Christmas at Carnton is a nice beefy novella. The end wrapped up nicely while still giving you glimpses of what is to come in the future for Carnton Plantation.

As a special bonus, the end of the book includes favorite holiday recipes to bake and enjoy with family and friends.

(I receive complimentary books for review from publishers, publicists, and/or authors, including Netgalley. I am not required to write positive reviews. The opinions I have expressed are my own.)

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### **Staci says**

This Christmas novella was a nice introduction to the upcoming Carnton Series. Tamera Alexander is a master storyteller and does a nice job of blending in historical detail in her novels.

In 1863 times are difficult for all in Franklin, Tennessee and even more so for a widow that loses her job. Aletta Prescott is concerned about her ability to keep her home and provide food for her son. She is a lovely example of not feeling defeated and trusting God to show a path to an answer to prayers.

Most of all this novella whet my appetite for her new series to begin in 2018. My favorite character was Tempy, the cook at Carnton, who was based on the actual cook at Carnton during the time period.

My gratitude to publisher Thomas Nelson for a complimentary copy of Christmas at Carnton. I was not required to post a review and the opinions expressed are my own.

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### **Susan Snodgrass says**

Tamera Alexander purely knows how to tell a good story. Beginning a new series with this novella (which felt like a full-length book, by the way), she sets her story in the last 2 years of the Civil War, a time of unrest and great deprivations in this nation of ours. She writes with deep feeling and has created a cast of characters that were so easy to fall in love with, for this reader. I loved every single minute. I found myself crying through the last portion. I love it when an author brings out such emotion in a reader. Don't miss this one, folks!

\*I was given a copy of this book from the publisher via Net Galley. My review is my own honest opinion.

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### **Deanne Patterson says**

I just thoroughly enjoyed reading about a slice of life taking place at a slower pace than we do now. Where people had more time for each other and really cared enough to listen to what you said. The novella I just read is a prequel that sets up the story so you can enjoy the other 3 books in this series. The next book releases in Fall of 2018. I am so impressed with the research Tamera Alexander puts into not only this book of hers but all of them. It makes it so much more enjoyable to read all of her books. Historical fiction is a favorite genre of mine to read and I am always looking up details of what I read on my computer and there is no denying her research is tops! I experienced so many emotions while reading this, in fact it even made me cry. Heartache,despair,warmth,compassion,loneliness,faithfulness and more are emotions you will experience as you read this.In my own research I found out that Carnton Plantation is a real place that still stands and offers tours. Carnton is a historic plantation house and museum in Franklin, Williamson County, Tennessee, United States. The home was turned into a make-shift hospital during the Battle of Franklin. 7 generals were laid out dead on the front porch during the Battle. You can still see blood stains in the wood floors under the upstairs windows where amputations and surgeries were performed for the natural light coming through the windows. A large confederate cemetery is also on the property.

Highly recommended book!

Pub Date 03 Oct 2017

Thank you to NetGalley and Thomas Nelson--FICTION for a review copy in exchange for my honest review.

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### [p]aulie says

***i am absolutely astonished. i sit here minutes after*** having completed this title feeling wounded, empty to a degree, needing to feel a fraction of the tenderly layered chemistry this title provides. this is so pleasantly poignant at times, other times it is greatly heartwarming and radiant.

*christmas at carnton* is based on a real plantation house (currently a museum) in franklin, tennessee, built in 1826. the mcgavock surname in this story is the actual surname of the estate's original owners. it is set during the civil war, 1863, and is about recently widowed mrs. aletta prescott. her husband, warren, is another casualty of the confederates. hard times have led to the impending foreclosure of her home leaving her and her young son, andrew, unsure of what's next (there's a little bit more to it, but you need to experience it yourself). cut to having found opportunity of temporary employment at the plantation house to assist in raising funds for the war effort, she meets wounded(?) soldier, captain jake winston, and ***the. spark. is. set.***

***this is a clean romance, which, to me, should be*** a given when labeling anything romance (i don't think people should confuse romance with erotic/erotica/trysts). it is also considered christian fiction, and, yes, there is mention of believing god will provide, but i wouldn't say this is slathered in sermon; i'd be up front if it was. this is my first tamera alexander experience and i am entirely enthralled to read more of her work (this was a #0.5 with three more to come in the series). this author has a gift for wonderfully captivating description of elements of people apart from physical attributes. an example is how she relates the class, dignity, and strength of mrs. col. john mcgavock (carrie), owner of carnton. an even stronger example is aletta herself. i usually get verklempt when i read/hear about the love that a good woman, mother displays for her family by any means necessary in the toughest of times. *christmas at carnton* was no exception. ms. alexander also knows plenty about the subject she's writing, as you can feel its researched authenticity complimenting the allure she captures of the conflict both in love and war.

this is also a civil war era title, on the confederate's side at that, so we cannot escape the topic of slavery. it was difficult at times for me to grasp i was reading & *enjoying* this title. i will say that this is not focused on battles nor slaves (all but one, tempy, the cook, had been relocated further south), but it's not like there's not a (wrongly captive) elephant in the room. even while many characters were not in agreement with slavery, and even with mrs. col. mcgavock removing a lady from her home for disrespecting tempy, a scene that i highly enjoyed, ***still...***

*thanks to thomas nelson / harper collins and all involved in this goodreads giveaway.*

***\*\*\*\*\*which, by the way, giveaways will probably go by the wayside since the site is going to make it extremely difficult and uninviting to do so by charging exorbitant prices just to give books away starting early january. this is going to hurt indies most definitely as well as most anyone who currently lists. such a shame.\*\*\*\*\****

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## **Rebecca says**

"Please do not make this more difficult on me than it already is."

Aletta Prescott is not only widowed, she has just lost her only source of income as a seamstress; making survival even that much harder for her family of almost three. Desperate to locate employment, facing property foreclosure on her home, she applies for a temporary pastry chef position at a large Franklin, Tennessee estate.

"At this point, we still have every reason to believe your full sight will return . . . . But the apprehension in the surgeon's expression . . . . told him a different story."

Captain Jake Winston has been an heralded Confederate sharpshooter until a bullet pierces his shoulder, followed by a devastating head injury. Ordered to assist a local Women's Relief Society auction while convalescing, he meets the lovely Aletta Prescott and her rambunctious six year old son. The draw between them is surprising, especially to Aletta, who tries her hardest to settle for a simple friendship with the handsome soldier. As Christmas approaches at Carnton, will the gift of love be found under the tree?

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## **Lorraine says**

This was a beautifully written novella (that seemed as complete as a novel) that was a wonderful start to a new series from Tamera Alexander. Dealing with life, death, and love during the Civil War, Alexander brought this time period to life til I felt like I was a part of it. Having never heard of the Women's Relief Society, Alexander obviously devoted time to researching the role of this group in the Civil War and its support of the Confederate troops focusing on this group's hard work. Troubled times brought women together to help one another carry on both physically and emotionally creating love, friendship, and pride among this hardworking group of women.

I loved Aletta's never give up spirit and her relationship with her six year old son, Andrew. She was a hard worker, industrious, talented, and organized. It was due to her that the auction became such a success. Mrs. Carnton and Miss Tempy were both so lovable and such wonderful supports for Aletta both in her relationship with Jake and her close to term pregnancy. The changes in Jake from his "oh my goodness help a bunch of 'crinolines' " to his strong supportive help for their endeavor were amazing. Add to that his developing love for Aletta and his wonderful friendship with Andrew and Winder, he made a great hero!

I am so looking forward to the continuation of this new series from Tamera Alexander.

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