



## **It Must Have Been the Mistletoe**

*Judy Astley*

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Thea's parents decide to host a big family Christmas in a house by the sea. even though they are, in fact, about to split up. Thea herself is newly single - her sister and brother are both settled, with children, homes and a future. But Thea's boyfriend has ditched her in favour of his pedigree dogs, and Thea can't decide whether or not she minds.

There will be copious food and drink, holly and mistletoe, lots of bracing walks and a wintry barbecue on the beach. If it seems an odd way to celebrate the final break-up of a marriage and the Moving On to new partners, no- one is saying so. But then no-one had anticipated that the new partners might actually turn up to complicate the sleeping arrangements.

As Cornwall experiences the biggest snowstorm in living memory, the festive atmosphere comes under some strain. Will Thea manage to find some happiness for herself? Will the mistletoe work its magic on them all?

## **It Must Have Been the Mistletoe Details**

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Author : Judy Astley

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## **From Reader Review It Must Have Been the Mistletoe for online ebook**

### **Kitvaria Sarene says**

His was cute and interesting - and it did definitely have some humor.

A big plus for me was that sex is sometimes a topic, but there aren't any actual sex scenes in it.

A minus for me was the sometimes too random and unrealistic feel to the plot. Of course funny coincidences should happen in such a story, but the parents and their partners sometimes made me raise an eyebrow and go "really?".

I also start to wonder if almost every chick lit has to bring up the topic of loosing a baby. It's not a major part of the book, but it is mentioned quite some times. In this one it isn't overly heart wrenching or depressing, as it's been a while and the character has mostly gotten over it, but there are other problems in the world to be explored too...

All in all it was an easy, fun read that kept me well entertained all the way through!

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### **Clare O'Beara says**

This is a light contemporary read with some issues relating to a family over several generations who meet for Christmas in a Cornwall holiday cottage.

The parents, sort-of separated, are at the senior age now and deciding to sell the family home which is too big - and even get a divorce, though there doesn't seem to be any reason for it.

The sisters are one married with small kids at the lively stage, one newly single again from a relationship with a man who preferred poodles to a family.

The youngest generation include teens and early school children. So it is a lively account.

Now, if you're not really concentrating it can be hard to keep all the names straight as the voices sound pretty similar. Especially early on, as the narration jumps around you find yourself wondering why the teacher has brought the class with her on a journey - oh no, they are her own kids - but she didn't have kids - you go back a bit and discover that the 'she' you are currently following has a different name from the 'she' you were reading about a few paragraphs ago. I thought this could have been better presented.

The excursion to Cornwall is relentlessly Christmassy from the start so you consider that the festival has begun as soon as they arrive. I like particularly the expedition in the dark to poach a large bunch of mistletoe. A catering service is available so half the work is done for the family and some of them get friendly with the lads running the service. We can easily see that a comedy of errors is under way so just go along with it and laugh.

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### **Chrys says**

I love Christmas books, and this was fabulous - I'm a big fan of Judy Astley and this is one of the best books

she's written. Definitely a festive recommend.

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### **Sonja says**

Theas Eltern möchten Weihnachten zusammen mit der ganzen Familie feiern und mieten ein Ferienhaus in Cornwall. Sie laden Thea, ihre Schwester Emily und ihren Bruder Jimi nebst Anhang für die Feiertage ein. Thea hat gerade eine unschöne Trennung hinter sich, Emily fühlt sich überfordert mit allem und auch Theas Eltern haben Neuigkeiten, die erst verarbeitet werden müssen.

Mein Leseindruck:

Ein zauberhafter Weihnachtsroman mit einer schönen, manchmal humorvollen, manchmal auch nachdenklich stimmenden Familiengeschichte. Ein guter Schuss Romantik ist auch vorhanden.

Mir hat es viel Spaß und Freude gemacht, diesen Weihnachtsroman zu lesen. Die Atmosphäre, die der Roman aufbaut, ist sehr schön. Die Handlung ist gefühlvoll und herzerwärmend.

Die Figuren wirken authentisch und sehr liebenswert. Man möchte gerne Teil dieser Familie werden, auch wenn sie natürlich auch ihre Probleme haben.

Der Schreibstil ist leicht und angenehm, so dass es rundum ein sehr gelungenes Buch ist!

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### **Laura says**

Originally posted on:> <http://lauraslittlebookblog.blogspot....>

Firstly I have to apologise for the amount of times I say Christmas in this review and express my love for its gorgeous cover.

This was my first Christmas read of the year and it is more than safe to say that it has definitely got me in the Christmas mood. This was a great first Christmas read and I now cannot wait until Christmas!

I particularly liked that this story was set in Cornwall, which has a lot of summer childhood memories for me, so to get a little experience of Christmas by the beach was truly wonderful. Thea has a big family like me and although they are a little unconventional in this story and their reason for having a family Christmas in Cornwall, I really felt like I could resonate with them and especially with Thea feeling a bit on the outside of things.

This was incredibly enjoyable, entertaining and enough to get anyone in the Christmas mood! I don't think a novel has ever made me feel this Christmassy so early on in November! The setting, the mood the images, just everything had that magical Christmas, frosty feel to it. Judy is an expert at setting the Christmas scene. I now really want to experience Cornwall at Christmas.

If you are unsure of which Christmas read to start then this is definitely the one!

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## Andy says

Was hat ein Weihnachtsstollen mit diesem Buch zu tun?

Das Thema? Schon, aber nicht nur.

Auf einem Weihnachtsstollen liegt immer eine ganz dichte Schicht Puderzucker. Die einen mögen das und die anderen nicht. Dieses Buch war so überzuckert, dass man beim Lesen Angst haben musste, Karies zu bekommen. Aber die Schmerz- bzw. Geschmacksgrenze scheint da, wie schon bemerkt, sehr zu variieren, denn wie heißt es auf dem Buchrücken:

"Nicht schnulzig, sondern richtig schön romantisch, schließlich ist bald Weihnachten."

Da hat jemand wohl ein anderes Buch gelesen?

Was mir als erstes auffiel, war die Vorhersehbarkeit. Ich dachte mir bloß: das wird nichts, das wird nichts, die kriegen sich, die kriegen sich nicht und das wird passieren. Alles! Wirklich alles ist so eingetroffen. Mir war sogar sofort klar, was mit Emily los ist.

Die Protagonistin Thea ist komplett dumm, blind, naiv, mit dem Klammerbeutel gepudert. Dieses darum geht-das-nicht ist wirkt extrem konstruiert. Wie kann man seinem Leser als Autor zumuten, das nicht sofort zu durchschauen.

Thea ist nicht 8 Jahre, sodass man ihr solche Naivität nicht mehr nachsehen kann. Aber eventuell stimmt etwas mit Judy Astleys Wahrnehmung nicht? Allein wie sie das Thema Wetter umsetzt, war sehr unrealistisch. Auch wenn es in Cornwall so milde Winter gibt, wie inzwischen auch in Berlin, heißt das noch lange nicht, dass die Menschen noch nie von Schnee gehört hätten. Aber vielleicht hat Judy Astley ja wirklich noch nie Schnee erlebt. Ich weiß nur eines, wenn ich am Strand einen Schneemann bauen würde, wäre der sandig, weil er allen Sand mitnimmt. Nur mal so.

Oder die Muskatnuss! Keine Ahnung, wo sie das gelesen hat, aber als Halluzinogen habe ich die noch nie empfunden und ich benutze sie sehr gerne in meiner Küche. Man reibt etwas davon in die Suppe, doch so wie sie da ran geht, entsteht ein völlig verdrehtes Bild. Und so ist das mit allem möglichen. Ich konnte es auch nicht so betrachten, dass würde die Autorin ihre Figuren so handeln lassen wollen. Nein, sie erweckte den Eindruck bei mir, dass sie selber die entsprechenden Defizite hat. Bei ihren Figuren macht sie einfach nur adäquate Abstriche entsprechend ihres- der Autorin - eigenen Vorstellungsvermögens (logisch) und schon passt es.

Warum ich trotzdem drei Sterne gebe liegt daran, dass ich bemüht bin, genregerecht zu beurteilen. Und dieses Buch ist ein typischer Schnulzenroman. Nur weil ich das nicht lese, heißt das nicht automatisch, dass er für andere auch schlecht sein muss. Darum habe ich nur Dinge kritisiert, die damit nichts zu tun haben und dabei meine persönliche Messlatte niedriger gelegt. Andere erfreuen sich ja an dieser ganzen fluffigen Roman-Zuckerwatte.

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## Suze Lavender says

Thea's parents have made plans for one final Christmas as a family. They're about to split up, so things are going to change and they want to have everyone together one more time. Thea has recently been through something traumatic and is newly single, so she doesn't have anyone she can bring. She finally has the chance to be herself though. Her brother and sister both have a family of their own, so there are plenty of people to spend the holidays with. They're staying in a big house by the sea and there's a lot of delicious

food. There are some unexpected guests though as the partners of both of Thea's parents invited themselves.

The atmosphere might not be what everyone expected, but it isn't such a bad Christmas. There's the special magic of mistletoe, there's enough to drink and there's unexpected snow. It's a strange family Christmas with many surprises and Thea might get the biggest one of them all...

*It Must Have Been the Mistletoe* is a fun and festive story. I loved the idea of a big dysfunctional family Christmas in a gorgeous house by the sea. It has disaster written all over it and it definitely made me laugh. I like it when Christmas stories are happy and cheerful and this is a really good one. There are some unexpected twists and turns and the ending is lovely and romantic. I enjoyed reading this amazing story very much.

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### **Kim says**

I loved this book from page one. It was supplied from NetGalley for a review with many thanks. A lovely festive read- but set in a gorgeous rambling house in Cornwall so it felt right to be reading it in the summer.

After being invited on a family holiday together in Cornwall- many family secrets and niggles are exposed. Thea's parents who organised the holiday are getting divorced after spending a year separated but living in the family home. They both have secret partners- who amusingly manage to invite themselves to share in the festive fun.

Thea, a schoolteacher, is nursing the loss of a baby who was due over this Christmas time. Her sister is fractious with her own children- why is she so fraught when this should be the perfect, cosy round the fire time for a young family.

Thea was asked to compile a timetable of compulsory activities to extend the bonding experience- uniting young children, a teenager, 3 siblings , grandparents and then the unexpected plus ones. Will they all join in with beach barbecues in severe snow storms?

I was so engrossed in this story- I really didn't want it to end. I want to book a holiday in this lovely house! The characters were all well rounded and interesting. I loved the addition of the unexpected partners, just imagining being stranded with the very last people you really want to spend Christmas with.

I highly recommend this one- perfect for any time of year. It leaves a really warm feeling behind.

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### **Samantha says**

I was really excited to be able to be part of Judy Aslley's blog tour for this wonderful Christmas book.

This has been one of the first Christmas books I have read this year and it really got me into the festive mood, I didn't even mind if it was only October when I was reading it!

This story is about Thea and her family; they are staying in Cornwall for the Christmas period and I could imagine myself there. This for me had a personal touch to it, when I was growing up I spend a lot of time

down in Cornwall as my grandparents loved there. We went for summers and Christmas's some year. I must admit that was my favourite time of year to visit. Although it was cold, it was also cosy and I miss the coal fire smell even today. I loved that this book transported me back to Cornwall and wish that I would be able to spend this year down by the sea for Christmas!

I loved this story, it wasn't too long which also I thought was nice, it wasn't rushed and I felt that I could lap it up, the setting, the plot and the characters I just loved it. This story really had the magical feeling with it.

Thea's parents are getting a divorce but have organised this festive holiday for the whole family. Thea's life has not been plane sailing, she is a school teacher and mourning the loss of a baby, who was expected this Christmas. All the characters in this story are believable and likable, which makes this a very quick read as I just wanted to know what was going to happen with them all.

The novel centres around the family and at Christmas time family is the most important thing. It is about adapting to situations and knowing your family is always there for you. I also loved the book boyfriend in this book, uhum, the surfer landlord... no more needs to be said!

This has been the first Judy Astley book I have read, however it will not be my last. This was a nice easy read, one which left me feeling warm inside and wishing Christmas would come early!

I would like to thank the publisher for sending this in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Hanne says**

Comfortable mood, likeable characters. Simple story, but comforting and free of nasty behavior and people. Just as a Christmas romance ought to be. Easy on the nerves, and I am definitely reading the follow up.

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### **Book Addict Shaun says**

Finally a truly festive read! I think this is my third festive read so far this year and it has been the only one to live up to its title and cover. At this time of year there's quite a few books published that have a festive cover and blurb only for the book itself to be a let down where Christmas is concerned. This book is Christmas from beginning to end, and I loved it. Judy has captured the festive season incredibly well, and this book will definitely get you in the mood for the upcoming festivities, even if you're a bit of a Scrooge.

Christmas is all about family for me and spending it with your loves ones. The premise for the story is quite a different and unusual one, and one that certainly has scope for a number of problems to occur (which they do)! Anna and Mike are getting divorced but want to spend one last Christmas together as a family, so they rent out a cottage in Cornwall. Their children, Thea, Jimi and Emily obviously don't want to see their parents split up but join them in Cornwall anyway, and the siblings aren't without problems of their own. Thea especially as she has recently split up with her boyfriend. Will Cornwall help her get over the break up? Or perhaps a certain man could help with that... The family also get some unexpected visitors in the form of the parents' new partners. Awkward.

The setting of this book is just wonderful. I was transported to the cottage and then when I wasn't reading the

book I was disappointed and wanted to get back there. I've always said that I wouldn't like to spend Christmas away from home, it would feel strange and that might be because it's all I've ever known. This book has had me thinking that perhaps an escape would be ideal, and a nice change from the norm. The setting here I definitely wouldn't say no to. All through the book I was half expecting the family to turn up to Evie Flynn's Beach Cafe! The fantastic Cornwall cafe created by Lucy Diamond.

The characters in the novel are all realistic and believable and the family tensions and arguments you get at any get together are present here but there is the underlying message of love, and of families spending time together and enjoying themselves. I think everybody will recognise either a bit of themselves in some of the characters or bits of your own family members. Spending time with family can be both annoying and enjoyable at the same time and all aspects of that life are plain to see here. Books like this can be a little predictable in terms of where the story is going to go, but that's the comforting thing about picking up a book at this time of year. You want that bittersweet, romantic ending that makes you feel good inside and happy about the upcoming festive season.

Shockingly this is my first Judy Astley read but it definitely will not be my last. If you are looking for a perfectly festive read this Christmastime then stop looking, you've found it and it's called *It Must Have Been the Mistletoe*. Buy this book, devour it and fall in love with its setting and characters as I did. This book comes highly recommended by me.

Thanks to the publishers for the review copy.

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### **Rachel Gilbey says**

I love every second of this book. Was a lovely modern family Christmas in Cornwall, with surprise visitors, a few secrets and just loads of light hearted moments.

Loved the thought of the mistletoe having magical properties.

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### **Sophie says**

(review copy)

#### **Posted in full <http://www.reviewedthebook.co.uk/2015...>**

*It Must Have Been the Mistletoe* is my first Judy Astley book and when I reached the end and saw the long list of her previous books, I had to wonder why. This was such a cosy, entertaining read and it was so very festive and Christmassy that I half expected to be snowed in the moment I put the book down, finishing the book in the space of a few hours. I loved how this book really was all about Christmas. Every page screams Christmas at you from the masses of snow, the mistletoe, the Christmas trees, the presents, the turkey, the songs and the carols and mostly, the big family get-together. Family is what makes Christmas for me and your family may not be perfect, everything might not be rosy but to all be together at Christmas, sat around the big tree, reliving family memories and bickering and teasing and stuffing your faces – that is how I picture the festive season and that's what we get in *It Must Have Been the Mistletoe*. I've read few books

that have captured the essence of Christmas like this one.

Anna and Mike have been split up but still living amicably with each other for a little while now after their long and happy marriage. However, things are about to change as they've decided to get divorced whilst new people enter their lives. This is going to be their last Christmas still married and so they've asked for things to be a bit different this year – inviting their three children, spouses (in two cases) and kids to stay in a cottage they've rented in Cornwall so they can all spend Christmas together and happy. I liked the idea of this and how Anna and Mike were still good friends instead of at each other's throats, and what a beautiful destination they chose to spend Christmas. Their children, Thea, Emily and Jimi were each very different people and had their own stories, although we hear a lot more about Thea and Emily than we do Jimi. They all went along with their parents' idea to spend Christmas in Cornwall and it was nice how they were all still together as a family rather than spending Christmas away from home, separately.

I think one of the reasons I liked this book so much was how Judy wrote it all so realistically, I could see the events in this book happening in real life, too. They were a close-knit family, each with their own individual stresses (or joys) and nothing's too out of the ordinary, there's nothing you can't envisage being fixed and there's nothing massively groundbreaking – just your typical family facing the good and bad points in life. Having said that, although the book is quite comfortable in one aspect, there's a snag in that as the unexpected arrivals of Charlotte and Alec, the new people Mike and Anna have been seeing, cause a bit of a stir. Tensions are at a high and everything starts to become a lot more hard work for everyone. I think you kind of know where this one is going, but I enjoyed every second of seeing it work out.

The character we get to know the most in *It Must Have Been the Mistletoe* is Thea, and I found her to be very likeable. She's recently split up with Richard and she's still working out her plans for the future. She knows she wants a cat, but that's about it. I really wanted Thea to meet someone new and someone who appreciated her, for she was a lovely, caring person who'd gone through her own heartache and deserved someone who could be kind to her. Thea would like a new relationship too but she doesn't help herself once she's in Cornwall, since the only person she's drawn to is gay. Sean was my favourite character – he was such a laugh and yet very considerate with it. I looked forward to his parts in the book and always had a smile on my face when he was around. Though saying that, there were so many well-crafted characters in this book – one for everybody to relate to. Judy really draws on a family Christmas effortlessly and everything transpires naturally throughout the book. I did want maybe a slightly longer ending – it felt a tiny bit abrupt, but in the same way it was probably just because I didn't want the book to end. Judy writes a gorgeous setting and I was hooked on this book from page one – wanting to head to Cornwall with my family for Christmas too. *It Must Have Been the Mistletoe* is a warm, witty and very amusing festive story – well, well worth a read!

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### **Nessa says**

First book I've read by this author and I absolutely loved it. I will definitely be reading more by this author.

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### **Elaine says**

I do love a Christmas book, every year I read a few and I have to say that this is probably the best I have read. It is just Christmas, pure and simple. Thea and her family are staying at a country house in Cornwall for

the festive season in a story that is cosily, Christmassily predictable. You don't have to guess too hard about what is going to happen, just lie back and soak it all in! Apart from the usual tensions, disagreements and misunderstandings that are going to arise when a large family gets together, there is romance, new beginnings, gatecrashers and the laying of old ghosts to rest. The story is jam packed with snow, holly, ivy, Christmas trees, carols, mince pies, presents and of course the mistletoe!

I was so wrapped up in this story, caught up in the characters and what was going on, that I actually started panicking at one point that I hadn't done any Christmas shopping. I even looked out of the window at one point at the September sunshine and thought "where did all the snow go?"

If you want a story that is guaranteed to get you in the mood for Christmas, then this read is a must. Many thanks to the publisher for the review copy.

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