

LoveReading Reader reviews of The Christmas Cafe by Amanda Prowse

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.

Judith Waring

What a really lovely story this is and so easy to read. And, I have to say, so very different to 'A Mothers Story' which I reviewed earlier in the year.

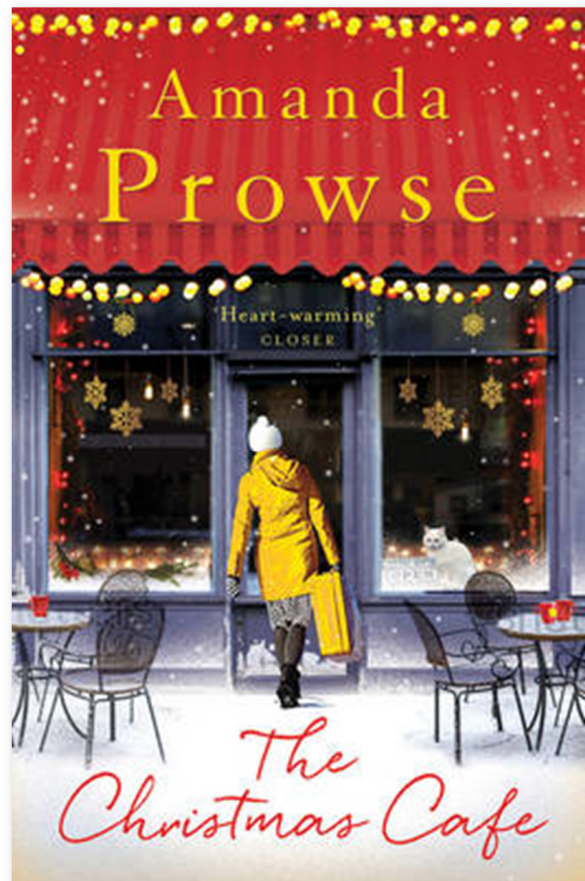
This is a much more laid back gentle storyline but still with a good emotional theme of complicated family ties between three generations of the same family, and also that of a lost love, a first love, which is one of the strongest you can experience and which we can all relate to although we don't all get the same happy ending.

I found it to be an engaging story with two strong lead female characters and set, eventually, in my beloved city of Edinburgh where I used to live, so that was the icing on the cake for me and it simultaneously took me down my own dusty memory lane which was lovely.

The chapters rolled along effortlessly, I never wanted to put it down and I finished it within a couple of days.

It's totally absorbing, warm, comforting and a real pleasure to read and I'll be looking forward to passing this on to friends and family to read too.

Amanda Prowse is a gifted storyteller and I am looking forward to discovering more of her work.



Humaira Kauser

Festive. Beautiful. Heart-warming.

I loved this book. I loved Bea and the way she acted. It was really nice to get in the festive spirit this early (It's only October!). There aren't enough Christmas books around and it was lovely to read 'The Christmas Café'.

I haven't read any of Amanda Prowse's books but I will definitely invest now. I love the way she writes- she has a way with words.

Sarah Musk

A lovely warm hearted tale about true love and how two people eventually find each other from the opposite ends of the earth.

I really enjoyed 'The Christmas Café'. It is a lovely warm hearted story about true love but also unselfish love. It is about two people who fall in love when young but cannot be together because one of them is married with children and cannot abandon their young family.

The years pass and they both eventually become free and this story is about how they find each other from opposite ends of the earth. There are other elements to the story - namely how you can lose people you love even if they are still physically present in your life. The book makes some very astute perceptive observation about life and relationships which really make you think.

I would certainly read another book by Amanda Prowse. She tells an intelligent life affirming story which I think many people will enjoy.

Sarah Harper

A story of lost love which captures snowy Edinburgh and Sydney cafe-culture perfectly. This is a lovely, peaceful, pre-Christmas read with delightful characters.

Independent Bea has come to a crossroads in her life. Suddenly widowed at only fifty-three, she can continue with her comfortable life, running the artisan cafe which she adores in Sydney, or she can seek out her one true love which she lost decades ago. As she ponders this she attempts to reconcile the rift which has developed between her and her only son. Bea had a rough start in life, falling in love and pregnant at only 18, she was disowned and thrown out by her family, left to raise Wyatt on her own with no money or support. Despite their strong initial bond, she and Wyatt have grown more estranged and Bea mourns the

loss of closeness that they once shared. It turns out to be events in the life of her granddaughter, Flora, which gradually shape the route that Bea will take and gently nudge her towards her destiny. Their blossoming relationship, and the sympathetic guidance Bea provides, begins to heal the family's wounds and, with the help of her mysterious e-penfriend Alex, eventually leads the pair to snowy Edinburgh in the run-up to Christmas. Will Bea use this opportunity to seek out her lost love and finally find peace or is it too late?

Overall, this left me with slightly mixed emotions. I really enjoyed the story, it was an easy read and the characters were engaging and likeable. Bohemian Bea with her silver bangles was delightful and all of the supporting characters were equally affable. The story was well orchestrated and the snowy charm of Edinburgh at Christmas was captured perfectly. However, I found certain aspects slightly contrived which meant it lost a bit of its shine for me, but nevertheless this would be a lovely, peaceful, pre-Christmas read.

Angela Rhodes

Bea is a fifty three year old widow, runs her own deli in Surry Hills, Sydney. She believes she will always be alone, even with a son, daughter-in law, and her beloved granddaughter Flora.

By chance, she gets an email from a cafe owner in Edinburgh, who quickly becomes her "e penpal". With her son and his wife going to Bali, for a few weeks and Flora not wanting to go, Bea decides to take Flora on a holiday to Scotland.

What she finds there will make you smile, laugh and if you're like me, sob buckets! **This is the first Amanda Prowse book I have read, I am sorry to say, but it will not be the last. It is the perfect Christmas book.**

Emily Curnow

This novel fulfills every expectation offered by its title. It is a nostalgic, feel good story, set during the festive season. We see the characters between two locations, the hot summer of Australia, and the bitterly cold Scottish winters. It tells the tale of bereaved Bea, who is in search of a new life, and finds it. Her story brings together the past and present, loss and love, sadness and joy. With a guaranteed happy ending, the novel offers the smells and sights of Christmas. It is an easy and quick read, which is highly likely to please its reader. I look forward to reading more by Amanda Prowse.

Julie Bickerdyke

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and was a bit surprised that I liked it so much. Amanda Prowse is not an author I have read before and this is not a genre I choose regularly.

There were some interesting themes woven into the story and that is what kept it real. The book starts with the loss of a husband and deep grief but also covers (for various characters) lost love; teenage pregnancy; being a single Mum; parent-child relationships; the angst of teenage friendships and school life.

I found it fascinating how the author managed to include all these diverse life issues by using secondary characters to bring depth to the story. The book was well written and kept me engaged throughout.

The over-riding message of this lovely book is that 'Life is for the brave', which is a great message and it's lovely that the book has a message.

The only slight negatives are that the ending was a little bit too neat and I started off a bit aggrieved at the assumption that everyone over 50 has grey hair and should be retired.

You can follow Julie on Twitter: @JulesBickerdyke

Maureen Gourlay

Really engaging story and nice to have a "mature" heroine in this genre. Bea, a widow, finds her life perhaps is not as over as she thought. Will make great Xmas gifts!

Bea is recently widowed and although she had a good marriage we know there is something, or someone hovering in her background, and that there will be more to come for her than just widowhood. Loved the diverse locations.

This festive story will solve all your Christmas present buying this year -so buy it for all your friends!

Jan Kirkcaldy

This book was a joy from the moment I started reading it and yet it was not really my sort of book at all. Somehow the characters caught my imagination and I could empathise with most of them. Bea, the not so old widow, the young

helpers in her cafe, and her son, daughter in law and 14 year old grand-daughter - all seemed very real and in the same way I assume life in Sydney could also be as described. True, the story was a bit of a modern day fairy tale and highly improbable with a predictable outcome. Nevertheless as Bea and her grand-daughter headed for Scotland for a holiday and maybe a search for a lost love it was a pleasure to go with them. **It was an enjoyable escapist novel with a feel good factor that left me with a smile on my face. I think many people would be the same.**

Barbara Goldie

Put this on your Christmas list, perfect for the time of year, nostalgia and true escapism. Grab the tissues and curl up with a quick easy read. Join Bea on her journey, you will not regret it.

I had seen Amanda Prowse's books on the bookshelves but had never read one. I am so pleased I have and will be searching out more of her work. 'The Christmas Cafe' was a lovely read it has a very natural flow, the descriptions are detailed and believable from page one. The hospital, Sydney, Edinburgh and the Cafés are diverse locations but are all brought vividly to life. The storytelling and observations are superb with love, lost love, jealousy, hurt, family relationships and much more to keep the reader entertained. The characters are well draw and true to life but still have individual personalities. Bea quickly draws us into her life and her emotions, makes us cry, smile and laugh as well. It is a nostalgic read just right for the Christmas season; it has the feel good factor about it and a perfect ending to round it off! Just like Christmas should be, curl up on a dark night, get the tissues ready and join Bea on her journey.

Edel Waugh

This was probably one of the loveliest Christmas books I have ever read. The story is about a woman called Bea who owns a cafe, and through that, on an online forum for cafe owners worldwide she meets another cafe owner on the other side of the world and they begin a friendship. The story is based in Australia and Scotland and it was lovely experiencing the story from both settings.

*This story is about family, love and timing, and how important all these things are especially at Christmas. **I closed this book with a smile on my face***

and a warm feeling in my belly and I would recommend this to anyone who needs a book to get them in the mood for Christmas and leave them with a feeling of hope.

<http://www.edelwaugh.blogspot.co.uk/>

Dana Captainino

This is a nice easy read and focuses on a fantasy or a reality that many people have contemplated. The revisiting of a past romance - a one true love.

The story begins as 53 year old Bea is widowed. She has had a good life so far. She is the proprietor of a successful coffee shop in New South Wales. And - she misses her husband.

As grief swamps her she emerges herself in work and in the lives of her colleagues. And then she receives an email from a cafe owner in Edinburgh which sets off a chain of events that hurtles her back into a life and love she thought was gone forever.

This light hearted story is a heart warming tale and proves once again you are never too old for love.

Emily Wright

Ideal for winter evenings curled up in front of the fire; a big hearted festive read which perfectly captures the spirit of Christmas.

Bea Greenstock is used to grieving; she lost the love of her life years ago and now her beloved husband Peter has passed away. To keep herself busy, Bea immerses herself in preparing her Sydney café for Christmas and takes her teenage granddaughter Flora under her wing. When Bea is contacted by a café owner in Edinburgh, who offers a very welcome hand of friendship, Bea and Flora decide to take a trip to Scotland. Surrounded by wintry festivities, the landmarks of Edinburgh make Bea feel closer than ever to a figure from her past...

Bea, as a slightly older central character, has had plenty of time to accumulate regrets and mistakes but also has a lot of wisdom which she shares with the next generation. I felt Bea's life experience really added to the emotion in the novel. The contrast between the wintry Scottish Christmas and the sunny Australian one beautifully mirrored the difference between the lonely Christmas Bea was

dreading and the jovial celebrations at the end of the book.

'The Christmas Café' made me cry at the beginning and end. This is testament to Amanda Prowse's characterisation; I cared about the characters right from the first few pages of the novel. I loved how the author pulled me into Bea's story with poignant emotions, wonderfully portrayed characters and a sprinkle of Christmas magic.

Kathryn Whitfield

A wonderful festive story for Christmas

I adored this book. It is a beautiful story full of love, mystery and Christmas.

The story swept you along from grief to happiness and from Sydney to Edinburgh. I loved it and just wanted to read more and more.

The descriptions are wonderful, of Australia and the snowy cold Scottish winter.

I will definitely be reading more from Amanda Prowse.

You can follow Kathryn on Twitter: @kathreenieA

Susan Mooney

Love, Loss & Family is what it's all about. From sunny Oz to the grey, bleak cold Edinburgh winter, where love really does shine through.

Bea as a single mother struggles on her own to bring up her small Son singlehanded. But her luck takes a turn for the better when she goes for a job & gets much more than she ever dreamed possible. Marrying Peter, her boss who is quite her senior, Bea's life becomes one of happiness & companionship, but with no romantic spark.

Her Son, has many privileges as he grows up, including a private school, but as he gets older he distances himself from his step father & Bea.

The death of Peter, doesn't see any changes & Wyatt still keeps his distance, until his teenage daughter Flora is packed off to spend time with Bea.

Fate lends a helping hand & Bea & Flora, embark on a trip of a lifetime to Edinburgh, to meet up with the mysterious owner of The Christmas Cafe, who had become an e-pal a few months before.

Happy endings all the way here. Plenty of emotions along the way

An enjoyable read.

Margaret Madden

A charming, festive read which balances grief with hope, while showing that there can be new beginnings, whatever age you are.

Most book reviewers receive their Christmas themed books at the end of the summer, and have them read and reviewed by September or October. I have to admit that I cannot do this. I can't read a Christmas novel while wearing a bikini, or when there is no fire in the grate. I need dark evenings, cozy jumpers and a variety of Christmas decorations around me. Hence, this is only my fourth Christmas read this season, However, it's a cracker (see what I did there)!

When Bea is widowed in her early fifties, she is feeling lost and lonely. Her son has his own family and has moved on. Her cafe, in Sydney, Australia, is her world and yet she still feels something is missing. Her memories come back to her and she dreams of her younger days with a heavy heart. When she is invited to join an online club for cafe owners worldwide, she learns how to use her laptop properly and finds some virtual friends. Her granddaughter, Flora comes for a visit and soon the girls are planning a visit to the other side of the world, where snow replaces sand and Christmas decorations don't look out of place. Scotland bites them with its chill, but embraces them with its charm. When they arrive at the Christmas Cafe, they step into a unknown scenario which may just change their lives forever...

This is my first time reading Amanda Prowse, yet I have many more of her titles on my bookshelves. The cover was calling to me, in all its twinkling glory and the fact that the author is compared to JoJo Moyes and Freya North could only be a good thing, right? I devoured it in a couple of days, and am now a huge fan. I'm off to root out her previous novels so I can get stuck in

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Follow Margaret on Twitter: @margaretbmadden

Isobel Finbow

What a treat. Totally absorbing. A book is not just for Christmas!

A fabulous read, totally engrossing and endearing. It covers several generations and not immediately sure how it will thread together it knits together beautifully and very cleverly. The characters are complex and it deals with

modern dilemmas of growing up at all ages in complex family units.

I couldn't keep my nose out of this book and it was my first by Amanda. It has inspired me to read more by her. It is light, frothy but with substance a real joy. I did not want it to end and fell in love with the characters.

If you enjoy Katie FForde, Freya North, Jenny Colgan you will gobble this up like a good muffin and cappuccino at your favourite cafe.