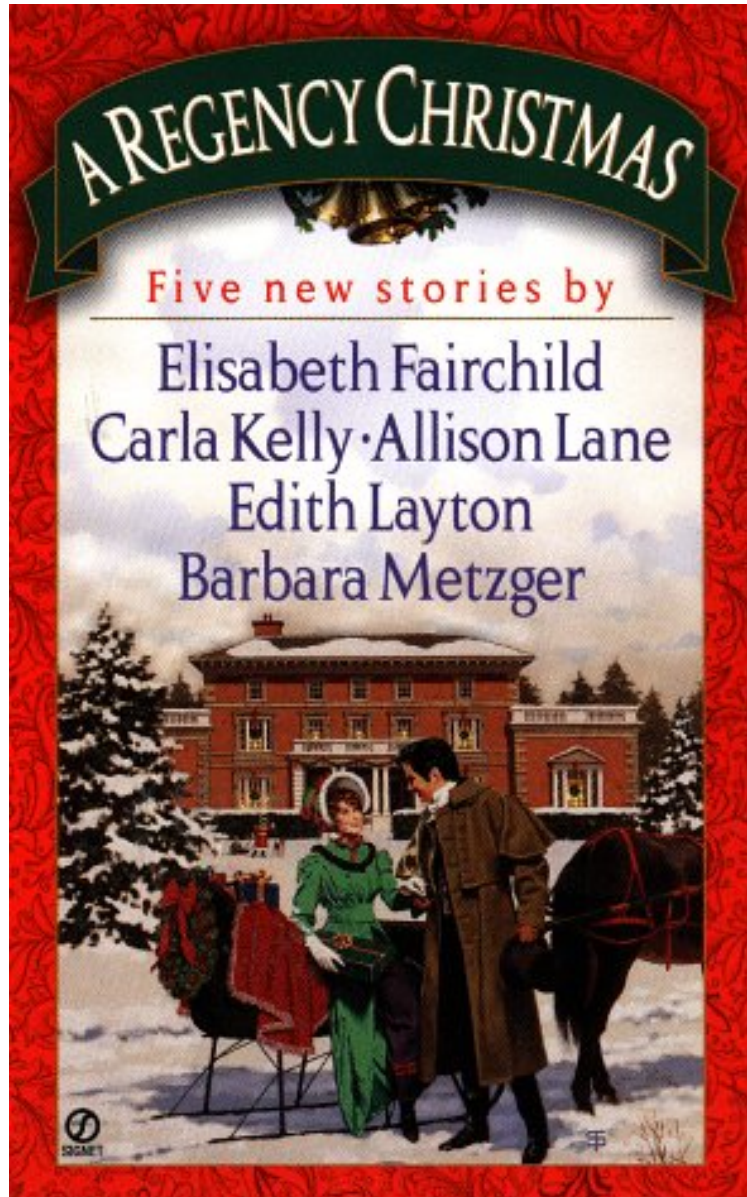


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## A Regency Christmas: Five New Stories

*Barbara Metzger, Edith Layton, Allison Lane, Carla Kelly, Elisabeth Fairchild*  
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**Barbara Metzger, Edith Layton, Allison Lane, Carla Kelly, Elisabeth Fairchild : A Regency Christmas: Five New Stories** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Regency Christmas: Five New Stories:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three out of five are keepers. By Jean The first story, Three Good Deeds (Barbara Metzger), was pretty good, and I enjoyed it quite well. I also liked Carla Kelly's The Christmas

Ornament. Have to say, though, that I really liked Edith Layton's *The Hounds of Heaven*. I do agree that the female character (whose name is mentioned so infrequently that I barely remember reading it) is not well fleshed out. The story is mainly about Thadeus, and HIS journey to discover his heart's desire. For those who don't know, this is not the first Regency Christmas anthology in which Layton has written about one of the puppies from that very special litter. The other two stories in this anthology... no thank you. In *Felicity's Forfeit* (Elizabeth Fairchild), Felicity's so-called southern accent is written so abominably and horrendously that it got very, very distracting. And annoying. As a result, I didn't bother finishing the story. (I skipped ahead to see if maybe the accent, once established, was 'toned down' or not written out, but nope, there it still was. So I moved on to Allison Lane's *Second Chance*. Unfortunately, I can't say I enjoyed it all that much. For one thing, the set-up was absurdly complicated. Alice and Jeremy had relatives who were related to each other, and there were numerous characters mentioned--cousin What's-His-Name or Aunt So-and-So. Just WAY too many characters, period. I get the feeling that some of these same secondary characters are featured in other books by Lane. Also, heroine Alice constantly beats herself up and says she "doesn't deserve" to be happy, isn't "worthy" of being in respectable company, etc., etc. Her constant inner dialogue is very repetitive and (here's that word again) annoying. And the reason for her feelings of guilt seems to come from nowhere and be anticlimactic. All in all, not a very enjoyable story in the long run. So three of the five were worth my time reading, and in another few years, I'll revisit them again.

10 of 13 people found the following review helpful. A pleasant group of Christmas based Regency short stories. By A Customer This was an enjoyable Regency anthology built around the Christmas season. However, as is common with anthologies the stories were not all equal. The best story was Carla Kelly's "The Christmas Ornament". Olivia and James, were refreshingly unlike the typical Regency couple, especially James, whose shyness and absent-minded professor personality was truly winning. You could just picture a young Jimmy Stewart or Hugh Grant playing the character. Of the five stories this was the one that I wish had been a full-length novel. My second favorite was Edith Layton's "The Hounds of Heaven", which was full of humor and the true spirit of the Christmas season, despite having the least amount of Christmas "trappings" in the group. Again, a charming hero and a sweet and different plot twist. The only drawback for me was that Helena, the heroine, was not fully drawn-out, probably as a result of the limitations of the short-story format. Barbara Metzger's "Three Good Deeds" and Elisabeth Fairchild's "Felicity's Forfeit" were both pleasant Regency fare. Both stories managed to fit a great deal of detail and some originality into their short frameworks. The only story I didn't enjoy was Allison Lane's "Second Chance". The hero, Jeremy, was actually quite attractive, but I could not warm up to the overly dramatic plot, and found Alice annoyingly self-pitying rather than tragic as she was obviously meant to be. It's hard to enjoy a romance when you only like half of the couple. All five stories featured very charming and well-drawn male leads, and in fact most of the stories were told from their points of view, which I enjoy, since I read romances for the heroes. Overall, a nice group, which Regency fans should enjoy, and which does get you in a pre-holiday spirit.

7 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Delightful Christmas Romp; Stand-out Reading By E. Lynch I enjoy regency anthologies for those days when I just want to read a quick and fun story. The Christmas ones are usually the most delightful especially since I love the holidays! As with most anthologies, one or two stories stand out and I tend to read those over and over. In this grouping, Carla Kelly's "The Christmas Ornament," and Elizabeth Fairchild's "Felicity's Forfeit" were the two that captured my heart! Both had unusual and wonderful female lead characters. "Livy" (Olivia) in "The Christmas Ornament" was intelligent, yet filled with common sense and compassion. She was not only able to express herself well but bring the shy, bookish "Jemmy" (James) out of his shell. The many secondary characters were well fleshed out even in this short story. James father advising him that "I have often suspected she (Olivia) is even more intelligent than you," and "Take her seriously as you would any man ... learned that from your mother." The outrageous comments that came out of James regarding Olivia - "You smell remarkably like a biscuit." I loved his professor ways!!! But will he lose her to another - an Adonis, rich and sophisticated with an eye to changing Olivia. Or will Olivia trust her father (who had a hand at matchmaking) and her own instincts? Felicity of "Felicity's Forfeit" was a wonderful and different female lead (from America's south) and Bingham Kirby was our equally honorable male lead. Forced by the loss of his father's fortune, he must marry an heiress. Lost fortune is the key - the money was actually hidden for safekeeping by his forgetful father who makes vague references to wood and leaves when telling them where the money is. To choose a bride, Bingham hosts a holiday gathering which includes many wealthy young women. The reader is drawn into the Christmas fun and games. And Bingham's kindness shows as he invites the penniless vicar's daughters and their American cousin to join in the fun. But can there be a happily ever after? Bingham is ever mindful of his duty and a penniless American is not on his bride list! The other stories were notable, but not standouts to me. I enjoyed "Three Good Deeds" and loved the dog in "The Hounds of Heaven." Allison Lane's "Second Chance" was a dark, disturbing tale, more like a sad pioneer historical than a regency. I found it depressing! But this book is worth having and re-reading. A keeper for me.

Make the season bright with these original stories of Christmas love, written by five award-winning Regency authors--Elisabeth Fairchild, Carla Kelly, Allison Lane, Edith Layton, and Barbara Metzger. Heartwarming, celebratory, and romantic, each delightful story in this eighth book in the "Regency Christmas" series captures the essence of the

Yuletide spirit.

.com This is a thoroughly charming collection of Regency romances set at Christmastime, each lively and heartwarming without being too sweetly sentimental. Barbara Metzger brings energy, humor, and skill to her exceptional story, "Three Good Deeds," in which a young widow's three sons atone for breaking the vicar's window by reuniting their mother with her former love, the heir to the local manor. Carla Kelly captivates readers in "The Christmas Ornament," an insightful, funny, and moving story of a well-intentioned young man of a scholarly bent whose awkward attempts to court a childhood friend leads them on an erratic course to perfect understanding. In "Felicity's Forfeit," Elisabeth Fairchild uses traditional Christmas games to unite an American Southern belle and a responsible English lord, who refuses to place his need for money above his desire for love, despite his family's mysteriously lost funds. Author Allison Lane provides a "Second Chance" for a governess with a sad and secret past and an earl's younger son, whom she loved and lost years ago. And in "Hounds of Heaven," Edith Layton gives a large and devoted puppy named Titania the unique task of teaching a proud but obtuse lord--whose marriage proposal has been inexplicably rejected--a much-needed lesson about the true nature of fidelity and the real blessings of love. -- Ellen Edwards  
About the Author Mary Balogh has won seven Waldenbook Awards and a B. Dalton Award for her bestselling romances, as well as a Romantic Times Lifetime Achievement Award. She is one of the romance genre's most popular and bestselling authors.