



A Winter Affair

Minna Howard

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A wonderful warm, seasonal treat, whisking you on a magical adventure to the Swiss Alps. Full of food, laughter and fun. Perfect for the fans of Trisha Ashley.

With a recent divorce and empty nest Eloise Brandon is facing Christmas alone until a harried phone call from her godfather changes everything.

Accepting his challenge, Eloise finds herself en-route to Verbier and to her godfathers chalet in the beautiful Swiss Alps to help cater for some seriously rich, high rolling guests.

What ensues makes it a Christmas to remember. A heady alpine mixture of old friends, ex-husbands, mega-rich, super demanding guests, a dishevelled proprietor and Bert the dog.

A Winter Affair Details

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Liina says

Eloise's life hasn't been easy, after a divorce and the twins being on a gap year travelling, she is facing the first Christmas alone. When she suddenly gets a call from her godfather, she is heading to the Swiss Alps for the holiday season to take over the chef duties after the previous chef ran off with a rich guest. Lawrence is Eloise's godfather's son and is running the chalet, he knows that Eloise is not an actual chef, but he doesn't have many choices and gives her a chance to prove herself. When the posh guest arrive, everyone is trying to give their best, because the chalet's future depends on the guests. Can they make it happen?

I really liked the setting in Swiss Alps and how entertaining the whole story was, especially those extremely funny moments with Bert the dog. Bert really wanted to steal the show. It was my first book by the author and I definitely want to read more. I thoroughly enjoyed the whole story, but there was just one thing that I wanted to read more about-the romance between Eloise and Lawrence, it came in a bit too late in the story, I wish there was a second part, which would pick up where the first ended. All in all, I'd truly recommend this wintry book.

Didi says

I have never read Minna Howard's books before. But aside from the lovely cover, what drew me to read this was the blurb: the story of middle aged woman who struggle to bounce back after the failure of her marriage. And where did she go to make that first step? A chalet in Switzerland! Of course I'm game to read it!

It turned out to be quite a lovely story; I'll say a **3- stars** from me.

The book recounted the exciting life at *Verbier*, a premier village ripped with holiday resorts and ski area in Swish Alp; in which Jacaranda - an old chalet of Eloise's godfather's - situated. Thrust upon the role of temporary cook at Jacaranda, Eloise must struggle with memory of happier times there, difficult house-guests and unexpected attraction to her boss slash godfather's son.

As a non skier - I have never even seen snow in my life! - this sort of setting really awed and excited me. And let's not forget the amount of food mentioned, they were all mouthwatering!! Even the incident of Bert the dog with the lamb joint, that in other circumstances might sound disgusting... (well, I really don't want to experience that myself. But still!!) was hilariously charming. Not to mention got me hungry.

The story was told alternately as third person in Eloise's and Lawrence's POVs, that it gave insight to both MC's grasp of things and each other's misunderstandings. Although even with these, I didn't really feel the mutual attractions that slowly built between them - it was just too vague.

When it came to the characters, I loved Lawrence's son, Theo, Bert the dog, and Vera more than Eloise and Lawrence. Part of me could understand Eloise described as feeling low and uncertain was caused by her recent divorce. But I really wished she had more confidence than shown here. I cheered for a couple times she showed some backbones; yet sadly she stayed hesitant to the last page. Lawrence was no better; the way he acted around the dubious Aurelia or handled the trouble with his guests - I thought he could have been more firm with them.

The book concluded with the hopefully ever after ending, though it felt too rushed-up to me. Yes, it was the

ending the readers hoping for - sure. But it could use more finesse to get there. So, in a nutshell, it was a nice read for me, but nothing exceptional except for the premises.

Advanced copy of this book is kindly provided by the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Nessa says

This was the first book I'd read of Minna, and I'm happy to report that it won't be the last. It was the beautiful cover that appealed to me first, followed by the blurb.

This isn't an overly Christmas story, it's more orientated on Winter and skiing with lots of snow. So I reckon this could be read at any time not just Christmas.

It was a delightful entertaining read, with well written and wonderful characters, well majority of them. There are a couple of characters that you end up not liking to much.

The story was well written, I was engrossed from start to finish, and was pleasantly surprised to discover that there was a suspense element within the story, wasn't all just love and romance.

I loved the ending, just perfect.

Christina Knowles says

Lovely Story But Needs an Editor

I loved everything about the content of this story--the characters, the setting, the fact that it was more about the people than a contrived romance, but the book was full of elementary errors, run-on sentences, subject-verb disagreement, and even basic spelling and capitalization errors. I can't believe it had an actual editor. Instead of acknowledging them, she should have fired them.

Heather Belleguelle says

I found this book (if it's not completely fictional) to be quite an insight into the way that a very different circle of people from the ones I move in spend their winter holidays. The beautiful ski resort that is the setting for the novel is well described and I could almost feel the cold freshness of the snow. I didn't really warm to most of the characters though, especially Lawrence who just comes across as rather grumpy. Lawrence's son, Theo, and Bert the dog are delightful though. The story is interesting from a culinary point of view, but otherwise, as the characters are a bit stilted and two-dimensional, and I couldn't really see where the book was heading, I found it a little bit of a drag. I assumed that somehow there would be a romance between Lawrence and Eloise, but it comes very suddenly with no build up, so doesn't feel at all realistic. Also, the ending and the way that everything works out is all tied up too quickly and neatly. I did quite enjoy reading the book, but was left a bit disappointed at the end so won't be rushing to read another book by

Minna Howard.

K says

Disappointing

I spent what felt like a lot of time on this book to have it fall dead at the end. I know these novels aren't realistic and that's fine but, seriously, I love you and I want to make love to you, the end!? =(I didn't expect an amazing novel but I thought it would be better than this! Save your time and choose a different book. Even though the novel was okay until the end, I will not be choosing this author again...what a major letdown!

Lynne Tilley says

Dropped Dead.

The whole book was a great edge of your seat read until the final chapter last page and you are dropped dead. No build up nothing, just I love you and now I'm gonna take you to bed, the end. Total disappointment after a great book. Another author that doesn't know the first lesson in story writing and she was a journalist in a before life, a beginning, a middle and AN END, not dropped straight off of a cliff. I enjoyed the book up until this point.

suzanne curtian says

Loved it

Heart warming. I'm in the hospitality business and this is a honest depiction of what happens in this world.

Love,truth and unfortunately ungrateful people are part of our lives. Making one fell at home and welcomed is an art which can change ones perception.

Well done. Thank you.

Suzanne says

Lighthearted and predictable Christmassy story. Some annoying repetitions and equally annoying characters stop me rating this higher. The main character Eloise name was too close to her rival Aurelia for me and I'd often mix them up in the beginning. An extra half star takes it to 2 stars as it's set in the mountains and has skiing in it.

Kaisha (The Writing Garnet) says

All reviews can be found on my blog at <https://thewritinggarnet.wordpress.com>

Having just finished reading Minna's previous book, I was rather excited to read 'A Winter Affair'. After all, Christmas in the Swiss Alps, how can you not be excited? Easy for me to say I guess, I'm not the one cooking and running around after high-end clientele all day. Luckily (or unluckily) for Eloise, she gets to spend the festive season with other people, and not alone as originally planned. Will Eloise find herself burying her head in the snow if it gets too much? Or will she brave the slopes like a trooper and grab the challenge by the ski-boots?

There is nothing worse than the prospect of a Christmas on your own, unfortunately, Eloise was faced with exactly that. Christmas day would be just Eloise....and her boxes. Or would it?

By the end of the first chapter, I was already curled up on the sofa in my Minnie mouse dressing gown, with my kindle in one hand, and a cuppa in the other. I had no intention of moving from the sofa until the book was completed. There was something quite different about 'A Winter Affair', I couldn't quite put my finger on what it was. All I knew was that I had to keep reading, the force behind Minna's writing was too powerful to ignore.

I couldn't believe how 'busy' the storyline became, there seemed to be a constant conveyor belt of situations and turmoil to try to resolve. Usually a storyline like that would be too much in an 'easy read' but I felt as though the book's true depth came from the intense circumstances and feisty characters. Just like any book that I read, there were characters that I gelled with more than others, and some that had me riled up. I won't say the names of the characters, but all I will say is that one is male, and the other female! Doesn't narrow it down at all I know!

I LOVED the dog, he is the legend of the book. The things that Bert got up to had me in absolute hysterics. I adore the way Minna described his antics, as well as the responses of the characters around him. Genius. I think he should get his own book to be honest, 'Bert the dog...and friends'.

The cosy feeling captured me early on in the book, so I was rather hopeful that it would stay with me as I continued reading. Which it did! I consider 'A Winter Affair' to be an easy read, a book that doesn't make me think too much yet is soulful with its words.

The only thing that didn't quite work for me was the fact the wrap up of the storyline felt a tad hurried.

Minna Howard has written such a soul enriching read which involves you in every aspect of the storyline through her words alone. When certain characters were sad, the book came to a standstill in a good way, it was as though the focus needed to be on that one person and as the reader, I felt as though I connected to the emotions that that one person expressed. It's incredible that 26 letters of the alphabet create such comprehensive words with intense meanings, tugging at your heart-strings in the process.

'A Winter Affair' is a book about going for it, sticking with it and realising your own worth. Nobody can fix everything for you, but they can often give you the tools to help you on your way. Take Eloise for example, if she can grab life by its ski-boots with the help of Minna Howard, then who are we to judge? Another fantastic read from the talented Minna Howard. If you have to unwrap something this festive season, make sure it is this book. It will give you your own kiss under the mistletoe this Christmas.

Lisa Houston says

A winter Affair Minna Howard

A winter Affair is a fantastic winter, seasonal read. Imagine facing Christmas home alone, newly divorced, and your children on a gap year.

But then you are offered a Chef job in a beautiful Chalet in the Swiss Alps, decisions, decisions. That's how lucky Eloise is when her Godfather offers her the job in his family Chalet turned business.

Eloise rises to the challenge and heads to the Swiss town of Verbier, where she will cater for some very rich families over the festive period.

I warmed to the character right away, she was lovely. You felt for her, landed in this job under false pretences. But she did wonderful and turned it around and done a fantastic job for the owner Lawrence. Had a giggle at the instance with the lamb and the dog.

Eloise in her favour got out on the slopes and skied, met with friends, lunched. She started a great new life for herself after her divorce. You could really feel happy for her.

Loved this part of the book. Harvey was like a butterfly, alighting for a moment on a flower and then having had his fill flying away to the next one. Really enjoyed reading this.

The book ended on a high. Will there be a follow up, I do hope so.

Thank you to Netgalley, Mina Howard and Aria, for a copy of this book in return for a review.

Zoe Hartgen says

More like 2.5 stars. The ending ruined this book for me. There wasn't any chemistry between Eloise and Lawrence, and then suddenly they're in love? Hmm.. A poor ending and poor characters.

Jill Steeples says

With the glorious setting of a ski chalet in Verbier in the Alps, this is the perfect winter read. Recently divorced and with her two children off on a gap year, Eloise is facing a miserable Christmas in London. That is until her godfather, Desmond, rings asking for a massive favour, can she help out his son, Lawrence, who urgently needs a chef at his chalet in the Swiss Alps for the Christmas period. Eloise once did a Cordon Blue cookery course, so she's seems the obvious choice, although she's never cooked professionally before. With nothing better to do, Eloise reluctantly agrees and with guests soon arriving at the chalet, Eloise is thrown in at the deep end.

The book has a wonderful cast of characters, delicious sounding food, snow and drama on the slopes, a naughty dog and a touch of romance too.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this.

Rachel Gilbey says

For a wintery/festive book that I read at in early August, thankfully the Christmas angle wasn't too involved, and it was far more a story set in a ski resort, featuring the wonders of Verbier, some great food, skiing and drama, that just happens to occur in the last weeks of December rather than Christmas being the focal point.

I'm happy to read wintery books at any time of the year, so this worked out really well for me, and I loved the story. Arguably the slight romance involved may have been a bit predictable but it was a very slow burner and the true feelings take a long while to become apparent.

It is far more a story about the Jacaranda, the chalet in Verbier, Swiss Alps, that Eloise's godfather owns. He persuades his son Lawrence that Eloise is a top level cook, and could solve his chef issues over Christmas, until the new professional one arrives. One slight problem is that Eloise although she did a Cordon Bleu course once, tends to cook more for friends and family, and doesn't really have the confidence to do anything overly pretentious.

She though agrees to the plan, as she was going to otherwise be home alone over Christmas, as she is recently divorced, and her twins are on a gap year. Off to a rocky start, I loved seeing Verbier through Eloise's eyes, and it was fabulous for her to have an old friend in the resort too.

The main set of guests in the chalet are an absolute nightmare to deal with, so of course they produce all the drama and humour in the story. There is plenty of drama as you may expect on ski slopes, and with the chalet having financial problems this set of guests are the sort that could make or break the Jacaranda entirely.

I loved Bert, the chalet's dog, Theo, Lawrence's grandson is a warm character, as is Vera the cleaner, who has fabulous insights into some of the guests personalities. The setting is superb and I'm glad to say we get plenty of skiing and not too much of the apres ski drinking that sometimes fills books about ski chalets, probably due to the more mature age of the main characters.

There is plenty of food, all of which sounded not only delicious but that would certainly fill you after a hard day on the slopes. I really did enjoy the whole of A Winter Affair, which is the first book I have read by the author, and as my first winter or festive book of the season, its certainly given me a promising start to the Christmas book season 2016!

Thank you to Aria and Netgalley for this review copy. This was my honest opinion.

Grass monster says

Luckly this is not an overly Christmasy story. As i started this in August it really didnt feel right but as it is more of a winter story it was fine.

Eloise Brandon, lives in London. Recently divorced from husband Harvey, she is facing her first Christmas alone. With her grown up twins off on a gap year travelling, she is dreading the upcoming time of the year. After talking with her godfather on the phone he tells Eloise that his son Lawrence needs some help at their skiing chalet Jacaranda that they run in Verbier, Switzerland. After the chef has run off with a rich guest, they have been left in the lurch. Eloise agrees its better than staying alone over christmas and besides what could go wrong?.

As the posh guests arrive for their stay, Eloise seems to of taken on more than she thought. As she has to deal with tempers aswell as flirty guests, Eloise takes a shine to Lawrence's son Theo as he reminds her of her own children. Theo's dog Bert, house keeper Vera are all a breath of fresh air for her. As Eloise bumps into old friends she thinks things might turn out ok. The obvious romance brewing between Eloise and Lawrence is a slow starter and i felt there could of been a bit more bite to it throughout the story rather than pushing them together right at the end. This story is otherwise packed with things going on, local girl Aurelia trying to take over Jacaranda and jump into Lawrence's bed, a skiing accident, a runaway Lamb joint, delicious food descriptions, a giant Christmas tree, memories for certain people and a return of a ex husband. This is a funny, happy, wintery story which i enjoyed and will leave you grinning from ear to ear.
