



THREE NIGHTS
BEFORE
Christmas



KAT LATHAM
RITA*-NOMINATED AUTHOR

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Kat Latham

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Have yourself a steamy little Christmas...

After three years in prison, freight train engineer Lacey Gallagher doesn't expect this Christmas to be very merry and bright. At least chopping down trees for her brother's Christmas tree farm will help her save money to get her life back on track. All her plans derail, though, when her new job puts her in territory patrolled by the man who haunts her dreams—the forest ranger who sent her to prison.

Austin Wilder isn't thrilled about Lacey working in his forest—but he soon realizes he needs her help. His family is depending on him to restore an old steam train for a spectacular Christmas event, and train expert Lacey is his only hope of finishing in time.

Working together challenges every assumption Lacey and Austin have about each other, and they discover a desire hot enough to melt even the deepest Montana snow. But will the season of second chances be enough to mend the most hardened broken heart?

Three Nights before Christmas Details

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From Reader Review Three Nights before Christmas for online ebook

Sophia says

Just getting out of prison on parole right before Thanksgiving, Lacey Gallagher returns to her brother's home and the family Christmas tree farm ready to get her life back. Too bad she encounters the man who arrested her and he's as disdainful of her as ever.

Austin Wilder wasn't prepared to encounter the woman he arrested for transporting drugs and being a huge part of a drug ring. She looks harder and wary, but she's also the only one he knows who can get the steam locomotive up and running in time for the Christmas charity activities to help get the donations for the camp for kids with special needs like his nephew.

Working together, day in and day out takes some of the edge off their hostilities, but Lacey never wants to be dumb about men again and the best way is to keep her distance and Austin doesn't know what to believe now that he's getting to know Lacey. In the meantime, Lacey's lawyer brings startling news and starts to raise her Christmas hopes.

I saw the blurb and couldn't resist such a situation- an ex-con and her arresting officer? Plus she works on trains! How cool is that? Plus it's Kat Latham and I enjoyed her rugby players so I had to give this Christmas story ago.

The book is connected both to the Montana Born Christmas series and the London Legends stories through Austin's siblings' romance that chronologically happen before this story. There is also a tie to a separate book that tells a parallel time line romance with Lacey's brother. For all that, this is still a standalone.

The story was a good blend of holiday cheer and hope with the reality of Lacey being an ex-con and Austin being directly involved in the investigation that put her away. The author did a good job of writing a character who was convincing as having just spent time in prison and now must live with the consequences. The story went by quickly, but the author still took her time developing a romance that starts as hostile at best. There was also the shadows that Lacey's experiences cast over the relationship. It was many of the little things that the author got right whether it was her response to touch, her near terror at seeing Austin in uniform, her appreciation for real coffee and private bathrooms, and even the struggle she has to connect with her very supportive brother.

Now, the other thing was Lacey's physical reaction to Austin and his to her. This pair were hot tamales once they got to a certain place. Lacey is not a gentle, retiring sort. She is a strong, lusty woman that works hard and is honest in her needs and wants. Austin soon finds that what he thought he wanted was all wrong. Lacey's it for him. He gets hot seeing her covered in grease and sweat and wrestling train parts together or hauling a Christmas tree up over her shoulder and loading it for a customer just as he can't get enough of having her in his bed. But while Lacey will take what Austin has to offer in bed, she struggles to get past the fact that he was there for all her worst moments- her arrest and her court hearing and sentencing, and she doesn't think he can see past all that either.

The holiday element was woven in well. There was the Christmas tree farm which was a festive setting, but also the preparations for the Christmas town to raise money for the special camp. Lacey wants decorations and music around her to reminder her that she is free and Austin finds that he enjoys providing it all just to

give that sense of freedom and peace to her.

So, all in all, I thought this was a great Christmas romance involving an unusual circumstance and pair and would recommend it to readers who like snow-melting holiday contemporary romance.

My thanks to Tule Publishing for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an honest review.

The_Book_Queen says

If you're looking for a fun, and sexy, holiday romance with an interesting heroine and set up, look no further than Three Nights Before Christmas! Also, why haven't I read Latham before? I know I have one or two on my Kindle, unread, and I also know that Kame loves her books. After enjoying this one so much, you better believe I'm looking forward to reading her other novels, too.

Lacey made some mistakes and trusted the wrong guy, which lead to her being arrested and sentenced for a drug-bust three years ago. Out on parole and trying to get her life back together, she never expected to run into the very man who arrested her, let alone start to fall for him. Austin is just as thrown by the attraction burning between them, but as he gets to know her more, he starts to realize that perhaps she was telling him the truth three years ago. Could she be innocent, after all?

I loved this story. I loved that the set up was different. I loved all the fun quotes and scenes in it. So many, in fact, that my Kindle is full of highlights, only a fraction of which I shared on Twitter while reading, or here, in my review. I actually found myself smiling and snorting while reading, something that's rare for me. It had just the right steam-to-laughs ratio, with some mild angst in the form of Lacey trying to get her life back and her record cleared. The fact that it took place during the holidays only added to the charm of this book.

Once again, I'm only sorry that I've put off reading Latham until now. I'll be fixing that immediately. I highly recommend this charming and fun romance!

4 1/2 STARS!

~ * ~ * ~

To read my favorite quote(s) from this book, please visit TBQ's Book Palace.

TheBookQueen

Jules2016 says

Some spoilers

DNF. Sorry, I just can't get past the description of the heroine who sounds like an old hag:

"She'd certainly gained weight, and not in an I spent all my time in the prison yard pumping iron sort of way. Fine lines bracketed her wide mouth, and strands of premature gray hair glittered among the dark brown ones. Her eyebrows were thick and rough, and her gaze grew harder as he stared her down."

UPDATE: finished 17/07/2017

Ok, here's the deal. Overall, while this is not a literary masterpiece it is a good story. The problem for me is that the heroine comes off as sort of skanky (a.k.a loose with the goodies)

Homegirl is out on parole for a crime she did not commit and within a week she is begging for the guy who put her in jail to sleep with her. She propositioned him. He turned her down. She propositioned him not once, not twice, but three times!!!!

And this is how she does it:

"I want to rub myself all over you. Ride you and kneel for you."

No pride? Check. Absolute lack of judgment? Check. Beyond pathetic? Check.

And after all those pleas to suck his dick guess what his answer was- NO!!!!

Of course, because this is a romance he recants later and she takes him with open arms and legs. Within three weeks of her release from prison they are telling each other I love you. Huh??!!!

Then we get the ridiculous epilogue where the district attorney drops all charges against her and she is instantly a free woman because of course, this is never never land where we never age and your every wish comes true.

Maria Rose says

Nominated for a 2016 RITA Award in the category Contemporary Romance: Short!

Lacey and Austin have a pretty unpleasant history. He was the arresting officer in a drug case that Lacey inadvertently was involved in due to her relationship with the man in charge. Imprisoned for three years, she's finally free to try to pick up the pieces of her once thriving life. Working at her family's tree farm with her brother is a chance to rebuild, but for one reason or another Austin seems to always be around. Despite their best efforts to stay uninvolved, there is a strong attraction between them and they can't resist giving in. But can they develop the trust to put their troubled past behind them?

Kudos to Lacey for embracing the real spirit of forgiveness because I'm not sure that I would have been able to consider developing a relationship with a man who was responsible for the worst three years of my life. But Lacey is determined to move on, and Austin is realizing that things might not have been what they seemed, to his (most likely) everlasting guilt. The friendship they develop starts out very slowly, but eventually they find a space where they can just be themselves at the moment, and not what they were to

each other before. I really liked both characters, Lacey's strong will and determination balancing well with Austin's dedication and wish to make amends. They share some steamy scenes together, and the spirit of the Christmas season definitely shines through. 4 stars for an entertaining, sometimes bittersweet, but eventual happy ending story.

Note: a copy of this story was provided by the publisher via NetGalley for review.

This review also appears at All About Romance: <http://allaboutromance.com/book-review/>

Claire Robinson says

4 - "I don't know why it's you... and I wish like hell it wasn't." Stars!

I really enjoyed *Three Nights before Christmas*, it is always a pleasure to return to the town of Marietta, Montana and its inhabitants, and Kat Latham, gave Austin and Lacey an absolutely stellar story for me to sink my teeth into.

I think what made this little novella such a treat is the fact that it was quite unusual in its tropes, the ex-con and the man who helped send her to jail falling in love, over the rebuilding of a steam train.

Lacey was a strong and sassy woman, hardened to some elements in life due to her time spent in prison, and Austin operating under pre-conceived assumptions about her due to her conviction were a really great couple, both strong mentally, but also vulnerable as well. It was good to read of the gradual building of the relationship for this couple in-spite of the issues that initially were between them.

A really great read, sexy and a little emotional at points, and a really likeable couple to boot. It also gives you a little insight into Lacey's brother Sawyer, whose story is told in Sarah Mayberry's Christmas novella *His Christmas Gift* also available now.

ARC generously provided via Netgalley, and it was a pleasure to provide the above honest review.

Nicola says

2015 has seen Kat Latham become one of my go-to authors. I just know that when I pick one of her books up I'm not going to be left disappointed and *Three Nights Before Christmas* reinforces this.

I have to say I wasn't quite sure how a romance between Lacey Gallagher and Austin Wilder would work; after all he played a part in her ending up spending three miserable years in prison, how do you go from that to lovers? But Kat Latham did make it work and crafted a wonderful festive romance focusing on forgiveness and understanding.

"...I see you, Lacey."

Perfectly paced, the romance was enchanting, steamy, emotional and Lacey and Austin were a couple to love. She's no wallflower, her time inside may have ended her career as a successful train engineer but her strength of determination to move on with her life and start again was quite humbling, as was Austin's realisations as to the mistakes and assumptions he may have made in the past.

If a festive feel-good, steamy read is what you're looking for, then this ticks the boxes. And with Lacey's brother and her lawyer featuring throughout, it's onto Sarah Mayberry's *His Christmas Gift* for me to see what lies in store for them.

Copy received courtesy of Tule Publishing via NetGalley for an honest and unbiased opinion.

Carrie says

Lacey Gallagher has finally been released from prison after being convicted of a crime she didn't really know she was involved in. Lacey had been a train engineer and got caught up with the wrong man. Her boyfriend had used her to traffic drugs but being caught with the package she couldn't convince a jury she hadn't known what was going on and her boyfriend Dave had testified it had all been her idea.

Austin Wilder was the officer that had arrested Lacey three years ago. When he runs into her after her release he immediately distrusts her and begins checking up on her quite often. When Austin has a problem with restoring a steam engine train before Christmas he turns to Lacey for help.

I have to admit I was a bit on the fence with this one all the way through. Lacey's story was one that a lot of women or even men in some cases could relate to, maybe not to the extent of prison time but in trusting someone so completely but being let down and ending up feeling used that I couldn't help but wish the best for her.

Austin on the other hand seemed quite the jerk in the beginning of this. Even if Lacey had been completely guilty of her crime she had done her time and he really didn't need to keep harassing her when she first was released. A part of me kept wondering why in the world Lacey would even be attracted to someone who couldn't give her a bit of trust at all. I think I would've believed the attraction between the two more if Austin had come to Lacey saying ok you did your time let me help you get your life back and offer you a job working on this train and the relationship sparked from some sort of niceness on his part.

Also, I picked this one up thinking it was a small town Christmas cozy romance but it got a bit graphic in the sex and language. There's romantic steamy and there's erotic steamy and this one with the language and details fell more to the erotic side which isn't necessarily bad but felt it should be mentioned as it isn't overly obvious with the description or what one would expect from a cozy Christmas tale.

I received a copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.wordpress....>

Monique says

This book was received free via Netgalley for an honest review. My review is below.

OK - I admit it. I cried a bit over this story, in a totally good way. It didn't blow me away, but it was more than solid in its emotional strength. I'd say this year's crop of Christmas stories out of the Montana Born books got started with a winner.

Lacey has just gotten out of prison, three years for drug dealing. It's been a hard road, especially for a woman who swears she's not a drug dealer. But she's home now and trying to make the best of it. I like the subtle cues that indicate stress now that she is out. They add a realism to it that belies the more rose-tinted portions that come later. She's nervous and self-conscious, then angry and belligerent. She betrays her fears and then runs. I thought she was a compelling character overall. I adored her brother just for being himself and being there for her, a strong bulwark, even if a slightly bitter one.

Austin was more of a cipher. He's straight-laced and proud of it. He's not a goody-goody, but he definitely is a straight arrow and he has a sense that he is always right that takes some hard knocks in this book. He was Lacey's arresting officer and his strong sense that she is smart and her fellow members of the drug ring are dumb led to some assumptions. He's not happy that Lacey is out of prison; that's for sure. But he shows an incredible amount of love and guilt, especially when it comes to Josh Dekker, whose accident happened on his watch (at least that's how he sees it).

Unfortunately for Austin, that means he needs to spend more time with Lacey, the same Lacey who is trying to avoid him. She's the train expert and he needs to restore a locomotive. And so, they are thrown together. And Austin sees a completely different side to Lacey, a side he likes - a lot. The time spent together rapidly becomes time spent being intimate and then time spent living together temporarily. And then the hitch in the road you are waiting for hits. Because Lacey has a real attorney and her ex-boyfriend the drug dealer who perjured himself against her at her trial has recanted. Now Austin has to decide what he believes.

A lot of the law enforcement stuff in this book is painted in a much rosier light than reality. It's a little hard to swallow but the "Christmas miracle" softens some of that blow. I liked the story and I like the author. I'd just have liked a bit more realism on that front. The tie-in for Lacey's brother's book was obvious and I'm curious about it as well.

Julie says

Three Nights Before Christmas by Kat Latham is a 2015 Tule publication. I was provided a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Don't let the holiday season pass by without reading this book!

Lacey has just been released from prison for a crime she committed unwittingly. But, the evidence was compelling, and her own boyfriend testified against her.

Now three years later, Lacey is home, helping her brother with his Christmas tree business, when she comes face to face with Austin, the man who helped send her way. If that weren't bad enough, Austin has decided that, although Lacey has served her time, she is still not trustworthy. So, he makes a point of checking up on her frequently.

When a situation arises that calls for Lacey's expertise with steam engine trains, Austin has to swallow his pride and ask for her help in order to make a Christmas wish come true. In the process, Austin gets to know Lacey a lot better and is stunned to discover she is not at all like his preconceived notions of her.

I read A LOT of romance novels, and one thing I'm always sure to point out in my reviews is how love can change a person's life, heal all wounds, forge hope, forgiveness, and inspire us to do things we never thought possible.

But, in this case, I found that belief challenged just a little bit. Austin is not a guy I liked at first. He's in law enforcement, but takes that power a little too far by harassing Lacey. His motto is 'once a criminal, always a criminal'. It felt like he just could not wait for Lacey to make on misstep so he could send her back to the pen. He also seemed to bask in his alleged 'all knowing' authority, arrogantly believing he knows the way of things and practically beats his chest with pride that he sent Lacey to prison, his only regret being that she didn't have to serve her full term due to good behavior.

But, as you have guessed by now, Lacey's only real crime was in trusting the wrong people and never questioning anything. She obviously paid a high price for her mistake.

Still, it seems important to her to show Austin she is not the scum he thinks she is, and she agrees to help with the train, in part, in order to impress him. I wondered a little if Lacey had learned her lesson about trusting men, since Austin seems bent thinking the worst about her...

Austin has some real eye opening experiences with Lacey, he learns that he is not as smart as he thinks he is, that there are often gray areas in life, and that he has a lot to atone for. Will Austin step up and do the right thing?

The set up for this story had me on edge a little, right from the start. A man sends a woman to prison and she falls in love with him? Seriously? I was not sure how to feel about that and I admit to feeling a little skeptical. I mean, how do you forgive someone for robbing you of three years of your life and for continuing to look for the bad in you instead of the good?

Well, that's where we go back to the whole power of love thing. Only real love could open a heart up wide enough to close the gap between these two. Lacey will have to dig deep into her battered soul to forgive something that big, and Austin will have to humble himself and do one of the hardest things in the world... admit he was wrong. It's against all odds this pair will make it, and it's not a bowl of cherries. It's a hard fought battle with many obstacles in the way. Lacey doesn't just pop back into society and make an overnight adjustment. Lacey's body and spirit bear the scars of prison life, which was very realistically addressed, and she struggles with all that Austin represents, as well as trying to reconnect to her brother.

But, this story is not just about heavy drama, it's also about falling in love, however, the pacing had to be timed delicately, but, Lacey and Austin do have a lot of sizzle and burn chemistry between the sheets. The author did a great job of balancing these elements, giving us a steamy holiday story with a lot heart.

Warning Label:

1: Keep the tissues handy! This story pulls on the heartstrings and is very emotional.

2: The steamy level is Spicy

5 stars

Diane says

This was kind of difficult to review, because I absolutely loved it and I want to make sure I explain exactly why. It is set in Montana right before Christmas, but it's about so much more than just the holidays. It's feels very realistic and gritty about someone who just served three years in prison for a crime she swears she was innocent of but who toughed it out and now just wants to get on with her life. In some ways she's much stronger, but she's also pretty jaded, knowing she can't ever go back to the totally trusting and fun girl she was before.

Lacey Gallagher was a freight train engineer and loved her job but when she finally comes home to help at her family's Christmas tree business, she doesn't even have a driver's license. She just wants to keep her head down and help her brother by cutting and hauling trees on their property while their parents are out of town over the holiday.

But living in a small town means facing people from her past, including the forest ranger, Austin Wilder, who was instrumental in having her put in prison for a drug related scheme that her boyfriend at the time swore she orchestrated and carried out, using the train to make deliveries.

When they first meet again, straight-laced Austin and Lacey are horribly uncomfortable with each other and he's not very accepting of her having done her time and getting on with her life. At first, he doesn't even realize that every time he shows up in uniform in the part of the forest where she's working, it totally freaks her out and also means she has to report to her parole officer that she's had an encounter with law enforcement, even if it's not in an official capacity.

Eventually, Austin needs Lacey's help in repairing an old steam train to be the main attraction at the Christmas attraction for which he's responsible. And when he explains his reasons, he can't believe how little she wants in compensation and how willing she is to help.

Over time, the two begin to see that maybe they were both wrong in their opinions of the other and both made some bad decisions in the past. An almost purely physical relationship develops between them at first, an extremely steamy physical relationship, that satisfies both of their needs. But soon Austin starts to wonder if there could be a more permanent relationship between them and he begins to question his past judgment where Lacey's case was concerned.

The story feels so real and the characters so well developed that I found the events so believable, even though at first the story seemed like it would be implausible. Like I said, it's not your typical feel-good, light-hearted Christmas read, it's so much more. It's poignant and funny and sexy and well worth your time.

I received this as an ARC from NetGalley. You can read more reviews like this at <https://ladieswholunchreviews.wordpress.com/2018/12/10/his-christmas-gift-by-sarah-mayberry/>

Lenore Kosinski says

3.5 stars -- After reading His Christmas Gift by Sarah Mayberry, I knew I wanted to read the companion story about Sawyer's sister, Lacey. And it was a steamy, quick holiday read! I loved the premise of the book -- an ex-con (if wrongly convicted) being released after 3 years in prison, and her developing relationship with one of the officers who helped put her away. I had a bit of a problem with how their relationship started -- I guess b/c Lacey was already having hot sweaty dreams about Austin practically right from the start, and I just found it hard to believe that lust could overcome the circumstances surrounding who they are to each other. But then again, my feelings for a person always influence how attracted I am to them. And unless I'm remembering wrong (I feel like I'm getting a cold, so I'm not trusting my brain right now), the way he described her wasn't all that attractive either.

So yeah, the start of their relationship was a bit harder to believe. Once we got into them working on the train though, things started to pick up. I still never felt completely invested, but I can't quite figure out why. On the other hand I completely devoured the book, so I'm a bit confused about how I actually felt in the end (hence the middling rating).

Lacey was an intriguing heroine -- I really enjoyed how real her emotions were with coming to grips with being out of prison again. She could sometimes be a bit crass, and I couldn't decide if she made me laugh or cringe sometimes. Austin was harder to get a read on, but what I did learn I liked. And once their romance started to move forward, I enjoyed his sweet feelings for her.

I found the ending to be a bit unbelievable with his testimony...I give it a bit of a pass though, since it's a holiday romance and I'm feeling generous.

All in all, a solid holiday read, it was just missing that extra oomph to push me into loving it.

namericanwordcat says

I adore this book.

It is so thoughtful. Our heroine was a train engineer. My love of trains can't be understated so I completely get her train love. And this thing she loved was taken away from here when she was implicated in drug smuggling.

She is coming home to her family christmas tree farm after serving her sentence. She readjusting.

The hero is the ranger who arrested her. But he needs her to help fix a train. And then she gets to know her.

I love the heroine sexual agency. I love the hero's ability to see he was wrong.

The setting is great. The brother sister relationship is so well done. The romance is tender and brave and real.

And we get a Christmas Tree Farm at Christmas. Yes.

Snuggle up with this one.

I was given this book for my honest review so there you go! 4. 5.

Beth says

Looking for some holiday fun, check out *Three Nights before Christmas*.

Lacey is a recent parole, thrust back into a life she was ripped from 3 years prior.

The man who was the catalyst behind her incarceration doesn't think he can trust her but needs her train expertise to make a Christmas wish come true.

This is a slow building romance, with lots of character growth and mutual appreciation.

I have to admit, I was a little reluctant about an ex-con falling in love with the lawman storyline but Latham works it out perfectly. My apprehension was for not.

Cute, quick and very enjoyable, *Three Nights before Christmas* is a heartwarming Christmas love story.

I received this copy of *Three Nights before Christmas* from Tule Publishing- Montana Born Books in exchange for a honest review.

My Rating: 4 Stars

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[Amazon](#) | [Barnes & Noble](#)

For Reviews and More Check out: <http://tometender.blogspot.com>

Katie says

I liked this! I wasn't sure I wanted to read it because ex-con and the guy who arrested her didn't seem up my alley, but it got enough reviews that I decided to give it a try. It dealt with that issue well enough. And I do like Latham's characters.

Tina "IRead2Escape" says**Hotness Rating 3 out of 5**

Review to come...
