



Kissing Under the Mistletoe

Marina Adair

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Regan Martin stopped believing in Christmas miracles six years ago when she lost everything—her house, her job, and her impeccable reputation in the wine industry—after she fell in love with a man she had no idea was married. Then Regan gets a chance for a fresh start in the Napa Valley. With her dream job, dream home, and her daughter enrolled in a wonderful new school, she starts wondering if holiday wishes really do come true.

But she soon tumbles back down to earth when she learns that her new boss is none other than Gabe DeLuca, the scorned wife's brother. Gabe wants nothing more than home-wrecking Regan Martin out of his life, his sister's world, and his family's business. Mostly, he wants the lush beauty out of his head. Yet his attempts to run her out of town have him thinking twice, especially when he sees that Regan may hold the key to tracking down his sister's stolen start-up capital. Even worse for Gabe, Regan might just be his Christmas wish and hold the key to his heart.

Kissing Under the Mistletoe Details

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From Reader Review *Kissing Under the Mistletoe* for online ebook

Ian says

3.5 Stars

Six years earlier at the age of 19, Regan was (unknowingly) in a relationship with a married man. When the relationship was discovered she found herself pregnant and alone. Gabe DeLuca, the brother of the wronged woman has been a constant spanner in her works. He has used his industry contacts to make sure every job she applies for is no longer available.

Finally she manages to score her dream job working for a small women run winery in the Napa Valley, until she discovers the winery is owned by the DeLucas.

Kissing Under the Mistletoe is a cute and harmless holiday romance which might make you shed a few tears. For the most part I liked it. The one thing that I really didn't like is the cruelty of the DeLuca men. It was over the top and bordering on criminal. I understand that many women like their alpha males, but these guys really need a good kicking.

KatieV says

2.5ish. I'll round up.

A secret baby with a twist since the H is not the father, but the the brother-in-law of the father.

The heroine was 19 when the H's 30-year-old brother-in-law seduced her and made her believe he loved her. She didn't live in the same town as the wife, so she didn't know he was married. She made a stupid, naive mistake and ended up pregnant and alone when the guy skips town. She was horrified to learn the man was married. She wasn't a heartless homewrecker, but the H basically ruined her life for 6 years over her mistake.

Much of this is a rant I posted on a forum. Sorry I wasn't more original, but I'm lazy today.

This was an odd one. I've never read anything by the author before and she is pretty good. The book flowed and she can be witty. Then again, the tone was bizarre. It attempted to be a fluffy romcom, but the issues were much too weighty for a fluffy romcom. I'd have bought it if the H's actions had been toned down. The initially firing 6 years before - sure. Being a sarcastic jerk to her when she moved back to town - sure. Having her blackballed and ruining her life for 6 years - really?

IMHO if the author wanted to go with the fluffy romcom Christmas special, she should have dialed way back on the h's suffering and the darn pitifullness of a little girl just wanting a home and a cat - that just broke my heart. If she wanted to keep the suffering, then there needed to be some real suffering for the H aside from him "feeling like a jerk". The h should have packed up and left town and he should have had to follow her and crawl. Not setup a 'I stole Randolph' thing that just made me think of the old Kirk Douglas Spartacus movie.

Also, I don't see why the heroine was immediately panting over the man who just had her fired and tossed

out of her home. I know that's how these stories go, but jeez!

Sarah says

Buddy read with Aly & Maru

When Regan fell in love with Richard she had no idea that it would cost her everything, she didn't even know he was already married until she was five months pregnant with his child. When Richard vanished Regan was left broken hearted and alone to raise their daughter. At least his wife Abby had her family to support her and when Abby's brothers were unable to find the cheating husband they were happy to take out their anger on his mistress. For the last 6 years the DeLuca men have made Regan's life miserable costing her countless jobs and ruining her reputation in the wine industry. But this Christmas things are finally looking up for Regan and she has been offered her dream job and the chance to start over in a new town where she can build a life for herself and her daughter Holly. What she doesn't realise is that her new boss will be Gabe, the oldest of the DeLuca clan and the man behind everything that has happened to her. Gabe wants nothing more than to protect his sister Abby and that means getting Regan away from their home town fast. He isn't going to let anything get in the way of that goal - especially not an unwanted attraction to his family's enemy.

Every so often a book comes along that sucks me in from the very first page and makes it impossible for me to do anything else until I've finished reading it and *Kissing Under the Mistletoe* was one of those books. I picked it up planning on reading just one chapter before making myself some dinner but several hours later I was still reading. In fact I only managed to put the book down very briefly to grab a quick snack before I jumped back in to devour the rest of the story. I have now added Marina Adair to my list of must read authors and I can't tell you how pleased I was to discover that this is the first book in a new series.

I found it easy to connect with Regan from the moment I met her, she was young and innocent and completely betrayed by the man she loved and I had nothing but sympathy for her. I was so angry at the way the DeLuca clan had made life so difficult for her - especially considering she'd had no idea that Richard was married. She was as much his victim as Abby was and had spent a further six years being victimised for something that she had no control over. To say I was livid at Gabe and his family is an understatement and to be honest I didn't think he had a chance in hell at redeeming himself in my eyes. You have to admire Regan because although she has been through hell she has never given up, she never took the easy option of giving up her career and walking away from the wine industry and she never, ever let her daughter suffer because of what had happened. Holly was her world and Regan would do anything to protect her and make her happy. There were times that Regan's story brought tears to my eyes but more than anything I admired her strength and wanted to see her find happiness.

I've already mentioned how much I hated Gabe in the beginning so I was incredibly surprised that Marina Adair managed to make me fall for him. As you get to know him you see that he ended up responsible for his four younger siblings from a young age after their parents died and all he has ever done is try to protect them. He was convinced that Regan knew that Richard was married but went ahead and had an affair with him anyway and he had no idea that she had a young child to care for. None of that makes what he did to her acceptable but it did make it easier to understand. The fact that we get to see things from his perspective was what helped me fall for him though - you get to see first hand how guilty he feels when he realises that Regan was another innocent victim and when he sees first hand how hard life has been for her since then. I enjoyed watching Gabe discover his conscience and try to make up for what had happened but I enjoyed seeing Regan tell him where to go even more. The banter between them was one of the highlights of the

book for me, the chemistry between them was off the charts hot but while their eyes were stripping each other naked their words were cutting them to the core. I knew from their heated looks that they'd be good together but boy were the sexy times worth the wait!

Other highlights included Holly who was utterly adorable - I dare anyone not to fall in love with her - and Gabe's grandmother ChiChi and her friends who Regan had nicknamed the Mrs. Clauses. There were a lot of laugh out loud moments at their antics and they really helped lighten the tone of the story. *Kissing Under the Mistletoe* is definitely my favourite Christmas read of the year, funny, cute, romantic and hot, it was the perfect book to get me in the mood for the holidays and I know it is a book I'll be re-reading in the future. Fans of small town romance series like Jill Shalvis's *Lucky Harbor* books will love this one - it has the same feel good factor and great cast of characters who I am looking forward to spending more time with.

Kathryn says

DNF and returned to Audible. So much of the beginning of this story just did not add up and was just silly.

Tina says

his book had me scratching my head.

Regan Martin had the bad misfortune at the age of 19 to fall in love with a smooth talking man who was already married. She did not know this and was as much a victim of his perfidy as his wife. Except the wife has a large and loving family who will do anything to protect her. Since the cheating husband has taken a powder and disappeared to parts unknown, all the considerable ire of the vengeance seeking clan falls on the head of the hapless Regan.

The book picks up six years later. Regan, who happens to work in the same industry as the DeLuca family (the family of the wronged wife) has found herself blackballed and unable to find a job. Every time she gets an interview, the oldest DeLuca brother Gabe somehow manages to get to the prospective employer and poor Regan finds herself without prospects again.

However Regan finally gets a break. She gets a job at a small start-up winery in Napa valley and it includes a place to live. This couldn't have come at a better time because Regan is down to the fumes of her savings account and it is Christmas season. She has a young daughter (she was pregnant with married-cheater's child when he took off) who she wants to make this the best Christmas ever. Except, Gabe DeLuca has caught up with her again.

The reason this book has me scratching my head was because I was not sure what tone this author intended to take. On the one hand it sometimes plays out like a sexy comedy. Regan and Gabe spar and twinkle and flirt throughout. They sometimes seem like they are simply playing a fun game of sexy one-upmanship. There are also wacky hijinks involving a reindeer and three busybody old ladies.

Yet at other times, Regan is in the pits of despair. She has been prevented from holding a meaningful job for 6 years through the whims of one vengeful family. Through dialogue and exposition we learn that she and her daughter have lived in a succession of not-very-nice apartments, she has very little money left and is

feeling incredibly demoralized. Having been unceremoniously tossed out this job (and home) which she thought was finally going to give her a measure of security, she ends up working as a hotel maid briefly. This is untenable to her because as the daughter of a Mexican illegal immigrant, Regan had been determined not to have the same menial jobs her mother had when she was growing up. And yet, here she was..a maid.

So yeah, there was a bit of cognitive dissonance there. At times the story was engaging and even funny. However, I simply could not resolve how Regan could be feeling any attraction to Gabe considering he had pretty much messed up her livelihood for six years.

To the author's credit, she doesn't make Gabe a total asshat. Once he realizes that his unrelenting campaign has impacted the life of a child (he did not know she had a daughter) he begins to question his actions and tries to make amends. The story does get better once he realizes this, but I had already been so soured on what I felt was such willfully unfair persecution that I couldn't really enjoy the romance between these two.

Another headscratcher is Regan herself. She was 19 when she had the affair and found out she was pregnant with her daughter, still a sophomore in college. And yet she is supposedly some whiz at Marketing at the ripe old age of 24. The job she gets is actually VP of Marketing. I was not convinced that she could have landed such a job considering that she had been denied job opportunities since the affair was discovered. I also kept getting knocked out of the story a bit whenever Regan mentioned her Mexican immigrant mother and her absentee French father because I would idly wonder where the heck the name 'Regan Martin' came from?

Not a bad book by any means. It was a quick read and I did not feel like I was slogging through it nor did I want to chuck it against the wall. But definitely not a winner for me.

This review was based on a copy of an ARC received via the Amazon Vine program

TJ says

3.5/5.0

There are parts of this story I absolutely loved and parts that drove me nuts. First the parts I love:

Ms. Adair's writing. It pulls the reader into the story and uncovers all the emotions layer by layer until one can actually feel Regan's humiliation and despair and Gabe's frustration and anger. It is rich and emotional. One can't help but feel for Regan and her struggles. And, her daughter Holly is absolutely adorable.

The parts that drove me nuts:

I HATED how horribly Gabe treated Regan. Good grief! Sabatoging all her jobs for six years until she is borderline destitute? He, nor any of his family ever took the time to hear her side of the story - rather they all - Gabe included - do the most despicable things with only half the information. He never truly trusted her and the final blow was the most infuriating of all. It made the quick, "I'm sorry", kiss-and-make-up-the-end, enough to make me want to throw the book at the wall! He didn't deserve her. The story desperately needed at least a chapter where he has to prove he is actually worthy of her love.

Stacie says

4 1/2 "Randolph" Stars!

I loved this story! Best Christmas story for me this year. Gage and Regan are combustible! Holly is so sweet and an adorable child. The DeLuca family is quite interesting; I will definitely continue this series. Happy reading!

GraceMyBookSnack says

Highly Emotional, Delightful & Fun

Being the holidays, I wanted to read something romantic centered around the season. In *Kissing Under the Mistletoe*, I got that and so much more. With a story that is not only delightful and fun, but also highly emotional, I practically used up a box of tissues while getting to know Regan and Gabe in a story set in romantic wine country!

What can I say about Regan Martin? From the start, I found her to be awesome! She's a single mom to almost 6-year old Holly. They recently moved to St. Helena for a fresh start, a dream job for her, and an excellent school for her daughter. Most of all, she wants to give Holly the most perfect Christmas ever! Did I mention that Regan seems to be a little cursed with unfortunate events, too? Ahh, yes! This story had so many laugh-out-loud moments that all the stuff that happens to Regan had me both laughing and crying at the same time! Really, it was like a one step forward, two steps back kind of thing for her. I felt every emotion and sympathized with Regan every step of the way. In fact, I found a lot of the mishaps and sequence of events to be witty and humorous and written so seamlessly!

When you first meet Gabe DeLuca, you will think he is a big, relentless jerk. He is a thorn at Regan's side, because, unintentional or not, he makes life miserable for her. Oh, he has his reasons, but you will quickly find out that Gabe and the DeLuca family jumped to conclusions too quickly when it comes to Regan. His heart and mind begin to change as he and Regan spend more time together. The chemistry between them is pretty intense.

“See, Vixen,” he whispered, watching the pulse at the base of her neck skyrocket. “When you refer to stuff, I can only imagine you're talking about how whenever we're together we can't seem to keep our hands off each other. And when we do touch it's so damn combustible it's hard to breathe.” --Gabe

Marina Adair, I found your writing to be so clever and refreshing! When I say clever, I'm specifically thinking of all the “Randolph” business...so hilarious! I'm so glad I took a chance on this story! There is no doubt that I will be waiting for and wanting what comes next from you.

Full of small hometown traditions, family, friendships, mischief and Christmas miracles, *Kissing Under the Mistletoe* is a romantic comedy that can be enjoyed anytime of the year.

Jane Stewart says

Many uninteresting misunderstandings, adding troubles upon troubles for poor Regan. Supposed to be humorous.

Some readers will enjoy this type of humor in a slapstick sort of way, but it did not work for me. I was impatient, wanting it to be over.

Regan is a single mom who has been unable to find work in her field (wine marketing) for six years - because Gabe repeatedly sabotages her career. He is wealthy and influential in the wine industry. Regan's goal in life is providing the best she can for her daughter Holly. Regan does stupid things and makes stupid choices which snowball into problems.

The story opens with stupidity. Regan sees Gabe in a grocery store. She's so upset that she walks out of the store without paying for her purchase. Then she damages Gabe's car by running her grocery cart into it and throws several small statues from the nearby Christmas display at his car causing a broken window, dents, and scratches. He watches her do this. Then she puts one of the statues (Randolph a reindeer) in her trunk and drives away. The subject of who will pay for the damages to his car and the statues never comes up in the book. The town is upset at the theft of Randolph, with the sheriff planning to arrest the thief.

Randolph in her car trunk causes repeated problems for Regan. Notices are posted asking for help to find Randolph. So why does Regan tear down a bunch of notices to throw them away? And then she is seen doing that. She tries a few times to return Randolph but people are there. Why didn't she go in the middle of the night? Or leave him somewhere with an anonymous note or a phone call to the authorities. No, she creates embarrassing situations for herself.

Another poor choice:

Isabelle wants to hurt and humiliate Regan every chance she gets. Regan knows this. Regan is a single mom working as a hotel maid. So why does Regan let Isabelle sign her up to volunteer for the children's Christmas play? She later discovers that Isabelle signed her up as chairwomen of the most expensive and time consuming job. Instead of getting out of it claiming there was a misunderstanding, Regan takes it on. Has she no brain? Has she no backbone?

One part I liked:

One dimensional Isabelle. For those who have volunteered for charitable organizations, you will find parts of Isabelle in the most unpleasant people you've known and had to work with.

As to the romance:

Regan and Gabe desire each other and begin a relationship, but during the book a series of things happen causing misunderstandings and problems for them. These problems did not entertain me - maybe because they were one person assuming something inaccurate about the other - causing angst and worry. For example, she doesn't tell him a minor thing from her past. When he later discovers it he is angry and disses her in public - won't take her phone call. It's a problem because only part of the story was told to him, not the whole thing. When he later learns the whole story, it's no problem after all. Yes these types of misunderstandings are commonly used in romances. Sometimes they work. But for me they did not work here.

The narrator Renee Raudman was ok.

DATA:

Narrative mode: 3rd person. Unabridged audiobook length: 8 hrs and 52 mins. Swearing language: strong but rarely used. Sexual language: mild. Number of sex scenes: 2. Setting: current day St. Helena (Napa Valley) California. Book copyright: 2012. Genre: contemporary romance.

? Kimberly says

I am not going to lie; I am a sucker for holiday themed romances. They put me in a festive mood and *Kissing Under the Mistletoe* did just that. This was a fun, smexy, snugly read and I quickly consumed it in a single evening. This is the first in the St. Helena Vineyard series and I cannot wait to go back to Napa Valley.

The tale begins when we meet Regan Martin and her adorable six year old daughter. When she was younger she met and fell in love with her employer, only to discover he was married and lied to her. That mistake cost her everything and gave her the most precious gift. Now she is looking for a fresh start in Napa Valley and had just landed her dream job that comes with the perfect cottage and school to raise her daughter. This is going to be the best Christmas ever; that is until she finds out the boss is none other than Gabe DeLuca the scorned wife's brother. Convinced Regan is a homewrecker he quickly fires her and orders her to leave town. Gabe's meddling, fruit cake baking, grandmother has other ideas and the tale that unfolds is delightful.

Regan is a twenty-seven year old French-Mexican woman who up until her ill-fated affair was a successful marketer for the wine industry. The relationship with a married man shamed her and yet she is one tough cookie. She is a wonderful mother and despite many setbacks, she continues to build a life for them. I easily connected with her. Gabe of course is completely swoon-worthy! As the ever protective head of the family, he feels the need to protect his sister. The attraction he feels for Regan downright annoys him! The romance that unfolded was sweet, hot and oh so fun. Watching these two fight their insane physical attraction to each other was hilarious. The attraction was hot, heavy, and fast, while the romance developed slowly and with a few bumps. A meddling family, evil townspeople and a missing reindeer made this tale a hoot.

Adair delivered a well paced, entertaining romance with characters I enjoyed. I love when an author captures my attention in the first few pages and has me laughing aloud. While the plot isn't new she added her own little twists to it making it feel fresh. The banter between Regan and Gabe was priceless. I adored the meddling Christmas grandmas and despised those who stood in the way of my much needed HEA.

I want to thank the author for providing this ARC in exchange for my unbiased review.

Kimba @ Caffeinated Book Reviewer

Britt Bury says

I was so excited when I got an advanced copy of *Kissing Under The Mistletoe*. Adair delivered a spell-binding story about love, betrayal and finding your forever home.

The characters of this story are engaging and I found myself rooting for them from page one. Reagan is funny, sassy and a strong female lead. Whether she's fighting for her daughter's happiness, her home or her sanity, she finds ways to throw curve balls at the brusk Gabe DeLuca (or more appropriately, a ceramic reindeer) and remain right where she belongs: St. Helena.

Between the "Yoga Pants Posse," melding old biddies and a dark past, Reagan finds herself in the middle of Christmas chaos at the vineyard. The romantic scenes are hot and not rushed or misplaced. The conflict, characters—EVERYTHING about this book is phenomenally done!

This is a MUST READ and a story I will never forget. Brilliant job Ms. Adair and I look forward to the next in the series!

Aly is so frigging bored says

Buddy read with Maru, Sarah and Layla, possibly Madu as well :))

Great book! Can't wait for the next one.

Highlights:

- Regan, she was so strong and lovable and amazing, the hero doesn't deserve her
- Holly, sweet kid, very smart and was a pleasure to learn about
- ChiChi and her friends were the best matchmakers ever
- Gabe had potential, but didn't come through, not for me at least
- the setting of the story was idyllic, I enjoy small town stories very much
- the plot was good and left room for other stories

All in all it was a very good Christmas book that I enjoyed immensely.

Rating: 4.5*

Angela Carr (Under the Covers Book Blog) says

Review also posted at Under The Covers Book Blog

“Kissing Under the Mistletoe is an amazing start to St. Helena Vineyard series.” ~Under the Covers

Ms. Adair nailed it! She kept me engaged with every page of the book and falling in love with the characters immediately. Reading this book definitely put me in the right mood for the holidays, though I would have no problem reading it in the middle of summer.

Reagan Martin is a jaded single mom trying to survive from a mistake she had made 6 years ago. She had fallen in love with a married man and she has been paying for that mistake ever since. Career destroyed and financially troubled, she is trying to raise her daughter the best way she can, however, Gabe DeLuca will stop at nothing until she leaves town.

Regan is lovable, funny and one badass heroine. She does not kick ass in the literal term but she kicked ass in terms of survival. This woman endured hardships and survived not letting anything bring her down. She saw the best in her situation and did not let her daughter feel any of the grunts. Having a single mom my self along with many friends and family who are single parents, connecting to her was effortless. Her story actually had me in tears. Gabe on the other hand, I had no tears for him in the beginning. Of course right from start, I knew he was going to be a hot hero but that's besides the point. His only goal was to drive

Regan out of town. Though he was only trying to protect his sister, I thought that was a jerk move on his part. I'm just glad he was able to redeem himself because I don't think I can forgive myself lusting after a jerk hero.

I love Gabe and Regan's together. They are indeed a hot couple. Their banters and innuendos were hilarious. The sexual tension between them was off the charts and boy, their sexual encounters were even hotter. God forbid I become single again, but if I do, I want me a Gabe! The rest of the characters also captured my attention. Holly was just the sweetheart and the Mrs. Clauses were very entertaining. Randolph was one I cannot forget and I cheered for him to make home safe.

This small town contemporary romance is fast-paced, romantic and sexy. It had me tears and made me laugh-out-loud like a crazy woman. If you have not picked up this book, I strongly recommend you do. Ms. Adair absolutely did not disappoint and made an instant fan out of me.

* ARC provided by Author

Cherise says

When Regan Martin was 19 she made a huge mistake. She fell in love with a smooth talking older man, Richard, who promised her the moon and got her pregnant. Turns out her man was married and she found out when Richard's brother-in-law, Gabe DeLuca, caught them in the middle of a romantic dinner. Since that time Gabe has made it his personal mission to protect his sister Abigail from having to ever run into or deal with Regan. Regan has lost jobs and her reputation due to the powerful DeLuca name and is now trying to start over, again, with her 5 year old daughter. Unfortunately she has chosen to start over in DeLuca territory.

Gabe plans on using the close proximity of his sister's arch nemesis to uncover the whereabouts of the missing Richard, but what he ends up uncovering instead is how very wrong he has been this whole time. Regan is just as much a victim as his sister, if not more so, and he can't help but fall under Regan's spell.

I loved this book. It delivered everything the cover blurb promised and then some. Every character in this book is incredibly colorful and lends so much to the story. From the humorously zany grandmother and her pals, to the town snob who inspires thoughts of murder, you just can't help but feel you've known everyone forever.

Regan is so misunderstood but she holds her head high and does what she has to do to raise her daughter, Holly, and be the best mom she can be. Her hardships are heartbreaking and I felt every emotional blow she was dealt. Her daughter is charming and I loved how her and her mom had a "dirty jar" filled with change for offenses such as lying, swearing, cheating or being rude.

I wouldn't change a thing about this story, it was absolutely the kind of tale I had in mind for a romantic holiday story. It kept me up reading and it will be staying on my bookshelf, forever. I will be waiting anxiously for the next book in the series, Summer in the Vineyard, and buying it when it comes out in April 2013. I am adding this author to my list of favorites!

Cherise Everhard, October 2012

Katherine Coble says

Just AWFUL. More supposedly-professional people acting like preteens. The book opens with a woman shoplifting, vandalizing a car and assaulting someone. That's supposed to be a COMICAL scene. Then we get lots of talk about dicks and hard nipples and...it's just juvenile and turns any feeling of romance into sheer lowbrow lust. There are certain words that kill romance for me in fiction. "dick" is the worst offender.

This really is a Frankenstein novella. It's marketed as a holiday romance but then it talks like erotica. And the adversity faced by the heroine is far too melodramatically bad for light category romance. Add to that the fact that implausibility piles upon implausibility--a 24yo VP of Marketing who hasn't held down a job in the field at all? A Franco-Mexican daughter of illegal immigrants named 'Regan'? It feels like a bad first book from someone who doesn't know how to tell a plausible story in the least.
