



## The Christmas Promise

*Donna VanLiere*

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## **The Christmas Promise** Donna VanLiere

Each Christmas we are given a promise from heaven. And each year on earth we make promises to each other.

This is a story about how a promise from one person to another shows us the true meaning of faith, remembrance, and love. Seven years ago Gloria endured a family tragedy that almost shook her faith entirely. Each Christmas she places a card in an envelope on her tree, restating a promise she made to her husband before he died. Now, having moved from her small town and all the painful memories it held, she is building a life by caring for people in need. Whether it's a young mother who can't pay her electric bill or a family who needs some extra food, Gloria always finds a way. Miriam is a thorn in Gloria's side. Miriam is a constantly critical, disapproving neighbor who looks with suspicion at all the good things Gloria does. When a twist of fate makes them roommates instead of neighbors, it's the ultimate test of patience and faith.

Chaz has a good job as head of security at Wilson's Department Store, but each night he returns home to an empty apartment. He longs for a wife and family of his own but realizes that the life choices he's made have alienated him. He befriends a young boy whose mother has fallen on hard times, giving him a chance to have a life he thought impossible. In *The Christmas Promise*, the lives of these characters collide and we learn that even as we move ahead, the past is never far behind. And when we are forgiven much, we love much.

In this warmly humorous and deeply poignant story, we are reminded that the Christmas Promise is the promise of second chances.

## **The Christmas Promise Details**

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## From Reader Review The Christmas Promise for online ebook

### **Stefanie (foreversweetserendipity) says**

I cannot deny it! I absolutely love this series. The books are always the perfect Christmas remedy for feeling in the spirit. I also fully believe you can read these books any time of the year and still find some Faith and Hope in life.

This book was a little darker than the others have been. It dealt in depth with abuse and alcoholism. I was surprised how far the books went. But the books always teach something and it brings you back from the brink of hopelessness to find hope and a way for a new life.

This is mainly a story about Gloria or Miss Glory. And it follows her helping others because of how her life went astray. It brings in multiple story lines, but it all feeds together perfectly.

An absolute must read for the holidays and beyond!

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### **Trudy Gleason says**

Totally enjoy book. This is what the true spirit of Christmas is all about. Loved it.

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### **Malinda says**

I was surprised by how much I liked this "Christmas book." It has many lessons for the reader, but the one that struck me the most was that we need to be careful who and how we judge others. I recommend this book to you!

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### **Eomicheli says**

Nice to read a "feel good" book during the holidays! Definitely on the light side, but enjoyable just the same.

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### **Julianna says**

Reviewed for THC Reviews

*The Christmas Promise* was another great Christmas story from Donna VanLiere. The first three books in the *Christmas Hope* series embodied a sense of sadness with death taking center stage in each of them. While I loved all those books, it was nice to have one with a more whimsical tone where no one dies or is struggling mightily with someone else's death. There are some heavy themes, such as loneliness, alcoholism, domestic abuse and a missing child, but there was enough humor and lighter moments to keep those things from becoming depressing. This book also had more of an ensemble cast than the first three with several

characters playing significant roles. Overall, *The Christmas Promise* was a heartwarming Christmas story that I would recommend to anyone needing to lift their spirits this holiday season.

As with the other books in this series, *The Christmas Promise* is written in alternating first and third person POV. The first person narrator this time is Gloria aka Miss Glory. She is a retired widow whose adult son has been missing for seven years. He left home just before Gloria's husband, his father, died, and she hasn't seen or heard from him since. She somewhat recently moved to the unnamed small town that has been the setting for all the *Christmas Hope* books. In an effort to keep busy and to help others in lieu of helping her son, she collects and sorts donations of food, clothing, household items, and even the occasional car, which she then redistributes to the needy in the community. I have to say that Gloria has my dream job. Being a philanthropist is something I've always longed to do. Gloria is a very kind-hearted and loving woman who cares about everyone she meets and helps, maybe a little too much, as it takes her a while to figure out that she can't always help everyone in the way she would like to. Still she is generous to a fault with the only possible exception being her next-door neighbor Miriam. The woman is something of a snob, who always threatens to call the city on Gloria each time someone leaves donations in her driveway. Even Miriam has her own story though. Gloria just hasn't heard it yet. They've spent so long as rivals, she hasn't really taken the time to get to know the other woman, but that all changes when an unfortunate incident leaves the two of them living together temporarily. It was really fun to see these two develop an appreciation for one another and a deep friendship after feuding for so long.

Then there is Chaz who just moved to town and got a job as a security guard at Wilson's Department Store. At first, he's very much a loner and a drifter, who only intends to stay long enough to earn a little money. He obviously harbors some secrets he doesn't want anyone else to know and on top of it all, is a functioning alcoholic who spends all his free time at the bottom of a bottle. He isn't exactly the most likable character initially, but things begin to slowly change for him as he discovers a caring side to himself he didn't realize existed. He works the night shift, and the turnaround starts with him caring for the little boy of a cleaning lady, who had nowhere else to take him and so brought him with her to work. Chaz develops a strong friendship with the little boy, Donovan, and to the extent she will let him into her life, the boy's mother, Carla, who is being abused by her boyfriend. Chaz also begins to feel a connection to Mike, the homeless man who sometimes stands outside Wilson's, and worries when Mike is hit by a car. Last but not least, Chaz falls in love at first sight with Erin, a pretty but very pregnant young woman who Gloria is helping.

What impressed me most about *The Christmas Promise* is how the author managed to seamlessly weave together all the lives of these characters until it was like they became one family unit. She even brought back a few favorites from past books like Robert Layton (*The Christmas Shoes*) and Jack and Nathan Andrews (*The Christmas Hope*). *The Christmas Promise* was very much a story of new beginnings. Each one of the characters in the book received some sort of second chance after life had thrown them a curveball. This time they chose the right path, but it wasn't without the help of strangers. The one thing I loved most about this book is the serendipitous nature of the characters' meetings which underscores the *It's a Wonderful Life* principle that each person's life touches so many others in ways that we often don't even know. *The Christmas Promise* is simply a warm, feel-good story that was a welcome respite from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season.

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### **Staci says**

It took me a bit to get into this one, but I'm so glad I kept reading. Once I got hooked on the story, I was hooked in a major way. This was a very good Christmas story!

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### **Dana Leet says**

This book was amazing. It was miraculous that the main character glory was looking all this time for her son with a porch light constantly on. I think that we all should really strive to find a miracle with every Christmas that occurs and even if it is a small one realize that they still happen to every family today.

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### **Rayni says**

I listened to this book with my mother. The author read the book & did a wonderful job. I had a hard time following as it jumped back & forth between Chaz & Gloria. Not realizing this was part of a series, I enjoyed meeting Mr. Wilson, Robert Layton, Jack & Nathan Andrews again from *Christmas Shoes* & *Christmas Blessings*. *Christmas Promise* could definitely be read as a stand alone book. As Nathan & Jack briefly appear. Mr. Wilson & Robert Layton play more prominent parts, but still are not major players. I have yet to read *Christmas Hope*.

Since I am hearing impaired & only got the CDs for my mother, who is legally blind, I also checked out the hardback copy of the book. It took 2 days to listen to, & as we finished each day's listening, I'd stay up & read. (I also wait for the DVDs to come out so I can close-caption movies & finally catch what everyone else laughed at & the nuances I miss in a theater.)

If one does not build their life around God & look for His hand in their life, this book is a fairy tale. However, I do not believe in coincidences & I feel this is a very plausible book. Ms. VanLiere does an excellent job of conveying it.

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### **Tiffany Shelhorse says**

If you want a book with no huge conflict this is the book for you. In the best way possible it is like a Hallmark story without the overdone love story. Nice and short, an easy read to relax at the end of the day.

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### **Camilla says**

3.75 stars.

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### **Stephy says**

Sadly this is book 3 in a 4 book series and I read only this one. It was good a feel good book. A very quick read though. And I might have teared up once or twice.

Seven years ago Gloria endured a family tragedy that almost shook her faith entirely. Each Christmas she

places a card in an envelope on her tree, restating a promise she made to her husband before he died. Now, having moved from her small town and all the painful memories it held, she is building a life by caring for people in need. Whether it's a young mother who can't pay her electric bill or a family who needs some extra food, Gloria always finds a way.

Miriam is a thorn in Gloria's side. Miriam is a constantly critical, disapproving neighbor who looks with suspicion at all the good things Gloria does. When a twist of fate makes them roommates instead of neighbors, it's the ultimate test of patience and faith.

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If your looking for a quick read and a feel good book I'd read it.

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### **Deann Doolittle says**

Nice Christmas read!

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### **Pamela says**

LOVELY <> LOVELY <> LOVELY!!

FESTIVELY LOVELY.....

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around." - Leo Buscaglia, as quoted in *The Christmas Promise*

Absolutely delightful, like a comfy quilt on cold winter's day. And humorous....

"When I was young I always envisioned myself being fit and lean at this age in the middle of a race with runners half my age. Who was I kidding?"

And sometimes painfully honest....

"He stopped planning and dreaming a long time ago because all he could see was the gaping wound of his life, which hit him square in the face day after day. Maybe that's what truth does, it beats the living hell out of us until we do something about it."

And inspirational.....

"Life's most urgent question is: What are you doing for others?" - Martin Luther King Jr.

Yes, a wonderful little Christmastime story filled with just the right amount of wisdom, honesty, humor, charitableness, eccentricity and sappiness to be festively endearing. And yes, as typical with this genre, the ending is neatly tied-up in a conspicuously tidy, happily-ever-after bow. Ah, but everyone needs a bit sappy indulgence from time to time; it cleans the biblio-palate.

Four \*\*\*\* Delightful Christmas \*\*\*\*\* Stars

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### **Jana says**

This is a good story, but the reason I didn't rate it higher is because I detest books that introduce a dozen or so characters in a short story...It takes me several chapters to figure out who everyone is and then BAM! the book is ended! Maybe I'm just slow witted...

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### **Mom2triplets04 says**

I didn't enjoy this as well as the other 3 books. We meet many more characters and the writing just confused me when she switched between characters without warning. I was hoping to see characters from first books but they only appeared for a short time.

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