



What a Kiss Can Do

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Rita Jensen has had enough of what she perceives as the games involved in finding true love, witness her last two poorly chosen boyfriends. So when her job as a reporter for a suburban newspaper requires her to attend a holiday party on a cold December night, she doesn't want to go for two reasons. First, she might have to deal with men on the prowl, and second, she hates mistletoe and its idiotic kissing tradition. However, as the evening progresses, her casual friendship with a photographer colleague heats up when he catches her unaware under the mistletoe. And she meets a stranger, an attorney from London, who has his own element of intrigue. In the year that follows, she is seduced by one and pursued by the other and must choose with her heart and with her head between the possibilities that a kiss can create.

What a Kiss Can Do Details

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From Reader Review What a Kiss Can Do for online ebook

Catherine says

I was lucky enough to win a copy of What a Kiss Can Do by Kathy Johncox via a Firstreads giveaway. Despite receiving a free copy, this review is just my honest opinion of it. The first thing I'd like to say upon completion of this book is, "AWWW!" Ignoring that for one moment, I'll get to the rest of the review.

In the beginning of the book, reporter Rita Jensen has not much interest in love. One night, she's called to a Christmas party on assignment, unfortunately for her. She doesn't want to attend; generally because she doesn't really like those types of things and she also holds a strong dislike for the regular occurrence of mistletoe at these types of events. Though, this Christmas party and the mistletoe at it might prove to be a little luckier for her than it has in her prior life. She begins a relationship with a long-time friend, as well as meeting a new man who proves to be somewhat charming. The coming months prove to be challenging in many ways. She finds herself amidst all sorts of new experiences and opportunities.

The characters were all very unique. I felt that I could relate to all of them in some way or other. Firstly, Rita was a very special character. She's very kind, curious and willing to take on new opportunities. I appreciated how she tried to look into news stories about town, embracing what the people around her had to offer. It was very nice and heart-warming to read into her life. I really enjoyed reading about the things she experienced, reading into her thoughts and curiosity about the new events in her life. I found her to be somewhat intelligent, hard working and really loving. Fergie was really quite an interesting character to read as well. I liked his enthusiasm for his photography. I also like how loving he was towards Rita. I could certainly understand his later choices. I know that we weren't privy to his thoughts, but I understand that it must have been difficult for him. I think the author wrote the scenes with him particularly well, especially later on in the book. I, personally, don't hate him. However, considering Rita's perspective, I can see why she dislikes him and what he did. Derek! Oh my gosh! Derek! Early on, in Rita's relationship with Fergie, I kept on thinking that I would kind of prefer her in a relationship Derek. It just seemed so natural to me. Going by their early conversations, I just thought they were so sweet together and they were a match in terms of intelligence as well. They spoke well to each other and every moment they shared together just seemed to be so genuine and natural. I just felt that they were truly meant to be together. As a character, I consider him to be somewhat interesting. He was very unique and I thought him to be very loving towards Rita. As for background characters, I think all of them were well written. I enjoyed the work scenes with Boss, feeling that she was a very kind woman. I liked Rita's family members, the mother and Jen, who both seemed to be very nice people with interesting stories of their own. I even liked the various people Rita interviewed for the paper and felt that a lot of them had interesting stories to tell; it was nice to see the author encouraging people to notice the various arts about town, which subsequently got me considering about the arts within my own town. Overall, I really understood all of these characters. It was clear, to me, the motives of them and all of their thoughts and actions were completely understandable.

The plot was incredible. It takes all sorts of various plot lines and intertwines them incredibly well. There's various plot points that are quick, like the newspaper pull out portions. However, there are also longer plot lines, like the relationship stuff. There isn't much unnecessary plot, save for the visit to a gypsy and the plot with the possible UFO sightings. I think that some portions went a little bit quickly and skimmed over some things. However, I liked the overall pacing of the novel; it covered the time period quite well and gave a good impression of what had happened during the skipped moments.

This novel was a beautiful display of a well written book. I will definitely reread it in the future; it was such

a special story and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Five stars!

Stephanie says

Let me start by saying I was a first-reads winner for this book. I am glad I won. This was a very enjoyable book and different in a good way. Who knew a dwarf could be a romantic lead and it not be an issue? I must say the whole time I was reading this I only thought of Peter Dinklage in the Station Agent as that's who Derek reminded me of.

This is the story of Rita a self-sufficient, independent woman journalist who has had a hard time at love and relationships. She has a thing for Fergie the photographer whom she works with. At first they are just friends but there is a mutual attraction. They have to work together at a Christmas party and end up kissing beneath the mistletoe. From there they dive head/heart first into a relationship. While this is happening Rita had been assigned to interview Derek, an attorney at that party. They talk briefly and she finds him intriguing and different and not just because he is a dwarf. (I also found him intriguing and that is a testament to the writer's ability to make him a person and not just the sum of his outward appearance.)

Derek likes her but knows she has a thing for Fergie, so while he is pursuing her he never crosses the line. They start meeting for dinner and Rita doesn't tell Fergie about this because in some ways she likes Derek more than a friend (this was one of the things I didn't like but I got over it. I just believe people should always be honest no matter the fallout, but what is a romance novel without a little drama?).

Anyway, things are moving along nicely for Rita and Fergie and Rita and Derek. I won't say anything else because of spoilers. I truly did enjoy the book and the only reason the book isn't getting 5 stars is because of a small subplot that I didn't like and one other thing that if I reveal would also be a spoiler. These issues are a matter of personal preference and not a reflection of the writer who did an amazing job. The book was funny and real and just different in a way that I was very happy about.

Derek clearly was the best and I recommend a Derek in everyone's life. He had some of the best dialogue and I LOL'd quite a bit. He was so real to me.

My favorite Derekisms:

"I'll allow this behavior for a few days but then you have to give it up and get on.."

"...Knowing each other the way we do I feel comfortable telling you I am creative and adaptable and I have skills"

I recommend this to book readers of all genres.

Alison Lane says

Just read this book while on holiday. Made a good enjoyable read.

Bruce Johnson says

If you like exciting and interesting character development, like I do, then you will love Kiss. Johncox creates some memorable characters, both main and minor, and develops them with both conflicts and humor. Furthermore, suspenseful to the end. One of those rare books where you read the last sentence and smile!

Marci Diehl says

I've been an admirer of Kathy Johncox's writing for a long time. This is no "rookie" writing - the prose is clear, sharp and sophisticated. Rita Jensen is a thirty-something-year old writer for a local newspaper, no rookie at relationships, but inexperienced at real love. An unfortunate incident in her childhood involving her father's much-too-long kiss under the mistletoe with a neighbor lady (and his subsequent abandonment of his marriage and family) has given Rita an edge (dangerously close to bitterness) about holidays and men in general. And the mistletoe keeps cropping up in her path, much to her distaste.

On assignment to cover a very weird Christmas party among her town's artier set, she hears a thud on the steps behind her as she waits at the door to the party. What she mistakes for a fallen child turns out to be a brusque, very well-dressed man with a British accent -- a dwarf. Since the party is populated with people out of a Diane Arbus album, Rita assumes he's part of the group in town for a theatrical project. Rita's fellow professional from the paper, the hang-loose, funny, commitment-phobic surfer-type photographer, Fergie, is there to capture the party for the story and -- have you guessed? Fergie gives Rita a kiss to remember under the cursed mistletoe. And then he gives her a lot more than kisses. A LOT.

But Derek, the "person of short stature" -- it takes Rita awhile to figure out what the correct, PC word would be for him -- sets his eye on Rita, too. He's unsettling, self-possessed, highly intelligent, challenging and perceptive, not to mention a well-tailored attorney. There's a attraction there that Rita can't deny to herself.

The story of how Rita figures out what real love is through her relationships with these two very different men is unique and rich. There's humor, some mystery, and I've never read a romance like it. Think Peter Dinklage -- Johncox did.

The only thing that didn't ring true was a mention of mistletoe during a highly charged, funny scene that takes place in October -- and yet a sprig of mistletoe hangs within Rita's sight in a hallway. It felt forced. Not needed. But otherwise -- a fun, thoughtful book that affirms love and life in all sizes.
