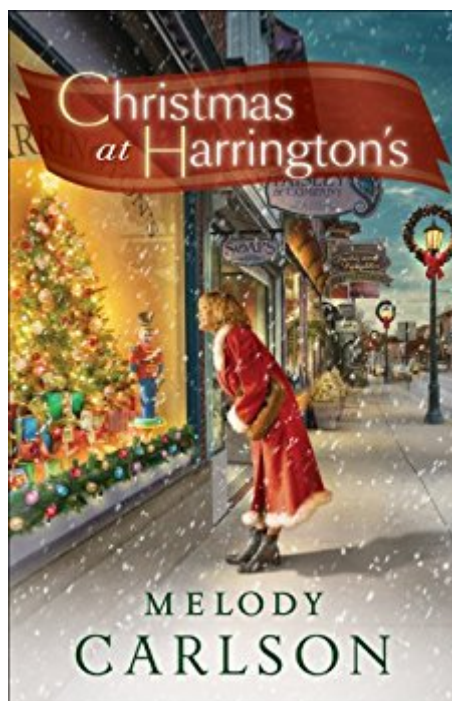


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# Christmas At Harrington's



## Synopsis

Christmas is approaching, and Lena Markham finds herself penniless, friendless, and nearly hopeless. She is trying to restart her life after false accusations landed her in prison, but job opportunities are practically nonexistent. When a secondhand red coat unexpectedly lands her a job as Mrs. Santa at a department store, Lena finally thinks her luck is changing. But can she keep her past a secret? This tender story about fresh starts will charm readers as all of Melody Carlson's Christmas offerings do. Full of redemption and true holiday spirit, Christmas at Harrington's will be readers' newest Christmas tradition.

## Book Information

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Contemporary Fiction > Religious

## Customer Reviews

A small town, inspirational story for the many this Christmas season that are besieged with their own past and/or the economy. Many need second chances and this book by Melody Carlson packs a lot of hope into a few pages. An enjoyable read with some depth. Even with its satisfying ending, it leaves readers with a hunger for more story about the life of Lena Markham. Lena is paroled from the pen with only the clothes on her back, \$65 cash, & a one-way bus ticket to New Haven, MN. I

found this author's stories irresistible after her book "The Christmas Bus" made its stop in my living room. She has warmth of spirit written into every story and a way of making the reader fall in love with her characters. "Christmas at Harrington's" is no exception. Lena rolls into New Haven with a prearranged boardinghouse room and a job at a local department store, Harrington's. Unfortunately due to lackluster sales, the job is gone. The owner's child decides Lena is the perfect looking Mrs. Santa. But...can an ex-con, just released, former spouse of an un-ordained preacher, & living in the disreputable Miller House, pull off pretending to be Mrs. Santa? Here is a story that will touch your heart and then put your conscience to considering the plight of many who struggle with making it on a daily basis. Even readers with their own difficulty will discover hope from New Haven's less fortunate. Moira will spurn your spirit of caring and charity. Young Beth, Cassidy, & Jemima you will simply love. Sam, a handsome widower lawyer secretly investigates Mrs. Santa's sordid history looking for truth. Over the scent of 'coffee with real cream' and gingersnaps (Santa's real favorite cookie), I can smell a sequel--maybe a Lena romance by Easter? One small negative is found.

I'm not sure whether to recommend this book or not. It wasn't terrible, and I was able to make it through the whole thing without losing total interest but I think that was only because this book was short. The writing style is also fairly simple, which makes it a quick read, but there's nothing in it to really praise. Overall this is just a decent fluff book, but there aren't many surprises and it isn't as original as I hoped from the description. As a main character I didn't find Lena very likable. I felt sorry for her and her situation, but I wasn't able to empathize with her the way I hoped to empathize with the main character, in fact, I found myself more drawn to minor character Sally and her daughter and I wish the book had been about them as I felt more for them and their struggle. It isn't that Lena doesn't come across as a decent person, she doesn't seem very real. I would have liked a little more back story about her time in prison, or even just a more descriptive explanation of her marriage or her childhood. The whole situation just seems very glossed over and details are just thrown in at the end to make the plot work (or at least that was how it seemed to me). Lena's situation was also not very realistic. I understand in books like these you have to suspend reality to a certain extent, but a convicted and sentenced felon final released from prison and moving to another state without once having to check in with (or even mention) a parole officer was a bit of a stretch considering it wouldn't have really changed the plot or story line (it just would have made things more believable). The landlord of the boarding house even seemed like the parole officer-type character.

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