

BOOK CLUB KIT

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Christmas 2021

Dear Friends,

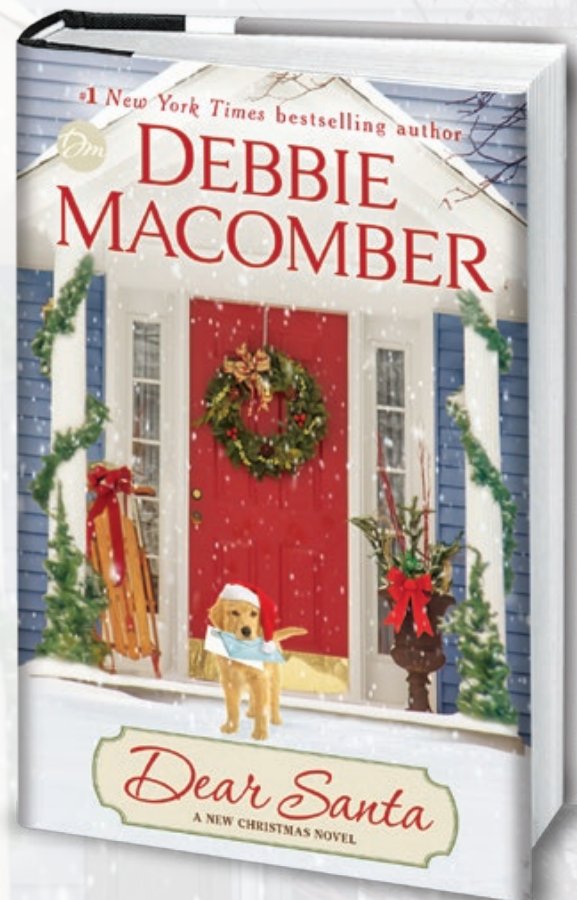
One of the most frequent questions an author is asked is “Where do you get your ideas?” Because my God-given gift is storytelling, I’ve never been short on those. Story is everywhere I look. Life throbs with it. Inspiration comes from a variety of places: a newspaper article, an overheard conversation, a movie, or, in the case of *Dear Santa*, a chance encounter with an eleven-year-old girl.

My husband’s cousin brought her granddaughter, who wanted to be an author, to meet me. When I asked her when she had decided she wanted to write books, she paused, gave her answer thoughtful consideration, and said, “I knew when I started writing Santa letters.” Right away, the idea for a book titled “Dear Santa” leaped into my mind.

My Christmas wish is that you enjoy reading about Lindy and Billy. I set the story in Wenatchee, Washington, which is said to be the Apple Capital of the World—something my hometown of Yakima highly disputes, claiming our fair city is in fact the Apple Capital of the World. Whichever is true, each city has an abundance of orchards and a growing number of vineyards that produce award-winning wines.

Thank you for taking a look at this *Dear Santa* Book Club Kit. Your support, as always, means the world to me. I hope you enjoy this extra-magical Christmas story and decide to recommend it to your friends and family. We can all use some holiday cheer! May your holidays and the year ahead be merry and bright.

Merry Christmas!
Debbie Macomber



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Christmas vacation has begun for Lindy, and she feels immediately welcomed in her hometown, greeted with a loving family and the smell of fresh baked cookies. What are some things about your hometown that make you feel this way? What is the importance of home to you?
2. Lindy's mom encourages her to have faith and believe, just as she'd done years ago when she would write letters to Santa. Do you think it's important to believe in a power outside of yourself? Why or why not?
3. Lindy's letters to Santa are answered every year, even when she wishes for a new father for Christmas. What was a special Christmas gift you remember from your childhood? If you were sure Santa would fulfill your wish, what would you ask for now?
4. Lindy's relationship with Billy in grade school had a rough start, but they've come together as two completely different people and fallen in love. Lindy and Peggy were the best of friends but lost touch until they reconnected. Have you ever rekindled a relationship from your past? What was that like?
5. It may seem illogical to believe that Lindy's letter had anything to do with Billy's terrible childhood Christmas, yet she still feels responsible for what happened to him and his family. Have you ever felt guilty or responsible for someone else's misfortune? Why?
6. Lindy and Billy's first kiss sparks an initial strain in their relationship, but they both recover quickly and laugh about it afterwards. Would you have done the same as Lindy? Do you admire Billy for forgiving her so quickly?
7. Lindy's family have their fair share of Christmas traditions, like baking their great grandmother's sourdough buns. Do you believe in the magic of holiday traditions? What is something you do every year during the holidays and how did the tradition begin?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

8. Peggy organizes a unique Christmas party complete with a game of white elephant and a scavenger potluck dinner. Do you have any unique Christmas party ideas to celebrate the holidays?
9. Billy and Lindy's love is undeniable. Their connection is so strong that Lindy starts to question the life she's built in Seattle. Can you imagine a love powerful enough to make you shift the very course of your life? Do you think Lindy made the right decision to move back to Wenatchee?
10. Peggy realizes that Lindy is still carrying resentment towards Celeste and Ben, which could be the reason she is so hesitant to take a leap into a new future. Lindy doesn't realize this until Peggy points it out—she doesn't want to give in and admit defeat by leaving Seattle. Have you ever had a friend understand you in this way? Was it helpful, and did you take their advice?
11. Pastor Dean's message on forgiveness and letting go is exactly what Lindy needs to hear. In the moment that follows the Pastor's message, Lindy closes her eyes and releases Celeste and Brian and, although it was difficult, she wishes them happiness. Do you admire Lindy for forgiving them? Would you have done the same? Do you have anyone you need to forgive, or any past hurt to let go of?
12. Near the end of the novel, Lindy reflects, "Christmas Eve was a time of joy and celebration. A time for family. A time to count her blessings, of which there were many." Take a moment to count your blessing and reflect on the past year. What do you have to be thankful for?
13. If *Dear Santa* was made into a television show or movie, who would you cast to play Lindy and Billy?

FUN HOLIDAY GAMES

White Elephant

Switch out this year's Secret Santa Exchange with White Elephant for a playful twist!

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Each player brings one wrapped gift to contribute to a common pool. The gift exchange organizer should provide information on what type of gift people should bring.
2. Players draw numbers to determine what order they will go in.
3. Players sit in a circle or line where they can see the gift pile. To make things easier, everyone should sit in the order in which they will take their turns.
4. The first player selects a gift from the pool and opens it. Make sure everyone can see the gift!
5. The following players can choose to either pick an unopened gift from the pool or steal a previous player's gift. Anyone who gets their gift stolen in this way can do the same—choose a new gift or steal from someone else.
6. After all players have had a turn, the first player gets a chance to swap the gift he or she is holding for any other opened gift. Anyone whose gift is stolen may steal from someone else (as long as that person hasn't been stolen from yet). When someone declines to steal a gift, the game comes to an end. Note that for this last "extra" turn, the three-swap rule doesn't apply. Players can keep swapping until someone decides to stand pat.



GUIDELINES:

1. Gifts must be wrapped and anonymous.
2. Gifts should meet predetermined criteria (e.g., price and theme).
3. Each gift can only be stolen three times in the game.
4. Each gift can only be stolen once per turn.
5. Each player can only be stolen from three times. After the third time, they are out of the game.
6. Everyone who has had a turn must have a gift. For example, if you took the first turn and your gift was stolen, you must unwrap a gift. As the game goes on, stealing gifts turns into swapping gifts, so everyone should have a gift at any given time.

FUN HOLIDAY GAMES



Peggy's Group Dinner Scavenger Hunt

Elevate your potluck dinner with Peggy's adventurous Group Dinner Scavenger Hunt!

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The organizer (host) should pass out a folded sheet of paper to the participants when they arrive at the dinner with the name of the food item they are to supply. To make it more interesting, give clues rather than naming it outright. (Peggy provided her friends with riddles!)
2. Give participants a time limit to find and bring back the meal described to them.
3. The first person back gets a prize, and the last one back has to clean the kitchen! The prize for the winner in Peggy's game was the honor of being the last turn at White Elephant (and thus become immune from having anyone take their gift away!).

TIP:

Be a good host and have the main course ready, wine opened, and table set by the time your participants return!

PLAYLIST: [LISTEN HERE!](#)

“Where Are You Christmas?” by Faith Hill

“Santa Tell Me” by Ariana Grande

“Christmas Without You” by Ava Max

“Let It Snow” by Colton Dixon, Atlantic Holiday

“Snowed In” by Conor Matthews

“Christmas Isn’t Christmas” by Dan + Shay

“Take Me Home for Christmas” by Dan + Shay

“Christmas Time is Here” by Devin Dawson

“I Need You Christmas” by Jonas Brothers

“Like It’s Christmas” by Jonas Brothers

“I’ll Be Your Santa Tonight” by Keith Urban

“Oh Santa!” (feat. Ariana Grande & Jennifer Hudson) by Mariah Carey

“Say All You Want for Christmas” by Nick Jonas, Shania Twain

“Oh Holy Night” by Nina Nesbitt

“It’s Not Christmas ‘Til You Come Home” by Norah Jones

“Christmas Blues” by Sabrina Claudio, The Weeknd

“Keep You Warm” by Sam Tsui, Kina Grannis

“Home This Christmas” by Justin Bieber, The Band Perry

“First Christmas (That I Loved You)” by Shameik Moore

“Under the Tree” by Sam Palladio

“Christmas Time Is Here” by Tori Kelly

“I Believe in Santa” by Meghan Trainor

“Santa Baby” by Ariana Grande, Liz Gillies



RECIPES



Sourdough Pancakes

Partake in a special Carmichael breakfast with these flavorful and fluffy pancakes. These might become a new family favorite!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 2 tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 cup sourdough starter
- 1½ cups milk
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 2 tbsp. vegetable oil

DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and soda, sugar and salt. Add the sourdough starter, milk, egg, and oil. Mix well just until combined.

Spray a pancake griddle with cooking spray or grease well with butter. Heat to about 300–350°F.

Pour ¼ cup pancake batter on the hot griddle. Cook until the pancake starts bubbling on top, then flip.

Cook for an additional 1–2 minutes or until the pancake is cooked through. Serve warm with butter and syrup. Simmer gently over low heat for 10 minutes. Serve warm and garnish with more citrus slices and cinnamon sticks.

Recipe credit: tastesoflizzyt.com/sourdough-pancakes

RECIPES



Rouladen

Recreate Lindy and Billy's first dinner at Berghoff's for your own date night with this hearty German rouladen recipe.

INGREDIENTS

6 slices top round (see hints below)
3 slices lean bacon
1 onion, sliced
3 garlic dill pickles, sliced
2 tablespoons butter
Mustard, salt, pepper, cornstarch
1–2 cups water

DIRECTIONS

Season beef slices with salt and freshly ground pepper. Thinly spread mustard on top of each slice.

Divide bacon, pickle, and onion slices on one end of each slice.

Roll up slices, tucking the ends in and securing with skewers, wooden cocktail picks, or thread.

Heat butter in skillet. Brown rouladen well on all sides. Do not crowd rouladen in skillet, or they will not brown nicely. Do in small batches if necessary. Add extra butter if needed.

Once all rouladen are well browned, add 1 to 2 cups of hot water, gently stirring up browned bits. Return all rouladen and any accumulated juices to skillet, bring to simmer and cover.

Simmer for about 1½ hours.

Remove rouladen. To thicken gravy, combine about 1 to 2 tablespoons cornstarch in a little cold water and stir gently into cooking liquid until slightly thickened.

Season gravy to taste with salt and freshly ground pepper. If you wish, add sour cream to the gravy.

Remove skewers, picks, or thread to serve rouladen with their gravy.

Recipe credit: quick-german-recipes.com/beef-rouladen-recipe.html

RECIPES



Holiday Spiced Apple Cocktail

Wenatchee, Washington is said to be the Apple Capital of the World. Get in the holiday, and Wenatchee, spirit with this holiday spice apple cocktail!

INGREDIENTS

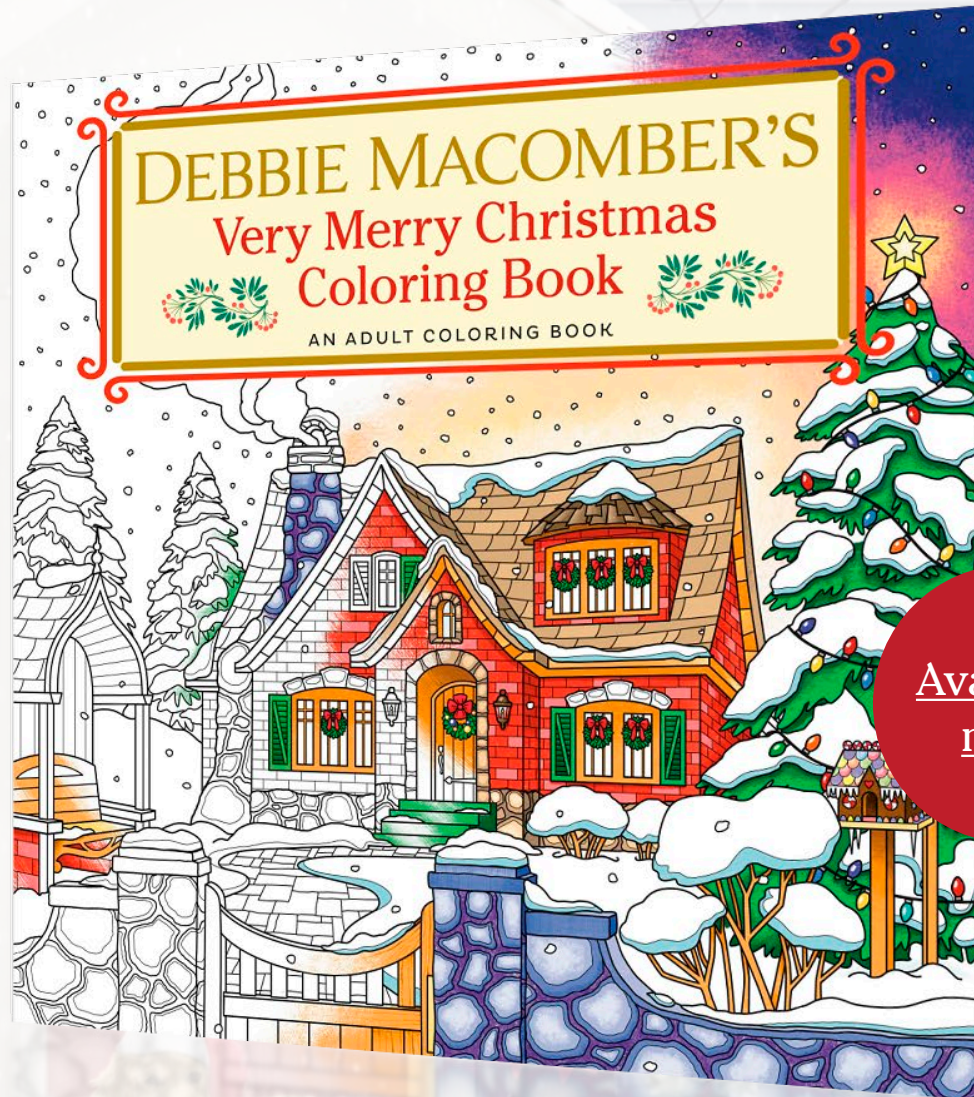
3 oz. apple cider
1½ oz. bourbon
¾ oz. maple syrup
⅛ tsp cinnamon + more to garnish
Ice
1 apple sliced thinly crosswise, seeds removed, to garnish

DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients in a cocktail shaker and fill with ice. Shake, shake, shake until the outside becomes frosty, then strain into a glass. Top with apple round and dust with cinnamon using a fine sieve.

Recipe credit: foodess.com/holiday-spiced-apple-cocktail

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