

DEBBIE MACOMBER

A Christmas Duet

BOOK CLUB KIT



Dear Friends,

I'm excited to share this holiday story with you, my readers, mainly because I had such fun writing it. Long ago, I came to understand the special link between the reader and the author. In some ways, I consider it almost a spiritual connection. I know if I laugh, you'll laugh, and if I weep, there will be tears in your eyes, too. And most important, if I put my heart on the page, it links with yours. Another reason I'm excited is because our friend Rhett Palmer has contributed his song lyrics. The "A Very Merry Christmas" song might be familiar, as it was played in the movie *Call Me Mrs. Miracle*. As always, it brings me joy to hear from my readers. You can reach me through all the media outlets and my website. If you prefer to write, my mailing address is: P.O. Box 1458, Port Orchard, WA 98366.

And now, my friends, I hope you enjoy this special book club guide for *A Christmas Duet*, full of discussion questions, a playlist, and recipes inspired by the book. Have yourself a very merry Christmas.



Discussion Questions

1. What is your biggest takeaway from *A Christmas Duet*? Did it make you laugh, cry, swoon? How would you describe this book to a friend? If you had to give it a one-sentence review, what might it say?
2. Just for fun: If *A Christmas Duet* were being made into a movie and TV series, who would you cast in the roles? And what songs would be featured on the soundtrack? (Please find a suggested playlist inspired by the book on page 4.)
3. Talk about the two main characters in this novel. How, if at all, did Hailey and Jay's story resonate for you? Did their relationship feel real to you?
4. What storytelling techniques does Debbie Macomber use to bring the romance in *A Christmas Duet* to life?
5. What were some of your favorite scenes or most memorable lines of dialogue in this novel?
6. What makes a "holiday novel" special for you? What ingredients do you look for in such a read? Did this one meet your expectations? How does the author capture the magic of the season on the page?
7. How is music a language of love in *A Christmas Duet*? You may wish to talk about the meaning, thematic and literal, of the novel's title as well.
8. If you could ask the Debbie Macomber one thing about *A Christmas Duet*, what would it be?



Playlist

Mary, Did You Know?
CARRIE UNDERWOOD

It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas
MICHAEL BUBLÉ

Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!
DEAN MARTIN

White Christmas
ANDY WILLIAMS

The Christmas Song
MEL TORMÉ

Winter Wonderland/Sleigh Ride
DOLLY PARTON

Twelve Days of Christmas
RAY CONNIFF

Christmas Without You
AVA MAX

Christmas Time Is Here
DEVIN DAWSON

Say All You Want for Christmas
SHANIA TWAIN

Oh Holy Night
NINA NESBITT

Christmas Blues
SABRINA CLAUDIO, THE WEEKND

All I Want for Christmas
MARIAH CAREY

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Listen on Spotify!

Lucille's Chicken Pot Pie

"You can't beat Lucille's chicken pot pie" —A Christmas Duet

Ingredients

- Homemade Pie Crust or All Butter Pie Crust
(both recipes make 2 crusts, 1 for bottom and 1 for top)
- 1 pound (450 g) skinless, boneless chicken breast or thighs, cubed
- 1 cup (about 130 g) sliced carrots (about 2 carrots)
- ½ cup (about 40 g) sliced celery
- ⅓ cup (5 tbsp; 71g) unsalted butter
- ⅓ cup (45 g) chopped yellow onion (1/2 of a small onion)
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- ⅓ cup (41g) all-purpose flour
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- 1 and ¾ cups (420 ml) chicken broth/stock (I recommend reduced sodium)
- ⅔ cup (160 ml) half-and-half*
- 1 cup (12 g) frozen peas
- Egg wash: 1 large egg beaten with 1 tbsp. (15 ml) milk
- Optional: sprigs of fresh thyme for garnish



Directions

1. The crust: Prepare either pie crust recipe through step 5, including chilling for at least 2 hours. I usually make the crust the night before. The pie crust recipe makes 2 crusts and you'll be using both crusts.
2. In a large pot, combine chicken, carrots, and celery. Add enough water to cover the chicken and vegetables, then place over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil, then allow to boil for 10 minutes. Remove from heat, drain, and set aside.
3. In a large skillet over medium heat, combine the butter, onions, and garlic. Stirring occasionally, cook until the onions are translucent and the butter is lightly browning. Whisk in the flour, salt, black pepper, thyme, chicken broth, and half-and-half. Cook and whisk until no flour lumps remain, then simmer over medium-low heat until thick. I simmer mine for 10 minutes. You want it to be a very thick gravy; simmer longer if necessary. Taste and add more seasonings if you prefer. Sometimes I add more thyme. Remove from heat and set aside.
4. Preheat oven to 425°F (218°C).
5. After the pie dough has chilled: On a floured work surface, roll out one of the discs of chilled dough (keep the other one in the refrigerator). Turn the dough about a quarter turn after every few rolls until you have a circle about 12 inches in diameter. Carefully place the dough into a 9-inch pie dish that's 1.5–2 inches deep. Tuck the dough in with your fingers, making sure it is smooth. With a small sharp knife or kitchen shears, trim the extra overhang of dough and discard.
6. Spoon the chicken and vegetable mixture into the crust. Scatter the frozen peas on top. Pour/spread the gravy evenly over top.
7. Roll out second half of pie crust dough just as you did the first. Cover the pie with the second crust and trim the extra overhang off the sides. Crimp the pie crust with a fork to seal the edges. With a small sharp knife, slice a few small slits in the top crust to allow steam to escape. Using a pastry brush, brush crust and edges with egg wash.
8. Bake for 32–38 minutes or until the top of the crust is golden brown. After 20 minutes of baking, be sure to cover the edges of the crust with aluminum foil or use a pie crust shield to prevent the edges from getting too brown. ([See this post on the best pie baking tools for instructions on how to make a pie crust shield out of foil.](https://sallysbakingaddiction.com/double-crust-chicken-pot-pie/))
9. Remove from the oven and cool for at least 10 minutes before serving. Makes amazing leftovers—the filling is so thick on the next day! Reheat as desired. Leftovers keep well in the refrigerator in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

Homemade Eggnog Recipe

Serves: 6

Ingredients

- 2 ½ cups whole (full cream) milk (625 ml)
- ½ cup sugar (divided in 2 parts) (100 g / 3.5 oz.)
- 4 egg yolks (from large eggs)
- 1 cup heavy cream (250 ml)
- ½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- Optional: ⅓ – ½ cup alcohol (bourbon, rum, Drambuie)

Directions

1. In a medium saucepan over low-medium heat, combine the milk and ¼ cup of sugar. Stir constantly while it heats to dissolve the sugar and until it's steaming. Don't boil.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together egg yolks and remaining ¼ cup of sugar until thick and pale.
3. While beating on low, very slowly drizzle the milk in until it's almost all combined.
4. Tip the mixture back into the saucepan and add the nutmeg and cinnamon. Heat over low-medium heat, stirring constantly until a thermometer reaches 73°C / 16°5F. It will have thickened and will coat the back of a spoon
5. Strain the mixture into a clean bowl, then pour in the cream and vanilla. Stir well to combine. *In this step, you can also add alcohol for a spiked version of this recipe.
6. Cover with plastic wrap and place in the fridge to chill completely.
7. Will keep for 3–4 days.

