



## Bittersweet Christmas

*Nina Croft*

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Orphan Liam Ryan isn't asking for much this Christmas--just his Uncle John. And he's counting on Father Christmas to find a way to make that happen.

But when Father Christmas tosses Liam's letter, claiming that the kid is asking the impossible, his daughter, Winter, takes over. Half-pixie, Winter, longs to do something important with her life, starting with getting a job at the Order of the Shadow Accords, the organization that polices the supernatural world. When she discovers Liam's uncle works for the Order, it seems like fate.

Savaged by werewolves and bitten by a vampire, no one knows what to expect of John Ryan, but it won't be anything good. So there's no way he's getting involved with his nephew...or anyone else. Worse, he's getting a babysitter over the holidays. But when he meets irrepressible Winter, all that matters is whether she likes her guys to be naughty or nice....

The Order series is best enjoyed in order.

Reading Order:

Book #1 Bittersweet Blood

Book #2 Bittersweet Magic

Book #3 Bittersweet Darkness

Book #4 Bittersweet Christmas

## **Bittersweet Christmas Details**

Date : Published November 27th 2017 by Entangled: Select Otherworld (first published November 15th 2017)

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Author : Nina Croft

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Genre : Fantasy, Paranormal, Novella, Holiday, Christmas, Romance, Paranormal Romance

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## From Reader Review Bittersweet Christmas for online ebook

### Elizabeth Neal says

Most kids, when asked what they want for Christmas, will spout off numerous items, but not fifteen-year-old Liam. No, after losing his parents, all he wants is his Uncle John, but Father Christmas feels that's one wish even he can't accomplish.

However, Winter, Father Christmas's half-pixie daughter, disagrees, and intends to make it happen. She wants to do something different, something special, with her life, and reuniting Liam with his uncle, and ironically, the dream job she's hoping for with the Order of the Shadow Accords gets her one step closer as John works for them.

John is essentially hiding from all that he is, or was as the case may be, since being attacked by werewolves, and bitten by a vampire a year ago. Wow, he just can't catch a break, can he? John is worried about the kind of man he's become, so he distances himself from Liam, and everyone else because no one knows what to expect of the mix now in his system. Unfortunately, it seems that exile is ending as he's about to receive a babysitter.

John's hesitancy for the interruption in his "life," however, changes upon seeing Winter. As for Winter, her interest in John is now no longer for Liam only, but for herself as well. Their chemistry is instant, their connection intense, and the complications are many.

Can these two come to a compromise, allowing both John and Liam to be with the only family they have left? Will Winter prove her worth and be granted the chance to follow her dreams? What does the combination of paranormal DNA in John's system mean for him? Is he safe to be around? Can he trust himself? Is a HEA for John and Winter, as well as Liam, possible?

One-click now and follow along as three people try to navigate life and decide what path theirs should take.

\*\*I voluntarily read and reviewed an Advanced Reader Copy of this book.\*\*

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### Marta Cox says

I've loved The Order series by this author and finally found time to read this novella that connects to it. Ok it's a seasonal Christmas story but I didn't mind that and it was such fun to reacquaint myself with favourite characters.

It starts out in such a poignant yet snappy way that I defy anyone not to find themselves drawn in and then the author amps up the humour by giving readers the most unusual Father Christmas ever! Plus who doesn't love a Vampire but this time he's also a hybrid Werewolf although Ryan is really still struggling to come to terms with all the changes in his life. Luckily a rather persistent half pixie is about to come crashing into his world and Winter might look sweet but she's a lot more than Ryan bargained for!

Expect a persistent female with a hankering to take a grumpy guy firmly in hand but don't tell daddy because then Christmas might be ruined!

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## **Elaine says**

Rating: 4.5/5

What a delightfully different Christmas story this proved to be! For Winter, being the youngest daughter of Santa Claus comes with its own drawbacks - especially when he's so overprotective! When Winter discovers a letter to Santa from a young orphan in which he asks to spend the festive season with his Uncle John, his guardian and only surviving member of his family, Santa just says it isn't possible, but Winter has other ideas! Her endeavours to make this boy's wish come true lead her to working for the Order of Shadow Accords, encounters with a variety of paranormal beings and meeting 'Uncle John' - even working with him! As she strives to grant that wish, she inadvertently causes adventures, danger, mayhem and finds love!

This is a very different paranormal festive adventure that I thoroughly enjoyed reading. I admit to enjoying other books by this author and this one definitely did not disappoint. It is a short but, as the title indicates, sweet read - a lovely Christmas romance with its own unique twists!

I requested and received a copy of this novel, via NetGalley. This is my honest review after choosing to read it.

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## **Faith89 says**

cute Christmas read with some paranormal humor. Quick pace but still gives a good story. Liam only wants one thing for Christmas, his Uncle John.

John Ryan loves his nephew but because of certain circumstances, he feels that Liam is better off without him. When Father Christmas doesn't have time, his daughter Winter wants to help. She sets out on a tricky journey to get John and Liam reunited. Things go sideways fast. They have to outrun vengeful werewolves, handle their attraction and a little white lie to get to the HEA. Fun story with a cute quirky female lead and a sexy hero.

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## **Eve Recinella (Between The Bookends) says**

This was a cute little holiday read. I haven't read any of the other books in the series, and I think it holds up fine as a quick standalone. I found it to be well written and well paced. The plot was engaging and intrigued me enough that I will be checking out the other books in the series. There was no angst or OW/OM drama. The relationship with the couple moved quite quickly, but there wasn't much sex in the book.

There weren't a lot of secondary characters, but the couple from book two make a brief appearance. Both the

main characters were intriguing (if a little underdeveloped). Lastly, it was wrapped up in a heartwarming happy for now ending. Personally, I felt a bit let down with how the romance aspect was left. I would have preferred a more solid relationship base. Perhaps they will pop up in other books at some point? Still, it was enjoyable overall, so it gets two solid thumbs up from yours truly.

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### **Claire Robinson says**

**4 - "I've wanted you from the moment I saw you..." Stars!**

It was really great to return to get a chance to return to *The Order* series with this short and sweet seasonal novella.

#### ***Fitting in was so hard...***

If you have read the previous books in the series you will know who John Ryan is. The once policeman, who is now a newly turned Vampire/werewolf hybrid. This novella gives him his Christmassy happily ever after, and with a Pixie no less!

#### **"Go on, admit it... You like me."**

I love the way the author tied the characters and the story line in and around Christmas, and although a quick read, it was really enjoyable, but then I usually find Nina's characters and story lines to be pretty agreeable.

ARC generously provided via Netgalley, in exchange for the above honest review.

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### **Heather andrews says**

Ryan knows when he's in deep doo-doo, "they all trooped out, Winter at the rear. She hesitated at the door, cast a look over her shoulder, and blew him a kiss. His \*\*\*k twitched. Yup, he was definitely in trouble." Ryan can be a territorial man, "I'm glad. I don't want you feeding any other vampire." One last tug and she fell against him, bracing herself with her free hand, her palm against his chest. "Just me." I really loved this novella, it was such a fun read.

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### **All Things Urban Fantasy says**

Review courtesy of All Things Urban Fantasy:

Novellas are the perfect medium for Christmas themed stories: perfect to read in one sitting under a blanket on a gray day. That said, I think I would have gladly read a full length novel about Ryan and Winter and their roller-coaster week before Christmas. BITTERSWEET CHRISTMAS featured characters that got you invested quickly and kept you hooked until the end.

Winter was a great, well-developed heroine. She's half-pixie, which makes her a bit impetuous and flighty, but she's caring too. Yes, she screws up big time, but it fits with the character and she fights hard to make it right. I got a kick out of people telling Ryan to be careful because Winter's dad is a really important, scary man. They're not wrong: you don't want to piss off Father Christmas.

There was one point in the story where I felt a conflict was resolved too quickly, but since it's only 122 pages long, I'll let it slide. Other than that the pacing was really satisfying. As Christmas approaches and the chapters count down the days, the action and passion heat up, culminating in a satisfying end to both. The relationship moves at a realistic pace and had a believable connection.

I've not read any of the other ORDER books but I wasn't at all confused by anything in BITTERSWEET CHRISTMAS, which is impressive. If you want original characters with a good serving of holiday cheer, pick up this novella right now.

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### **Penny says**

This was such a treat! I loved every second of *Bittersweet Christmas*; from its version of Father Christmas, quirky and mischievous Winter, our sexy and brooding were-pire (yes, a werepire: a hybrid between werewolf and vampire) Ryan, to the action, suspense and holiday spirit it includes. It has it all.

John Ryan was a human working for The Order, after being attacked by werewolves and subsequently turned into a vampire by his friend, he's been secluded in the offices as no one knows exactly what to expect of him. The volatile nature of his new powers, along with a pack of werewolves seeking revenge, forced him to stay away from his nephew. Even if he's the only family young Liam has left, he can't risk putting him in danger. He was broody and sexy, a bit of a jerk at times but in the end, really sweet and protective of those he cares for.

Winter is not only half-pixie and half.... whatever Father Christmas is, she's completely determined to get a job at The Order and be independent. When she realizes she can kill two birds with one stone (getting said job and getting Liam his Christmas wish of seeing his uncle) she cajoles, pleads and finally gets her way: she will stay and babysit Ryan through the holidays. She was sassy, impertinent and lots of fun, while also kick ass and caring.

As expected when a pixie wants to get her way, things get a little out of hand, plans go awry and Ryan and Winter soon realize their attraction and chemistry are not as fightable as they thought.

With action, sexy shenanigans, funny banter, and enough snark to fill up a stadium, *Bittersweet Christmas* is the perfect Holiday paranormal treat.

\*I voluntarily reviewed a complimentary copy of this book\*

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## Alison says

Three and a half stars.

Father Christmas is a lot less like the Hallmark stereotype we know and love and a lot more like Odin, the one-eyed Norse god. His daughter Winter is half-pixie and desperate to get a real job with the Order of the Shadow Accords, the organisation that polices the supernatural world. When Father Christmas refuses to help Liam Ryan with his request for his uncle John to come home for Christmas (because he is too old and swore too much), Winter decides to take matters into her own hands.

John Ryan is having a very bad Christmas. First he was attacked by werewolves and left for dead, then his friends from the Order decided the only way to save his life was to make him a vampire, so now he's some monstrous vampire/werewolf hybrid (BTW they are called Dhampirs) and no-one knows whether he is safe so his best friend is hovering around him ALL THE TIME.

When Winter finds out that Liam's uncle works for the Order she thinks she can kill two birds with one stone and manages to wangle a job babysitting John Ryan whilst his best friend spends Christmas with his wife, but her attempts to manoeuvre John into seeing Liam backfire hideously when John is ambushed.

This reminds me of the early Sookie Stackhouse books, with vampires and shifters and secret orders and pixies, all mixed up with Christmas and a teen boy's letter to Santa. It was silly and funny and heart-warming all at once. I would be interested to see where Nina Croft takes this series and whether the novels can live up to the delightful nonsense of this holiday novella.

I received a free copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in return for an honest review.

Bumped for release.

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## Romantic Reads and Such says

I've never heard of this series but I saw Nina Croft on the cover and I knew I needed to give it a go. And she definitely didn't disappoint!

John Ryan is struggling with his new state of being. A vampire-werewolf is something new and no one knows what to expect. He's getting a little tired of everyone hovering but he also understands why they have to. He doesn't even understand himself or know what to expect next so how can he expect anyone else to ... then he meets Winter. And his instant and undeniable attraction to her just complicates an already overly-complicated situation.

Winter really wants to start over somewhere that people don't have certain expectations about her – yes, she's made mistakes, been a little flighty, and overly ... enthusiastic sometimes but she's older now. And she really wants the chance to prove herself. Babysitting Ryan may not be what she expected but if she can get him together with his nephew then maybe she can finally get her chance. Finding him super sexy and hard to resist is definitely not the best way to do that.

Bittersweet Christmas isn't really a holiday read (Winter's dad is Santa and it all starts with the letter) but it is definitely super enjoyable. There's the perfect amount of heat and heart and danger to meet anyone's wants. And now I'm super curious about what else is going on in the world that Croft has created :)

(This is the first in the series that I've read but it can easily be read on its own. Croft does a great job of keeping you in the loop of anything that you might need to know.)

\*\*\* I voluntarily read a Review Copy of this book. All opinions stated are solely my own and no one else's.  
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### ♥ WishfulMiss ♥ says

**\*\*\* FREE ON AMAZON RIGHT NOW - 11/27/2017 \*\*\***

Being the youngest in her family has made Winter a very sheltered girl. Working for the the Order of the Shadow Accords, an organization that polices the supernatural, would be a dream come true for her. But her father is crazy overprotective and has shot down the idea too many times already.

While helping her dad (who just so happens to be Father Christmas himself) Winter comes across a heartbreaking Christmas wish from a lonely boy asking for the only family he has left, his Uncle John. When her father dismisses the boy's wishes, Winter steps in to once and for all prove her father wrong and show him she has what it takes to join the Order. She'll make this boy's wish come true and in exchange her father will finally allow her to seek a job within the Order.

It should have been an easy two for the price of one deal. She would track down this John character, reunite him with his family on Christmas and she would be that much closer to her dream job. But that was before she met Uncle John.

John has been keeping his distance from everyone but especially his nephew, to protect him. When he was attacked by werewolves and left for dead a year ago, the Order gave him vampire blood to save his life. But the mix of werewolf and vampire in him is an anomaly that has everyone on edge, including John. With his life so drastically changed, he flat refuses to bring his nephew into this world.

It starts off as a challenge, but John and Winter realize there's more than meets the eye between them and that maybe, just maybe, Winter can bring a little holiday cheer and magic to a small family in desperate need of the holiday spirit.

#### **What I liked:**

I definitely want to read more from this author and this series because I love sci-fi/paranormal reads for their unique take on shifters, vamps, demons and angels, etc. and this delivers on all counts. The Order of the Shadow Accord was amazing and I am definitely intrigued by the goings on involving other members but most of all, I loved how comfortable the whole supernatural world seemed to me. I haven't read any of her previous books but I'm so glad I gave this one a chance because it was a nice intro to the series and it all sounds amazing.

I just wish it was longer! I only had one issue and that was the length of the novella. I wanted more page time to explore the relationship that sprung between Winter and John. I needed more time with them as a

couple. They had potential to really explore their characters and I'm a little bummed we don't get more. (Greedy reader here!)

\* \* \* *ARC provided for an honest review* \* \* \*

**SAFETY INFO:** (view spoiler)

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**~Mandi~ says**

Bittersweet Christmas  
Discover the Order #3.5  
Nina Croft  
4 ????????

This is a short and sweet Christmas novella. This is a paranormal romance with vampires, werewolves, and other supernaturals.

Winter is the daughter of Father Christmas and it is her wish to give a boy his Christmas wish. She gets assigned to Ryan as his bodyguard/ babysitter. She is suppose to watch him and keep him out of trouble during the holidays. But she has a different agenda. Ryan's nephew Liam has asked Father Christmas to give him his family back which is his uncle Ryan.

This was such a great short story. I always enjoy reading novellas to figure out whether I want to read the whole series. I'm definitely into this series so I look forward to reading more.

Thanks NetGalley for the arc in exchange for my honest review.

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## Malinda says

4 stars

This was a very good story. I liked both Winter and Ryan and was happy with how they got together. This is the first story I've read by this author and I liked it well enough that I'm likely to try more of her work in the future. Obviously, I haven't read the other books in this series but this one worked fine as a standalone.

Winter is the daughter of Father Christmas and a Pixie mother that took off on her when she was only 4. Winter has been working for her father but she wants to do something with more meaning and has been trying to get a chance at a postilion within the "Order".

John Ryan (he goes by Ryan) was a human cop that was brought into the Order to act as a human liaison when the supernatural creatures eventually come out to the public. The Werewolves weren't too pleased with that plan and attacked him right before last Christmas to try to kill him. Instead, the other members of the Order turned him Vampire to save his life but it left him as a Vampire/Werewolf hybrid which is so rare, no one knows how to handle Ryan.

As the description indicates, Ryan's nephew, Liam, writes to Father Christmas wishing for his Uncle to be around for Christmas. Father Christmas knows that Ryan works for the Order and figures it's an impossible task. Winter isn't willing to accept that and makes a deal with her father that if she can reunite Ryan and Liam, he's endorse her when she applies to work for the Order. Piers (who's a close friend with her father and heads up the Order) greats her when she arrives at the Order and she finds out that they need someone to stay with Ryan. He's in control but because vamp/were hybrids are so rare, the fact that he hasn't lost control actually worries them and they want someone watching him just in case.

Since most everyone at the Order wants to leave for the holidays, Winter is tasked with "body-guarding" (aka babysitting) Ryan over the holiday. Winter thinks this is a grand idea as it will give her time to get Ryan to contact his nephew. There's a strong attraction between them and they don't act on it at first but it does happen eventually. Things actually go pretty smoothly but some trouble pops up in the form of the werewolves that previously tried to kill Ryan, which puts them both in danger and gives Winter a chance to actually be a bodyguard. There's some definite danger and a bit of drama but things do get handled. In the end, things work out nicely, with Winter and Ryan together and working their way towards a HEA.

This was a very enjoyable story. I liked Winter as the heroine. She was a bit whimsical (? not sure if that's the perfect word) at times but she was half-pixie so I guess it was to be expected and with Ryan's more dower attitude, she helped balance him. I really liked how she was able to bring Ryan out of his head and get him to live a bit. Ryan was a good guy but it seemed like he kind of shut down after his attack and he needed someone like Winter to bring him back to life (so to speak...he is a vamp so I don't mean for real. LOL). Overall, it wasn't perfect but I thought the story was pretty good and I liked the characters very much so I'd recommend it. :)

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## Sandy S says

3.75 stars--

#### ABOUT THE BOOK: Release Date November 27, 2017

Orphan Liam Ryan isn't asking for much this Christmas--just his Uncle John. And he's counting on Father Christmas to find a way to make that happen.

But when Father Christmas tosses Liam's letter, claiming that the kid is asking the impossible, his daughter, Winter, takes over. Half-pixie, Winter, longs to do something important with her life, starting with getting a job at the Order of the Shadow Accords, the organization that polices the supernatural world. When she discovers Liam's uncle works for the Order, it seems like fate.

Savaged by werewolves and bitten by a vampire, no one knows what to expect of John Ryan, but it won't be anything good. So there's no way he's getting involved with his nephew...or anyone else. Worse, he's getting a babysitter over the holidays. But when he meets irrepressible Winter, all that matters is whether she likes her guys to be naughty or nice.

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REVIEW: 3.75 stars--BITTERSWEET CHRISTMAS is instalment 3.5 in Nina Croft's contemporary, adult THE ORDER paranormal/ fantasy romance series focusing on the men and women who work for The Order of the Shadow Accords- an organization that polices the supernaturals of the world. This is half-pixie Winter, and former human, now a vampire/werewolf John Ryan 's story line. BITTERSWEET CHRISTMAS can be read as a stand alone without any difficulty. Any important information from the previous story lines is revealed where necessary.

Told from dual third person perspectives (Winter and John) BITTERSWEET CHRISTMAS finds our heroine tasked with 'babysitting' the recently turned John Ryan, a man who struggles with the beast within; a vampire/werewolf hybrid whose wolf has yet to come to the surface. Hoping to gain a position within the Order, Winter offers herself up as bodyguard and protector of the one-time human cop, a position she abuses, as she battles between her heart and what she is tasked to do.

One year earlier John Ryan killed the wolf-pack alpha, and in the ensuing time a price has been placed on our hero's head. In hiding for his own protection, and the protection of others, John has all but abandoned his fifteen year old nephew Liam, a young man he took guardianship of upon the teen's mother's death. A letter to Santa finds Liam Ryan asking for the return of the uncle he hasn't seen in months-a letter that finds its way to Winter and her father who happens to be Father Christmas, among other names. What ensues is the building relationship between Winter and John Ryan, and the potential fall out when John's whereabouts are revealed to those hunting him down as Winter ensures Liam's Christmas wish is answered.

BITTERSWEET CHRISTMAS is a sexy paranormal Christmas tale; a quick read; a story of insta-lust with limited sex scenes due in part to the nature of a novella. The premise is sweet and edgy; the characters are colorful and spirited; the romance is intimate without the use of over the top, sexually graphic language and text. For fans of the series, it has been approximately three years since the author last released a title in The Order series but many will recognize John Ryan from his previous involvement as well as the return of Piers Lamont, vampire and head of the Order of the Shadow Accords.

Copy supplied for review

[www.thereadingcafe.com](http://www.thereadingcafe.com)

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