

#1 New York Times Best-selling Author

**MEG CABOT**

*Illustrated by Chesley McLaren*



*Holiday  
Princess*

A Princess Diaries Book

# Introduction

Sleigh Bells Ring

A Note from Her Royal Highness

Princess Mia Thermopolis

Sleigh bells ring! Are you listening? In the lane,  
snow is glistening.

Well, okay, whatever, I've never actually heard sleigh bells. And there are no lanes in New York City, just streets and avenues (unless you count Minetta Lane down in the Village, which I don't because it smells like pee) and the snow never glistens here, it turns almost instantly into black slush because of all the car exhaust.

But that doesn't mean I don't wholeheartedly enjoy the holiday season when I get the chance. There's so much to do and see, sometimes I wonder how I'll ever get to it all.

That's why I, with the assistance of some of my friends and relatives, have composed this guide, to help make what often turns out to be a hectic and stressful time more relaxed, so that we can all

actually take the time to enjoy it. Because that's what the holiday season is all about enjoying time with friends and family!

Holiday Etiquette

A Note from Her Royal Highness

Princess Mia Thermopolis

The holidays aren't just any other days well, duh, since they're called holidays. But you get what I mean. They come laden with all this stuff. Like, traditions.

And while some people, like my mom, believe traditions are for breaking, some other people, like Grandmere, believe traditions are, like, the backbone of the family and society and stuff.

I don't know who's right and who's wrong. Maybe they both are. All I know is, none of this has anything to do with presents. Which is a bummer, if you ask me.

## HOLIDAY CARDS

Sending Joy to Your Loved Ones For the Price of a Stamp

By

Grandmere,

Dowager Princess of Genovia

[With Commentary by Princess Mia Thermopolis in red, here and throughout, wherever you see these brackets]

Cards sent during the holiday season are a lovely way to say Joyeux Noel, Happy Hanukkah, or Bonne Anne to a friend or family member with whom you are not necessarily close enough to exchange gifts, but whom you nonetheless wish to acknowledge.

The first Christmas card was sent by Sir Henry Cole, an Englishman who, in 1843, wished to urge his friends not to forget the needy during the holiday season. He commissioned a small illustration of a happy family enjoying a succulent meal, while failing to notice the destitute and squalid conditions

of the poor around them, and sent it to all of his acquaintances.

[I totally applaud Sir Henry for the thought, but bumper card to get in the mail!]

The tradition Sir Henry began soon caught on, and sending illustrated cards at Christmas became the rage. It is now a billion dollar a year industry worldwide. It has grown so widespread, in fact, with people sending so many cards to so many people that they have managed to forget basic card etiquette. And that is that a card, however beautifully rendered, is not as important as the message written inside it. And by that I do not mean the message the card manufacturer has written inside it, but the message YOU, the **SENDER**, has written inside it.

Because the recipient of your card does not particularly care if Hallmark wishes him or her a Happy New Year. What the recipient of your card cares about is YOU, and how YOU are doing. That is why it is essential to **HAND WRITE** a short note in each and every card you send, no

matter how many cards that may be. The Palais Royale du Genovia sends out over one thousand cards per year, and I personally handwrite messages on each one, such as:

Dearest Charles,

I do hope you and Camilla will drop in during you're next trip to Biarritz.

Merry Christmas, and the happiest of New Years to you and your children.

Much love,

Clarisse

This is perfectly adequate. It is, of course, ultimately the thought that counts.

This does not mean, however, that this horrid American tradition of sending photocopied "Christmas newsletters" is acceptable! Far from it. I can understand persons with children wishing to let friends and family know of their progeny's progress in school or games. And therefore I will allow that a one page note of this kind, WITH A PERSONAL

MESSAGE HANDWRITTEN ACROSS THE TOP, ENCLOSED IN A TASTEFUL CARD, is permissible.

What I cannot condone are the two, three, or even FOUR page single spaced NOVELS people seem to feel compelled to send today. I do not particularly care to know the details about “Grandmum’s” latest knee surgery, or the final score of every single one of “Harry’s” polo matches. Careful selection of the year’s highlights, related in fairly HUMOROUS manner, is the only way letters of this kind can succeed.

Since it seems highly unlikely, however, that anyone is ever going to follow my advice, I can only hope the holiday newsletter goes the way of bell-bottoms and fades from view.

[Uh, Grandmere? Bell bottoms are back in style now. And I personally LOVE getting Christmas newsletters, the longer the better. My favorite is the one Mr. Gianini’s sister sends out every year listing her kids’--Nathan and Claire--many many social and athletic accomplishments. For instance, Nathan was

voted Heaviest Sleeper at his sleepaway camp last summer. And Claire graduated from the Barbizon School of Modeling with top honors, particularly in Runway Walking and Product Endorsement. It warms my heart each holiday season to know that Nathan and Claire? Yeah, they're just keepin' it real.]

It's Not Just About Gifts--

Plus Snip-n-Save Gift List!

By

Princess Mia Thermopolis

Everyone knows that Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, who was born nearly two thousand years ago. The funny thing is, no one really knows whether Jesus was REALLY born on December 25. Probably, in fact, he wasn't, and this date was chosen because of the popular ancient Persian god Mithras was also supposedly born on this day.

But who cares? It's still a totally fun holiday-- especially when combined with all that Santa stuff, and, of course, PRESENTS.

Some historians say we give presents at

Christmastime because that's what the ancient Romans used to do at Saturnalia, a winter solstice celebration. Others say we give presents because of the gifts the three wise men brought to baby Jesus. Still others say we give gifts in memory of St. Nicholas, who was a really generous guy.

I say: Who cares WHY we give gifts? Just keep'em coming.

Oh yeah: It's important to GIVE. Otherwise, you won't RECEIVE.

Handy Snip-n-Save Royal Genovian Gift List:  
FOR: GIFT IDEA:

Mom: \_\_\_\_\_

Dad: \_\_\_\_\_

Step parents: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Siblings: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Best friend: \_\_\_\_\_

Other friends: \_\_\_\_\_

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Boyfriend: \_\_\_\_\_

Grandparents: \_\_\_\_\_

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Uncles, aunts, cousins:

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Pet: \_\_\_\_\_

Biology Lab Partner:

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Teachers: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postal Carrier: \_\_\_\_\_

Newspaper

Deliverer: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite

Chinese Food

Delivery Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Bodyguard: \_\_\_\_\_

Royal

Chauffeur: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal

Maid: \_\_\_\_\_

Others: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Gifts for Guys

Just Say No to Expensive Electronics

By

Tina Hakim Baba

## Romance Expert

Let's face it. Guys are IMPOSSIBLE to shop for. The only person harder to shop for than your dad is your boyfriend, and that's because your boyfriend's gift has to be imbued with all this meaning and stuff. Otherwise, it's, like, what's the point?

Hopefully you and your guy have some private jokes or at least shared musical taste. That way you can always get him a joke present like, if you two are obsessed with the violinist Joshua Bell, you could get him an autographed 8x11 of Joshua Bell or a CD he's been dying to hear.

But let's say your private jokes are about something that can't be bought in a store, purchased from a fan club, or even handmade, and a CD just won't cut it. What's a lovelorn girl to do?

Follow these simple steps, and the hearth glow of your love will never die.

Gifts for the Guy You Aren't Dating, but Hope to Someday:

FOOD. The way to a man (or woman's) heart is through the stomach. You can never go wrong

with gifts of homemade cookies, candy, or fudge (homemade cheese balls make excellent gifts for people on low-carb or sugar-free diets). Just make sure your guy doesn't have any food allergies if he does, do not prepare him something containing that substance.

Food gifts are appropriate for ANY guy of ANY duration of acquaintance. They are ALWAYS welcome. Whether it's the hot guy who works out next to you at the gym, your lab partner, or just the cute guy you see sometimes at the bus stop, just fork over a prettily wrapped tin of whatever, say, "I made this for you. Happy holidays!" and he'll be blushing to his hairline.

[To avoid teasing/rumors, you might want to give similarly wrapped tins to friends, so he doesn't think he's the ONLY one who got one, and that you're a creepy stalker he should run from like a startled fawn.]

Gifts for the Guy You've Only Been Out with Once or Twice on Group Dates:

Food is also an excellent gift for this person, but

you could move up a smidge on the intimacy scale and give him something else handmade, such as mittens if you knit, or a CD mix you burned yourself. A book or DVD might also be appropriate. Expensive jewelry or clothing is NOT acceptable for this person. He hasn't professed his undying love for you, and so does not deserve to be showered with electronics or gold at this point in the relationship.

Gifts for the Guy You're Dating Exclusively:

This is the hardest person of all to shop for or the easiest, depending. Again, gifts based on private jokes are always good. Food is good, but remember, he isn't going to gaze at an empty tin when he thinks of you the way he would the stunning portrait you had your little brother take with your iCamera, and framed in a beautiful homemade frame.

Whatever you do, do NOT spend an exorbitant sum on a gift for your romantic partner. Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa gifts are supposed to be MEANINGFUL, not expensive. Do NOT buy

him a gold ID bracelet, for instance, because you're hoping he'll ask YOU to wear it. Do not buy him a leather jacket for the same reason, or a CD player (so NOT meaningful) or car stereo. You want to make sure he's staying with you for YOU, not your money.

This is why the best gift for your one true love is ALWAYS a kiss accompanied by something you made yourself, be it food, a CD, or a lovely hand-knitted steering wheel cover.

[I could not agree more.]