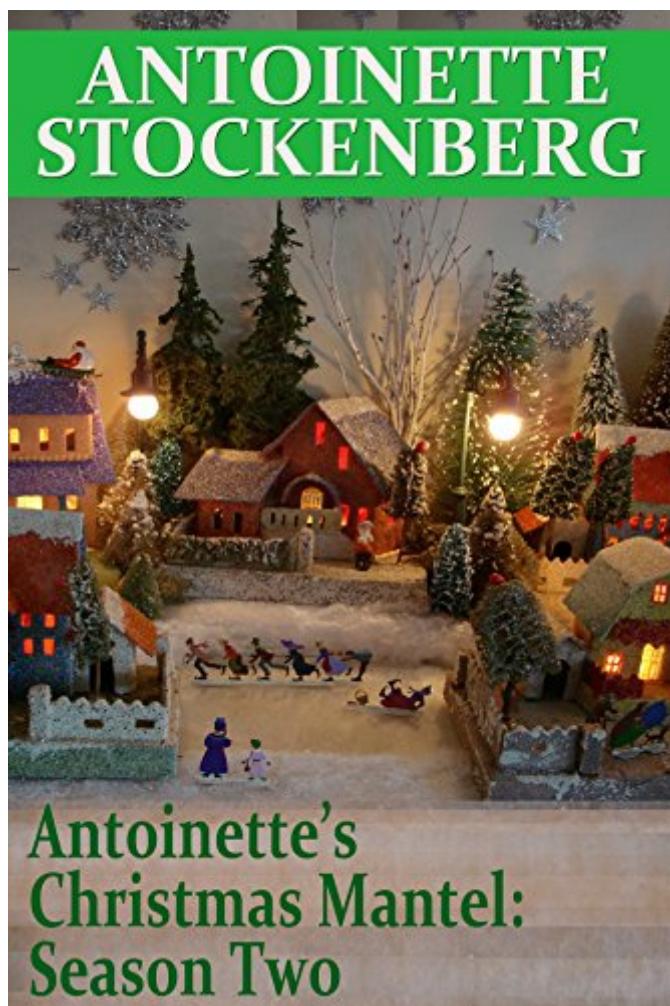


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Antoinette's Christmas Mantel: Season Two: A River Runs Through It



Synopsis

Note: This pictorial eBook contains large images and is designed to be viewed on an actual tablet, such as a Kindle or an Android or iPad with the Kindle App installed. Viewing it on a tablet will allow the images to be enlarged and explored. It can also be viewed on a PC with Kindle PC but with less ability to explore the images. I recommend that you download Season One first, which is free, to make sure that this type of eBook works well on your eReader.

As I called forth my antique village from its place of sleep to appear again this Christmas, I thought of the legend of Brigadoon. True, my village appears once a year, not once every hundred years; and, yes, the houses seem to change and move around a bit (not that they can move that far on a mantel). But the essence of the Brigadoon legend is the same: a whole little world, filled with characters with their own stories to tell, materializes as if by magic, casts its spell, and then -- poof! -- is gone. Every one of us, grownup and child alike, who has practiced this act of magic waits all year to do it again.

Almost everything you see in my mantel villages is from before World War II. The cardboard houses were all made in Japan, most in the early 1930's. The little flat figures, called "zinnfiguren," are from Germany. The street lamps are -- what else? -- Lionel. The bottlebrush trees are faded and rusty but carry their age, like everything else in this miniature world, with grace and panache. It's deeply satisfying to know that through most of the last century, other dreamers arranged these very same toys to tell their own stories. May it ever be so.

A River Runs Through it

For this season's Christmas village of vintage Japanese cardboard houses, I had but one desire: to capture the sparkling magic of ice and snow. For that, I think I blame Fred Astaire in *Holiday Inn* ... or maybe my east European heritage ... but definitely the taunting of my friends in Florida. To me, nothing sings Christmas more than falling snow and skaters on ice. I can't make snow actually fall from the ceiling onto my mantel's cardboard village (not for very long, anyway, without having to drag out the vacuum), so I've created the next best thing: a cold, cold Christmas with drifts of snow piled high against the banks of the river that flows through this year's vintage village. The river is frozen solid and the skating is the best it's ever been; almost everyone in town is either on the ice or watching from the sidelines. I've included some new characters in this Christmas chapter, and their stories will develop in the coming years. I should add that nearly all of the tiny tin Zinnfiguren in this year's village have been painted by me. (And I now have the crossed eyes to prove it; it's not easy painting expressions on faces that are an eighth of an inch small.) And so for all the other children besides me out there, here is this year's chapter:

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Nice happy little book.

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