The staff of the Chair of English Literature present their Christmas books of the month:

**Burkhard Niederhoff** recommends Robert Louis Stevenson’s “Markheim” (1885):

“Markheim” belongs to the Victorian genre of the Christmas story: a story with a Christmas theme published in December. “Markheim” is only 20 pages long, but Stevenson manages to put quite a lot into it: plot elements taken from Dickens’s *Christmas Carol* and Dostoyevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*, a probing psychological study of the mind of a murderer haunted by guilt, and a doppelgänger, i.e. a predecessor of Mr Hyde, who entered English literature and the popular imagination a year later in Stevenson’s novella *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

**Lioba Schreyer** recommends Kate Atkinson’s *Festive Spirits: Three Short Stories* (2019):

Kate Atkinson is one of my favourite authors (and I would usually never admit to having those). So if you are looking for a novel that will make you laugh and cry, that is real and magical, that chronicles families over several generations, try *Behind the Scenes at the Museum, Human Croquet, Life After Life or A God in Ruins*. However, if you are looking for something more seasonal, something a little shorter, I recommend *Festive Spirits*. This little book contains three weird and wonderful stories with brutally honest characters, their joys and pains, as they approach Christmas.

**Lena Linne** recommends Carol Ann Duffy’s *The Christmas Truce* (2011):

In 1914, the first year of the war that would later become known as the First World War, something unexpected happened in the trenches: on Christmas day, French, British and German soldiers celebrated Christmas together. In her 2011 poem, acclaimed poet Carol Ann Duffy (poet laureate of
the United Kingdom from 2009 to 2019) anticipates the centenary of the First World War. Illustrated by David Roberts, Duffy’s poem brings to life this unprecedented “Christmas truce” right in the middle of the battlefield. The result is a wonderful little book, also well-suited as a gift.