

Familiar Christmas tales take on a new twist

Marie Noe, Special to the Reporter-News 9:02 p.m. CST December 18, 2016



(Photo: david franklin)

As the Christmas lights flicker brightly on the tree, many families gather around to listen to stories passed down through the ages of Christmas visitors and lively little men in red suits. The legends and lore of Christmas have become delightful parts of the holiday season. In some households, a new and raucous tradition has taken hold. Creative authors and artists have taken familiar Christmas stories and turned them into hilarious stories for the holidays, and we have quite a few at your Abilene Public Library.

The familiar carol of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" is turned into a high-tech story with Nathan Hale's "The Twelve Bots Of Christmas." Robo-Santa makes an appearance bringing gifts of three wrench hens, nine dancing droids, and a cartridge in a gear tree. For a swashbuckling version of the song, try "A Pirate's Twelve Days Of Christmas" by Philip Yates. In this tropical offering, a young cabin boy is gifted with blazin' cannons, mermaids, and a parrot in a palm tree. For merrymaking on a tiny scale, try "Firefly In A Fir Tree" by Hilary Knight. In this variation, two tiny mice enjoy Christmas gifts including nine nuts for nibbling and four holly berries.

Clement Moore's poem about the night before Christmas has been skillfully translated into a rollicking set of stories including "An Irish Night Before Christmas" by Sarah Blazek and "Cajun Night Before Christmas" by Trosclair and the newest entry, "Hillbilly Night Afore Christmas" by Thomas Turner. Only the expert linguist will brave these tongue-twisting versions and much laughter is guaranteed. Much easier on our southern tongues is "A Texas Night Before Christmas" by James Rice. Look for other variations featuring Firefighters, Cops, Librarians, Nurses, Soldiers, Sailors, and even Rednecks.

After your kids get their fill of variations on familiar stories, they may wish to branch out into other rib-tickling holiday offerings. Try "A Bad Kitty Christmas" by Nick Bruel. Bad Kitty destroys all the gifts and decorations at home and escapes from the car on Christmas Eve. However, with the help of a new friend, he discovers the true meaning of Christmas.

Of course we don't want to leave the adults out of the fun. There are some funny Christmas tales for them, too. Lauren Willig's "Mischief Of The Mistletoe," part of the Regency-era Pink Carnation series, pits an amateur sleuth against French aristocrats and international spies with a special appearance by Jane Austen.

"The Fat Man: A Tale of North Pole Noir" by Ken Harmon is available through the library's Hoopla service. In this tale, a 1,300-year-old elf is fired by Santa after being framed for a crime. His path to redemption takes him on a trip that mixes noir fiction and pop culture.

Wind up your reading with John Grisham's "Skipping Christmas." When Luther and Nora Krank decide to skip Christmas in favor of a Caribbean cruise they discover that there are huge consequences to their decision. This fun tale was made into a holiday movie with Tim Allen and Jamie Lee Curtis.

Holiday reading material abounds at your Abilene Public Library. Check with the librarians for Christmas tales to tickle your funny-bone as you prepare for holiday festivities.

Marie Noe is Customer Service Manager at the Abilene Public Library, 202 Cedar St.

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