

Picture books for the 24 longest days of the year

By JENNIFER COSTLEY

Recently, one of our library patrons was checking out a stack of children's books and passed along a brilliant idea. She said she wraps up each book and her kids open one each night in December, which they read aloud together. Your family might like to try this, too — so here's a list of suggested reading! (And if that seems like a lot of wrapping paper, re-useable gift bags might work just as well.)

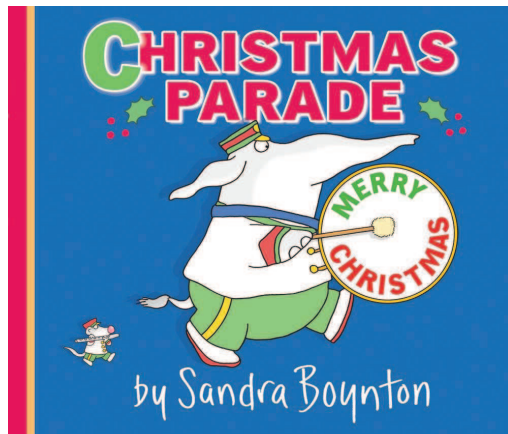
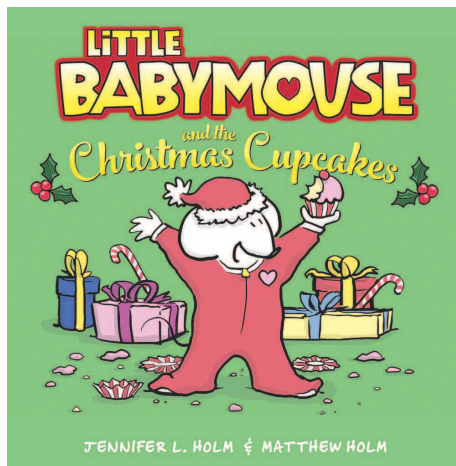
Dec. 1: "The Fright Before Christmas" by Judy Sierra. For those who consider Thanksgiving a blip on the radar between the real holidays of Halloween and Christmas, "The Fright Before Christmas" will both quench your Halloween thirst and get you ready for the Christmas excitement to come.

Dec. 2: "Llama Llama Holiday Drama" by Anna Dewdney.

Dec. 3: "The Lost Gift: A Christmas Story" by Kallie George & Stephanie Graegin. Four woodland creatures take on big time responsibility as they return a lost gift from Santa's sleigh to its rightful owner.

Dec. 4: "The Christmas Wish" by Lori Evert.

Dec. 5: "Little Babymouse and the Christmas Cupcakes" by Jennifer L. Holm & Matthew Holm. Comic favorite Babymouse has come out with her first Christmas picture book. This one will be



sure to leave your little one in a fit of giggles. Warning: you won't have any trouble guessing the ending.

Dec. 6: "Little Blue Truck's Christmas" by Alice Schertle.

Dec. 7: "It's a Wonderful Life for Kids" by Jimmy Hawkins. Say what?! "It's a Wonderful Life" is a picture book? Yes and no. This picture book shares a similar story line to the classic 1946 holiday movie but differs in that the main character is not George Bailey but his 11-year-old son, Tommy. A fun read for fans of the original film.

Dec. 8: "How to Catch an Elf" by Adam Wallace.

Dec. 9: "The Twelve Days of Christmas Dogs" by Carolyn Conahan. Do you have a relative you hate? Invite them over to read this story to your children. "The Twelve

Days of Christmas Dogs" is chock full of sappy, sing-song lines such as, "Nine doggies dancing, eight pups — all milky, seven splashy swimmers, six pooches playing, five golden dogs, four collie dogs, three French dogs, two turtle

dogs, and a pug puppy under the tree."

Dec. 10: "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" by Dr. Seuss.

Dec. 11: "Christmas Parade" by Sandra Boynton. Boynton never lets you down! "Christmas Parade" is full of fun sounds, rhymes and favorite Boynton characters.

Dec. 12: "The Mitten" by Jan Brett.

Dec. 13: "Calico the Wonder Horse" by Virginia Lee Burton. This Christmas classic is back in a new edition. A great choice for horse lovers but be advised you may want to split this book over a couple of readings, as it's longer than your standard 32-page picture book.

Dec. 14: "A Bad Kitty Christmas" by Nick Bruel.

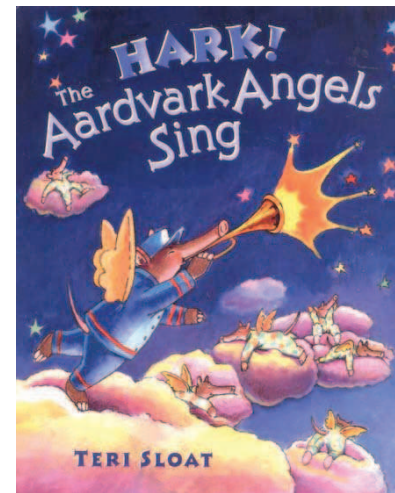
Dec. 15: "Hark! The Aardvark Angels Sing" by Teri Sloat. Singing skills required! This sing-song holiday book features helpful mail-carrying aardvark angels. What more can you ask for?

Dec. 16: "Bear Stays up for Christmas" by Karma Wilson.

Dec. 17: "Santa Cat" by Deborah Underwood. Laugh along as this jealous kitty goes from Santa fan to Santa's assistant. If you like this one you'll love the rest of the series including "Here Comes the Easter Cat" and "Here Comes Valentine

Cat."

Dec. 18: "Pete the Cat Saves Christmas" by Eric Litwin.



Dec. 19: "Olive the Other Reindeer" by Vivian Walsh. This recycled version of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" has all the heart of the original. Pair this tale with its movie and you are sure to have a fun family evening.

Dec. 20: "The Biggest Christmas Tree Ever" by Steven Kroll.

Dec. 21: "The Gruffalo's Child" by Julia Donaldson. Though not an official Christmas story, "The Gruffalo's Child" takes place during a cold and blustery night and features all of the warm, fuzzy family

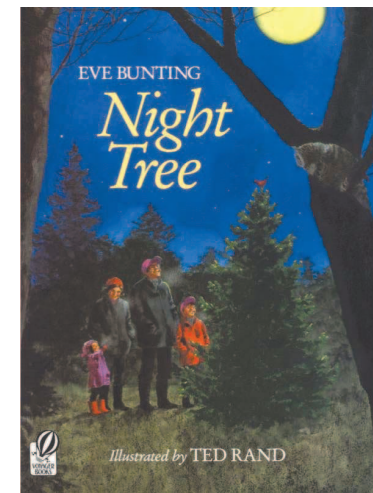
feelings that make any picture book a holiday tradition.

Dec. 22: "The Itsy Bitsy Reindeer" by Jeffrey Burton.

Dec. 23: "Dream Snow" by Eric Carle.

Dec. 24: "The Night Tree" by Eve Bunting. Join this special family as they traipse into the woods to find the perfect Christmas

tree. This fun, imaginative tale is a strong contender for favorite Christmas Eve read.



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