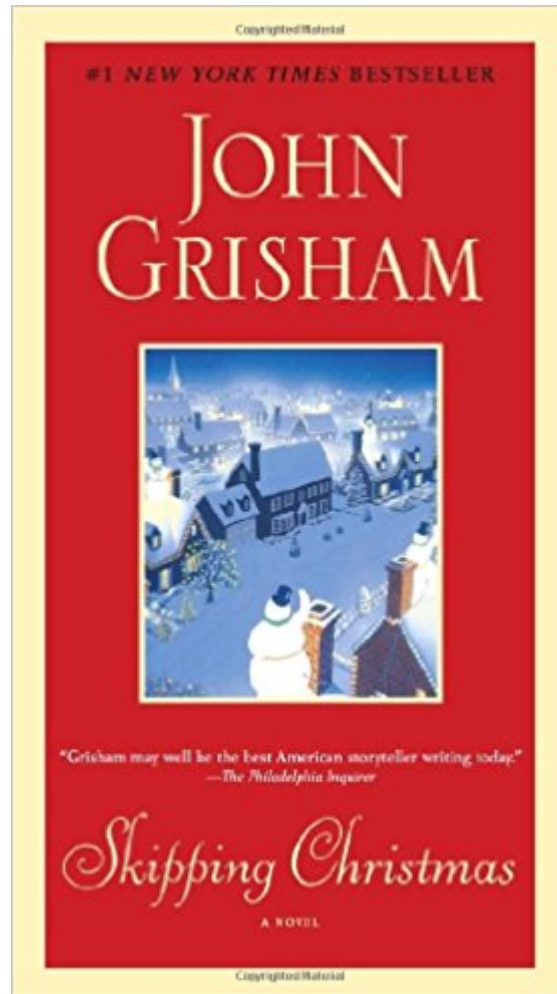




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Skipping Christmas: A Novel



Synopsis

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER Imagine a year without Christmas. No crowded malls, no corny office parties, no fruitcakes, no unwanted presents. That's just what Luther and Nora Krank have in mind when they decide that, just this once, they'll skip the holiday altogether. Theirs will be the only house on Hemlock Street without a rooftop Frosty, they won't be hosting their annual Christmas Eve bash, they aren't even going to have a tree. They won't need one, because come December 25 they're setting sail on a Caribbean cruise. But as this weary couple is about to discover, skipping Christmas brings enormous consequences—and isn't half as easy as they'd imagined. A classic tale for modern times, *Skipping Christmas* offers a hilarious look at the chaos and frenzy that have become part of our holiday tradition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

OK, it's not your typical Grisham courtroom drama but, once again, he makes a plausible argument for "skipping Christmas" in his latest book of the same title. "Bah Humbug", I said, when first hearing about the book's premise until the plans surrounding the main characters' scheduled departure for the Caribbean sounded so enticing that it left me wondering if they might take me along. While this book is not about doing away with Christmas forever, it's one couple's desire to just skip it, for just one year, and spend the money on a cruise instead. And, why not? Their only child Blair has just left for a stint in Peru with the Peace Corps and they are looking at spending their first Christmas alone in a very long time. But skipping Christmas entirely means not doing anything "holiday" related at all - no cards, no presents, no holiday parties and, most importantly, no rooftop Frosty...the "symbol" of

Christmas in their Hemlock Street neighborhood in Illinois. But Luther and Nora KRANK are about to find out what the true "symbol" of Christmas really is -- whether they like it or not. While their friends and neighbors are appalled at their decision to forego the Christmas festivities, Luther and Nora remain stalwart in their resolution of "no Christmas for the Kranks." Grisham throws some humor into many of the scenes as he has the Kranks hiding out in their own home as carolers sing Christmas songs on their lawn and then has them eating lettuce leaves in an effort to lose weight for the trip. But it's the end of the book where the true meaning of Christmas will be exhibited. It's not money spent or gifts bought or Frosty's on the roof. It's much simpler and easier than that.

For the legions of fans anxiously awaiting John Grisham's latest thriller, this will probably be pretty unsatisfying. Me, I'm not a big fan of his thrillers, and am glad to see him branching out more and writing the sorts of books I enjoy reading, with *The Painted House*, and now this. Plus, I'm a sucker for Christmas stories. Like most Christmas stories, this isn't groundbreaking literature. It's as familiar and comfortable as watching a rerun of *It's a Wonderful Life* or *Miracle on 34th Street* while a yule log blazes away in a stocking-bedecked fireplace, and in the corner of the room you can see the lights twinkling on the Christmas tree. It's the story of Luther and Nora Krank, who, with their daughter having joined the Peace Corps, decide to avoid their usual Christmas hassles and expenses and take a cruise instead. Of course, this shocks their neighbors, who are completely bound up in annual Christmas traditions. Told in an easy, breezy style, this story feels like the novel-length version of something that would appear in the *New Yorker*, poking fun at the pointlessness of all the surface trappings of Christmas in a slightly condescending but good-natured way. There are few real surprises in this story, but that isn't the point. We aren't reading this book for the shocks or the plot twists. We're reading it to smile as Luther finds himself under siege by neighborhood carolers. While this story ultimately does nothing more than reinforce traditional Christmas values, Grisham gets points for not having someone stand up and state the obvious. Indeed, upon first finishing this story, I felt sort of irritated. I had the impression that Grisham had ended up endorsing the sorts of activities he had initially lampooned.

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