



2005

Dear Santa: The Letter of James B. Dobbins

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Harley, Bill. *Dear Santa: The Letter of James B. Dobbins*. Illustrated by R.W. Alley. HarperCollins, 2005. ISBN 0066237792. \$16.89. 32 p.

Reviewer: Marsha D. Broadway

Reading Level: Preschool, Primary

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Christmas stories;

Subject: Santa Claus--Juvenile fiction; Letters--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Early in December, James B. Dobbins sends Santa Claus a rather extravagant Christmas list. Then, in almost daily letters, James adds to his list; highlights his good behavior, even with "THE MOST ANNOYING FOUR-YEAR-OLD SISTER ON THE PLANET;" and explains some lapses in judgment. As the month progresses, his letters become less about his wants and more about the pleasure James (now Jim or Jimmy in his signatures)finds in making, buying, and giving gifts to others.

With his typical wit and child-like enthusiasm, Harley captures the excitement of Christmas in these letters to Santa. Alley's energetic illustrations add to the humor and make the letters a delight to share with young audiences. Teachers and parents could use this picture book to inspire some letter writing or realistic wish lists. Santa himself will laugh when he reads this mail.