



2018

Merry Christmas, Mary Christmas!

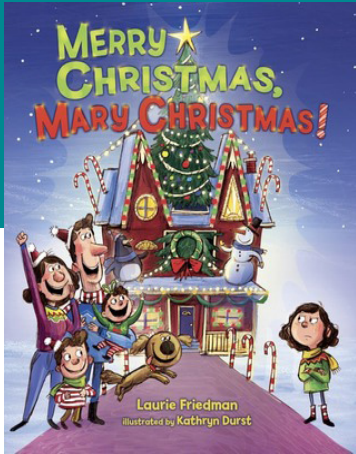
Samantha Bullock

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Book Review

Merry Christmas, Mary Christmas!

Author

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Illustrator

Kathryn Durst

Reviewer

Samantha Bullock

Rating

Dependable

Level

Preschool, Primary

Pages

32

Year

2017

Publisher

Carolrhoda Books

ISBN

9781467792615

Seven-year-old Mary Christmas really wants to love Christmas. However, try as she might, she instead finds herself exasperated by her family's overzealous observation of Christmas traditions. A super sized tree, a towering cart full of gifts, and enough lights to suck all the power away from the rest of the houses on the street are a small sampling of the embarrassments young Mary endures. After a visit with Santa Claus himself, Mary discovers a way to appreciate her family's over-the-top observance of Christmas: to share it! A Christmas celebration too big for only the Christmas family is just the right size for a whole neighborhood, and Mary Christmas is finally able to have a merry Christmas.

Merry Christmas, Mary Christmas! is visually appealing with its whimsical, brightly colored illustrations. The pencil-outlined, hand-drawn feel complements the detail in each scene. However, the book is a bit lacking in character development. Mary herself is expressive and spunky as she demonstrates her upset with the extremes her family takes. Her family members, on the other hand, seem to lack personality and sense, which makes the story feel a little off-balanced since Mary, as a seven-year-old, becomes the voice of reason to her parents. The overall message of the book seems to be that excess and the "big-ness" of celebration doesn't make the celebration better, but that sharing with others does. A good message, though not as easy for young children to trace compared to the more straightforward morals found in other books. This book is probably best read for the visuals, followed up by a guided discussion with children about Christmas being about sharing with others instead of getting things in excess.