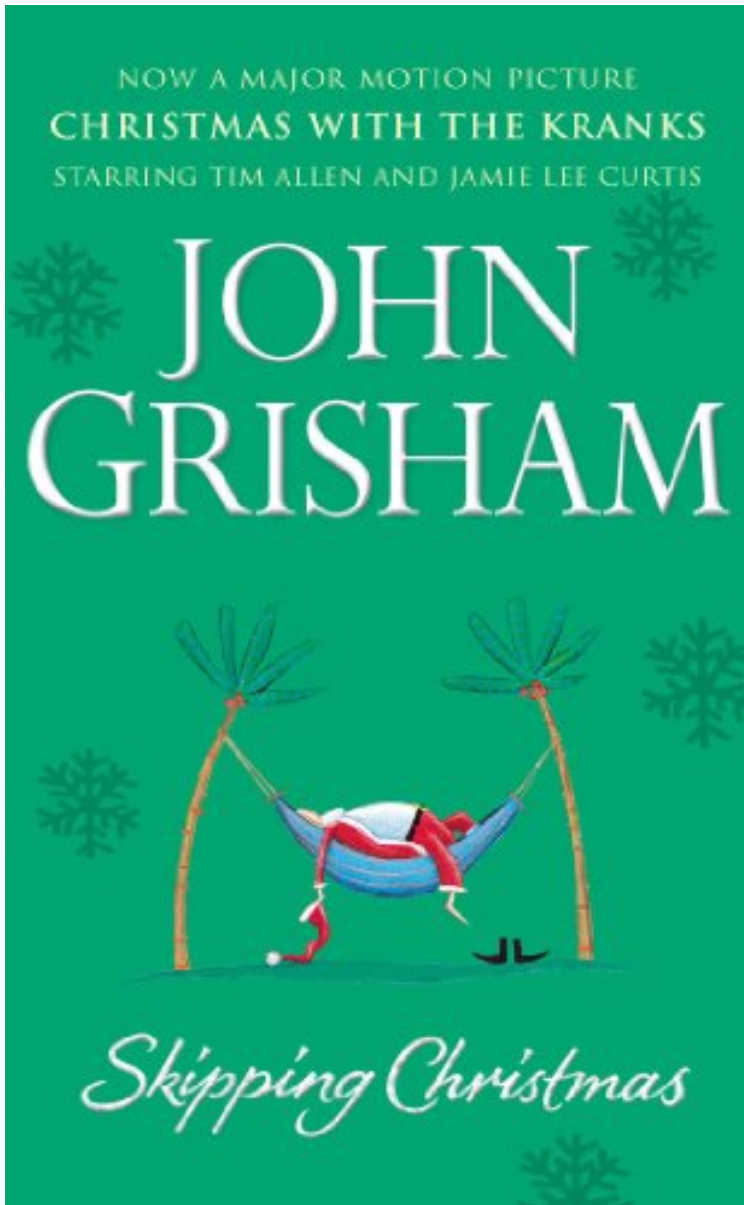


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# Skipping Christmas: Christmas with The Kranks



*Par John Grisham*

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**Description :** Description du produitImagine 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. This is a limited edition, cloth bound book, that is signed by the author and numbered. The book is wrapped in a protective wax covering. The book is then included in a red cardboard flip case. There are 350 copies of this edition of *Skipping Christmas* available worldwide.

Prsentation de l'diteurA classic tale for modern times, *Skipping Christmas* offers a hilarious look at the chaos and frenzy that has become part of our holiday tradition. Imagine a year without Christmas. No crowded shops, 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 the street without a rooftop Frosty the snowman; 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..comJohn Grisham turns a satirical eye on the overblown ritual of the festive holiday season, and the result is *Skipping Christmas*, a modest but funny novel about the tyranny of December 25. Grisham's story revolves around a typical middle-aged American couple, Luther and Nora Krank. On the first Sunday after Thanksgiving they wave their daughter Blair off to Peru to work for the Peace Corps, and they suddenly realize that "for the first time in her young and sheltered life Blair would spend Christmas away from home." Luther Krank sees his daughter's Christmas absence as an opportunity. He estimates that "a year earlier, the Luther Krank family had spent \$6,100 on Christmas," and have "precious little to show for it." So he makes an executive decision, telling his wife, friends, and neighbors that "we won't do Christmas." Instead, Luther books a 10-day Caribbean cruise. But things start to turn nasty when horrified neighbors get wind of the Krank's subversive scheme and besiege the couple with questions about their decision. Grisham builds up a funny but increasingly terrifying picture of how this tight-knit community turns on the Kranks, who find themselves under increasing pressure to conform. As the tension mounts, readers may wonder whether they will manage to board their plane on Christmas day. *Skipping Christmas* is Grisham-lite, with none of the serious action or drama of his legal thrillers, but a funny poke at the craziness of Christmas. --Jerry Brotton, .co.ukExtraitChapter One The gate was packed with weary travelers, most of them standing and huddled along the walls because the meager allotment of plastic chairs had long since been taken. Every plane that came and went held at least eighty passengers, yet the gate had seats for only a few dozen. There seemed to be a thousand waiting for the 7 p.m. flight to Miami. They were bundled up and heavily laden, and after fighting the traffic and the check-in and the mobs along the concourse they were subdued, as a whole. It was the Sunday after Thanksgiving, one of the busiest days of the year for air travel, and as they jostled and got pushed farther into the gate many asked themselves, not for the first time, why, exactly, they had chosen this day to fly. The reasons were varied and irrelevant at the moment. Some tried to smile. Some tried to read, but the crush and the noise made it difficult. Others just stared at the floor and waited. Nearby a skinny black Santa Claus clanged an irksome bell and droned out holiday greetings. A small family approached, and when they saw the gate number and the mob they stopped along the edge of the concourse and began their wait. The daughter was young and pretty. Her name was Blair, and she was obviously leaving. Her parents were not. The three gazed at the crowd, and they, too, at that moment, silently asked themselves why they had picked this day to travel. The tears were over, at least most of them. Blair was twenty-three, fresh from graduate school with a handsome resume but not ready for a career. A friend from college was in Africa with the Peace Corps, and this had inspired Blair to dedicate the next two years to helping others. Her assignment was eastern Peru, where she would teach primitive little children how to read. She would live in a lean-to with no plumbing, no electricity, no phone, and she was anxious to begin her journey. The flight would take her to Miami, then to Lima, then by bus for three days into the mountains, into another century. For the first time in her young and sheltered life, Blair would spend Christmas away from home. Her mother clutched her hand and tried to be strong. The good-byes had all been said. "Are you sure this is what you want?" had been asked for the hundredth time. Luther, her father, studied the mob with a scowl on his face. What madness, he said to himself. He had dropped them at the curb, then driven miles to park in a satellite lot. A packed shuttle bus had delivered him back to Departures, and from there he had elbowed his way with his wife and daughter down to this gate. He was sad that Blair was leaving, and he detested the swarming horde of people. He was in a foul mood. Things would get worse for Luther. The harried gate agents came to life and the passengers inched forward. The first announcement was made, the one asking those who needed extra time and those in

first class to come forward. The pushing and shoving rose to the next level. "I guess we'd better go," Luther said to his daughter, his only child. They hugged again and fought back the tears. Blair smiled and said, "The year will fly by. I'll be home next Christmas." Nora, her mother, bit her lip and nodded and kissed her once more. "Please be careful," she said because she couldn't stop saying it. "I'll be fine." They released her and watched helplessly as she joined a long line and inched away, away from them, away from home and security and everything she'd ever known. As she handed over her boarding pass, Blair turned and smiled at them one last time. "Oh well," Luther said. "Enough of this. She's going to be fine." Nora could think of nothing to say as she watched her daughter disappear. They turned and fell in with the foot traffic, one long crowded march down the concourse, past the Santa Claus with the irksome bell, past the tiny shops packed with people. It was raining when they left the terminal and found the line for the shuttle back to the satellite, and it was pouring when the shuttle sloshed its way through the lot and dropped them off, two hundred yards from their car. It cost Luther \$7.00 to free himself and his car from the greed of the airport authority. When they were moving toward the city, Nora finally spoke. "Will she be okay?" she asked. He had heard that question so often that his response was an automatic grunt. "Sure." "Do you really think so?" "Sure." Whether he did or he didn't, what did it matter at this point? She was gone; they couldn't stop her. He gripped the wheel with both hands and silently cursed the traffic slowing in front of him. He couldn't tell if his wife was crying or not. Luther wanted only to get home and dry off, sit by the fire, and read a magazine. He was within two miles of home when she announced, "I need a few things from the grocery." "It's raining," he said. "I still need them." "Can't it wait?" "You can stay in the car. Just take a minute. Go to Chip's. It's open today." So he headed for Chip's, a place he despised not only for its outrageous prices and snooty staff but also for its impossible location. It was still raining of course she couldn't pick a Kroger where you could park and make a dash. No, she wanted Chip's, where you parked and hiked. Only sometimes you couldn't park at all. The lot was full. The fire lanes were packed. He searched in vain for ten minutes before Nora said, "Just drop me at the curb." She was frustrated at his inability to find a suitable spot. He wheeled into a space near a burger joint and demanded, "Give me a list." "I'll go," she said, but only in feigned protest. Luther would hike through the rain and they both knew it. "Gimme a list." "Just white chocolate and a pound of pistachios," she said, relieved. "That's all?" "Yes, and make sure it's Logan's chocolate, one-pound bar, and Lance Brothers pistachios." "And this couldn't wait?" "No, Luther, it cannot wait. I'm doing dessert for lunch tomorrow. If you don't want to go, then hush up and I'll go." He slammed the door. His third step was into a shallow pothole. Cold water soaked his right ankle and oozed down quickly into his shoe. He froze for a second and caught his breath, then stepped away on his toes, trying desperately to spot other puddles while dodging traffic. Chip's believed in high prices and modest rent. It was on a side alley, not visible from anywhere really. Next to it was a wine shop run by a European of some strain who claimed to be French but was rumored to be Hungarian. His English was awful but he'd learned the language of price gouging. Probably learned it from Chip's next door. In fact all the shops in the District, as it was known, strove to be discriminating. And every shop was full. Another Santa clanged away with the same bell outside the cheese shop. "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" rattled from a hidden speaker above the sidewalk in front of Mother Earth, where the crunchy people were no doubt still wearing their sandals. Luther hated the store refused to set foot inside. Nora bought organic herbs there, for what reason he'd never been certain. The old Mexican who owned the cigar store was happily stringing lights in his window, pipe stuck in the corner of his mouth, smoke drifting behind him, fake snow already sprayed on a fake tree. There was a chance of real snow later in the night. The shoppers wasted no time as they hustled in and out of the stores. The sock on Luther's right foot was now frozen to his ankle. There were no shopping baskets near the checkout at Chip's, and of course this was a bad sign. Luther didn't need one, but it meant the place was packed. The aisles were narrow and the inventory was laid out in such a way that nothing made sense. Regardless of what was on your list, you had to crisscross the place half a dozen times to finish up. A stock boy was working hard on a display of Christmas chocolates. A sign by the butcher demanded that all good customers order their Christmas turkeys immediately. New Christmas wines were in! And Christmas hams! What a waste, Luther thought to himself. Why do we eat so much and drink so much in the celebration of the birth of Christ? He found the pistachios near the bread. Odd how that made sense at Chip's. The white chocolate was nowhere near the baking section, so Luther cursed under his breath and trudged along the aisles, looking at everything. He got bumped by a shopping cart. No apology, no one noticed. "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" was coming from above, as if Luther was supposed to be comforted. Might as well be "Frosty the Snowman." Two aisles over, next to a selection of rice from around the world, there was a shelf of

baking chocolates. As he stepped closer, he recognized a one-pound bar of Logan's. Another step closer and it suddenly disappeared, snatched from his grasp by a harsh-looking woman who never saw him. The little space reserved for Logan's was empty, and in the next desperate moment Luther saw not another speck of white chocolate. Lots of dark and medium chips and such, but nothing white. The express line was, of course, slower than the other two. Chip's' outrageous prices forced its customers to buy in small quantities, but this had no effect whatsoever on the speed with which they came and went. Each item was lifted, inspected, and manually entered into the register by an unpleasant cashier. Sacking was hit or miss, though around Christmas the sackers came to life with smiles and enthusiasm and astounding recall of customers' names. It was the tipping season, yet another unseemly aspect of Christmas that Luth...