


Santa Calls

William Joyce

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Art Atchinson Aimesworth -- inventor, crime fighter, and allaround whiz kid-journeys north with his sister, Esther, and his pal, Spaulding, by special invitation from Santa himself. But why did Santa call? Now available in a new hardcover edition, this truly Joyce-ian crusade features villains and swashbuckling adventure, concluding with a most spectacular and touching Christmas celebration.

A holiday extravaganza like no other, by the creator of *Rolie Polie Olie*, *Snowie Rolie*, *Sleepy Time Olie*, *Dinosaur Bob and His Adventures wirh the Family Lizardo*, and *George Shrinks*.

Santa Calls Details

Date : Published September 28th 1993 by HarperCollins

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Author : William Joyce

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From Reader Review Santa Calls for online ebook

Rebecca says

It would seem I've been living under a rock, because I'm pretty sure this book is my introduction to William Joyce, and it seems he's a Really Big Deal. (Cue me immediately checking out everything else of his I can find.) This Christmas story has an old-fashioned adventure sensibility, from the rollicking text (which would make a great grade-school or one-on-one readaloud) right down to the dramatic, cinematic illustrations (reminiscent of N.C. Wyeth, Winsor McCay, and Maxfield Parrish). Includes an interactive ending, but I won't give it away. This would be a great gift for anyone who loves *The Polar Express*.

Lorelie Mansur says

My eight year old son still loves this story even though he rejects almost all other xmas books. A rompingly good detective yarn that ranges from Texas to the North Pole. As Santa points out though, some things are best left mysterious. An equally good story for girls.

Could be better written, but children won't notice.

Randie D. Camp, M.S. says

Art Atchinson Aimesworth is a jack of all trades. He is a creative inventor, brave enough for adventures, and excellent at fighting crime. So, when a mysterious box comes his way, he is determined to go where it leads him--to Santa Claus. One little problem. If Art doesn't take his little sister, Esther, with him, she will tattle and end the quest. Art concedes and soon the siblings are flying to the North Pole. To their surprise, everything isn't as cheery as they hoped and Art must use his wit to save the day.

Joyce's story is somewhat random and wild, but children will certainly love the unpredictability of Art and Esther's adventure. I personally liked the ending, especially the two letters found at the end of the book. The illustrations are detailed and if you look closely, they seem to tell a story of their own.

Jessica Nieman says

Santa Calls is about a group of children that receive an invitation from Santa himself to visit him at the North Pole. While the kids are on the trip, they run into a problem where the youngest, Esther, has been kidnapped by the evil elves. I think this book was very interesting. It didn't reveal why these children were selected for this opportunity until the very last page. This added a suspenseful element to the story. I think this book would only be appropriate for older grades, possibly third through fifth grade. The language in the text would be extremely difficult for a young student to understand. This book could be used to introduce the letter writing format and proper letter writing skills. I personally think that this book would be a great read aloud

activity during the holiday season.

Tonja Drecker says

This isn't your cuddly, hot-chocolate-warmth, Santa tale, but rather a fast-paced, high-flying adventure with tons of wondrous Christmas magic around every bend.

Art is a boy in Texas, who is known for his adventurous spirit and talent in about everything. He has only one flaw, he likes to fight with his little sister. When the siblings and Art's best friend discover a mysterious box and find that Santa has called them to the North Pole, an action-filled adventure begins.

The tale begins with Art, a true Texas-crime fighting hero already as a boy. The description and illustrations of this tough, slightly arrogant, and very Western kid start the book off with a clash to the winter-world to come. And it grabs kids right away and jerks them to pay attention.

Slow is not a word to be found in these pages. The moment the kids get that box, it leads to a line of adventure which hits with explosion after explosion. There is mystery, thrills, magical wonder, edge-of-the-seat escapes, daring rescues, and, on top of it all, warmth. This is exactly the kind of Christmas story kids who love adventure and aren't ready to dive into snuggly emotions are going to enjoy. It makes a great read-aloud, especially for groups. However, I wouldn't recommend this for younger readers and see it more as a read for kids ages 5 to 7.

The illustrations have a very traditional feel, which wakes a nice sense of an old-fashioned Christmas. There are lovely details, and every scene brings across the emotions and adventure nicely. While lovely, the traditional style holds an interesting clash to the very fast paced and thrill-filled adventure the kids experience. It's a mixture which demands attention and works.

If you're looking for a different type of Christmas tale, which still holds on to a bit of traditional charm while packing in a fast-paced adventure to please action fans, this tale is it. Especially kids ages 5 to 7 are sure to stay attentive as this story is read-aloud to them, and they'll probably hit the playground and join in on similar adventures of their own imaginations.

I received a complimentary copy and found the story so creepily-cute and still warm that I had to leave my honest thoughts.

Lisa Brown says

Art is a very smart boy living in Texas, who has recently become an orphan. He still has his little sister, Esther, but he doesn't treat her very well. One day a mysterious box arrives from Santa, and tells them to build a flying machine to take them to the North Pole. While there, they have all sorts of adventures, including Esther being kidapped by the dark queen. Art rescues her and realizes how much he loves her.

When they return home, they each have gifts from Santa, except Esther who only has two letters. On the last page of the book you see what e letters say - one is from Ester asking Santa to help her brother become her friend, and the second is from Santa happy that their plan worked. Very sweet.

Neil Coulter says

I love William Joyce's books and illustration style. *Meet the Robinsons*, *Dinosaur Bob and the Family Lizardo*, and the visual design of the film *Robots* are some of my favorites. So when I saw *Santa Calls* on the Christmas shelf at the library, I had to take it. I read it to the kids during Christmas week, and it was . . . pretty good. Not my favorite William Joyce--it just isn't *quite* strange enough, somehow--but it's a good children's book, with a wonderful and emotional reveal at the end.

Alex (not a dude) Baugh says

It's 1908, and orphaned inventor and jack-of-all-trades Art Atchinson lives in Abilene, Texas with his aunt and uncle, and his younger sister Esther, to whom he is pretty mean. Along with his best friend Spaulding, Art is a pretty brave guy, who loves adventure and smashing crime, but who, deep down, feels a sadness and loneliness that never leaves him since the loss of his parents.

Then, a few days before Christmas, a mysterious package arrives that turns out to be an invitation from Santa Claus to come to the North Pole. Inside the box is a flying machine, which they christen the Yuletide Flyer, since it is now Christmas Eve when they finally leave for the North Pole. At first, Art wants to leave Esther behind, but gives in at the last minute and the three immediately head north.

Landing in the North Pole, Art, Spaulding, and Esther are picked up by Ali Aku, captain of the Santarian Guard, who warns them that they must get to their destination before nightfall, when the Dark Elves and their evil Queen come out. Too late, they are pelted with snowballs by the Elves, but fight back, and Esther even manages a direct hit on the Dark Queen, who threatens that Esther has not seen the last of her.

Amid all the fanfare of their arrival, Art asks Santa just why they were called to the North Pole. Santa's answer: "Some mysteries are best left unsolved." As they take off in Santa's sleigh to make the night's deliveries, the Evil Queen manages to snatch Esther from the sleigh and take her to her castle. Art insists that he must save her, after all, she's his sister. So Art, Spaulding, and Ali Aku sneak in and rescue Esther, while pelting the Dark Elves with candy bombs and licorice as they make their getaway, back to Santa's sleigh.

Arriving back in Abilene after all their Christmas Eve excitement, Art once again asks Santa why he was summoned to the North Pole, and once again Art is told: "Some mysteries are best left unsolved."

The next morning, Art and Spaulding find splendid new gifts from Santa. For Art, it is a puppy from Santa's Canine Brigade, for Spaulding a new canoe with Yuletide Flyer II painted on it, but for Esther there are only two letters. Does Esther get what she wanted for Christmas? In the end, and I mean that literally, only Esther, Santa, and the reader know the answer to that. For Art, "Some mysteries [remain] best left unsolved."

I thought this would be a fun book to start off the holiday season. My kids love it. The first two times we read it, I didn't tell them about Esther's letters from Santa (which are pasted onto the back flyleaf), just let them speculate on why Santa had summoned Art to the North Pole. When we finally read the letters, they were surprised, but that led to discussions about importance of siblings and getting along.

Then we talked about the illustrations. The stylized art deco illustration on the cover was the first thing that attracted me to Santa Calls when it was first issued in 1993. It is not your typical warm-and-fuzzy Christmas cover, but it totally works, in part, because of the story that accompanies the illustrations throughout the book. Art deco flourished in the 1920s and 1930s and the story in Santa Calls definitely carries a kind of Perils of Pauline feel to it (no, Esther is no Pauline, trust me).

I personally loved Joyce's rendering of the North Pole, so different from the quiet busy Santa's workshop full of elves making toys. Joyce has turned it into a city that may remind fans of Emerald City from The Wizard of Oz film. But, that's where the resemblance ends, since Joyce has kept the figure of Santa the same kind, caring, generous figure he has always been.

Santa Calls is an imaginative Christmas adventure with some surprising twists that make it an annual family/classroom favorite.

This book is recommended for readers age 6+

This book was purchased for my personal library

Mary Anne says

1908, Art Atchinson Aimesworth lives with his little sister, Esther and his aunt and uncle. Art isn't very nice to his little sister - he is too busy having adventures and inventing things and eating candy.

One night Santa sends a secret flying machine and Art, his best friend Spaulding and Esther go out on the adventure of their lives - to the North Pole. They run into evil elves and when the elves kidnap Esther, Art realizes she means more to him than he knew. He sets out to save her! Adventure, mystery, and fun!

Relyn says

2008

This is one of my favorite Christmas books, so I was pretty bummed when it basically bombed with my students. They just weren't old enough, I guess. I really found myself having to explain quite a lot. Still. I love it. Even if you don't love the story, you'll love the art.

I read this one to my class and they did not love it. I was honestly a bit surprised. They liked it fine, but didn't love it. I think that they were not used to the old-fashioned feel of the story and found it a little hard to follow.

December 2010

Different kids, different response. This year, my second graders absolutely loved this book. In fact, it fueled many a playground adventure.

Marsha says

This is a darling book that puts one sharply in mind of The Polar Express. We're not dealing with a

disbelieving boy but an intrepid explorer, his best pal and beleaguered little sister who set off on an adventure against a despicable queen. The evil isn't really all that evil; in fact, the dark elves resemble nothing more than grubby-faced children in sack clothes. Santa's mysterious mission isn't revealed until the very end of the book but prescient readers can probably guess.

With beautiful softened illustrations featuring apple-cheeked children and fluffy clouds that look soft enough to sleep on, "Santa Calls" captivates with its ingenuous and straightforward storytelling. I was surprised to find that this book is fairly recent, first published in 1993. In its tender message and old-fashioned illustrations, it seems more in the style of children's books from the 1920s. Whenever it was penned, it is a Christmas delight and deserves to be a classic alongside *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and *A Visit from St. Nicholas*.

Matthew says

This adventure story involving Santa, an intrepid pair of siblings, and a villainous Dark Queen was entertaining, as all William Joyce stories tend to be, but I don't know that I would go so far as to compare it to *The Polar Express*, as so many other reviewers have. The story is a bit campy and fun, and I would certainly be willing to share it with readers in search of a different sort of Christmas story, but the story rings a little too much of a child's *Indiana Jones* or, as another reviewer mentioned, a *Pals in Peril* story involving Santa Claus and the North Pole. I liked it, though *The Polar Express* holds a place a little closer to my heart.

Kaethe says

2012 February 02

Santa summons a boy to the North Pole in 1908. Art takes his best friend, Spaulding, and reluctantly his younger sister, Esther, with him. Adventure ensues. As Christmas stories go, I quite prefer this to *The Polar Express* with CD. One, I prefer the art direction of Joyce over Allsburg, two, I like the characters better, and three, I prefer this plot, which I kindly will not spoil. Fans of the *Pals in Peril* series will recognize Art as another Jasper Dash.

Another thing I really like is the author's picture at the back of each of his books. Joyce renders himself with his wife, and later, his children, in a tiny picture that somehow fits the tone of the book.

Ditto to my earlier words. This really is one of my holiday favorites along with *A Christmas Carol*, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, *Miracle and Other Christmas Stories*, *This Year It Will Be Different*, and *A Wish for Wings That Work: An Opus Christmas Story*.

Even after repeated reading, the art is so detailed we notice new aspects. Had I ever spotted the penguins before? And I really love how Esther, ignored for her youth and her sex, really sneaks up on you.

Library copy.

Jessica says

This beautifully illustrated Christmas story is one of my favorites! An exciting adventure to the North Pole to help out Santa turns into a poignant (but not saccharine) message about the importance of family. The pictures have a sort of 1940's "Vision of the Future!" feel, if that makes sense, and the final pages feature two letters that you open and read to discover the secret behind why Santa called!

Anna says

Wonderful book I found in the post holiday sale at one of my favorite book stores in the world, Page One Books in Albuquerque. And I was shopping with two of my favorite people in the world (Paul and Betsy)

This picture book is for all ages, but in particular for those older than the usual picture book audience. In fact I bought it for my 30-something daughter to give to my 30-something son next year at Christmas.

It has a special message about sister/brother relationships.
