



Babar and Father Christmas

Jean de Brunhoff

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Babar returns in this unusual and heartwarming Christmas story by Jean de Brunhoff. Babar's children have caught wind of a fellow in Man's country named Father Christmas who brings joy and toys to little children. "If only we could bring him here," they wish. So they write the Christmas saint a letter inviting him to visit them. When they get no reply, Babar, ever the good father, rushes out to find the red-suited one. After much searching, and with the help of a dog named Duck, Babar reaches Father Christmas's workshop in the snow. Can Babar find a way to bring him to Elephants' country?

Babar and Father Christmas Details

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From Reader Review Babar and Father Christmas for online ebook

Greta says

A strange little tale of how Babar solves the Santa problem in the land of the elephants. In typically French fashion the story rambles along with interesting little asides like: "Celeste would have liked to go with him, but Babar told her that it would be better if she stayed and ruled the country in his absence, and that mysterious people often did not like to be approached by several people at once." There are lovely little observations like: "One always feels better after a good wash." And "The Professor examined the book carefully, uttering little grunts." There's something quirky about De Brunhoff's stories which give them a certain panache. Long live Babar!

Olivia says

Babar is a familiar character, but if you haven't read the first books, then do not expect to get anything out of this one. None of the characters or the world is explained, which one would think is important in a world where talking elephants live alongside humans. There is also plenty of time for potential explanation because this book is long, painfully long. Your child will lose interest after the first page and likely you will too, which is fine because the rest of the book is not worth it.

Danette says

Kind of long.
2/28/17 Read with Naomi and Julia.

Sharni says

Babar forever! I watch the animated version of this most years - so it was an interesting to see it in its original format. No Rataxes! It's so lovely, I especially love the double page illustration of the family around the Christmas tree.

Candice says

So magical

Daniel Nelms says

Great family Christmas reading. Our five and six year old loved the story (Babar being a family favorite),

and it will enter our yearly Christmas literature cycle every year.

Rebecca says

I admit, I've never quite known what to think about Babar. (Not to mention *how* to correctly say his name. My husband and I have had ~~hundreds of~~ two arguments about whether it is Ba BAR' [me] or BAB' ar [he].) There is something unaffected about the simplistic colorful drawings and the stylish up-right pachyderm family that really appeals to me. It may stem from the fact that as a child I never owned a Babar book and he was known to me only in a distant, library-check-out sort of relationship. Intellectually, however, I know that these books are really not very well written.

This holiday version is the same: really not very well written, but cute and strangely enticing.

Abigail says

Babar sets out to find Father Christmas in this seventh picture-book from Jean de Brunhoff - published in 1940 as *Babar et le père Noël*, it was the final original Babar book, with all subsequent titles either written by de Brunhoff's son, Laurent, or by ghost-writers - intent upon asking him to include the land of the elephants in his annual Christmas voyage. Traveling to Europe, where he hopes to find the seasonal gift-giver, Babar follows a number of false leads before finally tracking his quarry down at his mountainside cavern dwelling in Bohemia (near the village of PRJMNESWE). Although disappointed to learn that Father Christmas already has a full schedule for Christmas Eve, and cannot fit the elephants into his gift-giving trip, Babar does convince him to vacation in the land of the elephants, successfully setting up a seasonal relationship.

I had mixed feelings about Babar and Father Christmas, which marks the end of my recent Babar reading project - after the initial title, The Story of Babar, was chosen recently as a selection for *The Picture Book Club* to which I belong, I decided to read all of Jean de Brunhoff's original stories. I enjoyed aspects of it - the artwork, as usual, was charming, and I particularly liked the cross-section view of Father Christmas's vast underground complex - but overall, I found the story somewhat disjointed and unappealing. The colonialist themes, to which some have objected (Should We Burn Babar?: Essays on Children's Literature and the Power of Stories, etc.), were very much in evidence here, as Babar once again sets out to imitate European customs, even going so far as to journey to Europe itself, in order to fetch them back to his own home country, but there was nothing that was as egregiously offensive as some of the themes in The Travels of Babar (the low point of the series, in my estimation). That said, there was little that really spoke to me, or made a strong favorable impression. Babar's new canine companion, Duck, was a rather cute addition to the cast, I suppose, and I liked some of the visuals. All in all, this was somewhere between two and three stars for me, and a rather lackluster ending to the series.

Jennifer B. says

A beautiful addition to the Babar collection, and a beautiful addition to any Christmas collection.

Jill says

My favourite illustration in BABAR AND FATHER CHRISTMAS is the double page (pp. 30-31) cross-section drawing of Father Christmas' house under the snow, up in the mountains, "about twelve miles from PRJMNESWE." Recently, when I first saw the cross-section drawings of the underground cities of Cappadocia in Turkey, my first thought was their resemblance to this drawing of Father Christmas' home and workrooms by Jean de Brunhoff. The book was drawn before Brunhoff's death in 1937, and first published in 1940.

Kristine Hansen says

This is my favorite Christmas book of the season. There's a lot of life lessons woven into this story of Babar as he travels the world looking for Father Christmas so that he can bring him back to the Elephant Country with him. I loved the dog named Duck, and how the entire story plays out in such a believable manner given the fantastic nature of the characters. Just lovely!

Patricia says

In this story, the elephant children of Elephant Country write to Santa Claus in the hopes that he will visit them just like he visits human children. When Santa expresses that he is too exhausted, Babar offers him the opportunity to relax in Elephant Country so he can recover. After he recovers, Santa still does not visit Elephant Country. Instead, he allows Babar to become the Santa Elephant there, promising to visit the following and all subsequent years. The elephant children receive their Christmas gifts and are very happy in the end.

Donna says

This was always one of my favorites and it still made me smile after many years. I want to go spend some time in Elephant land.

Monty Cupcake ? Queen of Bloodshed ? says

The illustrations of the elves in this were creepy and the font was cursive handwriting, otherwise good.

Hilary says

We have read this book many times before but still really enjoyed the story and beautiful illustrations.

Babar sets off to find father christmas and ask him if he could bring presents for the children of the land of elephants. His travels unite him with a stray dog and together they track down the home of father christmas, meet some mountain dwarves and see the places where the presents are kept. Father Christmas comes for a holiday in the land of elephants and passes on some equipment for Babar to continue the work of distributing toys in his own land.

This is a lovely big book, lots of really interesting and beautiful illustrations. We love the colours used and the cream paper it is printed on and the use of a grey background on some pages so that snow can be shown. As always with Babar books we like the use of the handwritten letters for typeface.
