



Twenty-One Candles: Stories for Christmas

Mike Mason , Ron Reed (Foreword)

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Twenty-one Candles - Stories for Christmas by Mike Mason For over two decades, award-winning author Mike Mason has been circulating Christmas stories to a select circle of his closest friends. Now he's sharing these classic Christmas stories with us. Praise for Mike Mason's Twenty-one Candles "It has been my delight to listen as Mike Mason read aloud many of these stories-a score and one more of narratives that circle like candlelight around a season when light is scarce. Now, reading them, they bring a unique brightness, because in one way or another they illuminate more than just snow scenes and families around hearth fires. With a light and often whimsical touch, Mason's tales speak of the way 'people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light' (Mt 12:16)." Luci Shaw author of *Breath for the Bones: Art, Imagination and Spirit* "The best moments of Christmas are spent in the evening by the fire, telling stories... stories of courage and conviction, of discovering anew 'peace on earth; goodwill toward men.' My friend, Mike Mason, has penned a collection of heartwarming stories to be told time and again, every Advent. May Twenty-one Candles become a Christmas classic for years to come!" Joni Eareckson Tada Joni and Friends International Disability Center "In the tradition of our favorite Christmas tales, passed down from such masters as Charles Dickens and O. Henry, Mike Mason has lit Twenty-one Candles to shine fresh light into our darkness. Some shine with a mythopoeic ambiance, while others glow like mirrors from day to day life. They celebrate Christmas in ways you'll want to share. Gather around the Christmas tree; put another log on the fire. Mike Mason's stories want to be read aloud-read to families, to friends, to church groups-and you'll delight in sharing them." D.S. Martin author of *Conspiracy of Light: Poems Inspired by the Legacy of C.S. Lewis* "If you haven't read Mike Mason you live an impoverished life. Here is a book of frosty magic, wings of light, and the enchanting music of wisdom. With characteristically honest and beautiful prose, Mason has given us a gift that will warm hearts and kindle contemplation. These are stories that both refresh and rebuke. Read them and be awakened to joy." Andrew Case author of *Water of the Word* "These short stories are filled with charming, relatable characters discovering the spiritual origin and inspiration behind Christmas: Jesus Christ. Twenty-one Candles skillfully draws readers into its stories, inviting us to look beyond the veneer of a commercialized holiday season. Scratching the surface of our Christmas tradition, Mason captures glimpses of a loving God yearning to restore relationship with His children." Leonard Buhler President of Power to Change "In Twenty-one Candles master storyteller Mike Mason has carved out another classic. Truly a book for everyone that will captivate and inspire with its humor and unique way of spreading the true spirit of Christmas." Wally Armstrong author of *The Mulligan* "Twenty-one Candles should be as mandatory as mistletoe and manger scenes. Mike Mason's collection of funny, poignant, and inspired stories is a rare gift." Carolyn Arends Recording artist and author of *Living the Questions* "Twenty-one Candles captures the spirit of Christmas in a way all the commercial glitter never will. Mike shows the love and delight of the Messiah resonating in the hearts of those who need love and joy, and find them." David Gregory author of *Dinner With a Perfect Stranger* Learn more about best-selling author Mike Mason at www.mikemasonbooks.com

Twenty-One Candles: Stories for Christmas Details

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From Reader Review *Twenty-One Candles: Stories for Christmas* for online ebook

Violet says

Mike Mason (Canadian author of *The Mystery of Marriage*, *Champagne for the Soul* and the *Blue Umbrella* fantasy series for kids) has a personal tradition of writing a Christmas story every year. This book is 21 of those stories, collected into a “wonder-full” volume of tales, as different from each other as each Christmas we live is one-of-a-kind. Some stories are short, others long, some playful, others serious, some fairy-tale-like, others as real as photographs. What binds them all together, though is the way each reflects some facet of the deepest meaning of the season.

From the one with the earliest date, 1981’s “Christmas Rocks”—in which the narrator and his friend, weary of the commercialism of a Winnipeg mall, drive to Gimli to choose a unique water-lucent rock for each person on their list—to 2014’s “In the stillness of the Night”—set in Hope BC with a local tourist attraction, the Othello Tunnels, playing a major role—many of these tales are recognizably Canadian, yet have a universal, parable quality to them that sets them beyond time and place.

The two that touch me most deeply are “Born with Wings”—about a sick baby expected to live just hours, born on Christmas day. Any parent who has lost a baby to miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death will relate to this poignant, tastefully told tale and its Christmas message.

The other favorite is the 1984 tale that closes the collection, “Bound for Glory.” Its tame yet mysterious beginning:

“A light rain was falling as I set off across the platform. ... It was Christmas Eve, close to midnight, and the station was unusually busy, though not with the bustle of a daylight rush hour but with the trance-like commotion of darkness...” KL 2939.

soon reveals a carload of citizens fleeing for the border, among them a couple with a newborn baby. Enter soldiers with guns, making threats and culling group by group from the coach. Of course there is a surprise at the destination.

Stories in this book have been read at Vancouver’s Pacific Theatre’s annual series Christmas Presence. Now that they are available to all, they’re sure to add their special light to the Christmases of many more individuals and groups.

Floyd says

Mike Mason has a fertile imagination which I like. It almost convinces me that I might be able to come up also with some short stories. :)

Prairie Sky Book Reviews says

Many families have a special collection of Christmas stories they enjoy reading, year after year. Often this is a cherished tradition. And the only thing more fun than actually DOING a cherished tradition is adding to it – in this case, by finding new stories! If you are looking for new stories to add to your Christmas collection – stories that are unique, meaningful, and suitable for all ages – then I am happy to share with you a new volume that I have just discovered this Christmas season... “Twenty-one Candles: Stories for Christmas” was written by Canadian author Mike Mason, chapter-by-chapter over the course of many years, and collected into a single volume in 2014. As stated on the back cover, this book peers into the deeper meaning of the holidays and is filled with: “Silly sages and the wisdom of the simple. Stones and rockets and hand-written notes. Presents that unfold endlessly, and presents already open, if only we would notice.”

This book consists of twenty-one stand-alone narratives. The only thing they have in common with each other is that each one is extraordinarily unique, and will make you think and ponder in a deeper, unexpected way as a result. Some of the stories, such as “The Three Fools” and “Yabbakadoodles” will make you smile and chuckle at their silliness and unusual perspective. Others, such as “Born With Wings” and “Bound for Glory”, will touch you with their heartbreaking circumstances, and perhaps even bring tears to your eyes as the layers of storytelling unfold. Without question, you will discover your own personal favorites hidden within the pages of this collection.

Unfortunately but not unexpectedly, “Twenty-one Candles” is not perfect. What book is, after all? Occasional references or conversations include inappropriate content, but this aspect is quite minor. Naturally, all of the stories will not resonate or even be enjoyed by every reader, and indeed some are a little on the strange side. In addition, many of the stories have conclusions that may not provide complete closure for readers who are accustomed to everything being tied up neatly in a bow, but I think this is a specific technique implemented by the author. In any case, your imagination will get a workout in imagining how things turn out for each character! Overall, reading “Twenty-one Candles” was an enjoyable experience. Not every tale struck a chord with me, but many of them were beautiful, and several I plan to enjoy again next Christmas. I know that if you give Mike Mason’s collection a try, many of his stories are bound to become a tradition in your family, too.

I received a free copy of this book for review purposes, courtesy of Mike Mason and Word Slinger Publicity. All opinions expressed in this review are my own.
