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News & Reviews by Roz Weedman  
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## What's new for December: Christmas tales for everyone

The books aren't new, but the annual Christmas display is – hundreds of Christmas themed books just inside the front door on a couple of bookcases across from the circulation desk.

Some writers have made a cottage industry out of producing a Christmas themed book a year. It appears from our display that the queen of the holiday story is **Debbie Macomber**. She has twenty Christmas books. Normally, a writer who has a genre such as cozy mystery or light romance, might choose to have a subgenre like a Christmas series over the years. Macomber has created a series within the subgenre that is a sort of sub-subgenre (if there is such a thing. Since I just wrote it, let's say it's a thing.) In her case, it's the **Miracle Series**.

Mrs. Miracle is to those who really need some minor miracles in their lives what Mary Poppins is to those who are desperate for a qualified nanny. Macomber isn't embarrassed to give the reader miracles in her feel-good stories about families who need them. No one is a terrible person in her stories. Everyone is striving to pull things together. And sometimes they open the front door and let Mrs. Miracle in. These books are always best sellers.

**M.C. Beaton**, a popular cozy mystery writer, has a few Christmas books in her mystery series, the **Agatha Raisin** books, and at least one in her **Hamish Macbeth** detective series. Good humor is a hallmark of Beaton's writing. Those who have Acorn television can find both the Raisin and Macbeth series on the Brit TV channel. They are well done.

Her Agatha Raisin short story, **Christmas Crumbles**, presents Agatha, as usual, full of good intentions that go awry. She is determined to create an elaborate Christmas dinner for elderly neighbors in her Cotswold village. And yet, it appears she might have murdered an 85-year-old lecher by a thwack to the head with a Christmas pudding. This is a little bonus story, because it is right now a free download from Amazon on Kindle. Several of her books, though, are on our library Christmas book display, like **A Highland Christmas**, where Hamish Macbeth finds himself again beset by the Calvinist elements of the community stepping on everyone else's Christmas cheer. Needless to say, murder takes no holiday (and every book is free at the library).

It's nice to see Wally Lamb (**She's Come Undone** and other popular books) among the Christmas authors. His book **Wishin' and Hopin'** is compared in style to David Sedaris, which is

good company. (This is no surprise coming from Lamb.) What's more, there's a movie out there of this book. The fact that the movie stars Molly Ringwald and Meatloaf is a little bit tempting.

If Debbie Macomber is the queen of Christmas books, then **James Patterson** is the king with nineteen of them. **David Rosenfelt** is another popular author who likes a good Christmas theme, such as in his book **Dachshund Through the Snow**. Leave it to lawyer Andy Carpenter and his faithful best-friend retriever to pluck just the right request from a giving tree for Andy's special talents. Can they reunite a family in time for Christmas? (Spoiler alert: All these books have happy endings. No one picks a Christmas book to nurture their post-modern apocalyptic world views. If there were one on this list, I'd warn you.)

We are in what could very well be the most gorgeous little hamlet on the planet this time of year. Why not give ourselves that warm feel-good read before we hit the dark, colorless dead of winter and return to Nordic noir? (We can see what's new in that in January.) Stop in and see what we've got.

See you at the Library!

**Upcoming Events:** **Coffee and Crafts** continues each Friday from 10 – 12 up to Christmas.

**Books for Lunch** meets again next week, Tuesday Dec. 10 at 12:30. **Mah Jongg** will have an evening game on Dec. 17 at 5:30 and will meet every Thursday in December at 12:30 as usual.

**Bavarian Princess Cocoa & Candy Canes** will be Dec. 19 at 10:30. Follow us on FB and Twitter.