



## In the Dark Streets Shineth

*David McCullough*

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## **In the Dark Streets Shineth** David McCullough

Christmas Eve, 1941. Mere days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt met at the White House. As war raged throughout the world, the two leaders delivered a powerful message of hope that still resonates today. Bestselling author and renowned historian David McCullough relates a compelling story about the spirit of Christmas and the power of light to shine in difficult, dangerous times. Also sharing the stories behind the songs "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and "I'll Be Home for Christmas," this beautifully designed book is filled with historic photographs and uplifting messages that will bring the Christmas spirit home to your family.

## **In the Dark Streets Shineth Details**

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# **From Reader Review In the Dark Streets Shineth for online ebook**

## **Juergen John Roscher says**

I am a fan of David McCullough's historical books and think Winston Churchill is one of the greatest leaders in the 20th century, so when I saw this short book by McCullough about Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt I bought it. I was expecting a typical well written story by McCullough about Christmas in 1941. Sadly, all I can say about this book is I am disappointed. This is not what I expected from a David McCullough book.

This short book is about the 1941 Christmas meeting between ally leaders, Prime Minister of Great Britain Winston Churchill and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt during WWII. It tells briefly of the visit by Churchill to the White House and speeches they both gave trying to provide hope during the Christmas season. Also, the story attempted to intertwine the story behind two classic Christmas songs, "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem" and "I'll Be Home for Christmas" into story of Christmas 1941.

I disliked that the book had too many pictures, which mostly had little or no relationship to the story, and not enough detail about this crucial time in world history. The book only had a few pages of text without the necessary detail and insight to really make the story come to life.

The attempt to tie two classic Christmas songs, "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem" and "I'll Be Home for Christmas" into story of Churchill, Roosevelt and Christmas 1941, but was not successful. The story behind the creation of "I'll Be Home for Christmas" was of some interest to the timeframe of the story.

I would not recommend this book. It is too short on details of the relationship between Churchill and Roosevelt, World War II, and Christmas in 1941. I seldom give a book a two star rating but this book deserves such a rating for complete failure in meeting any of my expectations for it.

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## **Greg says**

This slim little volume (about 35 pages) is just the thing for an American history lover who also wants to feel a bit of the Christmas spirit. The actual text of the book, with some background into a couple of perennial favorite Christmas songs, is actually not the best part in my mind. There are two.

The best #1 is the text of the speeches given by Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill during the dark winter Christmas of 1941 as war was breaking out all over the world. They offer a message of hope, and of the indomitable human spirit, that thrills even to this day. I've not read much about FDR, but have read a couple of biographical accounts of Winston Churchill, and visited the Churchill museum in London several times. He was a remarkable man, and many of his speeches were masterworks designed to bring hope where and when it seemed darkest. By all accounts, he loved America, and it shows in this speech.

The other best part is the included DVD of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's 2009 Christmas concert, with narration of the story by David McCullough. As usual, the MoTab is awesome, and evokes a tremendous outpouring of Christmas sentiment. They are justly famous, and their Christmas performances are always inspiring, but this one was among their best, in my humble and untalented opinion. I know little about music, but I know what I like, and this was it.

*In the Dark Streets Shineth* is a little gem of a book, and one that has found a permanent place in my library.

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## **Jake says**

Just a quick review for this one because it only took me twenty minutes to read. It was inspirational and had a nice message for Christmas. I liked the history behind it, but the cohesiveness of the book was nonexistent. I felt like it jumped around too much and it didn't really make sense. It would mention a song and then tell the story about the background of that song and then suddenly we were back to the meeting between Roosevelt and Churchill. I'd say this wasn't his greatest work ever, but it was a nice effort to have some American pride during Christmas season.

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## **Cheri says**

Once upon a time, in a world before many of us likely took our first breath, on this Christmas Eve that David McCullough writes of in this book, Pearl Harbor had recently been attacked, earlier that month, following years of other unspeakable horrors. Most of the world was emotionally raw, devastated, and while the world was dark, two leaders, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, came together to offer hope to the world.

*"On Christmas Eve, from a balcony at the White House, the two leaders spoke to a crowd of 20,000 gathered to the twilight. As reported in the Washington Post, 'A crescent moon hung overhead. To the southward loomed the Washington Monument...as the sun dipped...behind the Virginia Hills.'*

*"How can we light our trees? How can we give our gifts? How can we meet and worship with love and with uplifted spirit and heart in a world at war, a world of fighting and suffering and death?"*

There's a lot of that specifically pertains to WWII, but there is a significant amount that is still relevant to us today. The message of holding on to the light in ourselves, protecting it, in order to overcome the darkness in the world. Both FDR and Churchill's addresses are included.

Technically, there's not "a lot" of pages to this book, I believe it's only 40 pages, but my copy is on my kindle, so I'll just say that it's a relatively quick read.

There's a bit of history of some Christmas songs, "*O Little Town of Bethlehem*," and "*I'll Be Home For Christmas*" which I also enjoyed.

Overall, this is less of a "book" than it is a lovely Christmas letter, but that doesn't mean it has less merit, it is worth reading for what it is, I mention it because the name David McCullough is usually associated with weightier tomes.

If you were to buy the hardcover, I believe it comes with a DVD, where you can watch David McCullough deliver this story with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir lending song when appropriate. Of course, that is not entirely necessary to own this since it's available on YouTube through the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATkPm...>

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### **Jennifer says**

Not impressed by the book AT ALL but the story itself makes me want to have a conversation with elders who lived through difficult times. Perspective to be gained from history, I think.

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### **Taylor Church says**

I read this book in like 7 minutes. It's full of pictures and large print, but it seemed too perfect to not read it, and finish it right before I go to sleep and await the Christmas morning. It's just a cool story that reiterates the camaraderie and togetherness that the Yuletide should imbue us with. It tells of Winston Churchill coming to America and speaking alongside Roosevelt on the eve of Christmas, 1941. My favorite line was by Churchill when he said, "This is a strange Christmas Eve." He was referring to the tumult and worry of WWII, but for me this year feels strange for its own reasons. My Grandma is sick in the hospital and might not make it. Though the snow keeps falling, and the sweets are abundant, something is amiss. A dark cloud of uncertainty hovers over us. Alas, I'm grateful and happy for the wonderful things and people that are around me.

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### **Danette says**

This book reminds us of a year when the world was so dark and how President Roosevelt & Winston Churchill came together to remind us of the power of light over darkness. Two Christmas carols are featured along with how they were written. Lots of photos from the meeting between Roosevelt and Churchill and other Christmas photos from the era.

A quick read.

A book about WWII

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### **Luisa Knight says**

First, be sure your copy has the DVD! I read the book first and then thoroughly enjoyed watching the short clip afterwords.

If I were to fan girl over an author, it would probably be David McCullough. I've read and enjoyed so many of his books. But I didn't know this one existed until a friend mentioned wanting to read it.

McCullough was asked to do a Christmas presentation with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir in 2009. For his subjects, he choose two songs, "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and "I'll Be Home for Christmas" (that the choir sings) and how they effected the Christmas of 1941, the Christmas right after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the start of World War II for America.

Included are the speeches Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill gave that Christmas Eve. So if you have a history buff in your family, consider this treasure for a stocking stuffer!

Ages: 8+

#christmas #history

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### **Christine says**

I love David McCullough. He usually makes history leap from the page. This story did not quite capture the moment in time as the US and Great Britain were going into war at the end of 1941 for me. It tried to be a little too sentimental. I loved the photos and the Christmas Eve messages of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Winston Churchill that were also included in this slim volume. I was disappointed to find that the DVD of David McCullough narrating this story with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir was defective and probably is the real reason why I did not like the book as much as I could have. I understand that the DVD is quite good from reading other reviews.

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### **Cathy says**

What a waste of time. For \$20.00 you get a book that stretches his small presentation into 52 pages. There are 22 pages of pictures, 2 pages each of credits and dividers, a 3 page forward written by someone else, and 6 pages of copies of Franklin Roosevelt's and Winston Churchill's actual speeches. The 17 pages of David McCullough's text contain 37 sentences. The book jacket says he will give the history of 2 Christmas caroles. We get 8 sentences of one and 5 sentences of the other. Not much information here. You also get a very short DVD of his actual presentation. That was the best thing in the deal, but not worth \$20.00.

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### **Loraine says**

**SUMMARY:** Days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt met at the White House. It was Christmas Eve, 1941. As war raged throughout the world, the two leaders delivered a powerful message that still resonates today. Bestselling author and historian David McCullough relates a compelling story.

**REVIEW:** In this short little 40 page book, David McCullough, Pulitzer prize winning historical author gives a poignant look at America's Christmas of 1941 shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He ties in the darkness of Pearl Harbor to the musical history of the song "O Little Town of Bethlehem," and reminds us how Christmas still gave Americans the "hopes and dreams" of a good future. He also includes the musical history of "I'll be Home For Christmas" that further bouyed the hopes of America. This little gem concludes with the complete Christmas Eve speeches of FDR and Winston Churchill that spurred both British and

American people to continue their fight for their hopes and dreams. A very good look at a moment in history that has not often been written about. So much of what both leaders spoke could well be applied to our day and time.

FAVORITE QUOTES: "The year 1941 has brought upon our nation a war of aggression by powers dominated by arrogant rulers whose selfish purpose is to destroy free institutions. They would thereby take from the freedom-loving people of the earth the hard won liberties gained over many centuries...We are confident in our devotion to country, in our love of freedom, in our inheritance of courage. But our strength, as the strength of all men everywhere, of greater avail as God upholds us." (FDR Christmas Eve 1941)

"Let the children have their night of fun and laughter. Let the gifts of Father Christmas delight their play. Let us grown-ups share to the full in their unstinted pleasures before we turn again to the stern task and the formidable years that lie before us, resolved that, by our sacrifice and daring, these same children shall not be robbed of their inheritance or denied their right to live in a free and decent world." (Winston Churchill Christmas Eve 1941)

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### **Jana at ThatArtsyReaderGirl.com says**

I was at the Mormon Tabernacle Choir Christmas concert where David McCullough told us this story, so naturally... the book does not live up to my expectations. When he told it, he was surrounded by beautiful scenery, under very nice mood lighting, and was backed by the amazing musical score composed by Mack Wilberg. I was captivated. Was I captivated by this book? Not as much. The text itself took me about 10 minutes to read, and all of the imagery interspersed throughout the story created a disconnect and I found myself forgetting where I was. The pictures were wonderfully heartwarming, though, so I'm glad they were there. I also love the story itself. I've heard it told many times in many different ways, and it is a truly inspiring story. As I was reading the addresses by both Roosevelt and Churchill, I was amazed that they each spoke with such spirituality and faith to the American public. I am sure that would not happen today, which is very sad to me.

Bottom line, this is not a book that will give you an in-depth account of the 1941 Christmas Eve in America. It was a nice, quick read and full of Christmas spirit. It was an appropriate Christmas Eve read, and it will be a fun one to pull out and share with the family every Christmas Eve for years to come. :)

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### **Kate says**

#52!!! First time actually achieving my goal! Under normal circumstances I might consider this tiny book cheating, but I'm nearly done with a really dumb book and didn't want it to be my 52nd. So I read this in the mean time.

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### **Cheryl says**

In 2009, the conductor of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir invited respected historian and author David McCullough to be a guest artist at the choir's annual Christmas concert.

McCullough inspired the audience with his narration of the history behind the Christmas carols Oh Little Town of Bethlehem and I'll Be Home for Christmas. These two carols lent comfort and meaning to people during the World War II years.

This little, yet inspiring book includes many photos taken during the Christmas season of 1941 when President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill spoke to a crowd of people from the balcony of the White House on Christmas Eve. The text of their speeches as well as McCullough's history behind the writing of the carols is moving.

The book also includes a DVD of the performance which adds greatly to the appreciation of the book.

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### **Tanya says**

This "book" is a disingenuous publication which aims to make money off David McCullough's respected name. I was one of many many holds at the library, expecting a sweet historical Christmas story. When I finally got the volume mid-January I found that it was nothing but a handful of large-print pages, a transcript of a short and much-too-simple narration McCullough gave between songs at the Mormon Tabernacle Choir Christmas concert. There are a lot of interesting period photos, and reproductions of Roosevelt's and Churchill's inspiring speeches from Christmas 1941, but no real "Christmas Eve stories." In the front cover is a CD of the concert. The honest way to market this would have been in a jewel case with a little booklet, headlined by MoTab and showing McCullough as a guest. I'm just glad I got it from the library instead of buying a copy.

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