

# Family Reading: Introduction for Parents

Welcome to **12 Nights with Christopher Kringle**, a family reading guide for *Christopher Kringle and the Seven-Year Curse*. This guide divides the book into twelve December readings so families can experience Christopher's origin story as a Christmas-season tradition.

This book is best as a **read-aloud for ages 8+**, or **ages 7+ with parent guidance**. Strong independent readers ages **10–14** may also enjoy reading it on their own. Some nights are longer than others, so feel free to pause at natural scene breaks. The goal is not to rush—it is to read, wonder, and talk together.

## How to Read This Book With Your Kids

This story is full of clues, symbols, real history, hidden meanings, and small details that matter later. Try not to explain everything too quickly. Christopher is a boy who notices what others miss, and children will enjoy becoming detectives alongside him.

As you read, ask simple questions:

**What did you notice?**

**Do you think that clue will matter later?**

**What would you write down if you were Christopher?**

The book includes QR codes every five chapters for deeper dives into the history, secrets, and real-world connections behind the story. Treat these as optional bonus doors, not homework. A good rule is: **read the story first, explore the QR code second.**

Some puzzles are meant to be solved slowly. The puzzle on page 155 will make more sense by the end of the book, so let children guess before giving them answers. The picture on page 164 is designed to be explored with image-recognition tools like Google Lens, ChatGPT, or similar software. Let kids first study it, ask questions, and form their own theories.

You may also want to give your child a small **Kringle Clue Notebook** to track strange words, important numbers, names, questions, drawings, and kind things Christopher does. It should feel fun, not like school.

The story includes serious topics such as grief, poverty, child labor, medical fear, slavery, secrecy, and unfairness. These moments are not there to frighten children. They help show why kindness, courage, education, and family matter.

Most importantly, this guide is not meant to explain away Santa's magic. Let the story live in the space between history, mystery, and wonder. By the end of the twelve nights, children should understand that a gift is not only something wrapped under a tree. A gift can be attention, protection, friendship, courage, and helping someone

who might otherwise be forgotten. That is where the Kringle tradition begins.

# Night 1: The Secret Begins

## Tonight's Reading

Chapter 0: "How It All Began"

Chapter 1: "Two Mothers"

PDF pages 9–36

## Story Snapshot

A father begins telling his children the secret story of Santa's childhood, using the glowing wooden briefcase filled with Kringle family mysteries. The story moves back to Manhattan on New Year's Eve, 1899, when Christopher Kringle is born just after midnight as the first baby of the twentieth century. His mother Elena leaves behind warnings, love, and a heavy responsibility for Julianna and Aunt Shirley.

## Family Questions

1. Why do you think the briefcase has to be kept secret?
2. What does Elena want Julianna and Shirley to do for Christopher?
3. Can someone become family even if they are not born into the same family?

## Parent Note

This opening contains sadness, but it also shows love taking a new shape. A gentle connection for kids: talk about the adults in their lives who protect, teach, or care for them like family.

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# Night 2: The Boy Who Said “No”

## Tonight’s Reading

Chapter 2: “Terrible Twos”  
PDF pages 37–64

## Story Snapshot

Two years after Elena’s death, Julianna is exhausted, grieving, and worried about Christopher’s strange medical problems. Christopher cannot speak like other children, but he communicates with signs, gestures, drawings, and small sounds. At the Mulberry Drug Store, Wil and Gil appear again, a dangerous prescription is questioned, and Christopher finally says his first clear word: “No.”

## Family Questions

1. How does Christopher show people what he wants before he can speak?
2. Why is the word “no” important in this chapter?
3. What does Julianna do for the boys sleeping near the heating vent, and what does that show about her?

## Parent Note

This night is about listening to children, especially when they communicate differently. A simple real-life connection: ask your child when it is okay to say “no” to something that does not feel right.

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# Night 3: Aunt Shirley's Magic Farm

## Tonight's Reading

Chapter 3: "The Magic Farm"  
PDF pages 65–84

## Story Snapshot

Aunt Shirley moves into her new farm in Far Hills, New Jersey, with Luke and his crew helping her settle in. The farm feels strange right away: animals are cared for, milk appears, and the place seems to "take care of itself." Shirley's family safe reveals wealth, generosity, and a mysterious envelope from Elena addressed to Johnny and Christopher.

## Family Questions

1. Why does the farm feel magical even before anyone understands what is happening?
2. How does Shirley use her money to help Luke's workers?
3. Why do you think Elena left clues instead of simply explaining everything?

## Parent Note

This section teaches work ethic, generosity, and patience. Ask your child what it means to "work smarter, not harder," and where they might use that idea at home or school.

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# Night 4: A Locket, a Chimney, and a Clue

## Tonight's Reading

Chapter 4: "Warm Water"  
PDF pages 85–108

## Story Snapshot

Christopher is now four and a half, speaking more clearly, helping around the house, and asking big questions. Aunt Shirley gives him a locket with Elena's picture, and Christopher meets Jerry, a young chimney sweep. Christopher breaks his promise to only watch, falls inside a chimney, breaks both legs, and later helps uncover Elena's hidden message in *The Iliad*: "Mr. Mancini what is the biggest room in the world?"

## Family Questions

1. Why does Christopher want to go with Jerry so badly?
2. What should Christopher have done when Jerry told him to try cleaning the chimney?
3. Why is Elena's locket such an important gift for Christopher?

## Parent Note

This night is about curiosity, peer pressure, and consequences. Children can understand that bravery is not the same as ignoring a promise or taking an unsafe risk.

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# Night 5: The Boy in the Barn

## Tonight's Reading

Chapter 5: "In Hot Water"

Chapter 6: "Old Friends"

PDF pages 109–148

## Story Snapshot

Aunt Shirley discovers that the "ghost" caring for her animals is actually a frightened boy named Wally, who has been living in her barn. Wally slowly reveals pieces of his past, including the apple incident that forced him to hide. Later, Christopher and Julianna visit the farm, Shirley hides Wally for his safety, and Elena's next clues lead to Samuel Smiles, Shakespeare, and the message: "I lie where none but a mother will find me."

## Family Questions

1. Why does Shirley help Wally even though she is scared at first?
2. Why might Wally have trouble trusting people?
3. What do you think "the room for improvement" means?

## Parent Note

This is one of the most important kindness sections in the book. Wally is vulnerable, scared, and misunderstood; ask your child how they can be kind to someone who seems quiet, nervous, or different.

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# Night 6: Best Friends and Elena's Diary

## Tonight's Reading

Chapter 7: "New Friends"

Chapter 8: "Elena's Diary"

PDF pages 149–175

## Story Snapshot

Christopher wakes during the night, follows a strange pull toward the barn, and is found by Wally after a frightening seizure-like episode. Wally helps him, and the two boys form a secret friendship. Back in Manhattan, Julianna, Shirley, and Christopher finally find Elena's diary hidden where only a mother would look, and the mystery of the Confraters becomes much more serious.

## Family Questions

1. How does Wally help Christopher before they really know each other?
2. Why does Christopher want Wally to be his friend?
3. What does Elena's diary tell the family about how carefully she planned for Christopher?

## Parent Note

The story uses secrecy to build magic and mystery, but this is a good chance to remind children that real-life secrets about danger should always be shared with a trusted adult.

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# Night 7: Electricity, Fire, and Courage

## Tonight's Reading

Chapter 9: "Derry Township, PA"

Chapter 10: "Penny 4 Your Thoughts"

PDF pages 176–219

## Story Snapshot

Christopher visits his father Luke in Derry Township, where Luke is working at Milton Hershey's factory. Christopher learns about electricity, AC and DC power, and the importance of safety. When an electrical fire breaks out, Christopher remembers Luke's instructions, acts quickly, and helps save the factory—earning Milton Hershey's respect and a gold coin.

## Family Questions

1. What did Christopher remember that helped him act during the fire?
2. What makes Christopher brave in this section?
3. Why does Milton Hershey care so much about schools and children?

## Parent Note

This is a strong "preparation plus courage" night. The real lesson is not that children should run toward danger; it is that learning, listening, and staying calm can matter when something goes wrong.

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# Night 8: A Family Becomes Official

## Tonight's Reading

Chapter 11: "Sirle of Gold"

Chapter 12: "Milton's Friend"

PDF pages 220–267

## Story Snapshot

Luke proposes to Julianna with Christopher beside him, making their family official in a joyful and emotional way. Jerry attends the wedding as a chimney sweep for good luck, and the broken hallway phone leads to a surprising message. Christopher then travels to Washington, meets President Theodore Roosevelt, and speaks about children's education.

## Family Questions

1. Why does Luke include Christopher in the proposal?
2. Why is Jerry's presence at the wedding important to Luke?
3. What does Christopher want adults to understand about children?

## Parent Note

This night brings family, tradition, and purpose together. A good connection for children: talk about how families can be formed by love, choice, promises, and showing up for one another.

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# Night 9: Across the Ocean

## Tonight's Reading

Chapter 13: "Studying Abroad"  
PDF pages 268–294

## Story Snapshot

Christopher and Julianna cross the Atlantic aboard the USS Brooklyn with Captain Hahn, who slowly warms to Christopher's endless questions. The journey includes talk of ships, history, John Paul Jones, and the meaning of travel. In Switzerland, Christopher finally meets Albert Einstein—but instead of a grand university, he finds a messy apartment, a strange teacher, and a new kind of friendship.

## Family Questions

1. Why does Captain Hahn sometimes get tired of Christopher's questions?
2. How does Christopher help Albert before Albert really teaches him?
3. Can cleaning, organizing, or noticing small problems be a kind of kindness?

## Parent Note

This night is about mentorship, curiosity, and helping people in practical ways. Ask your child whether a messy room, desk, or backpack ever makes it harder to think clearly.

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# Night 10: Higher and Lower Learning

## Tonight's Reading

Chapter 14: "Higher Learning"

Chapter 15: "Lower Learning"

PDF pages 295–344

## Story Snapshot

Christopher and Albert grow closer through experiments, mistakes, music, science, and hard questions. Dr. Wolfgang Gerhard arrives, and another mysterious old parchment appears. Back at the Magic Farm, Shirley teaches Wally about maps, trade, slavery, the Confraters, and the Great Seasons; when Christopher returns, Wally is finally introduced to the family, the boys clash, then learn teamwork by opening Shirley's safe.

## Family Questions

1. What does Albert teach Christopher about friendship, family, and being a person of value?
2. Why does Wally get upset with Christopher, and what does Christopher need to learn?
3. How do Christopher and Wally solve the safe problem better together than alone?

## Parent Note

This is a dense reading night with big historical ideas, including slavery, colonization, and hidden control. Keep the discussion simple: history includes painful truths, and learning about them can help children become kinder and wiser.

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# Night 11: The Magical Castle

## Tonight's Reading

Chapter 16: "Magical Castle"  
PDF pages 345–384

## Story Snapshot

The family travels through a storm to Boldt Castle because Luke fears Nic may be in trouble. Wil and Gil appear again, Wally learns that their mystery is much bigger than he thought, and Christopher follows strange light through the castle. On the roof, Christopher finds Nic conducting a dangerous experiment, the castle blazes with electricity, Christopher nearly falls, and the stone reindeer saves him before Nic is revealed as Nikola Tesla.

## Family Questions

1. Why does the family go looking for Nic instead of ignoring the warning signs?
2. How does Wally show loyalty during this chapter?
3. What is the difference between courage and doing something dangerous alone?

## Parent Note

This is the longest adventure night, and it includes adult distress, danger, storms, and a rooftop rescue. For younger readers, pause if needed; the heart of the chapter is that people in trouble need others to come looking for them.

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# Night 12: The First Kringle Christmas

## Tonight's Reading

Chapter 17: "First Kringle Christmas"  
PDF pages 385–404

## Story Snapshot

On Christmas Eve at the Magic Farm, the family gathers for dinner, lights the tree with electric bulbs instead of candles, and tries to help Julianna enjoy a holiday that has long been painful for her. After everyone goes to bed, Christopher quietly makes handmade gifts: a toolbelt for Luke, potholders for Julianna and Shirley, journals and chocolate for himself, Wally, and Nic. The next morning, the mysterious gifts under the tree bring joy—and begin something much bigger than Christopher realizes.

## Family Questions

1. Why does Christopher want to make gifts for his family?
2. What makes a gift meaningful: how much it costs, or how carefully it fits the person?
3. How has Christopher changed from the baby in Night 1 to the boy in Night 12?

## Parent Note

This is where the Santa magic becomes emotionally earned. The first Kringle Christmas is not about buying presents; it is about seeing what people need and giving quietly from the heart.

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# After You Finish the Book

After the final night, invite each child to choose one favorite moment, one mystery they still wonder about, and one act of kindness they want to try before Christmas. Families can keep the tradition alive by reading the book each December and adding one “Christopher question” to a family notebook every year. Another simple tradition is to make one thoughtful, handmade, or personal gift for someone who would not expect it. That is the real beginning of the Kringle spirit: notice, care, and give quietly.

The last QR code in the book will have the MUSICAL ALBUM that accompanies this story. The music (.mp3's) should be available to download for free, but hopefully will also be available on Spotify and Apple Music pending legal clearance.

**NOTE:** Other clues to the story are hidden in the musical lyrics.

**SECOND NOTE:** This is a planned nine-book series. All has been written. Editors are working diligently to release one-two books out per year, pending legal review. This process takes time since Christopher Kringle does come into contact with legitimate businesses, people and real locations.



*Dr. P and Boldt Castle General Manager, Brian Salisbury, 2024.  
Yes, that's Boldt Castle in the background 😊*