



The Calm Christmas Podcast with Beth Kempton: Episode 2 - Ma...

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00:05

Christmas can be a very special time, but it can also be a very stressful time. And given everything that has been going on this year, who knows what will unfold this holiday season? What if, for once, we just relaxed and gave ourselves permission to focus on what really matters. Welcome to the Calm Christmas podcast with me Beth Kempton, just like my book of the same name. I hope the common Christmas podcast inspires connection, belonging, self care, nourishment, and joy. And a little bit of festive magic.



00:51

Hello there. I hope this finds you well. Here in Episode Two, we're going to be exploring the theme of making magic and memories. I want to start by saying This podcast is not rooted in any one particular religion or belief about how to do Christmas. Rather, it acknowledges that Christmas is celebrated by 2 billion people all over the world, from all sorts of backgrounds with all sorts of beliefs about the origin of the world's most widely celebrated festival. It also recognises that some people are less bothered about Christmas itself, and find themselves more drawn to pagan ideas about midwinter and celebrating the return of the light after the winter solstice. For many people, a host of different ideas blur together to create what they know to be Christmas. We will be exploring some of those origins and ideas in the coming weeks, as well as exploring our own ideas of what we want it to be. So please, know all are welcome here. And there is much for us all to discover.



01:55

But first, let's check in with where we are right now. We're coming to the end of October, which brings with it Halloween or All Hallows Eve, which to be honest, I personally find a little bit scary. But in the Celtic tradition in the Northern Hemisphere, October 31 is Samhain spelled S-A-M-H-A-I-N. Which for a long time in my naivety I thought was so mean, but it's not and sound is the closest that I can get to how I think it is pronounced and I apologise if I pronounced it wrong. But this time of year, I think it's beautiful time of year to connect to that tradition and be inspired by the fact that it is all about going within. According to Danu Forest, who's author of a lovely book called The Magical Year, Samhain is a time of growing darkness.



02:49

"The days become short and evenings fade quickly into night. The last leaves fall to rustle underfoot and dance in the first strong winds that held the winter. Our ancestors believed that the day the year and indeed all life begins with darkness and stillness. As the evenings draw in and the dark half of the year begins to have its influence in our daily lives. It is natural to begin a period of introspection, honouring all that has passed in the world over the previous year, in order to create a new beginning. The indigenous spiritual traditions of this land always honoured the dead and all ancestral presences not as beings to fear but as respected allies and counsellors. as representatives of their people in the spirit realm.



03:37

They act as gave between transmitting knowledge to and from the mortal world and back to the realm of spirit. At sound, all fires were extinguished except for the bonfire, or bone fire, built of the remains of livestock slaughtered in preparation for winter, each family would take a torch from this fire to relight their home fires, the sound as a time of renewal, when life retreats within the earth, within doors and within the psyche, to find completion and contemplation. It is the blank page upon which the coming year will be written.



04:12

This powerful turning point is when the old becomes young again, it's a time of ancestral connection, where those that have walked the mortal roads before us gather at the edges of perception, whispering in our ear to be remembered, testifying that the bonds of

human relations stretch far from this world into the next. It's a time when all things lost, maybe found again, all things hidden, become uncovered, and all things clinging to life beyond their time. Finally, surrender to the great cycles of creation, trusting that in death, there is life and new to our ancestors endings merged into beginnings. And the first moments of life were also marked by silence, stillness, and nourishing darkness within the womb. And so it is with sound at the death of the year. We find inception and the beginning of a new journey."



05:04

I love that passage. And I want to invite us to borrow that sentiment and to use it to consider our approach to the festive season this year, offering the possibility that we can choose to shed any old ways of celebrating that we only did, because that's how we always did it, rather than because it brought us joy. And instead, imagine a new kind of journey towards festivities. And beyond creating a new kind of celebration that is nurturing, meaningful and gentle on the spirit. Of course, if there's any old tradition that you love, and you care about, absolutely carry that with you.



05:39

But what I want to encourage you is to not feel like you have to weigh yourself down with everything that you've inherited, just because you inherited it, or do things just because other people think you should, or because that's how you think Christmas has to be based on what you've been told or seen in terms of the way other people do it. Over the coming weeks, as we explore some of the origins of this famous festival, you're going to see that Christmas has shaped shifted so many times over the centuries, and as it has spread around the world. And that so many of the things we assume must be permanent fixtures in the setup that is Christmas, are actually evolving all the time, and they always have done.



06:21

You know, to me, that's a permission slip to keep evolving Christmas ourselves into whatever we want to need it to be, which I know for a lot of people means being less stressful and more meaningful. So I'm sitting here with a nice cup of tea and a mince pie, which for those of you who don't know what I'm inspired, it's a traditional sweet pastry pie that we eat at Christmas here in the UK. And I know some other people eat them around the world as well. But it's very much, I see it very much as something that I treasure from my childhood growing up in Britain. mince pies were always on the menu. And it's a sweet

pastry pie filled with dried fruit and all sorts of goodness. Anyway, I'm sitting here with my cup of tea. And it means pie thinking about the people who really love Christmas, and take the lead in their household in making it something special. I call those people the keepers of Christmas. And I suspect that if you're listening to this, you might just be one of them. And this episode is dedicated to you, and all the keepers of Christmas everywhere. You know, we keep as a Christmas have such good intentions. And everything we do we do because we want those we love to have a wonderful time. But in so many ways, it becomes a source of stress. Because often we take on too much or we try to please everyone, or we spend money we don't have or we try to make it perfect. And we know how that tends to work out.



07:51

Often we feel that taking time out to care for ourselves during the festive period is somehow taking away from the festivities. And I know this to be true because I spoke to hundreds of people from all sorts of backgrounds when I was researching my book *calm Christmas*. And the same kind of things came up again. And again. It's so easy to spend too much do too much say yes to too much at Christmas. And of course, what too much means for you completely depends on your circumstances and your way of life. And also, I think to some extent your personality and your energy levels.



08:23

But you know, when you're there at 'too much'. I think one of the biggest sources of stress is the fact that deep down we know really what Christmas means to us. But it gets lost in the rush and the chaos of trying to make it wonderful for everyone else, in all the ways doing all the things. And also because we get caught up in other people's ideas of what Christmas should be. I don't think it's difficult to have a calmer approach to Christmas, and to invite in a really meaningful celebration, which doesn't cause stress or break the bank. But it does take a little bit of thinking. And now's a really good time to do that thinking before the Christmas whirlwind really picks up speed.



09:04

Because once we're in December, you're running to keep up with everything. November is a wonderful time to start slowing down and thinking about the approaching winter, both in terms of how we're taking care of ourselves, and the pace that we're functioning out. And also in terms of how we will approach celebrations in a darker season of the year. And this year, we know it's gonna be different because of the impact and restrictions of

COVID-19. Already Scotland has been told to prepare for a digital Christmas by National Clinical Director, Professor Jason Leitch that was on the BBC Scotland's programme Good Morning Scotland just the other day. And he said I'm hopeful costs and terms of the restrictions that they're putting on people now may get us to a more family Christmas but Christmas is not going to be normal. There's absolutely no question about that. We're not going to be in large family groupings with multiple families coming around. That is fiction for this year. I'm hopeful that if we can get numbers down to a certain level, we may be able to get some form of normality. But people should get their digital Christmas ready. I mean, digital Christmas.



10:14

This time last year, the idea of somebody standing, you know, standing up on television, or speaking on the radio and saying that was really quite unimaginable. But I think a lot of us have already kind of prepared our hearts for the idea that Christmas is going to be different this year. And I can't remember, and I'm not sure that anyone in living memory except those who perhaps have lived through a war, remember a time when external circumstances will have had such a huge impact on how Christmas is celebrated by so many people.



10:49

You know, this situation is obviously going to be different depending on where in the world you are, and what kind of restrictions you're under. But it is likely that it will be true for many of us that Christmas is not going to be the same as the Christmas that we have come to expect. We know that already. So how about we turn that into an opportunity?



11:09

When I was researching Calm Christmas, one of the topics that came up over and over was how exhausting people found it to have to travel to visit relatives every year, when all they really wanted to do was stay at home and be cosy this year, if that's you nodding your head going, Oh, yeah, I remember that, you may well have that opportunity based on necessity. So you might even see that as a blessing in some ways, because you don't even need to come up with an excuse, you're not allowed to do that, in many places this year. Of course, the flip side of that is that those relatives end up alone, so and they don't get to see you, which is perhaps you know, the highlight of their year. So thinking about it now can give us time to consider ways to make it special for them, even at a distance, so that we can then really enjoy our experience of being at home, perhaps just with our

immediate family this time, we can be exploring those kinds of ideas later in the podcast with a special episode all about gathering or not gathering.



12:06

But for now, let's talk about how we can approach Christmas hopefully, in the knowledge that things are going to be different. You know, thinking about this reminded me a little of spending Christmas abroad away from family, which I've done several times in my life. And it can be a strange, or sad or wonderful experience depending on where you are, who you're with, and how you approach it. And I've discovered over the years that when you are away from home at Christmas, if you focus on everything being not as it should be, obviously, because you're not at home, it's not going to look like the Christmas at home, then it can be a very lonely homesickness inducing experience. But if you can find ways to embrace the novelty of it, it can actually be special in a different kind of way. And I wonder if, with that kind of approach, that can also be true for us this year, in the pandemic world.



13:04

I lived in Japan for many years. And I would often come home to England for Christmas because it was that special to me, but not always. And especially in the years that I didn't have any spare cash. It was very expensive to get a flight to come home and bring presents for everyone. You know, there was the Christmas as a 19 year old and I was in Japan as an exchange student on very, very little money. And I spent it with friends in Tokyo. And I remember getting an overnight buses, it was the cheapest way to travel. And we stayed in my friend's very tiny apartment. And we went to Kinokuniya, which is a huge store that sells books and imported food, and all those kinds of things. And that's the only place in Japan you could get Marmite at the time. We went to Kinokuniya to buy imported Brussels sprouts at some extortionate price these days that probably be like £3 a sprout or something in current prices, and but we bought a couple of each and we tried to roast a chicken in an oven toaster, which didn't go that well. But thankfully, no one got poisoned.



14:09

And we joyfully open the handful of presents that had been sent from home. And I think we all realised that it was actually a really unusual opportunity for us to share Christmas day with a bunch of university friends because obviously normally we would be at home with our respective family so we had some lovely chats about our own very different

experiences of Christmas growing up and and all those kinds of things and and probably got drunk in a way that we wouldn't have done in front of our parents, and back then as teenagers. And so I think there is something special to be found even in the oddest of Christmases.



14:48

There was a Christmas I spent on the Japanese NGO cruise ship Peaceboat on around the world trip and where I was working as an interpreter and I think Christmas day if I remember correctly, we were somewhere near the Equator. And I spent it sunbathing and eating rice and miso soup as we watched dolphins jumping. And that was a completely different kind of Christmas there was I had no opportunity to collect post so I had no presence from home. It was before the days of getting email on board a ship. So I had no messages from home. I've was completely disconnected from to home, including with the weather. So it almost felt like to me Christmas wasn't happening and yet, and it was an extraordinary experience to be able to lie in the sun with dolphins jumping around.



15:38

So you know, again, there's another experience, which I remember very, very clearly. There was the Christmas I spent in snowy Yamagata in the north of Japan, with a film crew in my house and all the homesick foreigners for miles around gathered for our version of Christmas dinner. I was living with some Japanese musicians at the time and all their band members came over to a Scottish friend brought eggnog and an American brought home baked cookies. And I baked a cake in the rice cooker and we had a final time. And then we headed off to the local mountains for skiing a hot spring. And in fact, a marriage proposal not to me, I might add. But it was a really special kind of Christmas. And although I was sad again to not be with my family, it was amazing to actually have a white Christmas because there was deep snow all around.



16:29

In the years I lived in Tokyo I figured out that Christmas to the Japanese is very different to my own experience of it being about togetherness as a family. With all the symbols I was used to, you know real Christmas trees in the house, a cosy fire a wreath on the door made with evergreens foraged from a local word, all those kinds of things. And if I'd been fixated on those things, I would have been disappointed because they were not available. But the Tokyo Christmas was in a very different way with its focus on fairy lights everywhere. Winter illuminations on an epic scale, and cosy date nights for young couples

and cake eating on Christmas Eve.



17:08

With all those kinds of things. It was different in its own interesting way. It always felt more like a celebration between young lovers and friends rather than what I knew from home. But as a young person living in an exciting city, it had its own charm. These days, there were lots of German markets that spring up across Tokyo, and classical pianists play Christmas carols in the lobbies of swanky hotels. And there are many more non Japanese residents in the country who will bring their own ideas about Christmas, to create a swirling hot pot of Christmas stew.



17:41

And actually, quite the industry has built up around people giving each other Christmas gifts, again, mostly between young couples, you know, a Tiffany set of earrings, or whatever, those kind of presents has become quite the thing. And that is all just before the traditional New Year celebrations, which I will talk about later in the series. So it's not that there's no Christmas, but it's just different.



18:08

And remember, I'm sharing these recollections of my somewhat strange but memorable Christmases in Japan, because they were brilliant because I accepted that they were going to be different, and then approach them with curiosity and real attention to the details that were different from what I knew. And that's what made them special. And I think that's something that we perhaps could do this year, knowing that Christmas is going to be different because of everything that's going on in the world. And yet there is an opportunity in that and to embrace what is different and see whether trying on a new kind of Christmas works for us. Who knows.



18:51

Judith Flanders says in her book *A Christmas Biography*, "Each of us is a storehouse of Christmases, a repository of all the happiness and sometimes sadness of Christmas Past. Christmas is therefore magical. It enables us to be like Alice in Wonderland White Queen, who could believe six impossible things before breakfast. We believe dozens of impossible things, often dozens of mutually contradictory things about Christmas without even trying

for the holiday piles legend upon legend at Christmas and about Christmas. what is true and what we think is true, is hard to separate from what we would simply like to believe is true."



19:34

Ain't that the truth. So today with our episode theme of making magic and memories, I invite you to consider this. If you could only do one thing to make Christmas special for each of the people you love the most, including yourself. What would that be?



19:54

This could be one collective thing. For example with or for your immediate family or one special thing with or for your partner, each of your children, a parent, a close friend or whatever, focusing on one thing and doing it brilliantly, offers you a permission slip to let go of lots of peripheral things, and create space to give real care and attention and bring real creativity to coming up with that one thing.



20:21

There's so much pressure on us at Christmas from money worries to the thought of potential rounds at family gatherings, from even more time stuck indoors after a year of lockdowns and restrictions on our movement to the impact of the darkest season of the year on our mental health and well being. Those of us with school aged children often have many additional obligations at this time of year for making costumes for the Nativity plays or baking cookies for the school's Christmas bake sale. Others have community commitments or pressure to wrap things up at work before the end of the year.



20:51

And while some of those obligations may look different this year, due to the impact of COVID, there will undoubtedly still be a long list of things to do if we keep saying yes to everything. So asking that question, if you could do only one thing to make Christmas special for each of the people you love the most. What would that be? That question can help us filter out lots of random ad hoc activities that we don't really need to do. And help us focus on the things that will bring the most joy to others, and hopefully also to us.



21:21

Perhaps it helps you decide where to put your attention or how to spend your time and money. Perhaps it gives you the reason to carve out an afternoon to spend just with your mother, or an idea to create a magical grotto in your garden shed to delight your eldest child, or to write a lovely long letter to your best friend who haven't managed to meet up with all year. And of course, in some cases, you're going to end up doing more than one thing for and with certain people in our in your life. But the idea of doing just one thing intensive, creating one magical thing that you can do together experience together or that they can enjoy can really help create magic and memories at this time of year.



22:02

While my own children are young this has really helped me and my husband get very conscious about what kind of traditions you want to create and how we can make parts of Christmas really special. Do things that might become treasured may memories as they grow up. Because to be honest, if we're just stressed, and rushing through everything, they're not gonna remember much about that except the fact that we were stressed and not really paying attention. Whereas if we can create one particular thing, that's a really wonderful experience, they're more likely to remember that.



22:32

When I was researching my book, *Calm Christmas*, I gathered stories from people all over the world from 37 different nationalities and all sorts of backgrounds. And I was struck by how many people had one specific experience emblazoned on their memory. And in most cases, it's because somebody took the time to create something special for them. Let me share a couple that I really loved.



22:55

One lady, Sylvia Byrne, who grew up in South Africa told me, we used to spend Christmas Eve with my grandparents. My grandfather put brown paper up on any windows looking into the living room, so no one could see inside us children were sent to waiting one of the bedrooms while the adults prepared the food. When the time came, we had to line up in age order youngest First, we were each given a small candle to hold then the doors to the lounge are open to reveal the tree with a pile of presents beneath it. music played and the room opened down onto the tropical nights. To this day, I remember the sense of anticipation, the feeling of family and belonging. The beauty of it all. You can tell from

Sylvia's words that it was very little to do with what was inside the presence and much more to do with the atmosphere and the anticipation and the togetherness, the ritual, the mystery, and the excitement.



23:50

And this is a story that geologist Stjepan Ćorić said with me about Christmas under the communist regime in Bosnia. He said I lived in a small city of about 5000 people. Winters were sharp, surrounded by mountains and trees, we often had more than a metre of snow that remained all winter. In mid-December, we would go to the forest in the deep snow to cut down our tree. This was forbidden by the regime but we did it anyway, as did many other people. You couldn't see any of them and we didn't talk, but you could hear the lack of access all around. I remember being fascinated that my father could make fire on snow. Nothing tastes as good as eggs and bacon cooked on a fire in the snow. When we got home, we would hide our tree near the house. We went out under the cover of darkness on Christmas Eve to bring it indoors and later sat down to pray and feast on river trout with boiled beans and garlic sauce.



24:47

You know for Stjepan those eggs and bacon cooks on a fire in the snow was such a powerful special memory that it stands out for him decades later. Same with Silvia. She can still remember what happened grandfather did to make the presentation of their Christmas presents so very special. So let's bring it back to you in this year's festivities, wherever you are going to be whatever situation you're going to be in. If you consider that Christmas is a season, not a single day, what kind of experiences could you plan that would make magic and memories to treasure with those you love the most. And you know what, why not start now in the middle of the season that is here right now. With all its wind, rain, cloud and autumnal sunshine, whether or not you have children, there are lots of fun things that you can do in nature, and it's a wonderful way to really explore this time of year.



25:43

Here are some ideas I found in a really fabulous book called The Wild Weather Book by Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield thought you might like to try these with or without children. One of them is to go rainbow hunting out in nature, collect things of different colours and then make a rainbow from cards, sticking them on in colour groups. Or if you're feeling a bit more sophisticated, use it to turn into a beautiful piece of nature based art that

perhaps you could give to someone as a gift.



26:13

Make a rain shadow, when you sense it's about to rain, lie on a hard surface like a patio or a playground or large rock and let the rain fall all around you and I love this so much because you know our natural inclination is to dive inside when it's raining often and get out of the rain. But this is all about actually experiencing the rain. Feeling the raindrops on your skin, listening to them landing all around you and bouncing off leaves and then standing up and seeing the picture that you've made with the outline of your body as the rain fell all around you. And then of course you can run inside to dry off and make a lovely hot drink. You can also do the same with leaves and other natural objects you can lay them out before the rain comes and then lift them and see what picture you've made.



27:01

Another great idea in the book was to make streamers for wild dancing, cutting brightly coloured crepe paper into long thin strips and then attaching them to a stick with sticky tape super simple, but very effective. And children love this running around making figures of eight in the air or vice your name or you might with a sparkler or simply running and dancing in the wind.



27:23

Another gorgeous idea was to make ice decorations for an outdoor picnic. And to do this, you take pastry cutters and you put them on a plate outside when it's freezing cold. Arrange the natural materials inside them maybe berries or leaves or tiny winter blooms. And then pour water into everything is submerged. And then you put one end of his piece of string into the water and leave outside to freeze. And then the next day you can remove the pastry cutter and you have some gorgeous beautiful icy decorations to hang up in the tree maybe stars or holly leaves or whatever is that you used in terms of your pastry cutter shape and then a gorgeous as the winter sunshine catches the spinning ice on your tree.



28:06

Another favourite of mine is stargazing. You can take some blankets out on a clear night with a hot drink and some snacks and watch in wonder at the vastness above. As

Norwegian explorer Erling Kagge said in his book *Silence*, he's quoting polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen in something that he said about what you come to understand on a dark night, and he says, "The starry sky is the truest friend in life when you first become acquainted, it is ever there it gives ever peace ever reminds you that your restlessness, your doubt, your pains are passing trivialities, the universe is and will remain unshaken, our opinions, our struggles, our sufferings, are not so important and unique when all is said and done. Most people who have spent a lot of time outside in the wild, nod knowingly at the polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen's thoughts on things you might come to understand on a dark night."



29:11

And with that, it's time to share this week's get ahead tips. Here are a few things you can do this week to slowly start to ready yourself for Christmas and the coming winter.



29:23

Today, we've been talking about one thing that you could do with each person who means the most to you. And if any of those things involves a ticket, maybe now is a good time to try and book it.



29:34

If you're a visual person, why not start a Pinterest board or a folder of inspiration for decorations for wrapping for recipes, and so on, or perhaps less tangible things like images that represent the atmosphere you want to create or the values you want to keep close, awesome quotes to inspire you through the winter.



29:53

It's also a great time to mark your calendar with self care ideas, your yoga class, you're meeting up for a friend for long hike those kinds of things.



30:03

Having a freezer clear out, it's a really good time to do that. So you can start batch cooking lovely warming, nutritious stews and other things that that you've always got a good meal in your freezer, it's a good time to start to stock your cupboards with the things

that will help you through the winter. So again, maybe get rid of anything that's out of date. And check that you have all the herbs and spices and the regular things like you know, your tins of tomatoes and your rice and pasta and all the stuff that you need to whip up a lovely warming dinner and get those things in the cupboards now.



30:42

It's a great time to order a seed catalogue. So you can start thinking about what you might want to plant and grow next year.



30:48

It's also a really good time to come up with an advent calendar, if you want to make one to delight a friend. And you could set aside some time in November to make it I think it says a really nice if you normally meet with someone over Christmas, and you're not going to be able to this year and you know, they're gonna be on their own. You know, perhaps you could write them a really lovely little note for each day of December, or you could make or otherwise put together some tiny little gifts. They get to open one every day in December so that they know that they're in your thoughts and you will be in there.



31:23

So there's just a few things that you can be doing to get ahead this week. And to wrap up today. Here's a short reading to remind us that although it's great to get a head start on holidays, we are still in autumn with its glorious colours and daily invitation to step outside. This short passage is from a lovely book called Morning by Allan Jenkins. It's a celebration of the earliest part of the day. And to be honest, it really inspired me to get up earlier more often, and make the most of that quiet time before the rest of the world gets up. And in a diary entry from October, he writes this:



32:01

"4:44am the first Blackbird calls, almost a whistled whisper. I've missed him, my once constant companion. Near quiet now for a while. The half moon hangs in the sky as though pinned. The last cat is quiet. He's been howling for the past few days, but it seems like he found his way home. A neighbour's light goes out the end of a long day. Mine beginning. The overnight rain stopped, the air cool, the window open, the city as close as it gets to contemplative."



32:38

Really, really simple observations but just lovely to capture. So whether you're a morning person or not, why not try to catch and capture at least one early start in the coming month and see what you notice.



32:53

And with that, I wish you a lovely week. And I invite you to join me again next week for our next episode of The Calm Christmas Podcast, when I'll be talking about self-care in winter, along with some more top tips for getting ahead for Christmas.



33:06

And don't forget with every order of my book Calm Christmas and a Happy New Year, which is packed with ideas and stories and inspiration for this time of year and is available now, I'm offering a free digital planner called 2021 My Perfectly Imperfect 2021 planner, which is a workbook and interactive PDF full of questions to help you reflect on 2020 and look forward to the year ahead. It recognises how so many of us had our carefully laid plans decimated in 2020 and encourages a different kind of more flexible planning for 2021 which inspires and motivates us, but also leaves room for things changing as they so often do.



33:48

And to get your free planner along with a bonus visualisation that I've made for you and a guide to creating your own mini retreat this winter, which could be a really special time for you just order a copy of consciousness and a happy new year from any online or physical bookstore in hardback ebook or audiobook which is read by me. And then go to [Bethkempton.com/Christmas](https://bethkempton.com/Christmas) and pop your receipt details into the short form there and you will be able to help yourself to all your free goodies.



34:17

And with that, I hope you will join me again next week for comfort and joy in winter. Until then, have a lovely week friend.



34:32

You've been listening to the Calm Christmas podcast with me. Beth Kempton For more inspiration and ideas. cosy up with a copy of my book, Calm Christmas and Happy New Year: A Little Book of Festive Joy. It's available now from all good bookshops all listen to the audiobook read by me.



34:52

Wishing you a calm Christmas and Happy New Year.