

## HOW THE HURRICANE NAMED GUSTAV STOLE CHRISTMAS

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Every Cajun down in Labadie-ville liked Christmas a lot. . . .

But the hurricane named Gustav, who lived just south of Labadie, did NOT!

Gustav *hated* Christmas! The whole Christmas season!  
Now please don't ask why. No one quite knows the reason.  
It *could* be he just had something to prove;  
he admired his sister Katrina and how quickly she moved.  
It *could* be he wanted to just get things right,  
to prove to the others he could put up a fight.  
Who knows what his reason, but I'll take a guess:  
I think he just wanted to stir up a mess.

But whatever his reason, his power or fame,  
He stood there last Christmas Eve hating Labadieville by name,  
Staring up from the gulf with his eye, full of rage,  
at the warm little town with its ripe old age.  
For he knew every person in Assumption was busy  
frying turkeys, cooking boudin – simply working up a tizzy!

“They're having too much fun!” he snarled with great fear!  
“Tomorrow is Christmas; I guess I'll wait until the next year!”  
So he growled and connived and made a plan to remember –  
“No one will expect me to destroy Christmas in September!”

For tomorrow he knew. . .

. . . all of the Bayou would wake bright and early.  
They'd grab their gifts with ribbons nice and curly.  
And *then!* Oh, the noise! Oh, the noise! Noise! Noise! Noise!  
That's one thing he hated!  
The NOISE! NOISE! NOISE! NOISE!  
Then the Cajuns, young and old, would sit down to a feast.  
And they'd feast! *And they'd feast!* And they'd drink! FEAST! DRINK! FEAST!  
They would feast on choupic and some venison roast,  
which was something Gustav hated the most!

And THEN they'd do something he hated with a passion!  
Each and every Cajun would stand, in similar fashion,  
right next to each other, arm in arm, like some hypnotic trance,

the zydeco would start, and the Cajuns would dance!

They'd dance! *And they'd dance!* And they'd DANCE! DANCE! DANCE! DANCE!  
And the more Gustav thought of this community full of elation,  
the more Gustav thought, "I've got to stop this celebration!"  
"For three years since Katrina, I've put up with it now!"  
I MUST stop next Christmas from coming!

. . .But HOW?

Then he got an idea! *A terrible idea!*  
Gustav got a superb, but terrible idea!

"I know just what to do!" Gustav laughed with delight!  
"I'll visit next summer, with winds that bring fright!"  
And he chuckled, and clucked, "What a terrible thing!  
No one would expect me to destroy Christmas in summer or late spring!"  
"I just need to pick a day to carry out my plan. . ."  
So Gustav grabbed his calendar, with pen in his hand.  
"Mardi Gras' too cold, Thanksgiving's too late.  
Labor Day! Ah hah! Could you pick a better date!"  
"All I need is a diversion so people don't know,  
that I'm coming early so Christmas next year won't go!"  
So he stayed in the gulf with his plots and his schemes,  
"Let's get their attention with other, various themes!  
Let's send earthquakes to China, continue the war in Iraq,  
when its my time to come, they'll have the election on their back.  
They'll be so darned busy that no one will think  
of my plans to put next Christmas on the brink."

THEN after all of his preparations were done,  
Gustav packed his bags for a weekend of fun.  
Gustav said, "Giddyap!" and the waters started to churn  
as he headed toward homes that provoked his heart-burn.  
All the bayou was sleeping, they lay snug in their beds,  
it wasn't visions of sugar plums that danced in their heads.  
They dreamt of LSU football and wished for another season  
like last year's championship - too keep Les Miles for a reason.  
"It's time to destroy Christmas, their parties, and their fun;  
Gotta start somewhere; heck, let's make St. Philomena stop number one!"

The first part of his plan was to tear up the places we pray,  
so when that time would come, you know, Christmas Day,  
we'd have no place to share our joy, laughs, or prayer.  
What's the way that he did it, you ask? He made the roofs bare.

The second thing he did was to simply take away  
the thing that makes Santa so happy and gay.  
He destroyed all the chimneys littered all over the town.  
Then when Santa would come, he would cry and would frown,  
because he wouldn't have a place to slide down in a pinch.  
Gustav's plan was so terrible – he be compared to the Grinch!

If you thought “that's the worst,” hold on, there's so much more:  
Gustav then tried to destroy every store.  
He figured as he thought with a smile so unpleasant,  
“Get rid of the stores, and there will be no more presents!”  
Pop Guns and bicycles – he threw them in the air,  
he even tried to make every grocery store bare!

You see, that was the next big part of his plan,  
that would indeed affect every woman, kid, and man.  
Remove the power from every icebox you see,  
and instead of feasting, they would have to enjoy an M. R. E.

There was one more big symbol that people danced all around,  
he knew to stop all that Cajun dancing in town,  
he have to get rid of as many as far as the eye could see:  
Gustav had to destroy each and every tree!

There were blue tarps, brown water, and power lines thrown –  
Gustav knew his plan worked and that it had shown  
the people of Assumption that Christmas would never again come;  
so he packed up his bags and returned to where he was from.  
He sang with great laughter, with humming and glee,  
“No more noise, no more dancing, no more Christmas – I'm free!  
When they start cleaning up, I know what they'll do!  
Their mouths will hang open for a minute or two.  
Then they'll all sit along the Bayou and cry BOO-HOO!  
That's a noise,” grinned Gustav, “That I simply must hear.”  
So he waited as he put a hand to his ear!

Well, he did hear some noise as he waited down south;  
it wasn't what he expected, and he slowly dropped his mouth.  
But the sound wasn't sad! Why, this sound sounded merry!  
It couldn't be so! But it WAS merry! VERY!  
He looked up the Bayou at all of the “villes”  
and slowly Gusatv started to feel ill.  
Gustav's eyes seemed like they were about to just pop;  
the sight he saw was simply over the top!  
There was so much hammering he could barley even think.

And despite the heat, the Cajuns continued to drink!  
And they sang, and they danced, and they helped every friend.  
Gustav knew immediately Christmas would not end.

He HADN'T stopped Christmas from Coming! It eventually CAME!  
Somehow or another, it came just the same!  
Gustav stood in the deep waters that flow,  
he stood puzzling over, "How could it be so?  
It came with less money and the sugar cane flat,  
with the economy in recession and a new president at bat!"  
And he puzzled three hours, 'till his puzzler was sore.  
Then Gustav thought of something he hadn't before!  
"Maybe Christmas isn't about dancing, drinking, and fun.  
Maybe Christmas means something more to everyone!"

And what happened then. . . ?  
Well, on the Bayou they say,  
That the mess Gustav caused  
went away that same Christmas day!

Though he didn't help clean the mess he made;  
and though his memory still has yet to fade;  
Gustav gave us a lesson that we should hold dear  
to remember and to cherish as we end another year:

Christmas is not about presents, beer, and cake,  
it's about what you have and what you make  
out of the battles you fight and the struggles you win  
that crop up every year, all over again.

Jesus was born today; celebrate the victory he has won!  
And celebrate yours too, each and every one!  
When times get tough and your spirit breaks,  
remember that promise that our Lord Jesus makes!  
"I only send tests that I know you can take!"

Christmas is important and we should have fun,  
but we should never forget his victory and those we have won!

Merry Christmas!