

ANTA CLAUS OF ANTARCTICA Serialized



13. Carol's Carol

North to south, south to north, Anta's sleigh continued its zigzagging course across the America. Along the way, Carol called out more familiar landmarks.

"The Grand Canyon...Great Salt Lake...Yellowstone National Park!"

Between stops, Anta sat silently in his seat. He stared forward, holding the reins loosely. He wore a grim look.

"What's the matter, Anta?" Carol asked. "Penny for your thoughts."

"I've been thinking about my job," Anta replied. "Sometimes it gets me down. I don't mind splitting the Christmas Eve deliveries with Santa Claus. But Santa gets all the glory. There are hundreds of books, TV shows, and movies about him. Every year in malls, millions of children have their pictures taken with Santa. No boy or girl ever wants a picture taken with me. Does anyone appreciate what I do? Does anyone even know who I am?"

"Naughty children know you, Anta," said Carol. "But none of them will admit it."

Anta grumbled. He pointed to a cluster of lights on the ground.

"Oh! Oh! Idaho!" he said. "Another thankless delivery!"

A short while later, the yaks landed on the slanted roof of a small house. Without a word, Anta grabbed his black sack and tramped toward the chimney.

Carol remained in the sleigh. Before her, the eight yaks swayed back and forth, humming their merry tune.

"Anta has a lot on his mind," Carol said. "He needs something to cheer him up."

The yaks nodded their horned heads.

"I have an idea," Carol said. "I'll write a Christmas carol about Anta. A song that will give him credit for all the hard work he does. A song that will help children

know him better.”

Again, the yaks nodded.

“Santa Claus has a lot of songs written about him,” Carol went on. “*Santa Claus is Coming to Town, Here Comes Santa Claus, and Up on the Housetop*. You hear them played in every store at Christmastime. But there’s not a single carol about Anta Claus. Not one.”

Carol grew silent. She listened to the yak’s hum.

“Yes, an Anta Claus Christmas carol is just the thing that will make Anta feel better,” she said.

She listened some more to the yaks’ humming.

“That’s a catchy tune,” she said. “I can use it for my Anta song. Now I need some lyrics.”

Over and over the yaks hummed the tune. Carol played it in her head until she thought up a good first line.

“How’s this, yaks?” she said. Then she sang,

“In a small cozy cottage on the cold South Pole.”

The yaks snorted.

“Now I need a word to rhyme with pole,” said Carol.

As she spoke, a gust of easterly wind blew across the rooftop. East Wind whispered in Carol’s ear,

“Lives a black-bearded man, a contrary old soul.”

Carol beamed. “Good one, East Wind,” she said.

She quickly thought up the next two lines and sang out,

“On Christmas Eve, Anta checks his Naughty List.

Wants to make sure there is no one he missed.”

Carol sat back in her seat. “First verse finished,” she said. “Now for the chorus.”

At this point, South Wind blew through the sleigh. In the whoosh of the wind, Carol heard the words she needed. She leaped out of the sleigh. She raced to the roof gutters and broke off two icicles. Tapping the icicles on the edge of the sleigh like drumsticks she sang,

“Oh, oh, oh, Anta’s on his way,

With his eight air-yaks pulling his big black sleigh.

Oh, oh, oh, naughty kids beware,

Cause Anta Claus will soon be there.”

West Wind helped Carol write the second verse, and North Wind helped her

with the third. By the time Anta appeared at the top of the chimney, Carol had the complete carol written and ready to perform.

Anta climbed in the sleigh grumbling. His pant leg was torn.

“Great bother, that one,” he said. “The naughty boy living in this house has a mean dog who sleeps by the fireplace. The second I stepped out, the pooch attacked my leg. Oh! Oh! Ouch!” He gripped the reins. “Yes, no one knows how hard I work.”

The yaks sprang into the air.

Carol waited until the sleigh was flying smoothly before she said, “The yaks and I have a surprise for you, Anta. We hope it will cheer you up.”

Anta raised his black bushy eyebrows. “Oh?” he said.

“We have written a Christmas carol about you.”

“Oh! Oh!” said Anta.

Carol stood on the seat. She raised an icicle as a band conductor might wave her baton.

“Girls and boys of the world,” she called out. “Here is the world premiere of the Christmas carol, *Anta Claus of Antarctica*.”

Before the sleigh, the eight yaks coughed to clear their throats.

“A one and a two,” said Carol. “Bass!”

Sounding like deep double basses in a band, the yaks hummed a low-pitch bouncy beat.

“*Bum, bum...bum, bum, bum. Bum, bum...bum, bum, bum.*”

“Winds!” called Carol.

East and West Wind joined in with high flute trills while South and North Winds hummed like violins.

“Percussion,” Carol called.

She sat and tap tap tapped her icicles on the front of the sleigh.

Then she sang,

*“In a small cozy cottage on the cold South Pole,
Lives a black-bearded man, a contrary old soul.
On Christmas Eve, he checks his Naughty List.
Wants to make sure there is no one he missed.*

*Oh! Oh! Oh! Anta’s on his way.
With his eight air-yaks pulling his big black sleigh.
Oh! Oh! Oh! Naughty children beware,*

*Because Anta Claus will soon be there.
The tall skinny man puts on his furry black suit.
A pointy black hat and white boots to boot.
Grumbling, he grabs his bulky black hat,
That his two troll helpers, Tis and Twas, did pack.*

*Oh! Oh! Oh! Anta's on his way.
With his eight air-yaks pulling his big black sleigh.
Oh! Oh! Oh! Naughty children beware,
Because Anta Claus will soon be there.*

*The Four Winds are listening all year long,
To hear what every boy and girl did wrong.
Anta brings gifts naughty children have earned.
By next Christmas will the lesson be learned?*

*Dirty sock for Sara, salt rock for Sam.
Rotten orange for George, slug for lazy Pam.
Dust bunny for Brit, and Larry, the liar,
Gets a pair of pants that had been on fire.*

*Oh! Oh! Oh! Anta's on his way.
With his eight air-yaks pulling his big black sleigh.
Oh! Oh! Oh! Naughty children beware.
Because Anta Claus will soon be there.*

*Oh! Oh! Oh! Anta's on his way.
With his colorful yaks pulling his big black sleigh.
Oh! Oh, remember what Anta gave,
To help you remember, better to behave.”*

*(Listen to **Anta Claus of Antarctica**)*



When the carol was over, Carol stood and bowed. The rush of the Four Winds sounded like applause in a concert hall.

A smile spread through Anta's black whiskers. "Oh! Oh!" he said. He wiped a tear from his eye. "Thank you, Carol. Santa Claus has never had such a fine song written about him."