

ANTA CLAUS OF ANTARCTICA Serialized



4. Carol Sneaks Out

Carol stood on the top rung of the fire escape ladder. She peered over the gutter onto the snowy roof. There it was. On the peak of the rooftop, between the two tallest chimneys, stood Santa's sleigh. It glistened in the moonlight. But something was wrong. What were those large shaggy animals standing in front of the sleigh? Could those be reindeer?

"Perhaps the moonlight is playing tricks on my eyes," Carol told herself. "It makes Santa's reindeer appear bigger than they really are."

She climbed onto the sharply slanted roof. The night was frigid and the wind blew hard. Good thing she wore her warmest winter gear.

"Santa's probably reading my Christmas note right now," she said. "I better hurry."

The climb up the steep roof was rough. Through foot-high snow, Carol plodded. Halfway up she slipped and dropped to her knees. From there she crawled. The entire way she kept her eyes on both chimney tops. Any time now Santa would appear.

Once on the roof peak, Carol stood up straight.



A gust of southerly wind stirred up clouds of powdery snow. An easterly blasted her from behind. A northerly gust nearly toppled her. But a westerly burst set her back on her feet.

“What odd wind,” Carol said. “It can’t make up its mind which way it wants to blow.”

Battling the wind and swirling snow, Carol trudged toward the sleigh. She reached it breathing hard. Up front, the eight shaggy beasts swayed back and forth. To Carol’s surprise, they hummed a merry tune.

“Hello, reindeer,” she called out. “Please don’t give me away. I’m just going to take a quick trip over the wall.”

The yaks turned their heads and snorted. Steam shot from their nostrils. Snow caked their colorful wool and icicles hung from their curved horns

“Goodness,” Carol said. “You reindeer sure need a haircut.”

She climbed into the back seat of the sleigh. There she found a canvas tarp and pulled it over her. She lay perfectly still.

“OK, Santa, I’m ready,” she said. “Take me away from this terrible place.”

Meanwhile, inside the big house, Anta Claus stood before an enormous fireplace. Moonbeams streaming through a tall window allowed him to see the large room in which he stood. White sheets covered the furniture. A crystal chandelier twinkled in the moonlight. The only sign of Christmas was a long limp knee sock hanging from the fireplace mantle.

“No Christmas tree. No Christmas decorations,” Anta said. “Was Carol’s grandmother expecting me this evening? Now let’s see what’s in my sack for this sneaky girl.”

Anta dropped his black sack onto the marble floor. He rummaged through the bag, searching for an item with Carol Snow’s name on it

“Oh! Oh!” he said at length. “Just the thing for a sneak.”

He pulled out an old sneaker full of holes. He stuffed it into the knee sock.

“What a shame,” Anta said. “I hope Carol learns a lesson and her name never appears on the Naughty List again.”

Beside the fireplace, Anta spotted a plate of cookies and a glass of milk.

“Great bother, this,” he said. “Children always leave treats for the other Mr. Claus. No wonder he’s so chunky.”

Under the plate was a note.

Anta bent over and read it.

For Santa,

Take your time. No need to hurry. I baked you some sugar cookies.

Sit down and rest for a while. You deserve a break.

P.S. The only thing I want for Christmas is to be with my Mom and Dad.

Merry Christmas, Carol

“Great bother, this,” Anta muttered again. He slung his black sack over his shoulder. “I’m just doing my job.”