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Santa in Eskimo Land

Mary Graham Bonner

It was Christmas morning, and Santa hadn't come.

The little Inuit children had been too excited to sleep. The storm the night before had been wild and terrifying, and now, though the wind had let up, the snowdrifts were piled like mountains in every direction.

Finally one of the fathers said: "I'm afraid something must have happened. The storm last night — let's get the dogs and sleds and go look."

A group of the older boys and the men began to bundle up. They wrapped themselves so thoroughly that nothing showed but their eyes. They had just set off when they heard a tinkling of bells — and then they saw, cutting through the brilliant white landscape, eight beautiful reindeer pulling an overfull sled, and at the reins, old Santa Claus himself, his red coat buried under great furs.

"Merry Christmas, Santa Claus!" all the children shrieked at once.

"Merry Christmas to you all!" Santa called back. And the reindeer shook their heads and jingled their bells, which was their way of saying it too.

Poor Santa's moustache and eyebrows were frozen stiff, and his face was a deep red from the cold. But, oh — how wonderful it was to have him there with them! Santa always visited their village last of all, and they had never once been awake when he arrived.

As soon as his hands were warmed and his reindeer fed and praised for their bravery, Santa opened his pack. And such a Christmas as they all had!

"You know," Santa told them, when they were settled and the children were deep in their new treasures, "I'm glad the storm came. Because this" — he looked around at the bright faces and the scattered gifts and the dogs nosing hopefully at the wrappings — "this is my very first Christmas party."



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