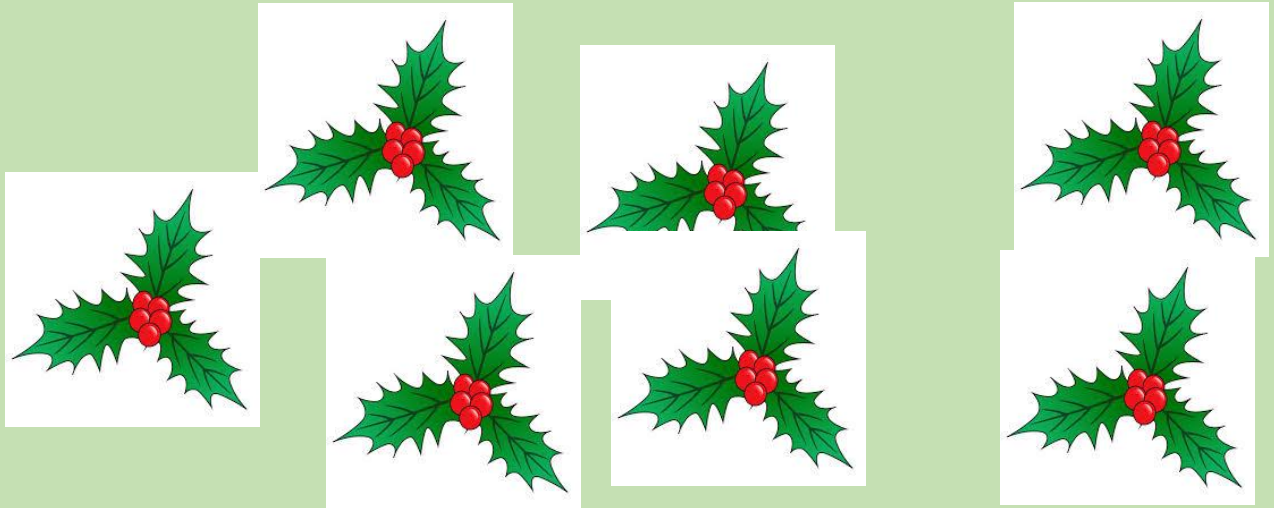


Once upon a Christmas Eve



by
John Bonthron



This is a Christmas story for
Ethan and Drew who live at No
62 Netherlee.

Once upon a Christmas Eve, a white-haired lady looked out from her cottage down into the valley far below.



Her name was Mrs Claus. Can you guess who her husband was?

Her sharp eyes saw the house where her son Michael and his family lived, the house where Santa and Mrs Claus would spend Christmas Day with their grandchildren.



How many grandchildren do they have?



From the bedroom came the sound of someone
Snorrrring. It was a very **LOUD** snore.



The St Bernard called Mitzi and Rudi, the baby
reindeer, were used to Santa's **LOUD** snoring.

A big black and white cat with pinkish ears was sitting in Mrs Santa's comfy chair. It was purring quietly.



She was called Sooty because of her black nose.

On wall above Sooty was a big clock made of wood. Inside the clock was a very noisy Cuckoo, called Gretel.

When the big hand had tick-tock, tick-tocked all the way to the top of her clock, Gretel, the Cuckoo always popped out and **SHOUTED**:

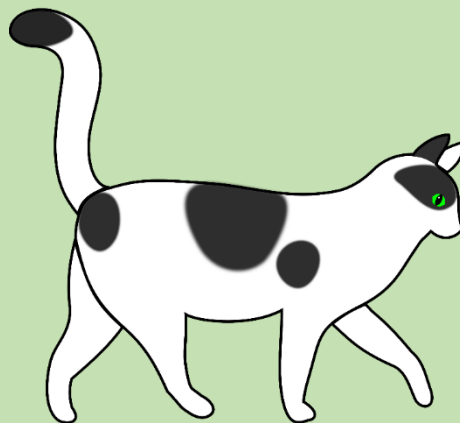
Cooo-kooo!
Cooo-kooo!
Cooo-kooo!
Cooo-kooo!
Cooo-kooo!
Cooo-kooo!
Coooooooo-koooooooo!



'Sooty,' said Mrs Claus. 'It's time to get Santa up for his breakfast.'

'We must pack all the presents onto sleighs today. Go on, Sooty dear, get him up, tell him breakfast is ready.'

Sooty was very good at biting Santa's toes to get him to wake up.



'Meeeeeawaaaa', said Sooty and went into Santa's bedroom.

'Hoy! Naughty, naughty, pussy cat,' said Santa. 'Stop that! Leave my toes alone!'

Sooty ran out and then there was a **LOUD** crashing and bashing noise from the bedroom.

'Ouch! Ouch! Help! Help! I can't get up. I can't walk. Help!'

Mrs Claus ran to the bedroom. Her husband was lying in a heap, both of his feet stuck down one trouser leg.



Santa was wearing his special dark glasses because he liked to sleep even when the Sun was shining.

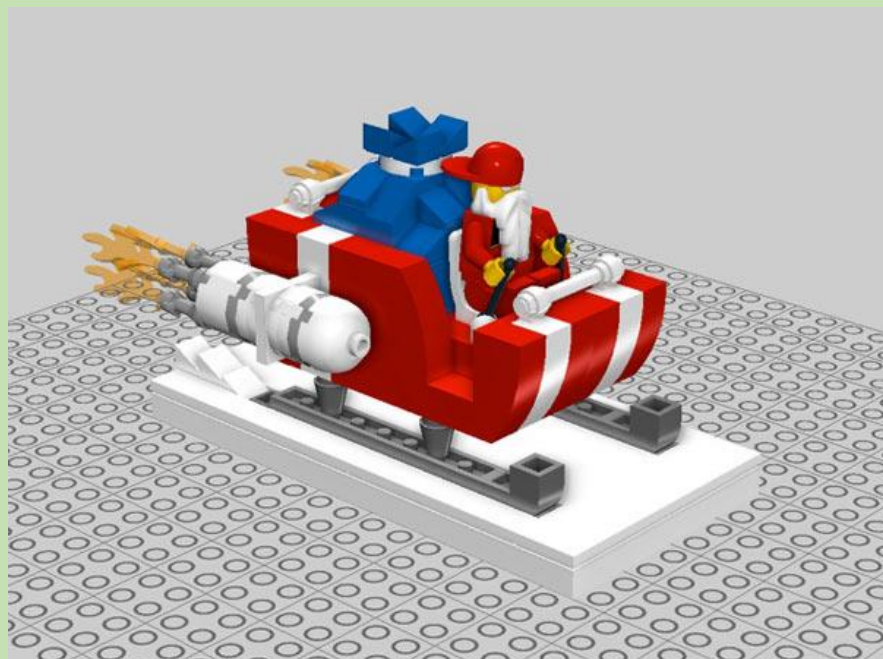
'Oh dear, Santa, how did you manage to do that? You've got both of your feet down one trouser leg. Here, let me pull off those pants. Lie back and stick your legs up in the air for me.'

'Ah! Ouch! Stop! No, stop! It's too sore. It's my ankle. I think I've broken it in fifteen million places.'

'Don't be silly. It's only a sprain. I'll rub some ointment on it and you'll be right as rain in no time! Come on, up you get, my dear. You know Christmas Eve is our busiest day of the year.'

'Oh, no, no, no, no, no! No! I can't work today,' cried Santa. 'No, it's far too sore. And look out there, it's too sunny and bright. And it's too cold. No! I can't do it. I'm far too tired. Close the curtains. I'm going back to bed.'

No matter what Mrs Claus said, Santa Claus would not get out of bed. He just lay moaning and groaning, eating bag after bag of crunchy crisps and drinking his favourite drink, orange juice mixed with fizzy water.



Santa was just pretending. He was being naughty. As soon as Mrs Claus left the room, Santa was out of bed, playing with his Lego, making a toy sleigh with rocket engines.

Snow White and her Seven Dwarfs arrived to help Mrs Claus. Doc was in charge, helped by Bashful, Grumpy, Happy, Sneezy, and Dopey.



The seventh one, the one with **longest** beard, was too tired to work.

He was lying down fast asleep.

Can you guess his name?

Outside, in Santa's fields, the ground was covered with snow. On the snow there were hundreds of sleighs and each one was heaped with presents ready to go to boys and girls all around the world. Every present was wrapped in bright, shiny Christmas paper.



There were lots and lots of reindeer because each sleigh needs six reindeer to pull it. Every reindeer wanted to stand beside their leader.

He was the only one with a shiny, red nose.

Can you guess their leader's name?

As the Sun went down and it began to get dark, Snow White and only six of her dwarfs finished packing the last sleigh, which was the one for Scotland. Right on top were lots of presents for two boys called Ethan and Drew at No 62 Netherlee.

Why did only six dwarfs help Snow White? Why was one missing? Do you think he was the one always falling asleep?

Do you know his name?

'Mrs Claus,' asked Snow White. 'Who will drive the sleighs tonight, if Santa can't do it because of his sore leg?'

'Wait and see, dear. He'll be up in no time. I've given him two plates of Green Energy Soup and an extra big portion of lasagne with three slices of crunchy garlic bread.'

Gretel the Cuckoo clock
shouted out:

Cooo-kooo!

Cooo-kooo!

Cooo-kooo!

Cooo-kooo!

Cooo-kooo!

Cooo-kooo!

Coooooooo-koooooooo!



'But Mrs Claus, look at the time. All the children are already fast asleep in their beds.'

'Well, Snow White, it's time for the second part of my cunning plan.'

This is what Snow White and six of her dwarfs heard what Mrs Claus said to Santa. The seventh dwarf, the one with the **longest** beard, was still fast asleep. He must have been very, very sleepy.

'Right Santa, we can all see **you** are too old drive your sleigh tonight. It's time for our son Michael Claus to take over. He is going to do it this year.'

'Oh, no! No! No! Most definitely not! Hey, Doc, please ask your dwarfs to help me into my Santa suit. Snow White, please telephone Mikey and tell him not to come. I really can't have anyone else delivering the presents! Every year children look forward to my visit. I can't disappoint them.'

'Right, then,' said Mrs Claus. 'Careful, careful, put just one foot into each trouser leg.'

'Oh, dearie me!' said Santa. 'Just look at the time! For goodness sake, my dear, you should have told me it was so late.'

Santa climbed up into the sleigh. Sooty, the cat with the black nose, sat on his lap. Mitzi, the St Bernard sat on one side and Rudi, the baby reindeer, sat on the other.

Santa grabbed the reins then, in a **LOUD** voice said, '**Righty-o, Rudolph, off we go!** Our first stop is 62 Netherlee.'



Mrs Claus and Snow White and six of her dwarfs waved and sang:

*'Jingle Bells! Jingle Bells! Jingle all the Way.
Oh, what fun it is to ride in a great big Reindeer
Sleigh!'*

Gretel the Cuckoo clock joined in:

*Cooo-kooo!
Cooo-kooo!
Cooo-kooo!
Cooo-kooo!
Cooo-kooo!
Cooo-kooo!
Cooooo-koooooo!'*





The only Dwarf not singing was the one with the ***longest*** beard. He was still fast asleep and had missed all the fun.

What is his name?

Can you point to him?

Can you see the other dwarfs?

Do you remember their names?

If you would like to read other stories for boys and girls, ask your adult to visit:

www.thebuzzinbee.co.uk

Here are the names of some other stories you will find there.

Ethan and The Giant Crabs

Theo's Big Secret

Korban the Krokka

Harry and Jonny the Spider

Matthew and the Cake Pirates

Harry Tallboy and Fairy Swish

Millie meets Ethan

Whistler the Orsinaurus

Teo the Hare

Frederica the Frog

Pinocchio and Cuccinella

Topolina and Nerone

Spot Check

Dominic the Donkey

Ghosts can't Whistle in Tune

