

The background is a vibrant, colorful illustration of a winter night. At the top, a green banner with a gold border contains the title. Below the banner, a sleigh with a reindeer is shown in flight, leaving a trail of red and gold garlands. The scene is set against a dark blue sky with colorful lights and a snowy ground. In the foreground, there are two green Christmas trees, one decorated with colorful ornaments, and a red and white striped banner. The overall atmosphere is festive and mysterious.

MERRY CHRISTMAS *Mystery*

Santa's on his way...
But something is missing!

Written & Illustrated by
Gramma Zanna

The case of the runaway reindeer!



For Peace, Love & Joy

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Santa went to the stable, through the deep winter snow,
Where the reindeer were resting, getting ready to go.



Santa wanted to take them for one last little ride.
But the stalls were all empty. There were no reindeer inside.



Santa was confused. He looked and looked all around.
But the reindeer he searched for, couldn't be found.



He went outside of the barn and found prints in the snow. Santa scratched his cold nose, thinking where did they go?



Why would they do this? Santa just couldn't guess. His special reindeer had left him in a big Christmas mess!



They were all gone. The whole sleigh pulling team. What could have happened? What did this mean?



Everyone was wondering... What would Santa do?
We can find out together. The elves will help too.



Mrs. Claus was so worried, but Santa had a plan. He knew he could fix it with his elf helper Stan.



He'd send out the elves, who would bring him some choices.
He told them his orders and heard the helpful elf voices.



The elves had to move quickly. They only had one day. One day to find an animal who could pull Santa's sleigh.



They brought back a bunch. Who do you think he'll send?
Let's read on to find the answer, don't skip to the end.



They brought elephants & tigers, cows & horses too.
Bunnies, sloths and rhinos, and even kangaroos.



Who would be the right choice, for pulling Santa's sleigh?
The job was so important. Who could make it all the way?



He was looking for ones that could see in the night.
Bats he knew could, but that didn't seem right.



Porcupines can see well, but their prickles were a puzzle.
The quills were not like the reindeer's soft muzzle.



The ears he was looking for would hear really well.
But by looking at ears, you know its hard to tell.



He made a lot of noise to see which ones would hear.
Do you think Santa's choice is becoming more clear?



Any creature with wings could work, Santa thought.
But Santa, the sleigh and the toys weighed a lot.



He scratched his white beard. The sleigh had to fly.
What do you think? Should he give the fliers a try?



The smallest of the bunch just wouldn't do at all.
Once they all took off, the sleigh would surely fall.



Mice would sink in the snow. Skunks would cause a big stink. Reptiles pulling the sleigh would be weird, don't you think?



Santa knows not all of them would be very fast.
He planned to leave the fastest ones to pick until the last.



The cheetahs, gazelles and lions came first place in the race.
But running for a long time, could they keep up the pace?



Santa chose the furry ones, with lots of fuzzy hair.
In the cold, they'd be warm, in the coats they wear.



He sent home anyone who would shiver in the snow.
Which ones did that leave? Can you guess? Do you know?



The ones that were the meanest, and biggest wouldn't do.
The cats and the giraffes, the bears and elephants too.



Each one Santa sends home, gets him closer to the best.
Which one would you pick? It's up to you to guess?



With only six more left in line, Santa knew he had to choose. Each one of them could do it. There was nothing left to lose.



Santa made his final choice. Turn the page and see.
Which one do you think? Which one will it be?



The wolves were the answer. Santa had no more doubt. He made his final choice, just before the time ran out.



Christmas Eve would be saved, with them leading the way!
The wolves were the ones that would pull Santa's sleigh!



It would take a little magic and Santa knew what to do.
With a magic Santa whisper, the wolves knew it too.
In moments they took off. They were ready to leave.
It was time to get going. It was a Merry Christmas Eve!



In the sky this Christmas Eve, look for something new.

Santa and the wolves up high, on their way to you!

Don't worry about the reindeer. I'm sure they'll be okay.

They will return another day, to pull Santa in his sleigh.

I'll end this tale, by wishing you... a Happiest Holiday!



I am Gramma Zanna

- a Canadian Author and Illustrator of children's books. I write imaginative stories because I love to interact with young minds. Writing stories for children is my passion. Creating pictures for the little ones is a happy bonus! Writing children's books all started with 'Up Past the Sky!!' I am a mother of 2 and I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of being a parent. I learned as much as I taught while being a mother to my kids. My first book was a tribute to that time of our lives when I had the 'time of my life'.

I taught my children about fun and imagination (at least I tried) and about the appreciation of the simple joys of the everyday -- right here, right now. I want to continue sharing these messages through books that are written with love.

Now that my wonderful boys are grown and independent and having little ones of their own -- I am Gramma Zanna! -- and have the time to pursue the world of publishing.

The desire to write for children comes from an active imagination and the ability to relate to children on their level.

My love of writing, imagination and the child's mind keeps me going and there are many, many more ideas floating around in my head just waiting to hit the pages and make their way to you.

Also Available from *Gramma Zanna*

Up Past the Sky! What A Trip!

Did You Ever? The Zoo That Grew!

What my readers are saying:

Barb B

Merry Christmas Mystery - The case of the runaway reindeer. I found the illustration mesmerizing with colour and full of details A book that can be reread over and over again to discover new clues. The reader is engage with the storyline right up to the end of book. Young at heart will enjoy this fun entertaining book.

Holly C

We're starting a library for our future Grandchildren and this book will be a favourite!

Josh M

Our two year old loves it!
She always needs multiple times through to look at all of the pictures. As a parent who isn't a big reader it was fun to read. Looking forward to more!



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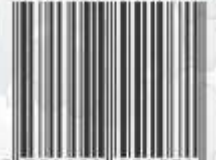
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