

The MYSTERY of the SILENT SLEIGH

Dan's English Student Original Story



Starter

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The Mystery of the Silent Sleigh

A Christmas Mystery for Starter Readers

Headwords: 250 / Word Count: ~1400

Chapter 1: The North Pole Problem

It is Christmas Eve. Mr. Claus stands in his big North Pole workshop. The elves are busy. The reindeer are ready. The sleigh is full of wonderful toys.

“Everything is ready, Chip?” Mr. Claus asks.

Chip is the chief elf. He looks at his computer screen. “Yes, Mr. Claus. The list is complete. All 2.1 billion children are on the list.”

Mr. Claus smiles. He puts on his big red coat. “Good. The journey is long. I must start now.”

But then, a small red light flashes on the computer screen.

“Oh, no,” Chip says. “The system has a problem. A small part of the sleigh’s GPS system shows a fault.”

“What does that mean?” Mr. Claus asks.

“It means the sleigh might be silent for one moment in one place,” Chip explains. “But the system is stable. It is **possible** it is nothing. It is a small part. We can fix it when you return.”

Mr. Claus looks at the list. “I cannot be late. The children wait for me. I must go.”

He waves goodbye and steps into the sleigh. The reindeer pull hard. Up, up, up they go, into the dark, cold sky.

Chapter 2: A Quiet Street in Boston

In Boston, USA, a girl named Jenny is sleeping. She is ten years old. Jenny loves Christmas. She always writes a long, careful letter to Santa. This year, she asks for a small, blue telescope.

At 3:00 AM, the sleigh flies over Jenny’s street. The speed is fast—too fast to see. Then, Chip’s warning comes true.

Sssshhhhh.

For only three seconds, the sleigh is silent. It stops moving. The red light on the dashboard flashes. Mr. Claus looks down. The sleigh is above a house—Jenny’s house.

“What is happening?” he says. He quickly checks the delivery system. The light is green. The delivery is successful.

Whoosh!

The sleigh moves again, fast. Mr. Claus feels a little worried, but he has no time. He has millions more deliveries to make.

In the morning, Jenny runs to the living room. She looks under the Christmas tree. There is a big, empty space. No blue telescope. No small gift. Nothing.

Jenny’s face is sad. She starts to cry. Her parents come into the room.

“What is wrong, dear?” her mother asks.

“Santa does not come,” Jenny whispers. “My name is not on his list.”

Chapter 3: The Investigation

Back at the North Pole, Mr. Claus is **upset**. He cannot be wrong. He checks the list again.

“Jenny, 10 years old, Boston,” he reads. “Requested: Blue Telescope. Status: Delivered.”

“The system says the gift goes down the chimney, Mr. Claus,” Chip says.

“But the house has no chimney, Chip! It is a modern house! And Jenny is **upset!** This is a serious mystery. I am going back to Boston. We must find the missing gift.”

Mr. Claus puts on a simple brown coat. He takes Chip with him. They fly to Jenny’s street. The snow is still on the ground.

“Look, Chip,” Mr. Claus says. “The snow is fresh. No new footprints.”

They walk to Jenny’s door. Then, they see something strange. Next to the door, in the snow, are two small, dark marks. Not footprints, but marks from a tool.

“This is strange,” Chip says. “A tool mark near the door, not the roof.”

“Yes,” Mr. Claus agrees. “And look here.” He points to a small, dark cable, cut neatly on the ground near the electricity box. “Someone is here last night. But who?”

Chapter 4: The Suspect

Across the street lives a man named Mr. Finch. He is old and quiet. He does not like children. He does not like noise. And he really does not like Christmas. The children call him “The Grinch of Boston.”

“Mr. Finch is a **possible** suspect,” Mr. Claus says. “He hates the Christmas noise. Maybe he tries to stop my sleigh.”

They go to Mr. Finch’s house. Mr. Claus knocks on the door.

Mr. Finch opens the door a little. “What do you want?” he says. His voice is cold.

“I am Mr. Nicholas. I am looking for something lost,” Mr. Claus says kindly. “Do you see anything unusual last night?”

Mr. Finch looks at them suspiciously. “No. I hear nothing. I see nothing. I go to bed early.” He tries to close the door.

“Wait,” Chip says. “Your roof antenna is new. Do you install it yesterday?”

Mr. Finch looks **ashamed**. He looks away. “Yes. I have problems with my TV signal. The signal is very weak. I put a new, powerful antenna up on the roof late last night.”

“And when do you install it?” Mr. Claus asks.

“Around 3:00 AM,” Mr. Finch admits. “I cannot sleep. I know it is a strange time, but I must fix it.”

Chapter 5: The Logical Answer

Mr. Claus and Chip go back to Jenny’s house. Mr. Claus takes a small device from his pocket. He points it at the roof. The device beeps.

“The powerful new antenna,” Mr. Claus says. “Mr. Finch is **ashamed** to tell us. He does not want us to know he is working at 3:00 AM on Christmas Eve.”

Chip looks confused. “But how is that connected to the missing gift?”

“Think, Chip. Mr. Finch’s new antenna sends out a very strong radio signal. It is a powerful signal,” Mr. Claus explains. “When my sleigh is above his house, that powerful signal hits my GPS system. It is not a physical problem—it is a **signal problem**.”

“So, the sleigh stops for three seconds?”

“Yes. And in those three seconds, the delivery system goes a little crazy. It is trying to deliver the gift but the signal is blocked.”

“But the system says the delivery is successful!” Chip insists.

Mr. Claus smiles. “The system tries to deliver the gift. But when the signal comes back on, the system realizes it fails. It does not want to show a failure. My system is very proud, Chip. It would be **upset** to show a failed delivery.”

Chip understands. “So, the system makes the delivery light green, but where is the gift?”

“The system does not lose the gift,” Mr. Claus says. “It *hides* the gift. It is the most **probable** answer. It puts the gift in a safe place, but one that is not easy to find.”

Mr. Claus uses his special device. The device beeps fast. It points to the electricity box where they see the cut cable.

“Why here?” Chip asks.

“Look closely at the cable. It is cut neatly. This is not Mr. Finch’s work. This is the **delivery system’s safety mechanism**,” Mr. Claus says. “The system senses the power problem from the antenna and thinks the area is dangerous. It quickly hides the gift inside the wall, behind the electricity box.”

“In the wall?”

“Yes. A safe, dry place. The system cuts the cable to give itself power for a moment, to open the wall and place the gift inside. That is the tool mark we see!”

Mr. Claus quickly opens the box. And there it is—a small, blue telescope, safe and sound.

They put the telescope under Jenny’s tree and disappear quickly.

Later that morning, Jenny runs to her tree again. “Mom! Dad! Look! The telescope! Santa *does* come!” she shouts, no longer **upset**.

Mr. Claus smiles from the sky. The system is proud again. The mystery is solved. Everything, even magic, has a **probable** logical answer.

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