

Stranded Aelians Need Technical Assistance

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Chapter 1: Sarah's Plan

Hi everyone, my name's Sarah.

I see you found the pictures I drew after I met Santa Claus.

I don't know if you believe in him or not, but when I was little I lived in a small house with my Mum, Dad and two older brothers, John and Kieran.

When I was four, John and Kieran told me Santa Claus didn't exist and our parents bought all the presents!

The next Christmas Eve I prepared a surprise for my brothers; I took John's phone!

Don't worry; I was only borrowing it so I could take a picture of Santa! That'd show them!

I hid the phone under my pillow so nobody would hear the alarm except me.

I tried my best to stay awake, but I was just so exhausted! I closed my eyes for just a few minutes, but then I heard a ringing noise which made me jump out of bed!

It took me a few seconds to remember what it was and I turned off the alarm with the phone still under the pillow.

Very quietly, I tip-toed to my bedroom door and opened it as slowly as I could.

The door started creaking, so I held it in place.

Then I heard a noise; I thought it was a scary lion roaring!

It came from my parents' room.

Nobody woke up, but the lion roared again. It seemed to happen every few seconds, so I opened the door when I heard it a fourth time and crept into their room to see what it was.

The noise was very loud in there.

I looked all around, but I didn't find a lion or a tiger or even a cheetah.

Then I looked again; it was my Mum snoring!

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I laughed a little and put my hand over my mouth to keep quiet.

Nobody woke up, so I tip-toed to the top of the stairs.

I checked the time on John's phone; 11:52. It wouldn't be long until Santa came!

When my Mum snored, I went down two steps at a time.

She was so loud that nobody heard the stairs creaking under my feet.

Soon I reached the bottom of the stairs.

I crept to the living room and turned on the lights; the carrot and mince pie were still in front of the fireplace.

Next to those was a drink in a wine glass, but I didn't like the smell.

Santa hadn't been yet.

I turned off the light and hid behind the settee.

It was very dark and quiet, and I soon started to fall asleep again.

Then I heard a sound; a footstep, and then another. They kept going until the lights came on.

I heard a voice say, "A racing drone for Kieran, a Tab-pad for John and-"

I jumped out from behind the settee and said, "And a Twinkle Rainbow Pony Princess Playset for Sarah!"

I took John's phone and pressed the camera button, but I was too slow; Santa was so scared he fell over backwards and all I got was a picture of the Christmas tree.

"Are you really Santa?" I asked him before we heard footsteps upstairs.

Santa stood up, looked at me and said, "Oh dear! Don't tell anyone I was here!"

I checked the presents under the tree; there were only two!

Santa pressed his belt buckle and the fireplace filled up with a bright yellow light, like a window of gold fire.

I took hold of the big brown sack of presents to look for my Twinkle Rainbow Pony Princess Playset.

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Santa reached out and shouted, "No! Don't touch it!"

Before I could ask why, the sparkling golden flames leapt out of the fireplace and surrounded the bag - and me!

I found myself in a twisty, sparkly golden tunnel and screamed as I raced down it.

It was like a magical waterslide, except it was totally dry!

I landed on the big brown sack at the bottom, where I saw a huge room full of crowds of Santas!

Very quickly, I pulled the sack over myself and watched them heaving their sacks of presents through golden portals just like the one I went through.

I thought there was only one Santa, but now there's more than I can count!

Then I noticed that the sack was empty! Where was my Twinkle Rainbow Pony Princess Playset?

I was about to peep out of the sack when I felt somebody grab the top of it.

The sack was being dragged by somebody who kept saying "Must tidy sack," over and over again.

He sounded like a robot!

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Well, I wasn't at home for this next bit, but John told me what happened.

When his phone went missing he just thought it was Mum or Dad who took it to set up his new one.

Anyway, Kieran couldn't sleep because he was so excited and he woke John up when he heard a noise.

John asked him what it was and he told him it sounded like me squealing.

John couldn't hear anything, so he told Kieran to go back to sleep; then they heard a crash downstairs, followed by rummaging.

"Let's have a look," John whispered to Kieran, who nodded back at him.

Carefully, they crept down the stairs.

John was used to Mum's snoring, so he thought it'd be unlikely either of our parents would hear what was going on downstairs.

At the foot of the stairs, Kieran grabbed an umbrella from next to the front door.

John took the walking stick Granddad left there a week ago and they snuck up to the living room door.

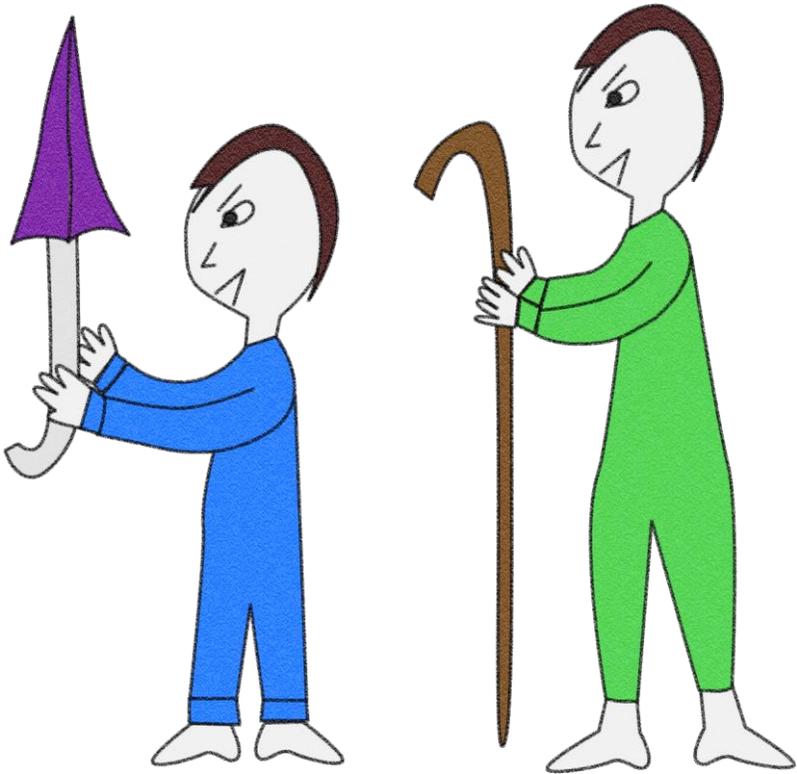
They saw the light shining through the gap in the door, which told them somebody was on the other side.

"I'm trapped!" they heard a man grumble.

John looked at Kieran; he looked back. They nodded silently and shoved the door open, being careful not to make too much noise.

My brothers jumped into the living room and Kieran raised his umbrella before swinging it down towards the unsuspecting bright red bottom of Santa Claus, which bobbed up and down as its owner scrabbled frantically at the fireplace.

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Before Kieran could strike the big red behind, John thrust the walking stick between it and the umbrella; a loud clack alerted him to their presence.

Startled, Santa jumped to his feet and turned around. My brothers noticed something very strange about him; his thick white beard covered the whole of his face.

“That’s a weird costume,” whispered Kieran.

“Don’t hurt me!” insisted Santa, quietly.

They look up at the frightened man before them; his fluffy red hat was pointing straight up, with the fuzzy white pompom quivering at the top.

“That’s the strangest Santa I’ve ever seen,” John whispered back to Kieran.

“Do you have the keys, little boy?” asked Santa. He looked at John with fear in his eyes.

“Who are you, and how did you get in?” asked John, who held the walking stick upright as though it were a sword.

Santa gulped as his hat appeared to relax and drop down behind his head before he said, “Why, I’m Santa Claus and I’m here to deliver your presents.”

“Maybe I asked the wrong question. What are you?”

“I’m late for my next delivery. Please let me out.”

“Why don’t you climb up the chimney?” asked Kieran.

“Your little sister grabbed my magic sack and it teleport- I mean, took her up the chimney. I can’t get up there without it, but I can call my reindeer down.”

“Don’t mess with us!” whispered Kieran as he angrily swung the umbrella once again.

“What did you do with Sarah?” John asked.

“Please! If I don’t get back to the North Pole right away, I don’t know what they’ll do to her!” explained Santa as his hat stood on end once again.

John looked at the furry red and white creature in front of him and said, “I thought you said she was on the roof.”

“OK, kid, you got me. The reindeer are just there for emergencies. We go from house to house using the magic

Chapter 2: John Corners Santa

sack and they circle overhead to make sure we don't get stranded; but I've never needed them before."

"Then I'm coming with you!" said John before Kieran asked, "You believe him?"

"The hat, or whatever it is on his head, pops up when he's scared."

"Oh yeah. Can I come?"

"No, I need you to stay here in case Mum and Dad get up before we get back. Put sleeping bags under our sheets to make it look like we're asleep."

"Please stay here, both of you! We can't have more humans at the North Pole!"

"Humans? Then what are you?"

"No time to explain! Just let me out and forget I was here. I just hope your sister hasn't been found, or we're all in danger."

"Then you can explain on the way."

"Stay here!" insisted Santa as the white pompom pointed at John aggressively.

John grinned at the fluffy red beast-man and said, "No me, no key!"

"Fine, but don't come crying to me when the others blow your planet up."

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