Christmas in the Barnyard

By: Rachael Komulainen, Park Animal Keeper

‘Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the Barnyard,  
Not a creature stirred, not even Javier, the goose guard.  
The stockings were hung on the houses with care,  
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.  
All the critters were nestled snug-as-a-bug in their beds,  
While visions of pellets &/or fruit danced in their heads.  
With Rachael and staff finishing up for the day,  
Ready to leave for the evening, to go hit the hay.   
When all-of-a-sudden there arose such a clatter,  
All ran from the Barnyard to see what was the matter.  
Near the barn in the horse corral, it happened to be,  
The equine began dancing in delight – quite a sight to see.  
Something was hiding behind the building, causing the stir,  
It appeared so quickly, it was quite a blur.  
When, what to our wondering eyes should appear,  
But a minature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer.  
A man dressed in red, so lively and quick,  
We figured it had to be the original good old St. Nick.  
His eyes twinkled brightly as Half Pint came around,  
He whispered to her, if you’re not good, to the South Pole you’ll be bound!  
I’ve got reindeer now but I’m happy to switch,  
To a mix of Hart’s residents to do an honorary hitch!  
“Come Monty, Come Blackie, Come Half Pint, I say:”  
Changing things up, just to hear the donkey bray!  
“Luke and Leia and Abby – we must add,”   
“But Cruella and Carma will make our lineup really rad!”  
“My reindeer need a rest,” Santa explained to us all,  
So nice of Hart’s critters to pick up the ball!  
It will be a great adventure to travel the world with a sled,  
Bringing toys to children tucked tightly in their beds.  
We realized he was serious as he was turning around,  
Sizing up his new crew, as Monty came over with a bound.  
St. Nick seemed thrilled to be starting with a new crew,   
But his reindeer said “ok, sure, but one day you will rue…”  
“Our quality of work cannot be done…”  
“By a band of misfits that can’t even coordinate a run!”   
He laughed at this challenge by Blixen, of course,  
For he was the troublemaker and always lead by force.  
No more would he have to be at the mercy of reindeer,  
Who tried to convince him that they were needed to steer;  
St. Nick laughed heartily as he harnessed his new buds,  
Thinking of his future plans, and no more duds!  
“My sleigh will be drawn by a critter medley of all kind!”  
With that, to the donkey, the harness he did bind.  
She didn’t like it, and as he turned around in his joy,  
Half Pint showed him who’s boss and made him a toy!   
St. Nick twisted and turned as much as he could,  
But, donkeys are stubborn and do not do what they should.  
She had a teeth full of St. Nick to her delight,  
And she wasn’t about to let go of this ridiculous sight!  
He pushed and he pulled but he could not release,  
The death grip of donkey teeth because she wouldn’t cease!  
Dancer & Prancer sprang into action to save St. Nick,  
Half Pint finally let go and he decided to stick -  
With his eight reindeer and not Hart’s animals here;  
Merry Christmas to all, and thank God for reindeer!