



How does the snowman in the picture keep its shape? The most obvious explanation is that a talented sculptor built the snowman. But what if the truth is much more sinister?

Story 1

It is a cold winter's night. A howling blizzard is heard outside. William Rover, the state's reigning snowman building champion, is sipping hot chocolate by a crackling fireplace. At the edge of the forest, a figure dressed in black is watching William through his window. Under the cover of the blizzard, the figure approaches William's house and enters. The figure creeps up behind William, knife in hand, and stabs the unassuming William. The figure drags William's corpse outside and through the snow, leaving a trail of blood soaked snow in the wake.

The figure props up William in a sitting position and begins to cover him in snow. As the night wears on, William's corpse becomes completely encased in snow. The figure fashions a snow hat for William and drapes a 'Happy Saint Patrick's Day' flag between poor William the snowman's hands. With the deed complete, the mysterious figure vanishes into the night.

In the following days, many people are delighted by the new snowy sculpture. People young and old take photos with the creation. But they are unaware of the true origin of the snowman, and who happens to be trapped inside.

Story 2

It is the night of the New York State Snowman Building Competition finals. The reigning champion, William Rover, was noticeably absent from the final match. William's unfortunate absence meant that William's rival, Simone Johnson, won by default. "After many years of fierce competition, I have finally defeated William Rover and become New York's Snowman Building champion. This year's competition was hard-fought, and I am glad to have finally prevailed", Simone declared to the uninterested onlookers after "winning" the match. A loud boo is heard in the distance.

In the following days, more people begin to wonder where William had gone. Eventually, a concerned friend of William visits William's house to find a trail of blood in the snow starting from inside William's house. William had been murdered. Rumors surrounding William's death begin to spread around Snowman Building friendship circles. Who killed William? Was it Bigfoot? Suicide? Aliens? All of the above? The police scoured the area for many days, but were unable to find William's body or a murder weapon.

The months came and went. As the snow began to melt away, so did people's hope that William's killer would be found and brought to justice. Nearly all of the snow had disappeared from the ground, except for a curious snowman with a 'Happy Saint Patrick's Day' banner in its arms. People admired how well the snowman managed to stay frozen, despite the rising temperatures. One day in the month of May, a group of kids playing by the snowman accidentally knocked into the snowman's arm, revealing the human arm trapped inside. William's body had been found.

The police reopened the cold case on William's murder. Rather foolishly, the murderer left the murder weapon lodged in William's stomach. DNA and fingerprint evidence collected from the knife quickly identified the murderer. Simone Johnson, William's bitter rival, was not the killer. It was Mary

Stevenson, a rival of both Simone and William, who committed the act. In a court appearance, Mary confessed to the whole murder. "I murdered William. People may not know this, but competitive snowman building is an extremely competitive sport, and I would do anything, *anything*, to win. I didn't end up winning, but I did place second, and I feel confident enough in my snowman building skills that I could beat Simone in next year's competition. William, on the other hand, was on another level, and there was no way I would be able to beat him. So I killed him to reduce the competition. I'd like to point out that my snowman with William inside lasted until May, long after all the other snow had melted. I think this proves that I am actually the best snowman builder in New York and well deserving of the state championship title. Upon reflection, I do regret using a knife as my murder weapon and leaving it in William's body for the police to find. I should have used something more discreet, like an icicle".

While the judge and jury were mildly amused by Mary's confession, they still sentenced her to life in prison and barred her from ever building a snowman again. Since then, the competitive snowman building community of New York has never been the same.