

LEVELED BOOK • L

# Catching Santa



Illustrated by David Cockcroft

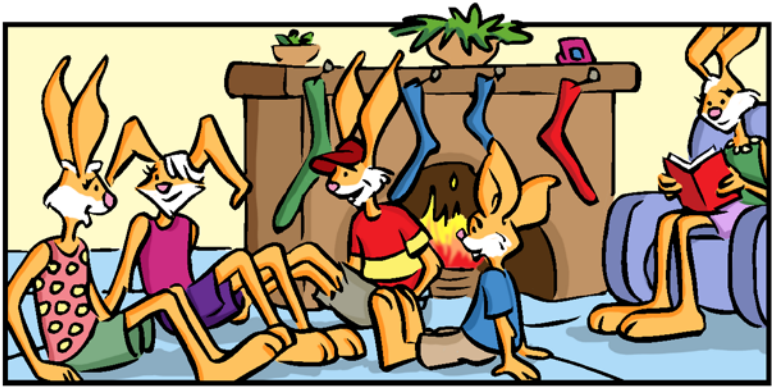
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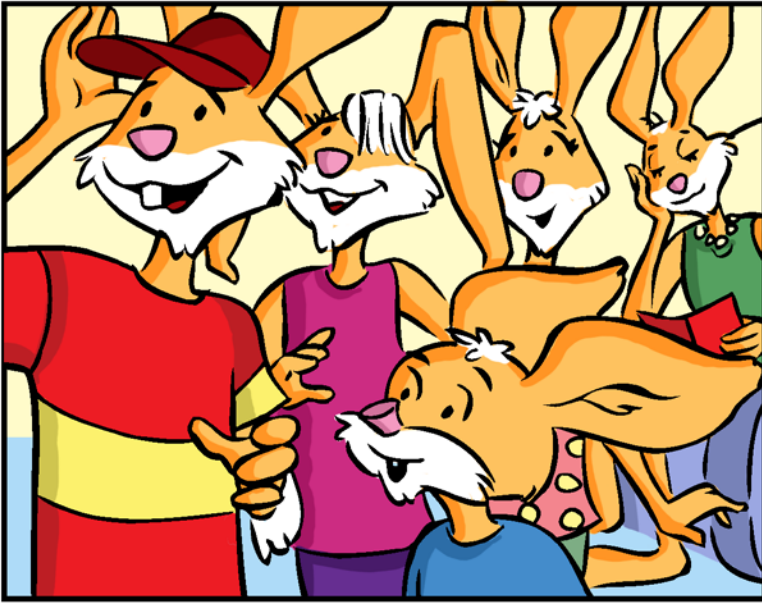
On Christmas Eve, the Hoppers hung their stockings by the fire. They planned to stay awake until Santa Claus came.

“What can we do to pass the time?” asked Fluffy Tail.

“One of us could tell a fairy tale,” said Floppy Ears.

“Why don’t we make some popcorn?” said Speedy Legs.

The Hoppers munched popcorn and waited for Santa Claus.



Ten o'clock came, then eleven o'clock. The Hoppers were wide awake except for Mother Hopper, who fell asleep in her chair.

Then Speedy Legs said, "I hear something."

"It sounds like sleigh bells," said Floppy Ears.

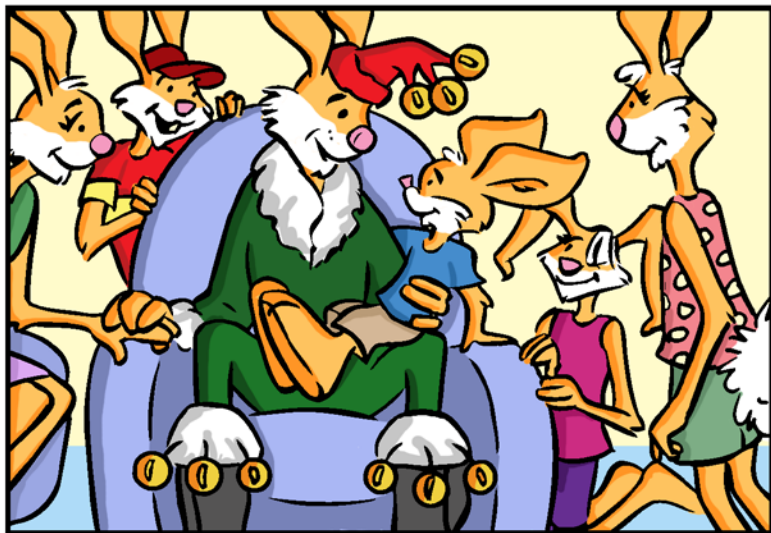
"Is it Santa?" cried Fluffy Tail.

The sleigh bells came closer and closer. Soon they heard footsteps coming toward the door. Snubby Nose ran to the door and opened it.

“It is Papa!” cried Snubby Nose.

Sure enough, Papa Hopper was home late from getting the Hoppers their presents. He had sleigh bells on his hat and boots.





“Merry Christmas, Hoppers,” said Papa Hopper. He hugged all the Hoppers and sat in a chair next to Mother Hopper.

Snubby Nose hopped in his lap.

“Did you see Santa Claus?” he asked.

“Santa Claus!” said Papa Hopper, sitting up. “You Hoppers know that Santa won’t come unless you’re asleep.”

“That’s right,” said Mother Hopper.  
“Off to bed, all of you.”

The Hoppers groaned, but they went to bed. Mother and Papa Hopper tucked them in and turned off the lights. It was very late, and soon all the Hoppers fell asleep—all except Snubby Nose.

“I want to see Santa Claus,” thought Snubby Nose. “I will creep downstairs with my flashlight.”



Snubby Nose took his flashlight and snuck downstairs. Soon, he heard sleigh bells coming closer. He heard the pitter-patter of reindeer feet on the roof. Then he heard Santa Claus coming down the chimney. He waited until he saw the fur on Santa's boots. Then Snubby Nose turned on his flashlight and cried, "Ha! I see you!"





Santa Claus jumped straight into the air, he was so surprised. “Oh! What are you doing up, Snubby Nose? You know you’re supposed to be asleep!”



Snubby Nose was very startled. He dropped his flashlight and jumped into the closet under the stairs.

“I’m sorry I was bad!” Snubby Nose said to himself. “I hope Santa doesn’t put coal in my stocking.”



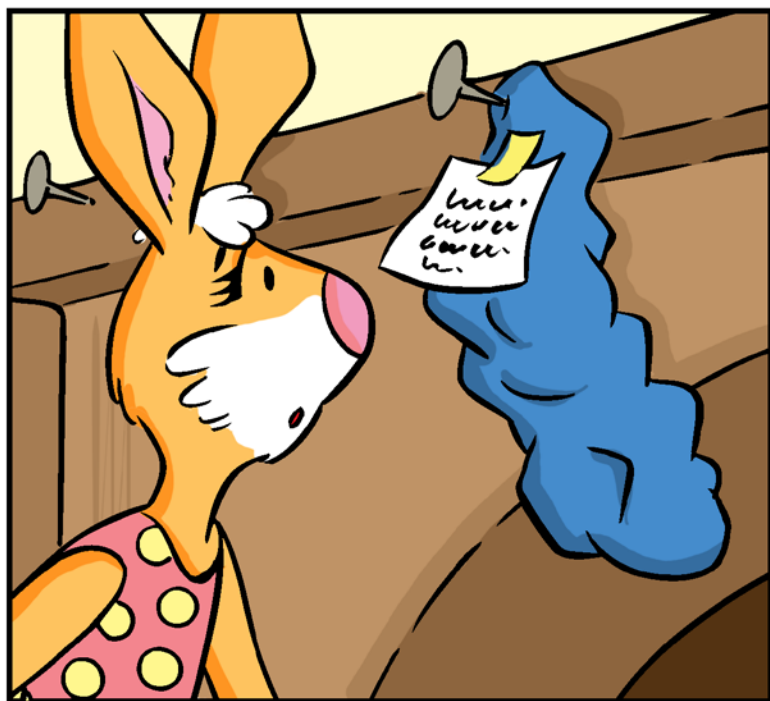
Snubby Nose could hear Santa filling the stockings. Then, he heard him going up the chimney, and he heard the patter of reindeer hoofs. Finally, he heard sleigh bells ringing into the distance. Snubby Nose was upset, but it was very late, and soon he fell asleep.

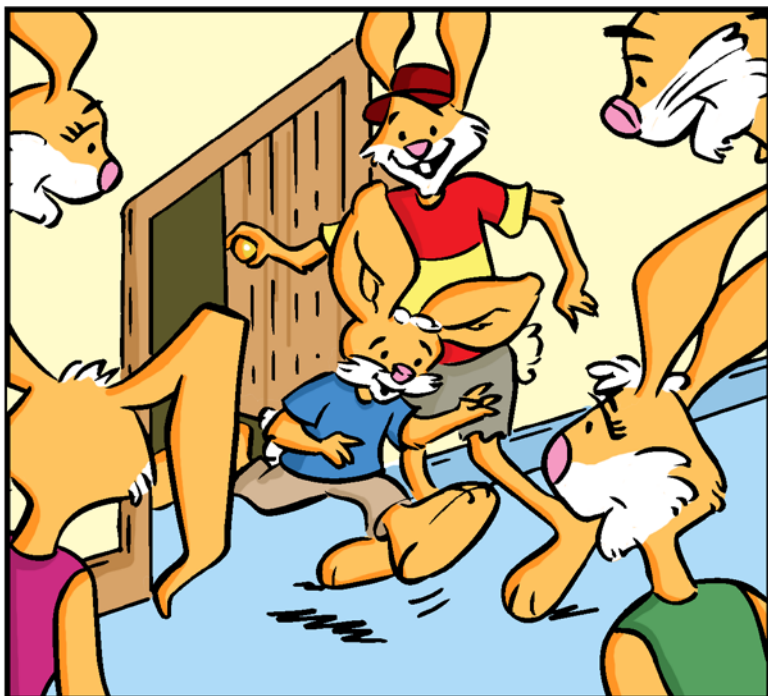
The next morning, Speedy Legs, Floppy Ears, and Fluffy Tail ran downstairs. Their stockings were full of treats. Mother and Papa Hopper came down after them.



“Where is Snubby Nose?” asked Papa Hopper. No one could find him, but then Fluffy Tail saw a note taped to Snubby Nose’s stocking. It read:

“I met Snubby Nose last night,  
And we both had quite a fright.  
Snubby Nose had such a scare,  
He ran and hid beneath the stair.”





Speedy Legs opened the closet door, and out jumped Snubby Nose.

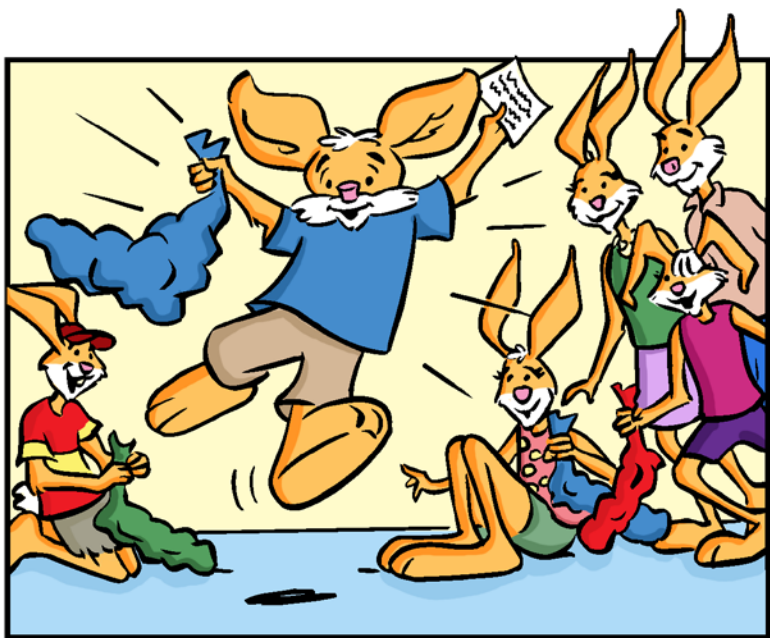
“Santa Claus filled my stocking with coal, didn’t he?” cried Snubby Nose.

“I don’t think so,” said Mother Hopper. Snubby Nose ran to his stocking and found it full of treats, just like the other Hoppers’.

Then Snubby Nose found another note at the bottom of his stocking. It read:

“Santa Claus is very shy,  
But he will never pass you by.”

Snubby Nose laughed and jumped up and down. “I will never try to catch Santa again,” he said. Then the Hoppers all had a merry Christmas.



Catching Santa  
A Hoppers Story  
Level L Leveled Book  
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an original story by Laura Rountree Smith  
Illustrated by David Cockcroft

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*A Reading A-Z Level L Leveled Book*

*Word Count: 609*



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