SHELL SHOCKED


Trouble in Santa Claus Land

By Art Stevens


Santa's reindeer were furious. No way were they going to risk their lives this year to bring presents to all the kids in the world. Not with Covid-19 raging everywhere.


Santa: Dear reindeer, you can't let me down now. You'll break the hearts of billions if you don't take me to the chimneys of the world. Children everywhere are looking forward to celebrating Christmas this year and expect their bicycles and dolls in their Christmas stockings. They've had a tough year with the virus and all and we need to lift their hearts. In fact I'm told that more kids are washing their hands than ever before which is a stunning development in and of itself.


Dasher: But we don't have a vaccine yet. How can we take a chance on getting the virus? Would that make you and all the kids happy?


Santa: We've been delivering Christmas presents for thousands of years. Don't you think it would be noticed if we didn't do it this year? All the kids in the world would rise up and disobey their parents. And stop washing their hands. Is that what you want?


Dancer: But we don't want to get sick. Our health insurance plan up here in the Arctic Circle doesn't cover pre-existing conditions. If we get sick who's to take care of us? The elves?


All the reindeer began to laugh sarcastically and Rudolph, who was warming up in the bullpen, started to flash his red nose.


Santa: I've heard from my friends down below that they're coming up with vaccines soon. But not nearly in time for our annual journey. I hear you, dear deer; we've got a real dilemma. What to do, what to do?


Cupid: Santa, we don't want to let the kids down either. But we don't want to get sick doing it. Is there someone way we can protect ourselves so that we don't have to worry about trying to find an available bed in a veterinarian clinic should we happen to come down with the virus?

Santa:  How about a custom tailored mask?

Vixen:  Our horns would get in the way.

Comet:  Besides the huge trade winds would blow the masks right off our heads.  Masks are vital for people on earth but they won't work for us.  We're built differently.

Santa:  (getting despondent) Oh, what to do, what to do.

At that point Rudolph the reindeer sauntered over with a happy expression on his face.

Rudolph:  I can help, Santa.

Santa:  Rudolph, you're only famous because of your red nose. But you're not even on the A team for delivery of the billions of presents we must deliver.  What can you do?

Rudolph:  (His red nose lighting, beaming and flashing).  Because of my red nose I'm immune to the virus.

Santa:  What do you mean immune?  How could your red nose possibly make you immune?

Rudolph:  A week ago I had a cough and went to the heavenly clinic.  The doctors gave me every conceivable test they had and came out scratching their heads.  They told me that there were some genes in my nose that prevented me from getting any disease.

Santa:  That's wonderful.  But how does that help the other reindeer?

Rudolph:  Simple.  The doctors told me that if my red nose touched anyone else's nose they, too, would become immune to the virus.  So all I have to do is rub noses with all the reindeer.

Santa:  Rudolph, God bless you.  You've saved the world from further sadness and disillusionment.  A Christmas without Santa and the reindeer would be worse than another World Series not won by the New York Yankees.

So Rudolph approached each of the reindeer, rubbed his shiny red nose on theirs and voila – the virus threat was gone.

Merriment ensued as Santa and the reindeer began to ready themselves for their annual eventful journey.  Santa approached Rudolph and said:

"Rudolph, you simply can't stay up here while the reindeer and I carry out our journey."

"Why, not?" Rudolph cried thinking the worse.

"Because," Santa said with a twinkle in his eye, "you're going to head the team of reindeer this year.  It's the least we can do for your wonderful good deed.  Never again will anyone forget about Rudolph the red nose

Reindeer."

And all was well with the world.

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