

by  
Lianna Denney

illustrated by  
Amanda Denney  
and Lianna Denney

# Dedication

To my grandparents  
Rick + Kareh  
-L.D

To my grandmother, Brenda Troup,  
who helped me <sup>learn to</sup> draw the  
reindeer, by taking me horseback riding.  
To Lauren Eckstein, the reindeer's  
namesake.  
Amanda

## Table of Contents

At the Zoo .....	2
Christmas Eve .....	7
Christmas .....	21



# Chapter 1: At the Zoo

One December afternoon, Santa came to the zoo to find reindeer for his sleigh team. He needed reindeer that were strong, healthy and not pregnant. He wanted to use only one reindeer that flew for him last year. He had his favorite in mind!

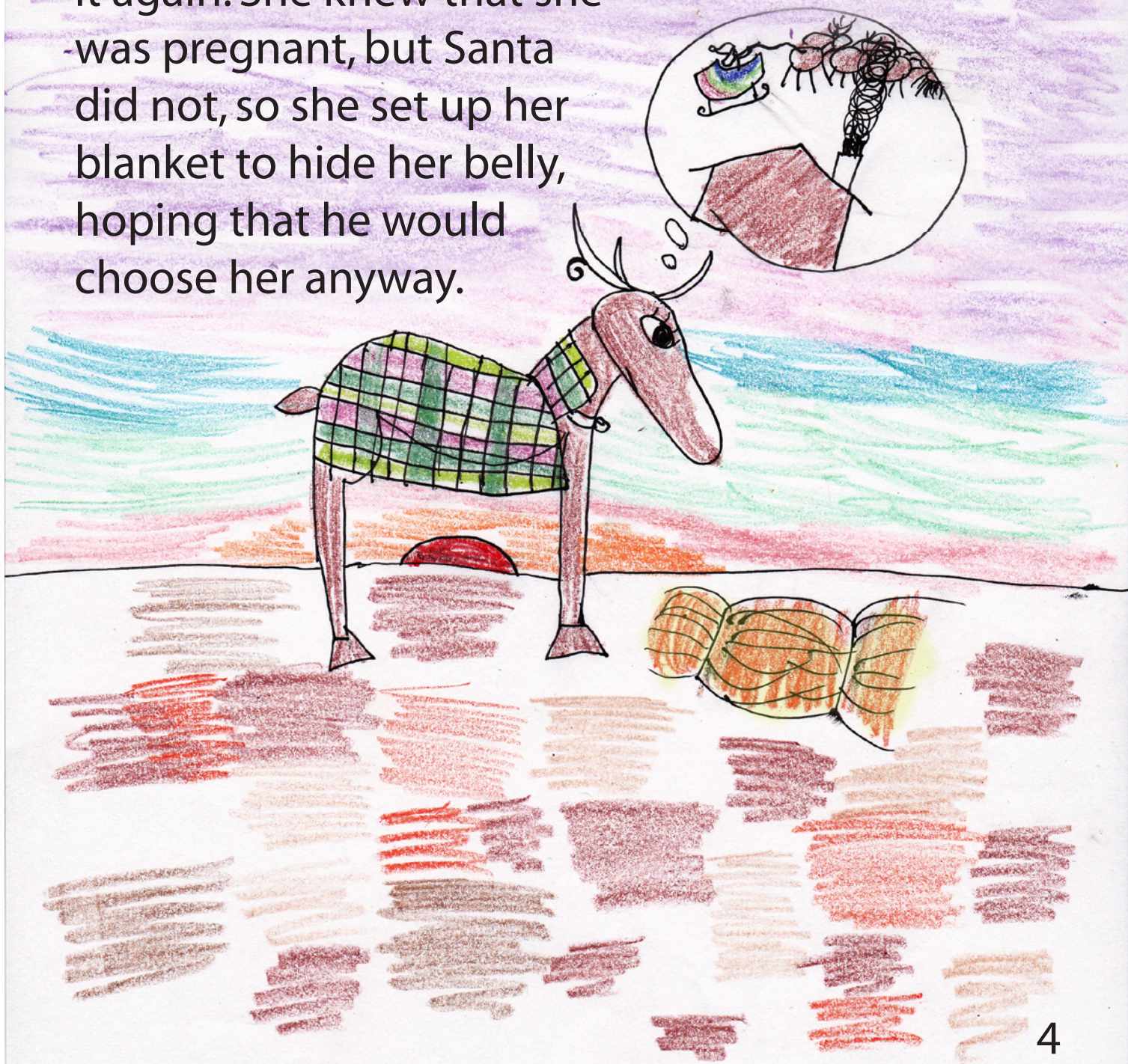




Santa walked over to the reindeer exhibit, remembering how helpful Megan had been last year. He wanted to invite her, and also to find other reindeer that had a kristier. A kristier is a swirl attached to a reindeer's antlers, that gives a reindeer the magic to fly. Santa knew that he could put a kristier on a reindeer that wasn't born with one, but if some had been born with a kristier, flying would be totally easy. If a reindeer was born with a kristier, it could fly as soon as it was born.



Megan's heart started beating faster as Santa walked toward her exhibit. She hoped she would be on the Christmas Eve team again this year. She loved racing over the rooftops to carry Santa from house to house, and she really wanted to do it again. She knew that she was pregnant, but Santa did not, so she set up her blanket to hide her belly, hoping that he would choose her anyway.





First, Santa chose Cora, the reindeer with the largest kristier. Her antlers had a very pretty swirl hanging off the side, which gave her the magic to fly. Then, he noticed Megan's husband Jack, whose antlers were plain, but his muscles were amazing. Santa remembered that he could add a kristier to Jack's antlers, and he would be able to learn to fly beautifully.



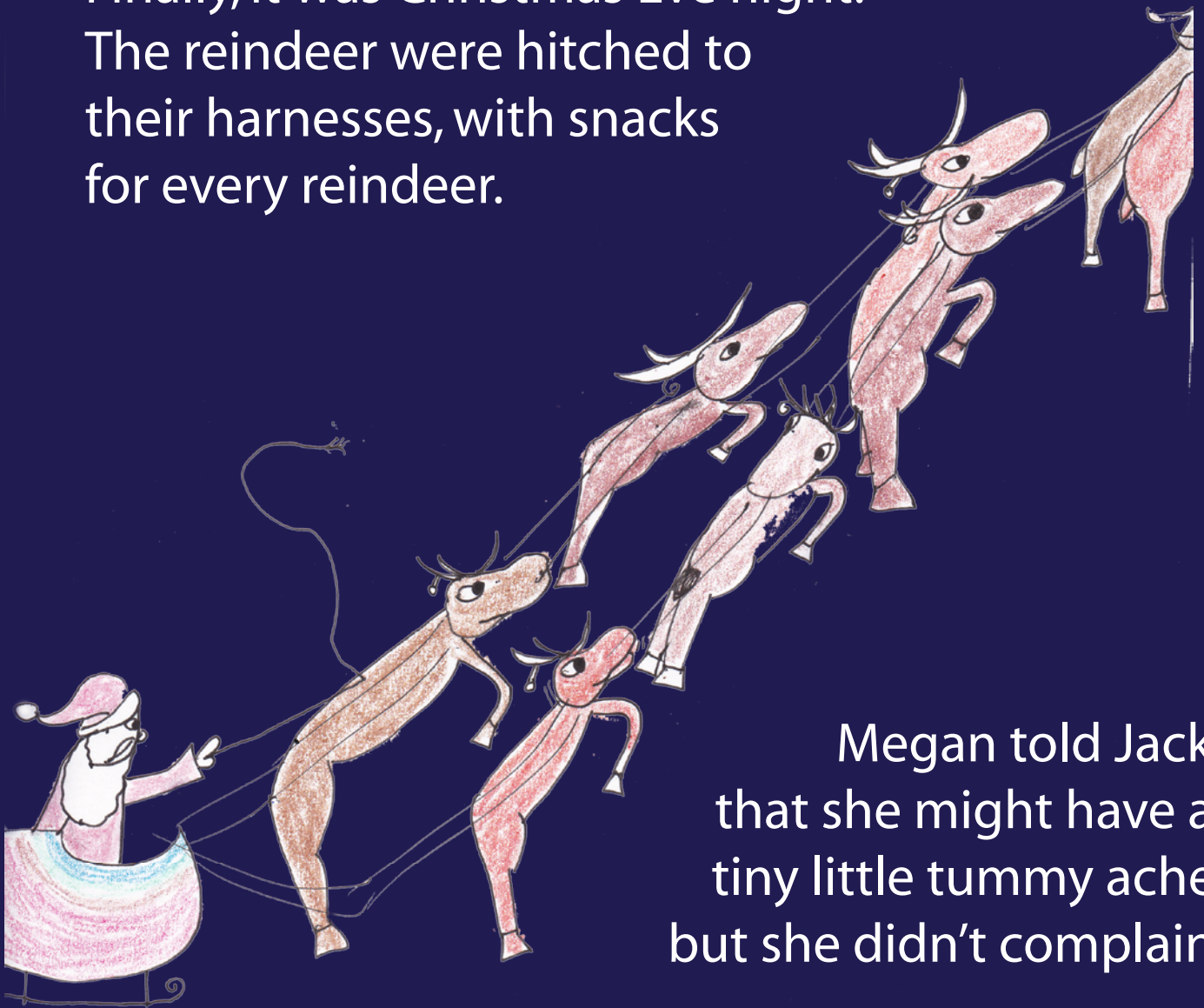




When Santa had chosen 7 healthy new reindeer, he invited Megan to be his leader. He loved the way that Megan was really strong and patient, and she had worked hard right through the end of the night last Christmas Eve. Megan was so proud when Santa chose her!

# Chapter Two: Christmas Eve

Finally, it was Christmas Eve night!  
The reindeer were hitched to  
their harnesses, with snacks  
for every reindeer.



Megan told Jack  
that she might have a  
tiny little tummy ache,  
but she didn't complain.



The first house had burned down a few years ago, so Santa gave them special gifts! He went down the chimney with lots of chocolate, new clothes, and a few dishes.





The second house had 3 chimneys. The family had 12 kids, a mom and a dad!

While Santa tried the first chimney, he noticed that there was a fire built in that fireplace and it wasn't safe for him to jump down. Santa walked to the next chimney. It had a fire in it, too!







Megan felt a big jump in her tummy. She knew then that she would have the baby TONIGHT! And she hadn't even told Santa that she was pregnant! She felt as if Santa would get angry with her.

Megan was also worried about something else: Would her baby have a kristier? If it didn't, would it be safe in the sky? She asked her friend Cora to be her midwife, and she tried to think about happy things.





Finally, Santa found a chimney that was safe to go in. Megan watched him disappear. Her heart pounded. She worked hard. With a gigantic push, a baby reindeer was born! Megan was the proud mother of a reindeer girl! The first thing she needed to know was: Does she have a kristier?



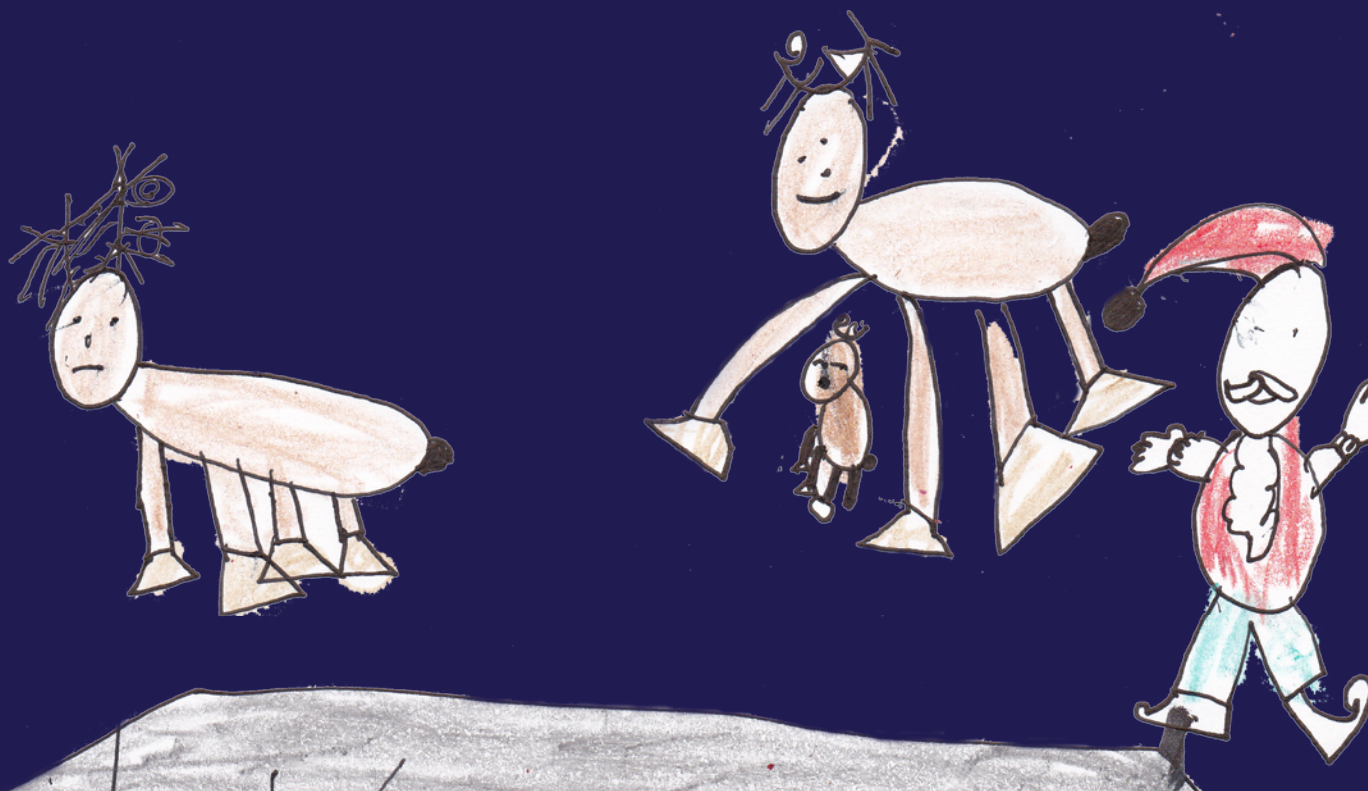




Jack was the one who found out that the baby had a kristier like her mama's. The baby would be safe in the sky! Megan was so relieved that her baby had a kristier. She decided to name the baby Lauren.



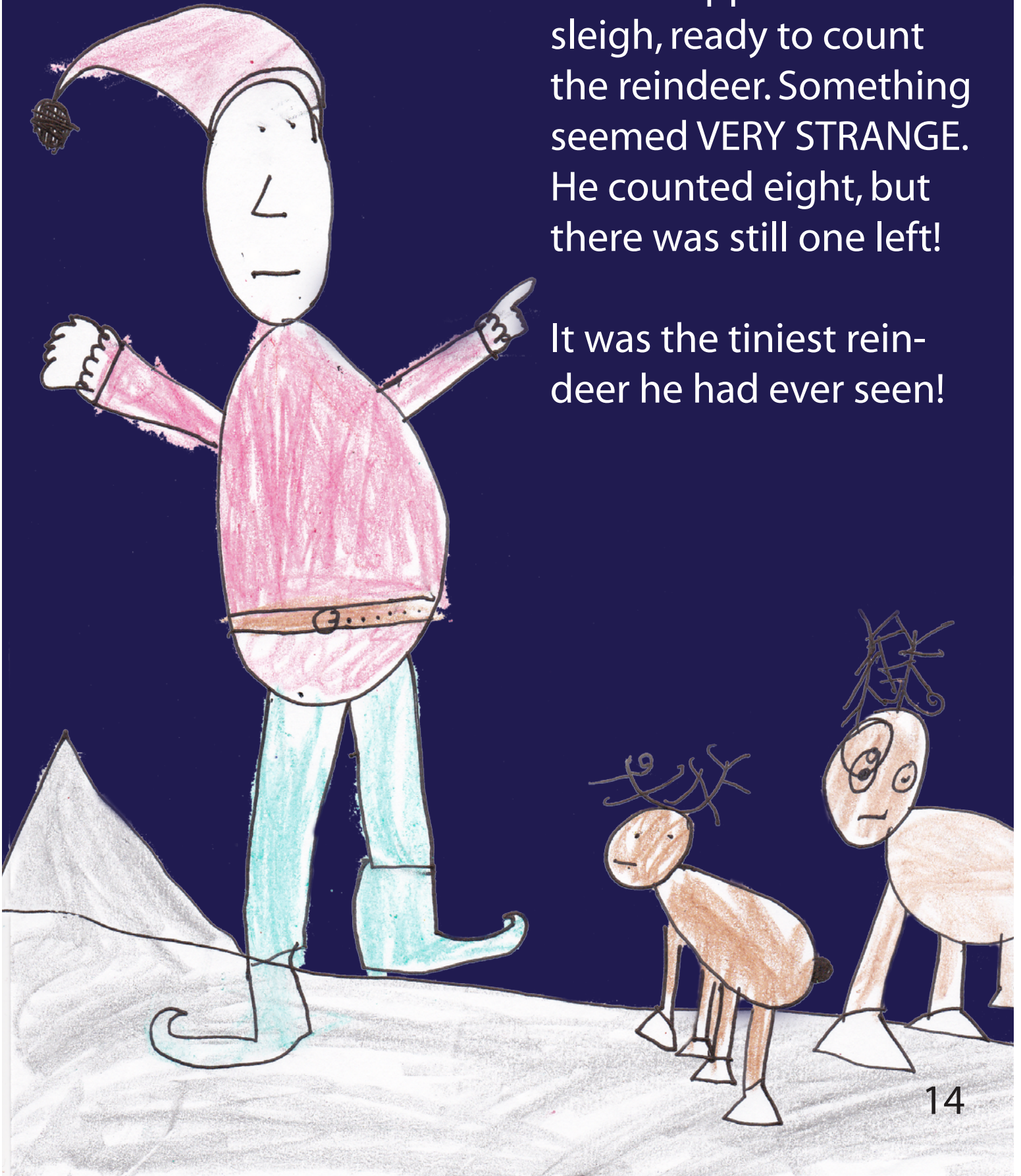
Santa finally came out of the house that had 12 children living in it. He walked toward the sleigh across the huge roof. Megan's heart pounded, and she started shaking, because she thought that Santa would be angry when he found out her secret. All the other reindeer were silent, wondering how Santa would react.



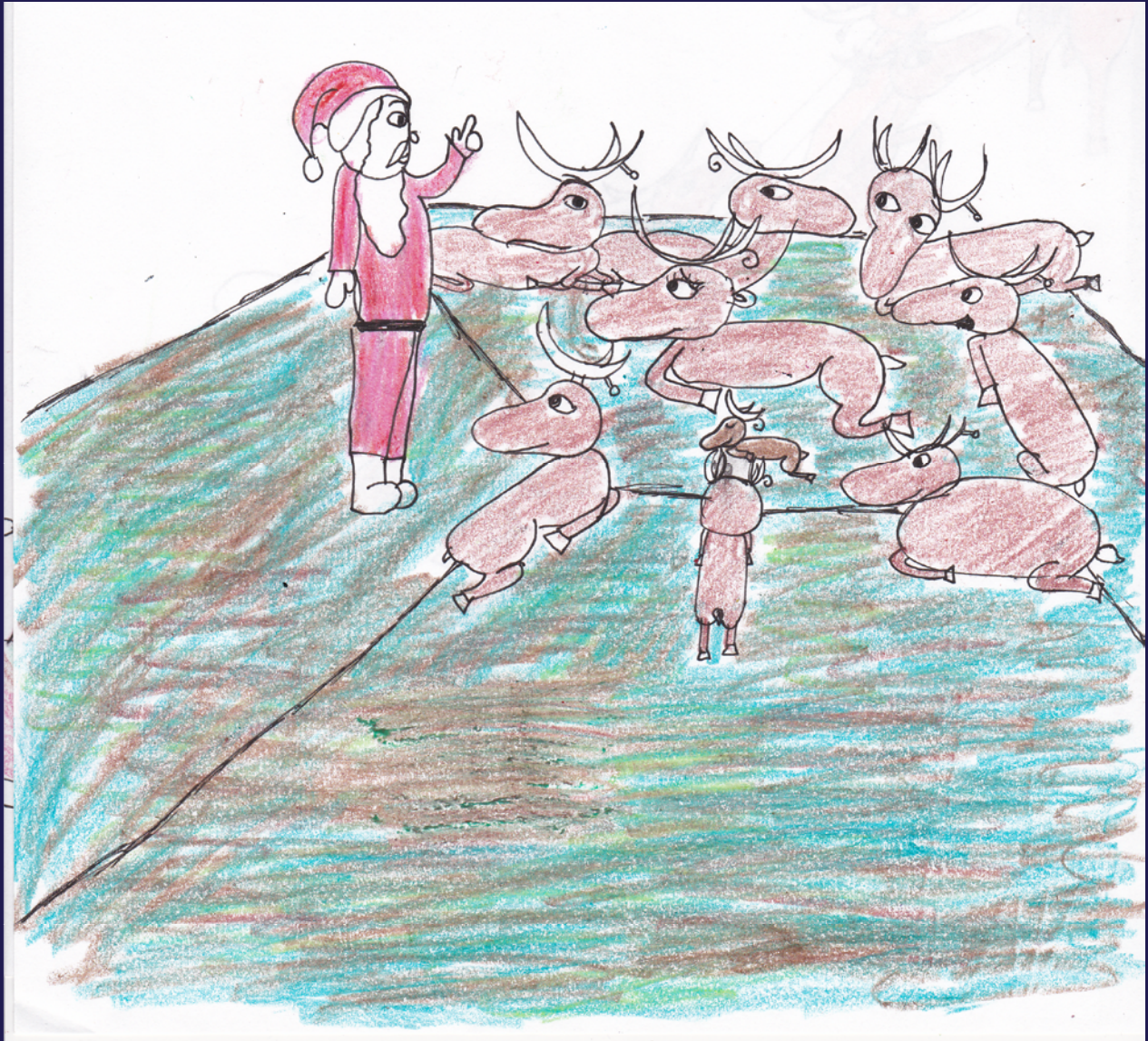


Santa hopped into his sleigh, ready to count the reindeer. Something seemed VERY STRANGE. He counted eight, but there was still one left!

It was the tiniest reindeer he had ever seen!







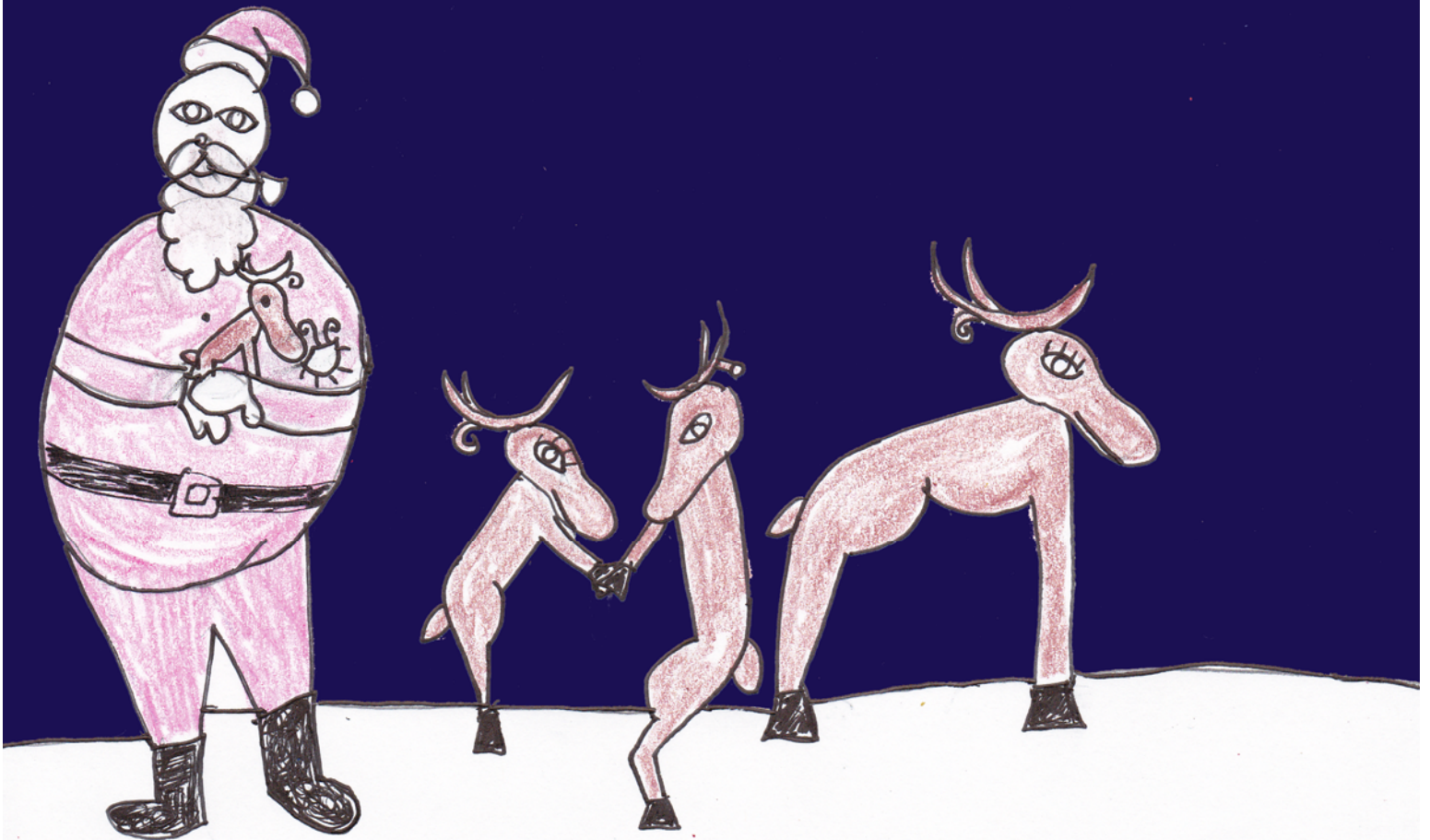
“Where did this baby come from?!” he shouted. Megan spoke in a tiny voice, “She is my daughter Lauren, just born, with a kristier.” Everyone held their breath.

Suddenly, Santa broke into a smile. He thought for a moment.



“All right, Lauren may sit next to me near the toy sack. Megan? Do you want to ride back here, near your baby?” “Yes!” said Megan.

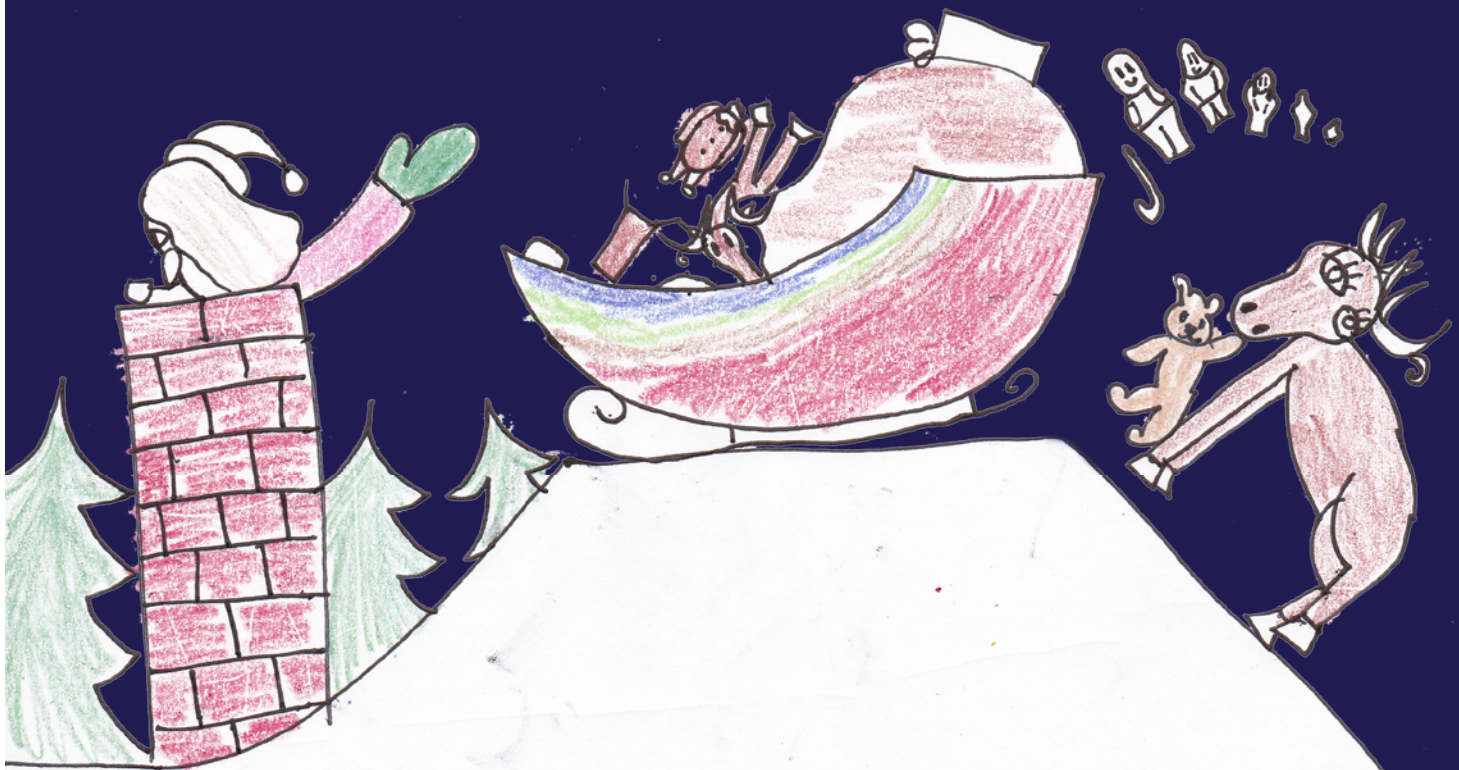
Santa asked Jessica to go in the front instead, then whistled to his team.



Jack said, “How are you feeling?” Megan did not feel good, but she pretended to feel fine. Flying hurt her tummy, but she continued on.



When they reached the fifteenth house, Santa picked up 20 toys and went in the chimney. There were still a lot more toys in the toy sack. Lauren was very excited about the toy sack, so she spilled it. She smelled something very good and it was a hollow chocolate Santa! She bit the chocolate, and the head came right off!









Santa went outside to get Lauren to show the boy. When he found her, he was shocked! He reminded himself that Lauren was just a baby, and he should not get angry with her. Cora was the only reindeer free to watch Lauren, so he pulled Cora aside and spoke to her angrily.

“If you can not keep control over this baby, I will hitch her up in your place, because I will let her fly on the team, and you can stay here until morning.” Cora bowed her head, thinking this is so unfair, but who can argue with Santa?







Santa popped back down the chimney to tell Alex, "Sorry, but Lauren is not behaving, so you cannot see her." He asked Alex to go upstairs and close his eyes, so that Santa could fill the stockings in that house with the 20 toys that he had brought inside.



# Chapter three: Christmas

The second to last house was the scariest. The roof was flat with slanted sides, and the reindeer could run around and get some exercise. Megan was the only one still attached to her harness, because she was so tired from the long night of giving birth and flying a sleigh.





Cora was mad at Jack, because she had gotten in trouble with Santa, even though she didn't think it was her fault that Lauren was eating Santa's toys. "Hey, I had to take care of Megan!" Jack said.



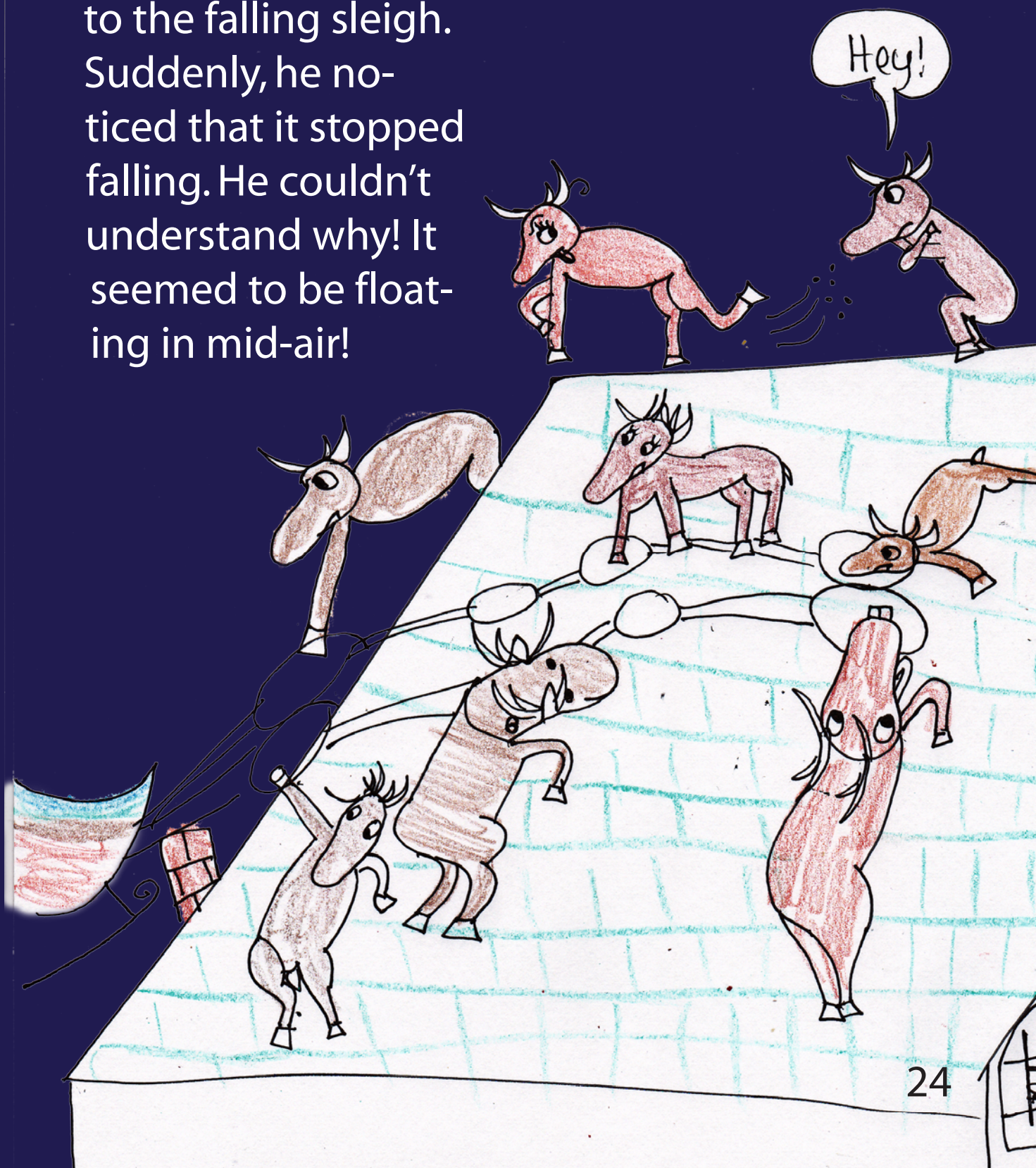


Cora replied, "But now Santa thinks that I am not a responsible reindeer." She shoved her hip against Jack. He pushed back, but since he was so strong, he did it harder than he expected to. He gasped, as the sleigh began to slide off the edge of the roof. What would he do to save all the toys?





The reindeer were scattered all over the roof. Santa would be back at any moment. What if the sleigh crashed to the ground? He moved closer to the falling sleigh. Suddenly, he noticed that it stopped falling. He couldn't understand why! It seemed to be floating in mid-air!





Underneath the sleigh, Lauren huffed and puffed, but she couldn't believe how light the sleigh felt above her antlers. Her muscles felt very strong, and she held still with her magic kristier. Prancer gasped, "Look, Lauren is holding up the sleigh!" and everyone cheered!





Jack called proudly, "Look, Cora, my little girl rescued all of us! She saved the sleigh from crashing to the ground!"

Cora smiled. "Wow, she must have gotten her strong muscles from you. She also got a kristier from her mommy. We are so lucky!"





Megan told Santa everything that happened. Lauren had saved Christmas Eve! Santa gave Lauren a little pat, and promised her one last Chocolate Santa, because he knew she loved them.





## About the author

Lianna Denney is a first grader at Jaworek Elementary School in Marlborough, MA. She thought of the idea of a kristier and began to tell this story while she was on her first backpacking trip over the summer. She loves to read, sing, play the piano, play school, and go horseback riding. She's really looking forward to Christmas this year so that she can share this story with her family and teachers. Working on this project helped her learn to type with the right fingers. Lianna wants to be a teacher when she grows up, and is really glad that Amanda helped her draw all those rooftops and reindeer and Santas.



## About the illustrator

Amanda Denney is a third grader at Jaworek. She had never drawn anything recognizable until the age of 4, but at that point she began to draw constantly, becoming more and more expressive with her characters and cartoon portrayals of action and detail. Amanda is also a horseback rider, and

thinks that the time she spends with horses every week has helped her to create reindeer with personality. Amanda loves Christmas, and enjoyed collaborating with her amazing younger sister in making this book come to life.



