

# SFX story: A TRIP TO THE NORTH POLE

## SFX audience:

1. Wolves howling
2. Marching Men

## SFX stage:

1. Sleigh bells (x1)
2. Train (x1)
3. Train Whistle (x1)
4. Horse (x1)
5. Horse (x1)
6. Thunder (x1)
7. Teeth rattle (x1)
8. Bell (x1)

## Reader:

1. Box that rattles

On Christmas Eve, many years ago, I lay quietly in my bed. I did not rustle the sheets. I breathed slowly and silently. I was listening for a sound – the ringing bells of Santa’s sleigh. I imagined I heard them. \*

Late that night I heard a real sound – the noise of a train approaching. \*

I looked through my window and saw a locomotive standing perfectly still in front of my house. It was wrapped in an apron of steam. A guard stood at the open door of one of the cars. He looked up at my window and waved to me.

I put on my slippers and dressing-gown and tiptoed downstairs I shut the front door quietly and walked outside.

“All aboard!” the guard cried out, and blew his whistle. \* “Are you coming?”

“Where?” I asked.

“Why, to the North Pole, of course. This is the Polar Express.”

I took his outstretched hand and he pulled me aboard and blew his whistle again. \*

The carriage was filled with other children, all in their pyjamas and slippers. We travelled through the countryside past galloping horses\* -- lots of them. \* Soon there were no more lights to be seen. We travelled through cold, dark forests where lean wolves howled. \* And the thunder roared. \*

We climbed mountains so high it seemed as if we would scrape the moon. But the Polar Express never slowed. Faster and faster we ran along. \*

We crossed a barren desert of ice. “There, “said the guard, “is the North Pole.” And he blew his **whistle**. \*

The North Pole. It was a huge city standing alone at the top of the world, filled with factories where every Christmas toy was made.

“Look!” shouted one of the children. “The elves!” We saw hundreds of elves **marching** towards us. \* The guard led us outside. It was so cold my **teeth rattled**. \*

Then, suddenly, right in front of us, stood Santa’s sleigh! And his reindeer!

The reindeer were excited. They pranced and paced, ringing the silver **sleigh bells** that hung from their harnesses. \*

Santa beckoned to me. I jumped into his sleigh and sat on his knee. “Now, what would you like for Christmas?”

I knew I could have any present I could imagine. But the thing I wanted most for Christmas was one silver bell from Santa’s sleigh. When I asked, Santa smiled and told an elf to cut a bell from a reindeer’s harness. The elf tossed it up to Santa. Santa stood up, holding the bell high in the air and called out, “The first gift of Christmas!” He handed the bell to me and I put it in my dressing-gown pocket. The guard helped me down from the sleigh.

Santa cracked his whip and the reindeer and sleigh climbed into the cold, dark polar sky, circled once and disappeared.

As soon as we were back in the Polar Express the other children asked to see my bell. I reached into my pocket, but the only thing I felt was a hole. I had lost the silver bell from Santa’s sleigh!

The **train** gave a sudden lurch and started moving.\* We were on our way home, back through the forests where the **wolves** howled, \* and the **thunder** roared. \* Back through the countryside where **horses** galloped \* -- lots of them \*-- and soon I saw my own front door. The guard waved goodbye, blew his **whistle** \* and the **train** thundered off. \*

On Christmas morning I was up early to open my presents. One of them was nearly hidden behind the Christmas tree. It was a little box which **rattled** when I shook it. \* Inside was a silver bell with a note: “Found this on the seat of my sleigh. Mend that hole in your pocket.” The note was signed “Mr C.”

I shook the **bell**. It made the most beautiful sound I had ever heard. \*