

Santa Soaked

A Story for All Ages



As told by Santa Claus
with Carl Lindemann

Illustrated by Milandi Coetzer

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To learn how to take part in this
storytelling initiative, please visit

SantaSoaked.net

For the rising legions of
young climate activists
- whatever their age



WHY THIS BOOK?

Santa Soaked – A Story for All Ages is a much-needed turn in a tale that's largely unchanged for over a century. Today, Santa's North Pole home is melting along with the rest of the Arctic. His story must adapt or it will become outdated or worse – a climate-denial myth.

Is this a break from the past? It's our present Santa that's gotten off track. His bright and sunny presence casts a deep shadow. He's become the Patron Saint of Consumerism, introducing kids to unsustainable beliefs and behaviors that cloud their future. This interfaith, inclusive revision is a return to roots. He's restored to his origins as a redeemer of children.

The story of Santa's life after the North Pole, an urgent call for youth empowerment, offers a fresh start for us all. For many grownups, the world of hope and possibility we grew up in seems distant. We only hope that our worst fears for ourselves and for our children aren't realized as our abuse of nature threatens to shatter civilization. How to regain the joyful spirit from when we were young enough to believe in Santa?

Telling Santa's timely tale of his spiritual rude awakening brings young and old together for a crucial conversation that is long overdue. By gathering to share our growing awareness, we can accept the challenges and get into action. That's how we find the way forward together. That's how we get back to a better tomorrow.

UNLESS someone like you
cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better.
It's not.

- Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax*

Les grandes personnes ne comprennent
jamais rien toutes seules, et c'est fatigant,
pour les enfants, de toujours et toujours
leur donner des explications.

- Saint-Exupéry, *Le Petit Prince*






This winter warm
was not the norm.


Icicles dripped
in slushy snow
for reasons that
I didn't know.

Why, why didn't I wonder why?

There's a simple something
that you never should forget.
When you live on floating ice,
melting is a major threat.



I remember in my heart
how the ice cracks got their start.
Those little lines grew into vines.



They crept across our workshop,
and reached from roof to floor.
We hoped that this was all,
and there'd be nothing more.



What happened next
was not so nice.
A crumbling wall went
through the ice.

I shouted a warning,

"Everybody out!"

My helpers took the quickest route.



I stayed
to save the list
of all the things
that kids had wished.

It was in my arms, then...
I started to leave

when...



Splash!

Water washed me
through and through.
I was in the ocean blue.



Dunking down then bobbing up,
getting soaked sure shook me up!



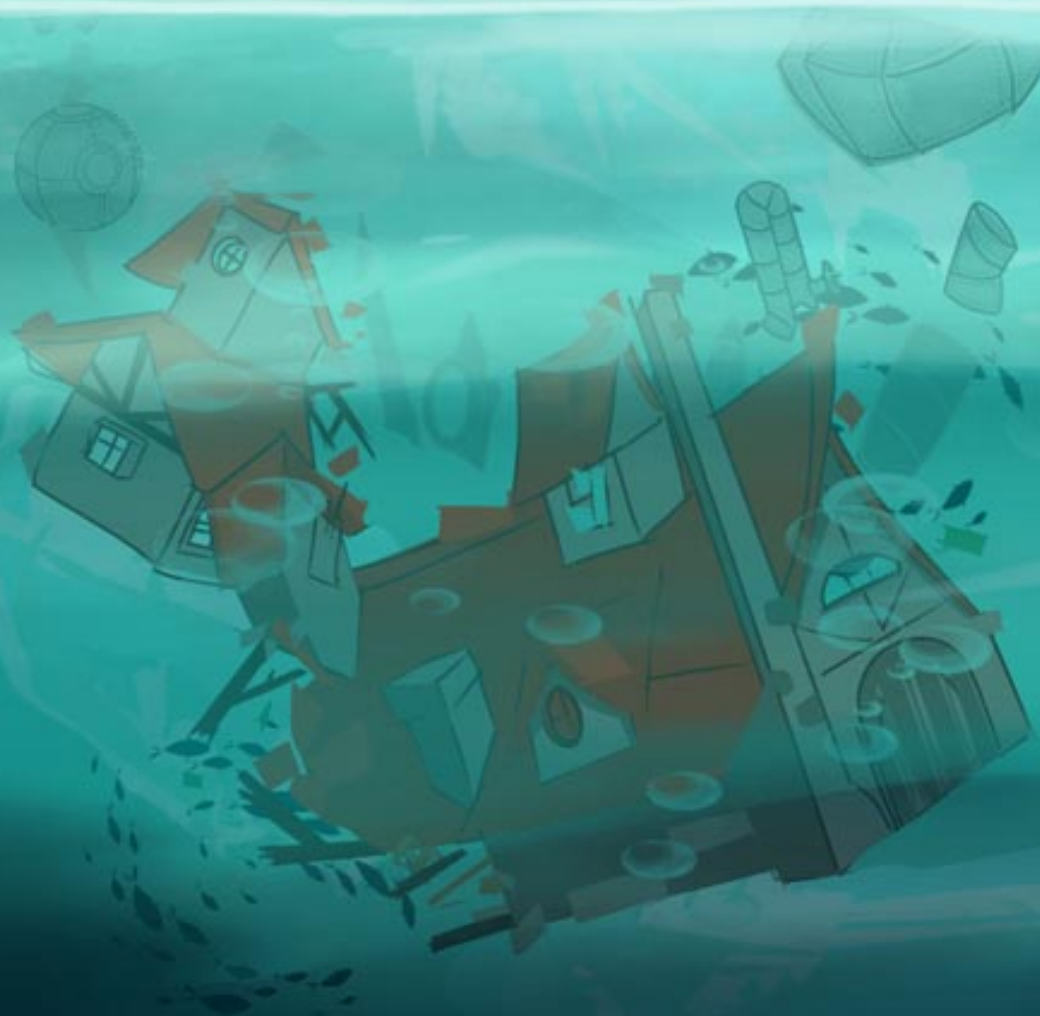
My helpers hauled
me out as the
workshop fell in.

Try to imagine
the incredible din:

Whoosh! Kerplunk!
AH-
WHOOM!!!

What a fright
to see it sink
out of sight!

Down went a treasure
of toys, clothes,
cookies and cake.
Losing these gifts
was such a heartache.



But no one was lost,
and not everything.
Our bunkhouse, somehow,
was still standing.

The wish list, too,
had survived.
We brought it and
ourselves along inside.





The helpers were

full of questions.

“What happened?”

“Should we stay or go?”

They looked to me for things I didn't know.

I looked to the list
for something strange,
and found there's been
a frightful change.

Tornadoes terrified
Tamara and Terrance.

Typhoon trouble
for Tirzah and Tommy,
Tyler and Tyrese, too.



That's what I found just in the T's,
then the same from the A's to the Z's.



All had weather worry wishes.
It was roasting, flooding or bone dry.
We didn't know the reason why.

The kids would know.
They always do.
If I asked them,
I'd know, too.

So I set out to travel,
to see them to unravel
the weird weather mystery.





First, I went to Siberia,
where I met with Zuleika
who was feeling down.

A brown stinky cloud
of smoke like a shroud
was choking her town.

This is what she told me:

"I speak of fire and
the forests it burns.

Raccoon and reindeer, bird and bear
- those are my friends living in there."

I wondered what had caused the blaze.
She answered with a sorrowful gaze.

Kai lived near the Great Barrier Reef,
with an ocean love turned to grief.

"I speak of water,"
they said, holding back tears.

"This home for creatures has started to fail.
The coral has gotten all brittle and pale.
Everything's sickly from minnow to whale."

When I asked the what, how, and why,
they broke down and had a good cry.





Amparo lived on her family's farm
where the land had come to harm.

"I speak of earth," she said.

"Rain pours down to drown our crops.
Hard times here till the flooding stops."

As to the cause, she wouldn't say.

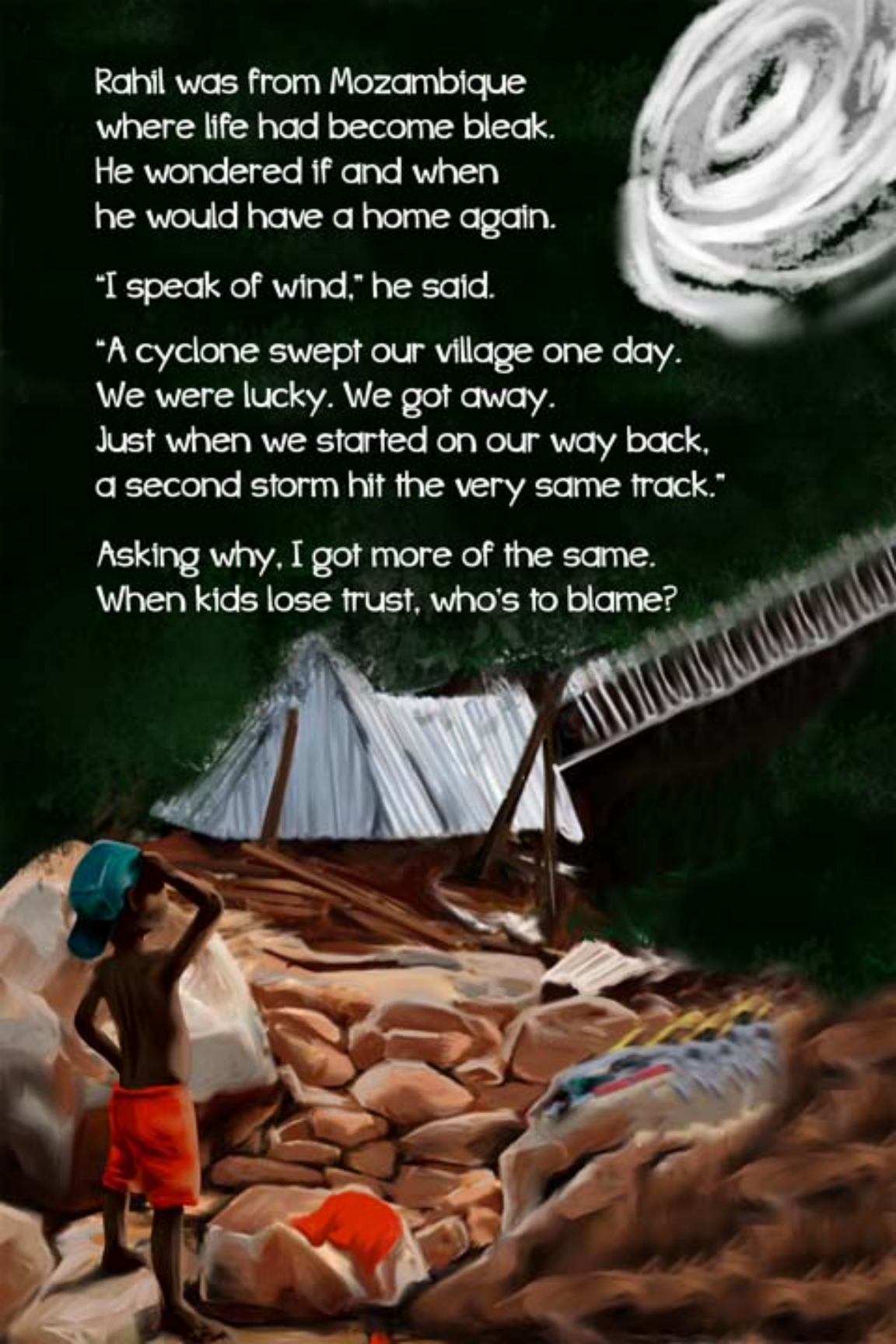
"It doesn't help when kids explain.
We've tried telling grownups time
and time, again and again and again."

Rahil was from Mozambique
where life had become bleak.
He wondered if and when
he would have a home again.

"I speak of wind," he said.

"A cyclone swept our village one day.
We were lucky. We got away.
Just when we started on our way back,
a second storm hit the very same track."

Asking why, I got more of the same.
When kids lose trust, who's to blame?





Hiranya's bothers weren't like the others.
There was something that wasn't quite right.

She had her own room, so sunny and bright.
In each and every shelf and nook,
a cuddly toy or a book.

If happiness was had
by having stuff,
you'd think, for sure,
she had enough.

But she'd sent
such a sorrowful wish.
What could be so amiss
that she hoped...for hope?





Before I could ask,
she took me to task.

“What are you doing here?
It’s the wrong time of year.”

I told her my mission
and, in addition,
the troubles the other kids face.

“I don’t know what’s going on.
Asking hasn’t gone so well.
It seems that no one wants to tell.”

Hiranya looked me in the eye,
and said that she would give it a try.
But first, she made a very sad sigh.

“Adults who don't know
and those that do -
is there much difference
between the two?
Who cares for us? Do you?”



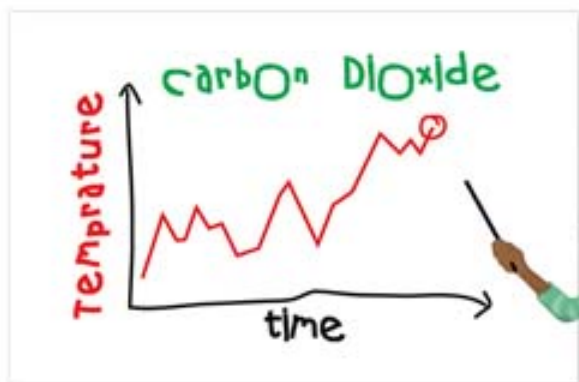
Then she gave a worrying warning
of a world that's warming.

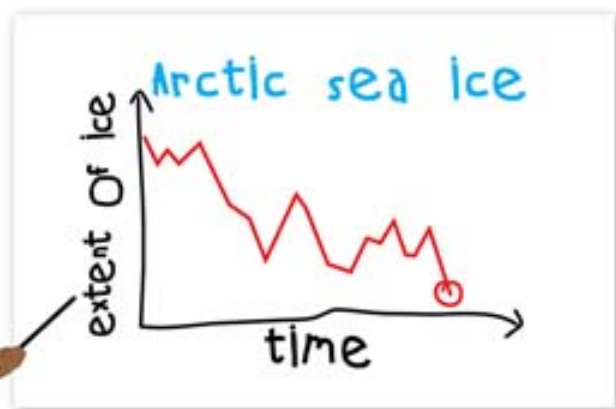
"Fumes from factory and farm
are causing the harm
plus everything else spewing smoke.

What's worse? It's getting worse,
and it isn't easy to reverse."

She showed me
many graphs and charts
from scientists with lots of smarts.

The simple truth? It's plain to see
that climate change means misery.





With temperatures
rising and sea levels too,
I wondered what we ought to do.

She took this as an invitation.
to ask about my situation.

"Now, the Arctic ice is melting fast.
How long can your home there last?"

I told her how I'd gotten soaked.
To my surprise, that got her stoked.

"So, your workshop's been deep-sixed?
You're free to help us get this fixed!"

She told me if I really care
there's something that is so unfair.

"Who gets to clean this climate mess?
Kids get stuck, that's my guess.

Adults in charge, the
leaders of our nations,
talk and talk and talk and talk
in endless conversations.
They make a lot of ballyhoo.
The time to act is overdue."



That stopped me cold,
and started me thinking.
I think I thought until I think.
And then I knew just what to do.

“Success depends on you and
your friends leading my team!”

Hiranya approved,
got on the move,
and was soon in the groove.



She spoke of protest, strike,
and other actions of the like.

“We must be bold
if we're to hold
adults to account!”

Well, I'm the Holly-Jolly guy.
Protest's not my thing, but I'll try!



Then she suggested something
that's really got me going.

Let's come up with wondrous ways
for happy, healthy holidays.

Like, why cut down
a Christmas tree?

Come, gather friends
and plant with me!

These aren't just for yuletide cheer,
but for every day of the year.

We hugged and then parted.
That's how we got started
on our new path.



Heading back, I had a feeling,
watching warming everywhere.

Soon, we would be leaving
the home we'd cherished there.

When I arrived,
we gathered inside
to discuss and decide
where to go and what to do.



I told of where I'd traveled
and how the children had unraveled
the weird weather mystery.

“What kids need and nothing less
is help to fix this climate mess.”

The helpers cheered and all agreed,
it's best to let the children lead.





They also had a great idea
for where we ought to go from here.

“Let’s tell the tale that you just told,
so that everyone both young and old,
will be in-the-know.

Once the clueless have a clue,
there’s so much more for us to do.”

And so I wrote this book for you.

For now,
it's the best gift I've got.
But there's another
I've thought about a lot.
It's one, together,
we shall make:
a better future
not just for our children,
but for their children's
children's children's sake.



The End

...of a New Beginning

HELP SANTA MAKE THE GIFT

There's more than a single "why" to explain climate change. The one Hiranya tells is easy to understand:

*Fumes from factory and farm
are causing the harm plus
everything else spewing smoke.*

It's simple to see how such pollution is cooking our world. Roll up the car windows on a sunny day. The sun's energy warms the inside, and the glass holds it in. It gets hot fast! That's how a greenhouse works. These pollutants are called "greenhouse gasses" since they trap the sun's energy in much the same way.

We've known the climate science about this for years. We've also known how we need to stop polluting and start using "happier, healthier" ways. Still, our society holds on to many of the worst, unhealthiest habits. That raises other questions. Why haven't we made needed changes long ago, and resist them even now?

But the "why" isn't so important as to how we all can get going on bringing these changes ourselves. That's why you're invited to take part in this new holiday tradition. Telling Santa's climate tale is the occasion for family, friends and neighbors to gather. We share our own stories and insights. That's how we get started working together to make the gift of a better, brighter tomorrow.



Santa's Gifting Ways

Imagine arguing over the price of a fire extinguisher as your home goes up in flames! That's what we've seen as our political leadership struggles to face the climate crisis. We know the price of everything and the value of nothing, so decades of negotiation has yielded little.

How can we regain our sense of reality, of value? This gift eBook edition gives a glimpse with a break from our commercialized holidays. It's gifted, offering a profoundly different relationship than the market-based mindset. By focusing on value, not price, we create more abundant relationships. This helps fosters community, our most powerful tool in organizing climate action.

Gifting inspires and instills generosity and reciprocity. If you find value in *Santa Soaked*, here's our holiday wish-list: First, share this gift eBook with those close to you. Better yet, gather friends and family to read it out loud! If you like that, you'll love this: gift your time and talent to participate in climate storytelling circles.

Your purchase of print versions for yourself or as gifts for others also supports us in our mission. Finally, your direct gift of financial support is also needed and appreciated. Help us realize the vision of creating a truly global platform to support the climate movement. To find out more, please visit SantaSoaked.net/gifting





P.S. little or no French? Here's the Saint-Exupéry quote:
The Big People never understand anything on their own, and It is exhausting for children to be endlessly explaining things to them.

Santa's Helpers

Carl Lindemann began his ministry at Phillips Exeter Academy and First Church in Salem, MA (Unitarian). He keeps a Vipassana meditation practice and serves on the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative advisory board.

Milandi Coetzer is an all-around South African creative. Her roots are in fine arts, branching out from furniture and graphic design to illustration.