

# *Santa's Sugar*

Story by Jane Gerencher with Illustrations by Michael Patch

---

## ***Image 1: Book Cover***

(After first image, all image numbers are in lower right corner)

## ***Image 2***

“Twink, Flutter, Mercury! Quick, now. Get the torches and gather up the other elves. Santa will be landing very soon.

Nugget, you bring Sugar. You know how Santa likes to see her at the end of the trip.”

Mrs. Claus and the elves hurried into the crisp, cold night, the glowing light from their torches pushing back the darkness. The sky was navy blue with diamond stars winking brightly. The cool moon was dropping lower in the sky. Along the edge of the horizon there was the slightest thread of light rising.

*Image 3*

Holding their torches high, the elves spread out along the ground on either side of a flat strip of land covered with hard-packed snow.

“Nicely done, elves. The reindeer are sure to have a safe landing. Santa will be so glad to see us.”

“Momma Claus, look! In the distance. Over the moon. Can you see? I think it is the sleigh!”

*Image 4*

The excited elves began to sing their sweet songs, calling encouragement and welcome to Santa and the reindeer. As the sleigh sailed closer, the sound of Santa’s laughing and calling to them mingled with the snorting and hum of the reindeer and the silvery jingle of the harness bells.

What a splendid sight to watch the sleigh arc and dip closer and closer to the lights from the torches! Just when it looked like

the sleigh would miss the landing strip, it did a wide circle and then slipped smoothly to the ground.

*Image 5*

A cheer rose from the elves as Santa stood in the sleigh.

“Thank you, my good elves. The reindeer and I long for home with the delivery of the last gift. We fly home lifted on the wings of the joy we were able to spread. The sight of your torches lights our spirits and your greetings warm our hearts. It is good to be home!

And my trusted reindeer, you have earned a vigorous brushing, sweet hay, crunchy carrots, juicy apples, and warm, straw beds. I am grateful for your strong backs, winged feet, and dancing spirits. Thank you, my friends.”

***Image 6***

Tossing his hat on the bench, Santa stepped down from the sleigh, and eager elves hurried to attend to the reindeer, calling them by name and removing their harnesses. Mrs. Claus hugged Santa, glad to have him back safe from his Christmas Eve journey.

Santa, tired but happy, asked with a hearty laugh, “Where is Sugar? Surely at the end of a long journey, I should be allowed a little sugar!”

***Image 7***

Then, the littlest elf, who was behind Mrs. Claus, stepped forward proudly and held up a cat whose white fur glistened in the moonlight.

*Image 8*

“Ah, there you are, Sugar. Thank you, Nugget.” Santa reached for the tiny cat and lifted her gently in his huge mittens and cuddled her to his chest. The snowy white kitty rubbed against Santa’s red coat, purring her delight.

*Image 9*

Sugar was a gift from Mrs. Claus the previous Christmas. Santa had named her “Sugar” because she was so white her fur shimmered like poured sugar in the sunlight. Her eyes were clear turquoise with gold flecks, and her nose was a rosy pink.

Sugar often played on Santa’s desk as he planned new toys for Christmas, batting at his pen and rolling on his lists. The sound of Santa’s chuckles delighted the elves.

***Image 10***

Sugar slept snuggled at the foot of his bed. She especially liked to curl up among Santa's clothes where she looked like some of the white trim on his red coat. Mrs. Claus said Sugar was just the little extra sweetness Santa needed to cheer him up when he was tired.

***Image 11***

It was Nugget's job to care for Sugar. Nugget had been given many jobs in the workshop, but he seemed always to make mistakes. When assigned to paint toys, he got more paint on himself than he did on the toys. Santa joked that he would have to leave Nugget under a tree as a gift because he was painted with bright colors just like a toy.

*Image 12*

The head elf, Twink, had then tried having Nugget deliver toys from the workshop to the packaging department, but Nugget stopped along the way to play with the delightful toys he was delivering, and they never quite got to the packaging department.

*Image 13*

Switched to the reindeer barns, Nugget did less cleaning and feeding and more time whispering songs into the reindeer's ears, thinking it would make their days happier.

*Image 14*

When Nugget was transferred to the kitchen to help Mrs. Claus, he was disappointed that there didn't seem to be a place for him, though Mrs. Claus let him help with cookie baking and candy

making. He liked putting chocolate chips in the cookies and dipping colorful lollipops, but he didn't feel like a proper elf working in the kitchen.

### *Image 15*

The year that Mrs. Claus gave Santa the small, purring kitten, Santa had declared that he needed someone to take care of Sugar. She was so tiny and Santa loved her so. Santa had surveyed all his elves and rubbed his bearded chin. His eyes flashed and twinkled as he studied each faithful helper. Then, he focused on Nugget.

“Nugget, I believe I can trust you to take care of my precious Sugar. Do you think this is a job that you could do for me?”

### *Image 16*

Nugget couldn't believe his pointy ears. Santa wanted him for such an important job! He trembled in his turned up shoes and

squirmed in his stripped tights. He thought of all the jobs he had had in the past. The other elves thought he was useless. Nugget knew how much Santa treasured Sugar. Could Nugget do this important job?

*Image 17*

“Me, Santa? Are you sure?”

“Nugget, it is the calling of an elf to help where help is needed. This tiny creature needs to be fed. She needs fresh water. She cannot be underfoot in the workshop. When I am tending to the sleigh and reindeer, I need to know Sugar is safe. Nugget, I need your help. Will you help me?”

In the quiet, waiting for Nugget’s answer, the other elves shifted from foot to foot, scratching their heads, and rolling their eyes at each other. Surely, Nugget would fail at this task too. How could Santa entrust his sweet Sugar to Nugget when any one of them could do the job so well?

Twink edged closer to Nugget and poked him with his elbow. When Nugget startled and raised his eyes to Twink, Twink scowled at him and whispered, “Santa is waiting for an answer.”

*Image 18*

Quivering, Nugget stepped forward and raised his small voice, “Santa, I will take the best care of Sugar. You can count on me.”

There was a low sigh from the elves. Santa beamed at Nugget and replied, “Nugget, I knew I could trust this job to you. Thank you. I know Mrs. Claus will miss you in the kitchen.”

When Santa said that, a red-cheeked elf, named Jolly, blurted, “Well, there will be more cookies and candies without Nugget in the kitchen eating them! That’s for sure!”

Santa laughed heartily. Mrs. Claus smiled and hugged Nugget. Nugget blushed and giggled. All the elves generously called out, “Good luck, Nugget!”

*Image 19*

For that whole first year of Sugar's life, Nugget was a devoted caretaker of the playful cat. He brushed her silky fur. He rescued her from high shelves. He shielded her from cold drafts. He carried her to Santa's office. He made toys for her. Santa was pleased with Nugget and Nugget was pleased with himself.

*Image 20*

On this particular Christmas Eve, when Santa returned from his deliveries, Sugar leaped from his arms and snooped among the piles of empty toy sacks, purring and rubbing against their coarseness. Santa was busy telling Mrs. Claus, as he did each year, of the children he had seen nestled all snug in their beds, and how the stockings were hung by the chimneys with care. Nugget liked

these stories and listened intently about Christmas trees and glowing lights and plates of cookies.

### *Image 21*

Nugget and Mrs. Claus led Santa into the warm kitchen for hot chocolate, vegetable stew and fresh baked bread, while the other elves busied themselves getting the sleigh into the barn and caring for the weary reindeer. Nugget ran ahead to hold the door open for Santa and Mrs. Claus.

### *Image 22*

As Santa sat drinking his hot chocolate and wiggling his toes in the cozy slippers Nugget had gotten for his tired feet, a worried elf ran into the kitchen. “Santa, we found this present in one of the sacks. Some child has not received her gift!”

“Oh, my! Let me see that, Willow. I know this child well. Oh, dear! Her family has so little. Without this gift, she will surely think that no one in the whole rest of the world cares for her. No, no, no. This will not do! Willow, alert the reindeer. We need to make a fast trip. Christmas must not come until this gift arrives!”

### *Image 23*

Willow ran from the kitchen. Santa rose from his chair with new energy, pulled on his red coat, and raced to the barn, never changing out of his slippers. In a few flashing minutes, the reindeer streaked out of the barn, the bells on their harnesses tinkling in the frosty air, Santa’s voice urging them on. Each reindeer pulled the sleigh with all its might so that the little girl would get her gift Christmas morning. By the time Mrs. Claus looked out of the window, the sleigh was in the air and on its way, almost out of sight.

*Image 24*

Nugget was breathless with all the excitement. Remembering his responsibility, he turned to take Sugar to bed, but she wasn't in the kitchen. Nugget wasn't worried. Sometimes the little cat wandered into the workshop or perhaps she had already gone to snuggle on Santa's bed.

When Nugget checked the workshop, Sugar wasn't there. She wasn't on Santa's bed either. Now Nugget began to worry. He sat on Santa's footstool, squeezing his eyes closed, and tried to remember where he had last seen the little cat. If only he hadn't listened to Santa's stories. If only he hadn't gone for Santa's slippers. What was he to do?

Nugget checked all the places he could think of, but he could not find Sugar. What could he do? Then he remembered seeing Sugar on the sleigh among the toy sacks. Could she still be on the sleigh?

***Image 25***

By this time, Santa was well on his way to the child's house. What should Nugget do? He had failed again. With a heavy heart, Nugget crept to the reindeer barn, avoiding all the other elves, and sat on a bale of hay, crying cloudy blue tears of sadness and saying aloud, "What have I done? I am a bad elf. If only I could find Santa and rescue Sugar from the cold."

***Image 26***

In the barn that night were reindeer in training who sometimes filled in for reindeer who needed a rest. One of them, Twizzle, had often heard Nugget sing songs in the reindeer's ears and loved these sweet gifts from the gentle little elf. She nuzzled Nugget and urged him onto her back.

***Image 27***

Before Nugget knew what was happening to him, Twizzle flew out of the barn, carrying a scared little elf, clinging desperately to her neck.

Twizzle followed the sparkling trail of Santa's sleigh with all her might through the early silver hours of Christmas morning. The wind whistled through her antlers and made Nugget's hat sweep back to a point. Nugget clung to the reindeer, feeling his spirit lighten by his friend's help and the hope that Sugar would be all right.

***Image 28***

Soon Nugget saw a house with a sleigh and eight reindeer on the roof. As Twizzle landed lightly on the roof, Nugget jumped from the reindeer's back and climbed into the sleigh. And there,

nestled in Santa's hat, was Sugar, sleeping warm and peacefully in the corner of the bench.

Nugget's heart leaped with joy. He wanted nothing else in the world but the safety of this little cat. He lifted the cap with her in it and put it inside his jacket to better protect her from the icy morning air.

### *Image 29*

When Santa returned to the sleigh, he saw Nugget huddled on the bench of the sleigh with two turquoise eyes peering out of his jacket and guessed what had happened.

“Nugget, in my hurry, I did not notice Sugar on the bench. She looks just like the white trim on my hat. But, you, Nugget, came to protect her.”

“Oh, Santa, I lost Sugar. She could have been hurt. I'm not a good elf.” His lips quivered as he spoke and a tear glistened in the corner of his eye.

“Nugget, why am I here tonight?”

Nugget took a deep breath and his voice wavered, “To make sure the little girl gets her present.”

“I made a mistake, Nugget, but I did my best to fix it. Just like you. You listened to your heart and did the right thing. I’m proud of you, Nugget. You are a true elf.”

### *Image 30*

“Come on, Nugget. Time to go home. Ride in the sleigh with me. I think you and I have had enough adventure for one night. Twizzle will go ahead and guide the tired team home. She loves to leap and twirl through the soft clouds. It has been a very good night, Nugget.”

Nugget stretched and settled back into the seat, carefully holding Sugar close to his happy heart. Sugar was safe. He felt taller. He had a friend named Twizzle. He was riding home in the

sleigh next to Santa on Christmas morning. It was a very Merry Christmas, and he was indeed a true elf.

*Image 31 Copyright and website page*

*Image 32 Bookcover page*

*Santa's Sugar* story and illustrations are copyrighted by Jane Gerencer, 2016. All rights reserved. Available free with author's approval for non-profit use, but not free for commercial production. Contact author at [jgnautilus@gmail.com](mailto:jgnautilus@gmail.com).

For related children's activities, go to [www.SantasSugar.com](http://www.SantasSugar.com) where there is also additional information about the three act play form of the *Santa's Sugar* story which is available for production.