Santa's Workshop

ADVENTURES FROM THE NORTH POLE

BOOK 10

The Christmas Post



As told by

Imogen Quillworth

KEEPER OF THE STORY LIBRARY

The Christmas Post

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Told by Imogen Quillworth, Keeper of the Story Library

SantasWorkshop Press

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Chapter 1: A promising sort of rustle



Penny untied the mail sack, and a red envelope slid into her waiting hand.

Then came a blue one. Then three white ones, a green one and a very small envelope with a very large stamp.

“Good morning,” she said to the post.

It answered with a splendid rustle.

At North Pole Post, the Christmas letters were arriving in cheerful armfuls. Penny had brought out extra trays. She read each address quietly and sorted the envelopes, setting the letters for Santa together.

The tiny envelope went beside the red one.

“There. You needn’t stand on tiptoe.”

Across the covered passage, hammers tapped in the Workshop. Wrapping paper crinkled. An elf began humming a Christmas

tune, stopped to ask for scissors, then started again in exactly the same place.

Penny found herself humming along.

Pip arrived with a tray of sealed replies from the Wrapping Room.

“Santa’s finished another batch.”

“How is the writing going?”

“He was choosing his next words when I left.”

Penny cleared a space and lifted the first reply. Its flap was firmly closed. She pictured the moment when whoever received it would slip a finger underneath and open it.

She smiled and set it down.

“This is the part I never get to see.”

“The opening?”

“All those envelopes I send out. Then somebody gets the lovely bit.”

Pip glanced at the empty sack.

“You’ve had quite a lot of opening this morning.”

“Sacks,” said Penny. “Sacks are different.”

The replies were narrow and square, cream and white. One envelope was so broad that it stuck out on both sides of the tray. Beside it lay a small cream envelope.

Penny fetched her red ribbon.

“Our first big Christmas bundle.”

“With one very big letter.”

“It’ll have to make room for the little ones.”

She laid the broad envelope at the bottom and arranged the others above it. The red bow sat beautifully on top.

Penny slipped her hands underneath.

The little cream envelope began to slide.

Chapter 2: The envelope with elbows



Penny caught it against her finger and lowered the bundle onto the tray.

“Stay here a moment, please.”

Pip looked down at the little envelope.

“You haven’t been sent yet.”

Penny untied the bow. The broad envelope had bent between her hands, loosening the ribbon around the smaller ones.

“An envelope with elbows,” she said.

Pip studied its wide corners.

“It does take up rather a lot of space.”

Penny set the broad envelope beside the small cream one. The little reply barely reached halfway across it.

“These two don’t belong in the same bundle.”

“Shall I tell them?”

“I think they’ve told us.”

Penny smiled and set the replies in two groups, keeping the smaller ones together. Nothing was creased or torn.

From the Workshop came a ripping sound, followed by laughter.

Pip glanced towards the passage.

“That will be the wrapping paper.”

“It sounds ready for Christmas.” Penny looked at her untied ribbon. “I wanted these to be ready too.”

“There’s time.”

Penny drew a fresh sheet of blank paper towards her.

“Then we’ll try two bundles. With these first.”

She folded the paper into a broad rectangle and some little squares to match the envelopes. The real replies stayed in their tray.

Pip picked up the tiny square.

“Another letter?”

“A practice one. Nothing inside.”

“Santa will appreciate the short reading.”

Penny laughed and fetched two packing boards, one large and one small.

She laid the broad practice paper on the large board. Its corners no longer drooped.

“Somewhere to rest your elbows.”

“The next tray of replies may be ready soon,” Pip said.

“Could you ask the Wrapping Room to keep it there until I come? I’d like to finish this one first.”

“Of course.”

Pip set down the tiny square and went to arrange it.

Penny drew the small board towards her. This bundle would have its own red bow.

Chapter 3: Room for the little ones



Penny tied each group of practice papers to its board. When Pip returned, she was carrying a fresh sack of incoming letters.

“Another armful,” Pip said, setting it beside the empty sack.

“They can wait just there.” Penny handed her the smaller practice bundle.

“Would you carry that to the Dispatch Counter?”

Pip lifted it, and Penny took the larger one. They carried the practice bundles to the Dispatch Counter. The broad paper stayed flat, and the tiny square stayed beneath its bow.

“Arrived,” Pip announced.

Penny grinned.

“Both of them.”

Back in the Sorting Room, Penny used the same boards and ribbons for the real replies. Soon two red bows sat side by side at the Dispatch Counter, with every envelope secure beneath them.

Pip looked from the broad bundle to the little one.

“Your first big Christmas bundle has become two.”

“I think we may clap,” said Penny, and gave one small clap.

Pip joined her, trying to look solemn. Neither quite managed it.

Penny rested her hands on the counter for a moment.

She could almost hear a flap being lifted, a letter unfolding, someone calling, “Look!”

From across the passage came the Christmas tune again. This time the humming reached the end.

Penny hummed the last few notes herself.

Then she went back for the new sack beside the empty one.

Chapter 4: A letter for Penny



With the replies ready, there was room to spread out the new post.

Penny untied the sack. Envelopes rustled onto the tray: a long yellow one, two red ones and a little white one barely larger than its stamp.

She sorted them until the sack was empty. Santa's tray filled with letters of every colour.

Soon he would lift the next one, unfold its pages and begin reading.

Penny reached for the tray just as Pip returned with two warm drinks and a plate of biscuits.

"The next replies are waiting at the Wrapping Room. They'll keep them there while we have these."

Penny looked at the biscuits.

"Two."

“I counted carefully.”

They sat with their drinks. Penny took a bite. For a moment there was only the sound of wrapping paper from the Workshop and Pip trying to catch a crumb before it reached her lap.

Then Pip put a tiny folded square beside Penny’s cup.

“One more delivery.”

Penny recognised the blank paper from their practice bundle.

Pip had folded it into a tiny pretend envelope. A little flap stuck up.

“For me?”

Pip nodded.

Penny set down her biscuit. She eased the flap free and opened the paper carefully.

It was still quite blank.

She looked at Pip.

“There’s nothing in it.”

“I know. But you’ve had the opening.”

Penny laughed, and Pip’s pleased smile widened.

Penny smoothed the little square on her palm. She folded it again, taking care with its tiny flap, and tucked it into her pocket, well away from the biscuit crumbs.

When their cups were empty, Pip gathered them up. Penny picked up Santa’s tray.

Across the passage, the Workshop rang with taps and cheerful voices. The next replies were waiting at the Wrapping Room.

Penny carried the tray across, with the little letter snug in her pocket.