

The Other Santa

By Sarah Northwood and family

It was the night before Christmas and things were anything but still. The electric fire hummed in the living room, blasting out a shield of warmth. Outside, the dark cold night was miserable. *The sky is too clear for snow*, David thought as his lips curled into a smile. He didn't like the fun snow brought other children, he didn't like Christmas and he hated anyone else being happy, except for him.

Richard and June, David's parents, were arguing loudly enough to shake the walls in the kitchen. Mum had been busy picking up David's toys; if she'd told him to put them away once, she must have told him a thousand times. David couldn't be bothered putting his toys away. He only thought about himself, why should he care about anyone else?

But poor old Dad had tripped on the fire engine David had left on the stairs earlier that day and now had a nasty colourful bruise on his head. (They didn't know that David had left it there on purpose.) David's mum and dad were arguing about whether it was even worth putting out milk and cookies for Santa; surely he wouldn't visit for such a naughty little boy who didn't even believe in him.

Even if Santa did come, David was far too wicked to get any presents. That didn't matter, he could always persuade Mum to get him something in the January sales. All he had to do was cry hard enough and she would melt like butter.

Upstairs, David was supposed to be asleep, but hearing his mum and dad arguing wasn't helping. His stomach growled loudly. He couldn't go into the kitchen and risk reminding them who had caused all the trouble in the first place. So instead he snuck into the hall where Mum kept her handbag. She wouldn't miss the money he stole from her purse. She hadn't before.

David wasn't allowed out of the house by himself but he pulled on his coat and wrapped a scarf around his neck. He wouldn't let some silly rules stop him from doing exactly what he wanted. As he shut the door behind him, he felt a moment of panic as a bitter wind hit his face. *I'm not afraid of anything*, he whispered to himself.

Meanwhile, the South Pole, home to The Other Santa, was a flurry of activity. Instead of elves hard at working making toys, he had giants, who were loading up coal they had mined into his sleigh. Dressed head to toe in the darkest black, The Other Santa was almost ready to start his mission.

Instead of reindeer to pull the sleigh, The Other Santa had an army of dragons, which had been thrown out of the magical forest because they kept disobeying orders. All naughty creatures were welcome at the South Pole.

On his way to the shop, David passed by his neighbour's house as a wonderfully wicked thought came over him. He always had the most wickedly naughty ideas. *Wouldn't it be fantastic to see the look on their faces in the morning when they see all their gnomes smashed into a million pieces?* David thought they were creepy anyway, he'd be doing them a favour.

As he opened the latch of his neighbour's gate, it creaked disapprovingly, and the wind whistled eerily. *Something moved.* Looking back at the garden, David could have sworn one of the gnomes had got closer. Shaking his head, he reminded himself he wasn't scared of anything.

Tiptoeing quietly into the garden, again the wind whipped, causing his scarf to fly into his face. Waving it away so he could see where he was going, he suddenly screamed. An angry-looking gnome with its teeth bared was standing right in front of him. Terrified, David swung around, almost tripping over his scarf in his hurry to get away. The gnomes were alive! Just then, a flame of light burst across the sky but David didn't notice. He was too busy running home, and he wasn't stopping for anything.

The army of magical creatures and The Other Santa were high in the sky when the sleigh phone rang. The Other Santa's gnome spies had found the naughtiest boy in the world! The Other Santa cackled and stroked his clean-shaven skin in sheer delight. His mission was simple: reward all the bad children for being so naughty by giving them presents stolen from the good children, and leaving the good children with nothing but coal. Now he had found the naughtiest child in all the world. What a joy!

David ran inside, slamming the door behind him, and was immediately greeted by Mum and Dad. "David, where are on Earth have you been?" Mum's face looked all red and blotchy and her eyes were puffy. He'd never seen her so angry. As she came towards him, David was sure he was about to get a smack. Instead Mum pulled him into a hug so tight he could hardly breathe.

Getting down on her knees, she held his face in her hands. "I love you so much! Don't you ever do that to me again, David!"

Feeling guilty at how worried his mum and dad must have been about him, he felt sorry for the first time in his life.

"Would you like a cookie?" Mum asked kindly.

Surprised, David nodded. "Thank you."

"Let's put some out for Santa hey?"

"Ok, Mum," David said gratefully.

Tucking him into bed, David yawned and Mum gave him a kiss. From now on he decided he would be good and he hoped Santa would come after all.

Closing his eyes, he didn't hear The Other Santa slip down the chimney, because he was already fast asleep.

In the morning, like all the other good children, David opened his presents excitedly. Only to find a bag full of coal and a strange set of scorch marks on the carpet...oh!

The End