

The (Secret) Diary of a Reindeer

December 25 – Christmas Day!

Auntie Hilda 'baby' sat me and Fuzz till Mum and Dad and Uncle Rudolph got back. Uncle Rudolph's nose redder than ever.

Adults all merry from 1,428,613 vegemite sandwiches, 3,679,428,017 peanut butter sandwiches and 4 million carrots.

It's not fair! How come they get to travel all around the world every year and eat carrots! It's not like I'm a little kid anymore! I'm twelve and a quarter!

Well, I am in human years. That's HEAPS old enough to pull a sleigh. Plus, I'm top of my class in flying.

Grown-ups. Ha!

Christmas dinner at Aunt Hilda's. Grownups all got carrots to eat AGAIN. Fuzz and I just got moss. Ha!

Cool presents though. Bright pink reins with spangles from Mum and Dad. Socks from Auntie Hilda. Okay, not so cool. How many reindeers wear socks? Uncle Rudolph gave me a small sleigh to practice pulling! His nose may be seriously uncool but he's a pretty good uncle. Diary from Fuzz.

Diaries are SOOO cool! I'm going to write in mine every day.

December 26

Grown-ups have indigestion. Too many carrots. Bet Santa's cross if Uncle Rudolph does smelly ones like that at 120,000 metres.

March 30

Found diary in gym bag. Smells. Managed to rub off the bit of mouldy orange.

Too much homework – again! If it takes seven reindeer one night to deliver 15 billion fluffy rabbits, how long does it take eleven reindeer to deliver 147 billion teddy bears? Like, whatever. Who cares?

But made me think. Why can't I help pull the sleigh?

It'd fly much faster with me too!

March 31

Down to workshops after school to see Santa. Elves busily tapping away. Am SO glad I'm not an elf. Imagine working indoors every day! Give me a blizzard and a headwind at 20,000 metres...

Told Santa how much faster sleigh would be if I helped pull it. Santa smiled that big professional smile I've seen EVERY Christmas since I was small.

'Ho, ho, ho,' he said. 'Don't be impatient, young lady. Your Mum and Dad are two of my best reindeer. You'll help pull the sleigh one day.'

'But I'm top of flying class already,' I told him. 'I work out every day in gym.'

Santa said 'Ho, ho, ho!' again. Then gave me a balloon!

Grown-ups. Ha!

April 20

Easter Bunny to dinner.

Found chocolate egg in bathroom. Wonder if chocolate as nice as carrots?

April 21

Found chocolate eggs in toilet, under bed and on trampoline in the gym.

Easter Bunny gets around.

April 27

Still finding chocolate eggs...

May 1

Arrk! Mum took down my Reindeer Spunk of the Month poster! Says I can't have nude spunks on my bedroom wall. I said, 'Helllooo? Like, reindeer never wear clothes!' Mum said, 'That is not the point.' Actually is exactly the point!

Grown-ups!

May 15

Studying global warming at school. Elves getting gum-boots. Polar bears look nervous.

May 16

Santa told me to turn music down! Wants me to play *Jingle Bells* instead. Gave me his 'Big CD of Christmas Carols'. Jingle bells! How lame is that? Ha!

May 17

Left 'Big CD of Christmas Carols' accidentally on ice float.

Hope polar bears eat it.

May 18

Polar bear called in with tummy ache. Burped up cover of 'Big CD of Christmas Carols'. Feel guilty. Polar bears already in enough trouble what with melting ice and whatever without me adding to their problems.

June 20

Miss Vixen says must have science project done by tomorrow morning. Pointed out that as it's mid-summer here at the North Pole it won't get dark again for months. Promised to have project done by August. Rest of the class laughed (It was a pretty cool answer). Miss Vixen didn't think it was funny.

Grown-ups have no sense of humour.

Skipped gym. Why bother when can't pull sleigh?

June 27

Shaved head last night. No one noticed.

Sigh.

Sometimes wish I wasn't a reindeer and had more hair to shave.

June 28

Maybe I should dye my ears green?

July 2

Santa says I'll never get to pull the sleigh if I skip gym. I said 'Who cares? Whatever. Sleigh goes too fast to meet boys OR go shopping.' Santa said, 'Think of the excitement. The whole world is watching!

I said, 'Yeah, yeah, whatever.'

August 12

My birthday! New laptop from Mum and Dad! Reindeers don't have laps, but who cares?

Uncle Rudolph and Aunt Hilda gave me box of chocolate-coated moss. Fuzz gave me a special mouse for hooves.

Santa gave me a toy giraffe! He thinks I am two years old!

August 13

Googled 'revolution' on my new laptop. 61,700,000 results.

Too much homework to look at them all.

August 20

Told Mum and Dad I'd joined Animal Liberation. Dad said, 'But YOU'RE an animal!' I said, 'Like, yeeesss!'

August 31

Downloaded 'The Great Train Robbery' on my laptop. Got an idea...

September 14

Back at the gym again. Need to work HARD!

October 11

Barbecue for Dad's birthday.

Don't like barbecued moss but Mum says it's the thought that counts.

Gave Dad a box of antler polish. Helped Mum make fairy bread for elves.

Fairy bread isn't that good barbecued either.

Mrs Claus brought chocolate mousse for dessert. Was about to give her one of my animal liberation pamphlets when Mum whispered that choc mousse is no relation to moose. SOOO embarrassing!

October 21

Had nose pierced.

November 10

Uncle Rudolph's birthday. Mrs Claus made carrot cake with big red cherries on it, just like his nose.

I made card that said 'No 1 nose how gr8 U R!' All sang 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer'.

Uncle Rudolph a bit glum. Didn't even eat birthday cake. Maybe he's on a diet.

November 12

Christmas countdown! Santa has carols playing in the workshop, gym *and in school!!!!*

November 14

Told Uncle Rudolph I'd heard 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer' 10,681 times. Uncle Rudolph said, 'Me too.' Seems kind of grim lately.

Working hard in gym. Got everything planned...

November 14

Have now heard 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer' 10, 721,347 times.

November 20

Uncle Rudolph borrowed Auntie Hilda's make up. His nose now all brown and powdery.

December 2

Eavesdropped after dinner when Mum thought I was doing homework. Uncle Rudolph says if he hears 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer' one more time he'll bust his antlers.

Wants plastic surgery!

Mum said, 'Why don't you just remember to use sunscreen?' Dad said, 'Zinc creams come in different colours now. You could be Rudolph the Purple-Nosed Reindeer!'

Uncle Rudolph said, 'Ho, ho, ho.' But not like he really meant it.

December 4

Mum and Dad training hard for Christmas. Uncle Rudolph depressed. I'm training too... but they don't know why!

December 14

Uncle Rudolph wearing large hat pulled down low over his nose.

December 15

Just happened to be under sofa when Mum had a long talk with Uncle Rudolph. (I was trying to find my left hind jogger.)

Mum said: 'Stop all this plastic surgery nonsense!'

Uncle said: 'It's alright for you. The whole world isn't laughing at YOUR name – or your nose.' Mum said: 'You're joking. My name sounds like a sneeze. Blitzen! Blitzen! Remember how the kids at school called me Sneezy? And Prancer would rather be called Shane or Jason. We all have our burdens to bear, not to mention 152 billion toys.'

Mum added casually. 'Can be hard to be a celebrity sometimes.'

Uncle Rudolph said, 'Celebrity? Me?' Then, 'Hmmm.'

Still looking thoughtful when he left.

Mum said, 'Brothers!'

December 16

Uncle Rudolph has applied to go on 'Celebrity Big Brother'. Also 'Dancing with the Stars.'

Snuck into Santa's study.

Downloaded Christmas timetable! And map!

December 22

152 billion presents loaded.

Sleigh greased and oiled. Santa's suit dry cleaned – stank of mothballs.

Mum and Dad training extra hard.

December 23

Mum and Dad taking it easy; warm up exercises only.

Uncle Rudolph told everyone in gym that being a reindeer super-star very stressful. Luckily everyone too busy doing push-ups to reply.

December 24

I am SOO excited! No one suspects a thing!

December 25

Oh, wow. Still can't believe it happened!

All went just as I planned at first.

Went round to Santa's as usual for moss sandwiches and moss shakes. I wore my new pink reins. Aunt Hilda, Fuzz and I waved as Santa, sleigh and reindeer leapt into the sky. Then I said, 'I left my laptop on. Be right back.' I dashed behind a snowdrift and soared into the sky.

It's dark up there! I mean I've gone on long night excursions with school. It's different all by yourself. Stars were like, so bright. But sort of comforting too.

Turned right at the North Star. Reckoned I was only three minutes behind the sleigh. Down past Japan, New Zealand on my left. Swung past Tasmania and headed north...

I'd organised it perfectly. I'd Google-Earthened Sydney. Planned to be lying by swimming pool at 56 Gallipoli Road reading 'Reindeer Weekly' when they landed.

'What kept you?' I'd say casually. 'I got here hours ago. Can I have a carrot now?'

Not old enough to pull the sleigh or eat carrots? Ha! I'd show them!

But it didn't turn out that way.

I'd just crossed Victoria. The air smelled of hot soil when I glimpsed the ute by the side of the road. Even above the clouds I could hear the woman crying. Could hear the man swearing too, as he tried to change the tyre.

'Hold on!' he kept calling, then went back to swearing at phones that didn't work just when you needed to call an ambulance.

I couldn't fly past, could I? Landed just as the man looked up.

He said. 'It's a blooming reindeer!'

There was another cry from inside the car. 'This is no time to dream of reindeer! The baby is coming!'

I stuck my nose inside the window. The woman stopped crying and just stared.

I couldn't leave them, could I? I gestured to the man to tie my harness to the ute's bumper bar. He looked a bit stunned but he worked out what I meant. The woman cried out again.

And then I soared!

The ute trailed behind me. Wasn't as heavy as a sleigh with 152 billion presents, but then there was only one of me pulling it!

Didn't want to get too high in case they got airsick. I levelled out as soon as I got a good tail wind. Over the sandhills, across the plains... Luckily the hospital had a sign out the front. I zoomed down by the front door.

Couldn't risk anyone seeing me. So flew round the hospital for a while till I heard this cry. It wasn't the woman this time. It was a baby!

I glided down and peered through the window. There was the man, looking pretty stunned actually. He kept muttering 'A baby! A reindeer! A baby! A reindeer!' But he looked happy too. The woman in the bed glanced up at me and smiled, then bent down again to her baby.

Santa was long gone now. I didn't care. I flew back across the ocean. I even did a somersault over the moon. I got back to the North Pole in seven and half minutes – my personal best – just as Auntie Hilda was putting her famous Moss Surprise into the oven for tomorrow. I mean today.

Mum and Dad should be back soon, and the sleigh. I don't know if I'll tell them. Don't know if I'll tell anyone – other than my diary.

A baby!!!! Who cares about carrots now?

Merry Christmas!

Lots of love, Flicka Blitzendaughter, Reindeer Extraordinaire!

From the Biscuit Creek Times

December 26 Births: To Barbara and Shaun Ramm at the Biscuit Creek Hospital yesterday morning: a girl, Tiffany Flicka Noel Ramm.

With grateful thanks to Doctor and staff ... and a reindeer who just happened to be flying by.