

The Christmas Waiting Train

One small room. A whole journey home.



An original illustrated story for ages 3-5

Caregiver read-aloud and picture sharing

About 4-6 minutes aloud • estimate, not a timed test

Original English story and AI-assisted original illustrations

Editorial production: Bryan Operations Dot / Little Story Harbor



Nora had put three paper stars in the window.

She had hung a fourth one upside down.

"Stars don't mind," said Dad.

It was Christmas morning, and Grandma was coming on the bus.

"Is she nearly here?" asked Nora.

Dad checked his phone. "She's just left home. There's time to play."

Nora looked at the window.

Then she looked at Rabbit.

Rabbit was not good at waiting. He kept falling sideways.

Nora put him in her little wagon.

"We're going to meet Grandma," she told him.

"Inside," said Dad.

"Of course. This is an inside train."



The wagon stood beside the sofa. Nora sat on the rug in front of it, holding a large, empty cardboard ribbon spool like a steering wheel. The wheels of the wagon stayed still.

"Tickets!"

Dad gave her a square of leftover wrapping paper.

Nora looked at its tiny Christmas trees.

"This ticket goes to the forest."

She turned her spool.

"Chuff, chuff, chuff."

The forest was the Christmas tree beside the window.

Its lowest branch held a red wooden bird.

"Hello, bird," said Nora. "Have you seen Grandma?"

The bird did not answer.

"Busy," Nora told Rabbit.

Dad sat on the sofa and made a long, soft whistle.

"Next stop?"



Nora pointed at the basket of clean laundry.

"Snow Mountain."

Dad lifted a white towel high above his own knees. Nora drove her pretend train past it without leaving the rug.

"Very snowy," she said.

Rabbit fell sideways again.

"Hold on. We're going round a bend."

Nora tucked a small cushion beside him.

Dad's phone chimed.

"Grandma's getting off the bus."

Nora sat up straight.

"We need a station!"



She tore more tickets from the leftover wrapping paper and put two on the low table. Dad set a third beside them.

"That one's for me," he said.

"You have to bring luggage."

Dad picked up an empty biscuit tin.

Nora shook her head. "That's not luggage."

"It has travelled all the way from the kitchen."

Nora considered this.

"All right. But it needs a ticket too."



The doorbell rang.

Dad went to the door. A gust of cold air followed Grandma into the hall.

She had a red scarf, a small bag and three snowflakes on her hat.

"Welcome to the station!" called Nora.

Grandma stopped.

"Oh dear. Have I missed my train?"

"No. We were waiting."

Grandma took off her coat and sat beside Dad on the sofa.

Nora handed her a Christmas-tree ticket.



"Where are we going?" asked Grandma.

Nora looked at the red bird, the white towel and Rabbit sitting snugly in the wagon.

She turned her spool the other way.

"Home."

Dad gave his soft whistle.

Grandma opened her bag.

"Good," she said. "I've brought biscuits for the journey."

Dad held up his empty tin. Grandma tipped in the biscuits.

"Excellent luggage," said Nora.

And the Christmas train chuffed all the way to the kitchen—in everybody's imagination.

The End.