Mom and Dad

Noah, Maple, and the Starlight Sleigh

For our brave Noah,

on your very first Christmas

in our brand-new house.

— Mom and Dad

Cardboard boxes crowded the drafty new house, making everything feel strange.

Noah squeezed the familiar driveway pebble inside his parka pocket.

Beside him, Maple the calico cat gave her tail two grumpy thumps.

Crunch-crunch! Noah stepped bravely into the deep, untouched snow.

Whump! A mountain of powdery snow tumbled from the giant fir tree.

Out popped Barnaby, a tiny chestnut reindeer with stubby velvet antlers.

He bobbed his head three times, puffing warm steam onto Noah's mittens.

"Oh!" gasped Noah, noticing Barnaby's empty ribbon harness.

"Look!" Noah whispered, spotting a golden bell glowing in an icy bush.

He tied the Starlight Bell onto Barnaby's braided harness.

Barnaby tried to leap, but his heavy hooves sank into deep drifts.

Noah patted his cherry-red sledge: "Paws tucked, bell bright, zoom through the night!"

Noah pulled the sledge down Cobblestone Lane while Maple rode up front.

Suddenly, a bright brass lantern flashed around the corner!

Warden Pindle marched forward in squeaky galoshes, tapping his pencil twice.

"According to Town Ordinance Section Four, stray reindeer are prohibited!" he shouted.

Maple's calico ears twitched with mischief.

Thump-thump went her tail as she sprang up the stone gatepost.

With one quick paw-swat, she dumped cold snow onto Warden Pindle's ear-flaps!

While Pindle sputtered, Noah whispered, "One, two, three… swoosh!" and ran.

Whoosh! The red sledge shot onto a slick patch of blue ice.

Barnaby's clattery hooves slid outward like a wobbly four-legged skater.

Around and around they spun until—*FLUMP!* into a soft drift!

Snow dusted Maple's whiskers, and she gave a sharp sneeze: *Achoo!*

Warden Pindle's heavy rubber boots crunched closer.

Suddenly, a porch gate swung open with a warm vanilla breeze.

"In here, little pilot!" whispered Mrs. Clara Gable, waving yellow oven mitts.

She tucked them behind twinkling cedar garlands and offered Pindle hot pastries.

Barnaby gobbled a sweet butter-shortbread biscuit with delighted little snorts.

"Whispering Hill catches the midnight breeze," Mrs. Gable hummed softly.

"Climb to the crest before the twelve bells ring!"

Noah cheered the magic words: "Paws tucked, bell bright, zoom through the night!"

At the hill's base, Warden Pindle blocked the path with his salt cart.

Rough gray gravel covered the smooth sledging path.

Pindle tapped his pencil twice against his clipboard.

"According to Town Ordinance Section Four, sledging is prohibited tonight!" he declared.

Warden Pindle marched away, towing Noah's red sledge behind him.

Just then, the town church bells boomed: *BONG! BONG! BONG!*

The loud metallic clanging echoed across the freezing valley.

Barnaby locked his knees in terror and froze like an icy statue.

Noah reached into his pocket and squeezed his lucky driveway pebble.

Courage was not back at his old house; it was right here!

He spotted a shiny tin bakery tray under the snow.

"Oh!" gasped Noah, hugging Barnaby's neck while Maple purred softly.

Noah carried the shiny tray up Whispering Hill through deep, powdery snow.

Maple bounded ahead like a little tiger, her green scarf fluttering.

Barnaby bobbed his head three times and trotted in Noah's footsteps.

Higher and higher they climbed, right to the windy, sparkling ridge.

Noah sat on the tin tray, tucking Maple onto his yellow snow pants.

Together, they chanted: "Paws tucked, bell bright, zoom through the night!"

"One, two, three… swoosh!" shouted Noah as they flew downhill.

The Starlight Bell chimed, and Barnaby leaped boldly into the rising wind.

Barnaby didn't fall—he soared into the velvet sky!

His hooves kicked above the trees, trailing ribbons of golden stardust.

Santa's grand sleigh dipped through the clouds to welcome Barnaby home.

Below, Warden Pindle dropped his pencil, watching with a tender, wonder-filled smile.

Noah and Maple walked hand-in-paw through the sparkling garden gate.

Behind them, every boot-print and paw-print glowed with soft starlight.

Noah looked up at the cozy amber windows of his new house.

Magic had found them here, and home had found them too.

Noah snuggled deep beneath his cozy bedroom quilt, smiling a drowsy smile.

His wet red mittens dried quietly on the warm, humming radiator.

Maple curled into a purring calico donut against his chest.

Outside, gentle snowflakes fell over their new home, where magic would always live.

The heroes of this book

Noah

Maple

Barnaby

Mr. Arthur Pindle

The heroes of this book

Mrs. Clara Gable

The Red Sledge

The Starlight Bell

Noah's Red Mittens

Acknowledgments

We want to thank our real-life heroes who inspired every single word of this adventure. Thank you to Noah, whose bright curiosity, gentle heart, and quiet pocket-sized courage turn even the most unfamiliar place into home. And thank you to our darling calico, Maple, for lending us her trademark grumpy tail-thumps, fierce loyalty, and perfectly timed mischief. Without the two of you filling our new rooms with laughter and warmth, this story never could have taken flight.

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Noah, Maple, and the Starlight Sleigh

Author: **Mom and Dad**

Written especially for Noah on his first Christmas in the new house

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Cardboard boxes crowd an unfamiliar new home on Christmas Eve, and five-year-old Noah worries holiday magic won't find him. But when an unexpected visitor tumbles into the snowdrifts, Noah and his grumpy calico cat must brave frosted hills and a watchful town warden to save the night before midnight chimes.