



THE REINDEER ROUND-UP

The snowy tundra of Lapland stretched endlessly under the pale winter sun. Parker and Lennon stood bundled in thick coats and mittens, their boots crunching softly in the snow. Nearby, a herd of reindeer shuffled and snorted, their thick fur gleaming in the bright light. The girls were exploring near their family's glass igloo, where they were staying on a trip north.

"Do you think the reindeer are cold?" Lennon asked, clutching her stuffed reindeer tightly.

"No way," Parker replied. "Reindeer are built for this. Their fur keeps them warm, and their hooves spread out like snowshoes so they don't sink. They're probably more comfortable in the snow than we are!"

Lennon scrunched her nose, imagining what it would be like to live in the Arctic. "I'd still want a scarf."

Parker laughed. "I don't think they need scarves."

Nearby, a Sámi herder named Aila was guiding a group of reindeer into a corral. She used soft whistles and gestures to direct the herd, her movements calm and practiced. The girls had learned that reindeer were a huge part of life in Lapland and that the Sámi people had worked with them for generations.

Aila waved to the girls. "Hello, Parker and Lennon! Are you enjoying the Arctic?"
"It's amazing!" Parker said. "Are the reindeer okay?"

"They're doing well," Aila replied. "We're rounding them up for winter. When the snow gets deep, it's hard for them to find food, so we guide them to safer grazing grounds." Her expression shifted slightly as she glanced toward the horizon. "But I think some are missing. A small group may have gotten separated."

"Are they lost?" Lennon asked, her brow furrowing.

"Not yet," Aila said, "but if we wait too long, the snow will cover their tracks. Would you like to help me find them?"

Lennon's eyes sparkled with excitement. "Yes!" she said, tugging on Parker's sleeve.

Parker hesitated, but only for a moment. "We'll help," she said with a nod. Aila led the girls to two snowmobiles parked by the corral. "We'll cover more ground this way," she explained, handing them helmets. "You each take a snowmobile, and I'll guide you. Just stay close behind me."

Parker and Lennon climbed onto their snowmobiles, the engines roaring to life beneath them. The vibrations tickled their hands through their gloves, and they exchanged excited glances. Aila led the way, her snowmobile kicking up a flurry of snow as they sped across the tundra.

The wind whipped past their faces, but the thrill of the ride kept them warm. "Keep your eyes on the ground," Aila called through her headset. "We're looking for hoofprints."

The girls scanned the snow, their snowmobiles slicing through drifts with ease. It wasn't long before Parker spotted faint tracks leading toward a grove of trees. "There!" she shouted, pointing.

Aila slowed, gesturing for the girls to follow. The grove was thick with snow-covered trees, and the quiet of the woods felt heavy around them. Suddenly, Parker shouted, "I see them!"

Five reindeer stood near a frozen stream, their hooves scraping nervously at the icy surface. But something wasn't right. One reindeer, smaller than the others, had broken through the ice. Its front legs were submerged in freezing water, and it struggled to pull itself free. The other reindeer stood nearby, as if guarding it. "Oh no!" Lennon cried, her voice trembling. "It's stuck!"

Aila brought her snowmobile to a sharp stop and jumped off. "Stay here!" she called. "I'll see how bad it is."

But Parker didn't wait. She parked her snowmobile and raced after Aila, her boots sinking into the snow. "We have to help!"

Aila crouched near the edge of the ice, keeping her voice calm and steady. "It's okay, girl. We'll get you out." The reindeer kicked again, sending a spray of icy water into the air.

Parker glanced back at Lennon, who was gripping her stuffed reindeer tightly on the snowmobile. "Lennon, find something to help us pull it out—maybe a branch or rope!"

Lennon nodded and scrambled off her snowmobile, searching quickly. Aila turned to Parker. "We have to act fast before it tires out. Stay back—it's dangerous near the ice."

But Parker spotted a thick branch nearby and grabbed it. "What if we use this?" she asked, holding it out to Aila.

"Good thinking!" Aila said. She reached for the branch and carefully edged closer to the reindeer. "Easy now," she murmured, guiding the stick near its front legs. The reindeer snorted, its breath misting in the cold air as it struggled.



Just then, Lennon came running back with a length of rope she found tied to a nearby tree. "Here!" she called, panting.

Aila looped the rope around the branch and extended it to Parker. "Hold the other end tight. Don't let go!"

Together, they pulled, the rope biting into their gloves as they tugged with all their strength. "Come on, girl!" Aila urged. Slowly, the reindeer found its footing, hooves scraping against the ice. With one last heave, it clambered onto solid ground, collapsing into the snow with a loud huff.

The other reindeer gathered around, nudging it gently as though to check if it was okay. Lennon's eyes were wide. "They're helping her," she whispered.

Aila smiled, wiping sweat from her brow. "They look after each other—just like we did today."

The girls watched as the group of reindeer slowly moved away from the stream, the weak one staying close to its companions. Parker let out a breath she hadn't realized she'd been holding. "We did it," she said softly.

"You were brave," Aila replied, clapping her on the shoulder. "You both were." Back on their snowmobiles, the girls followed Aila across the tundra, the setting sun turning the snow pink and gold. By the time they reached the corral, the reindeer had settled in, their breath visible in the cold air.

Aila turned to the girls with a warm smile. "Thank you for your help. You were exactly where you needed to be."

Lennon hugged her stuffed reindeer tightly. "We saved it!" "And we made sure it wasn't left behind," Parker added, a glow of pride warming her despite the cold.

As they rode back toward the igloo, the Arctic sky glittered with stars. Parker glanced at Lennon, who was humming softly, and smiled. It had been a day of teamwork, courage, and true adventure—one they would never forget.

**THE
END**

VOCABULARY

Here are vocabulary words carefully selected from the story. Each word highlights key themes from the Arctic and Lapland—such as survival, teamwork, and exploration—while helping to expand children’s vocabulary. Use these words to spark meaningful conversations, play word games, or incorporate them into writing prompts. Encourage kids to use the words in context by retelling parts of the story, describing their own Arctic adventures, or imagining the beginning of their own exciting writing journey!

Tundra

Sentence: "The snowy tundra of Lapland stretched endlessly under the pale winter sun."

Definition: A vast, flat, treeless Arctic region where the ground is permanently frozen.

Crunching

Sentence: "Their boots crunching softly in the snow."

Definition: A sound made when something is pressed or crushed underfoot.

Shuffled

Sentence: "Nearby, a herd of reindeer shuffled and snorted, their thick fur gleaming in the bright light."

Definition: To move slowly or drag one’s feet while walking.

Corral

Sentence: "A Sámi herder named Aila was guiding a group of reindeer into a corral."

Definition: An enclosed area used for gathering animals.

Vibrations

Sentence: "The vibrations tickled their hands through their gloves, and they exchanged excited glances."

Definition: Small, rapid movements caused by shaking or trembling.

Flurry

Sentence: "Aila led the way, her snowmobile kicking up a flurry of snow as they sped across the tundra."

Definition: A sudden light fall of snow, rain, or movement.

Submerged

Sentence: "One reindeer, smaller than the others, had broken through the ice. Its front legs were submerged in freezing water."

Definition: To be completely covered or hidden under a liquid.

Scrambling

Sentence: "Lennon nodded and scrambled off her snowmobile, searching quickly."

Definition: To move or climb quickly, often in a hurry or with urgency.

Edged

Sentence: "She reached for the branch and carefully edged closer to the reindeer."

Definition: To move carefully or gradually toward something.

Misting

Sentence: "The reindeer snorted, its breath misting in the cold air as it struggled."

Definition: To form a fine spray or fog in the air.

Heave

Sentence: "With one last heave, it clambered onto solid ground, collapsing into the snow with a loud huff."

Definition: To pull, lift, or move something heavy with great effort.

Clambered

Sentence: "With one last heave, it clambered onto solid ground, collapsing into the snow with a loud huff."

Definition: To climb awkwardly or with effort, usually using hands and feet.

Nudging

Sentence: "The other reindeer gathered around, nudging it gently as though to check if it was okay."

Definition: To push or poke something lightly or gently.

Collapsing

Sentence: "It clambered onto solid ground, collapsing into the snow with a loud huff."

Definition: To fall down suddenly, often due to exhaustion or weakness.

Glittered

Sentence: "As they rode back toward the igloo, the Arctic sky glittered with stars."

Definition: To shine with small, bright flashes of light.

Huff

Sentence: "It clambered onto solid ground, collapsing into the snow with a loud huff."

Definition: A sound made when breathing out forcefully, often due to exhaustion or frustration.

Guarding

Sentence: "The other reindeer stood nearby, as if guarding it."

Definition: To watch over or protect something or someone.

Steady

Sentence: "Aila crouched near the edge of the ice, keeping her voice calm and steady."

Definition: Firm, controlled, and not shaking or wavering.