



The Santa Claus Book

by Alden Perkes (pseudonym)

Where did Santa come from? How does he get all those toys into his bag? How does Santa know who has been naughty or nice? How did Santa get involved with all the elves? And really, what makes a reindeer fly? These questions and many more came from interviews I had with mothers. Why moms? Simply because moms are the people who buy books during the holiday season.

This uncomplicated approach became the basis for a collaborative work that took a lighthearted look at old Saint Nick. With beautifully-illustrated pages answering all these important questions about Santa Claus, it became a bestselling book on a totally enchanting subject.



Santa's favorite treat.



For the first time, I used my interpretive design approach on a fantasy subject. Before *The Santa Claus Book*, the subject matters I dealt with were always factual. This was a welcome change of pace.



How Reindeer Fly

If there's anything calculated to bring disbelief to the human mind, it's the idea that reindeer can fly. One look at those shaggy, semi-anatomically designed creatures should be enough to tell anyone with half a wit that they could never, never ever fly! And yet they did!

They lift off beautifully from almost any surface, slicing through the air effortlessly, light as a feather.

But that's not all. These heavy mammals, which look as if they're lucky to be able to walk around without breaking their spindly legs, can fly faster than any other known bird or animal. Only man's mechanical devices can do better—and they gulp astronomical amounts of precious fossil fuels.

Because the thought that reindeer really could fly was such an unlikely idea—I finally figured that that was one myth I'd surely disprove when I talked with Santa—when I learned it was true, I just had to have some scientific investigations.

With Santa's permission, I arranged to have a noted aero-research engineer meet me in Greenland one summer's day, when the reindeer weren't required for any North Pole duties. I brought with me one fine specimen of a reindeer, named *Bilzen*, who is one of the most powerful reindeer a person could ever hope to meet. The scientist, Dr. Wayne Elshardt, brought with him an impressive array of instruments.

Dr. Elshardt checked *Bilzen* from horns to hoofs, measuring, tapping—and marteling all the while. Every once in a while he'd exclaim, "More Caster!" or "Caster's! Unglitchable!"

I could hardly restrain myself, but I held my tongue until he was finished. Then I said, excited, "Well!"

He looked at me with disbelief in his eyes. "It's hard to believe," he said in his thick German accent, "but this reindeer really can fly!"

Dr. Elshardt then explained that it was all in the antlers—that a reindeer's antlers were an aerodynamically designed that they could give the deer even more lift than a bird or a plane.

Comparative Speeds

Nature has produced a wide variety of flying animals, all with different capabilities and designs. All of them, however, the deer can lift faster, farther, and maintain a greater altitude than any other flying creature.

*Note: This cannot be an exact speed—that the reindeer wishes to avoid!

Heron	22 km/h
Minnow	40 km/h
Hummingbird	64 km/h
Robin	120 km/h
Reindeer	212 km/h

The Aerodynamics of the Antler

It is then tried to get *Bilzen* to fly by the sea, but since neither of us was adept at communicating with a reindeer, *Bilzen* just stood there, looking like he knew something we didn't.

Well, Dr. Elshardt gave the demonstration himself. He absolutely certain they get into the air by kicking his feet together like this—and he got down on his hands and knees, then clapped his hands and knees together. "That gives them the impetus to get going, like that," says the good doctor, putting his hands to his waist and wiggling his fingers—"the antlers do the rest."

I must, absolutely must, write about this in my international research journal. ("Those who are interested can read the details of Dr. Wayne Elshardt's scientific findings in the international journal of *Aerodynamic Research*, published in Berlin, winterland, volume XI, number 11, pp. 878-94.) Here, who are unable to find the journal in their local library can write directly to Bert.)

THE FLYING REINDEER

Scientific research shows that reindeer's antlers are aerodynamically designed to lift the reindeer into the air faster than any other flying creature.

Reindeer can fly 212 km/h (132 mph) or go much faster!