

Rosie Riveter and the Santa Snafu

Rosie Mae Johnson was no ordinary seven-year-old.

She had grease stains on her overalls, goggles in her backpack, and a handmade patch that read "*Junior Engineer in Training*." Her room was 50% bed, 50% blueprints, and 100% serious business.

This Christmas, Rosie had one mission: Catch Santa in the act. Not for presents. Not for proof. Just because she *had* to know how he fit down the chimney with a belly like a bowl full of jell.

"I don't care what Tommy says," Rosie told her dog Nutmeg. "If Santa's real, I'll see him. If he's not, I'll invent a better gift-delivery system myself."

Rosie's "Santa Snag 3000" was a masterpiece of mayhem.

She used candy cane tripwires, an old Roomba converted into a net-launcher, and a series of glitter grenades made from Christmas ornaments. A cookie plate sat on a weight-sensitive trigger pad. And the pièce de résistance? A Loud-A-Lot-Alarm, built from a bike horn, a turkey baster, and Aunt Gertie's karaoke mic.

"Flawless," Rosie whispered, admiring her setup. Nutmeg wagged his tail. He had no idea.

That night, Rosie set the trap, tucked herself behind the couch with a mug of lukewarm cocoa, and waited.

12:17 a.m. – Nothing.

1:04 a.m. – Still nothing.

1:31 a.m. – Rosie began to nod off...

CRASH!

Rosie bolted upright as the alarm *WAILED*. Lights flashed. Glitter exploded. The net launcher sprang into action—

—and snagged the Christmas tree.

It toppled with a dramatic thud, ornaments shattering like snowflakes of doom. Nutmeg barked wildly and dove into the tinsel.

"Target located!" Rosie shouted, scrambling toward the chimney.

But all she saw was... soot.

“HE WAS HERE!” she yelled, pointing at a single black boot print on the hearth. “I MISSED HIM!”

Suddenly, a loud *BANG!* from the kitchen.

Rosie turned, just in time to see her Roomba—still attached to the net launcher—go skidding across the floor and crash into the fridge, knocking over a full carton of eggnog.

“Nutmeg, abort! I repeat, abort!”

The dog ignored her and launched into a heroic battle with a rogue Santa hat.

By morning, the living room looked like a glitter tornado had wrestled a herd of reindeer.

Tommy walked in, rubbed his eyes, and burst out laughing. “Wow. Santa *really* left his mark.”

Their mom stared at the mess in horror. “Rosie Mae Johnson, what on EARTH happened?!”

“I was trying to catch Santa,” Rosie said proudly, though her hair was full of garland and Nutmeg had duct tape on his head. “It mostly worked.”

“Did you *see* him?” Tommy teased.

Rosie held up the boot print on a piece of soot-smeared paper. “I have evidence. He was here. And he escaped my trap *because he’s magic...* or because he has excellent upper body strength.”

Tommy rolled his eyes. “You’re ridiculous.”

Rosie grinned. “Ridiculously scientific.”

Later, after the wrapping paper tornado had settled and everyone had eaten too many cinnamon rolls, Rosie returned to her room. Something shiny was sitting on her desk.

It was a red envelope marked "To Rosie – Nice Try" in glittery script. Inside was a single jingle bell... and a note:

Dear Rosie,

That was the most impressive (and slightly dangerous) contraption I've encountered in 1,734 years.

Next time, try decaf cocoa. And maybe don't net your Christmas tree.

Love,

Santa

P.S. Nutmeg is on the Nice List forever.

Rosie squealed, clutching the bell.

She didn't *catch* Santa.

But she got something even better:

A rematch.

And her blueprint drawer now had a new file titled:

"Santa Snag 3001: Now Reindeer-Proof."