

RAGGEDY ANN'S Picture-Perfect Christmas

By Gail Herman
Illustrated by Deborah Colvin Borgo



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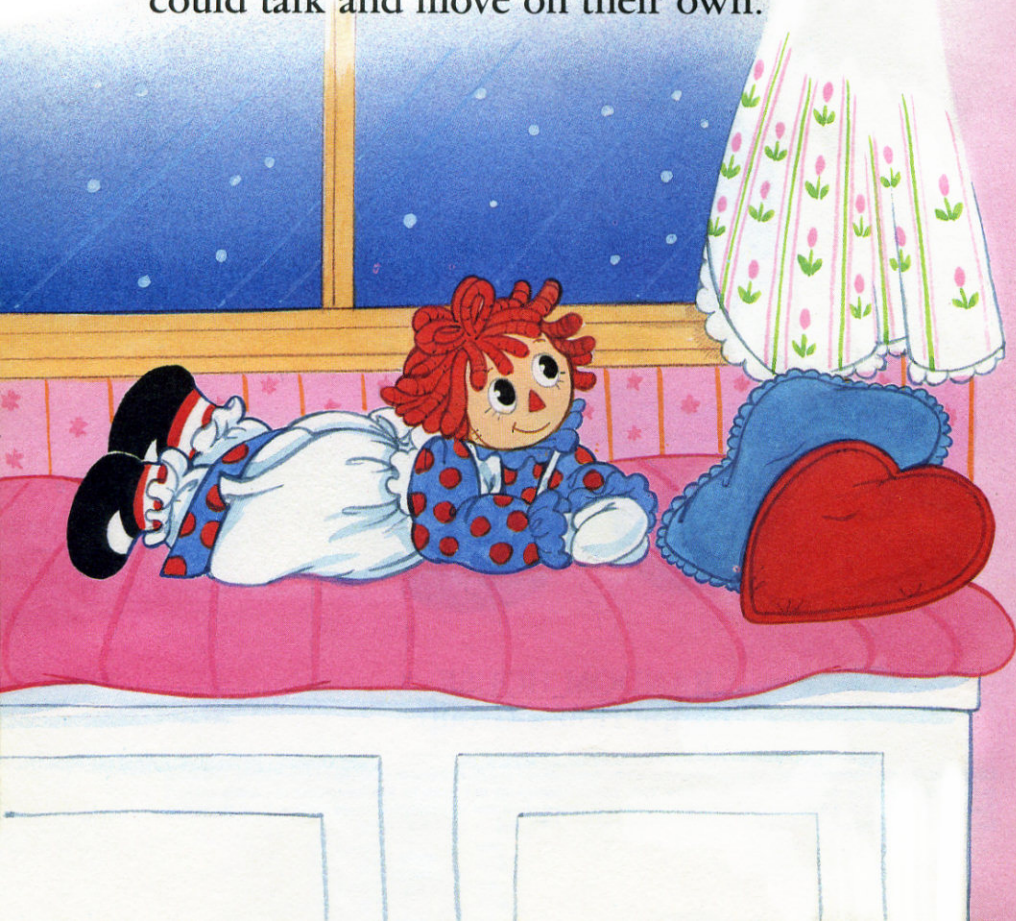
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It was Christmas Eve. Raggedy Ann gazed happily at the snow falling outside the playroom window. She loved the wintertime—building snowmen, drinking hot cocoa, and, most of all, celebrating Christmas.

Inside, the playroom was warm and cozy. All the dolls were getting ready for the holiday. Raggedy Andy hung stockings by the toy fireplace. The Camel with The Wrinkled Knees helped Babette, the French doll, decorate a doll-sized Christmas tree.

Marcella, the little girl who lived in the house, was fast asleep. She didn't know that the dolls could talk and move on their own.





Soon the playroom looked as pretty as a Christmas card. “Now that’s all done!” said Raggedy Ann happily. “But we still have to think of a Christmas present for Marcella.”

“How about a batch of cookies?” suggested Raggedy Andy.



“No—that’s what we gave her last year,” Raggedy Ann said.

“How about a bouquet of flowers?” said Babette.

“That’s nice,” said Raggedy Ann. “But it would be even nicer to give a gift that would last forever!”

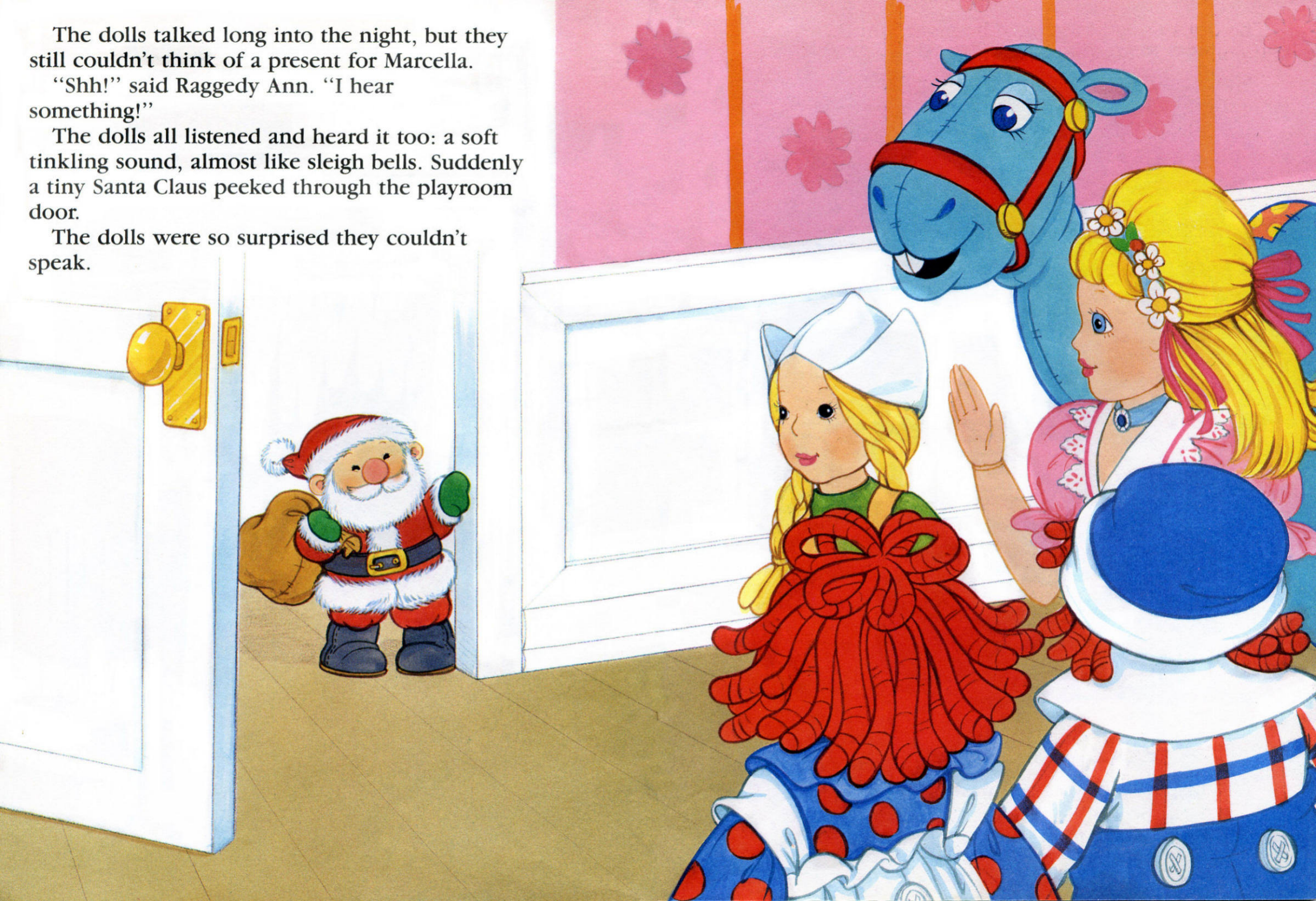


The dolls talked long into the night, but they still couldn't think of a present for Marcella.

"Shh!" said Raggedy Ann. "I hear something!"

The dolls all listened and heard it too: a soft tinkling sound, almost like sleigh bells. Suddenly a tiny Santa Claus peeked through the playroom door.

The dolls were so surprised they couldn't speak.





“Santa Claus?” Raggedy Andy finally said in a whisper. “Are you really Santa?”

“Ho ho ho!” he laughed, holding his sides.
“No, I’m a doll just like you. I’m a Santa doll.

“All year I sit on the real Santa’s night table, but the week before Christmas I open my very own workshop. I make Christmas presents for dolls everywhere!”





“You must have some beautiful things in your workshop,” said the French doll. That gave Raggedy Ann an idea!

“We can’t think of a present for Marcella,” she said to the Santa doll. “Can you take us to the North Pole? Maybe we’ll find something in your workshop.”

“Of course,” said the Santa doll. “Just let me get my sleigh.”

In no time at all the dolls heard the sleigh bells ringing outside the window. One by one they tumbled into Santa’s sled.





Stars twinkled brightly as the little toy reindeer pulled Santa's sleigh through the night.

The dolls looked down at the houses below and up at the moon. They couldn't remember ever having had as nice a ride. But before they knew it, they were at the North Pole.

The Santa doll gave Marcella's dolls a special tour of the workshop. Never had they dreamed of a place as wonderful as this. Sawdust swirled, papers flew—elf dolls were working busily in every corner of the room.

“Look over there!” said Raggedy Ann excitedly. An elf sat at a bench, carving a wooden puzzle.



Raggedy Andy watched another elf string a tiny guitar. An important-looking elf strode up and down the aisles, making sure all the workers did their jobs.





“I like everything here!” said Babette.

“Yes, but all the toys are doll sized. Nothing is big enough for Marcella,” said Raggedy Ann.

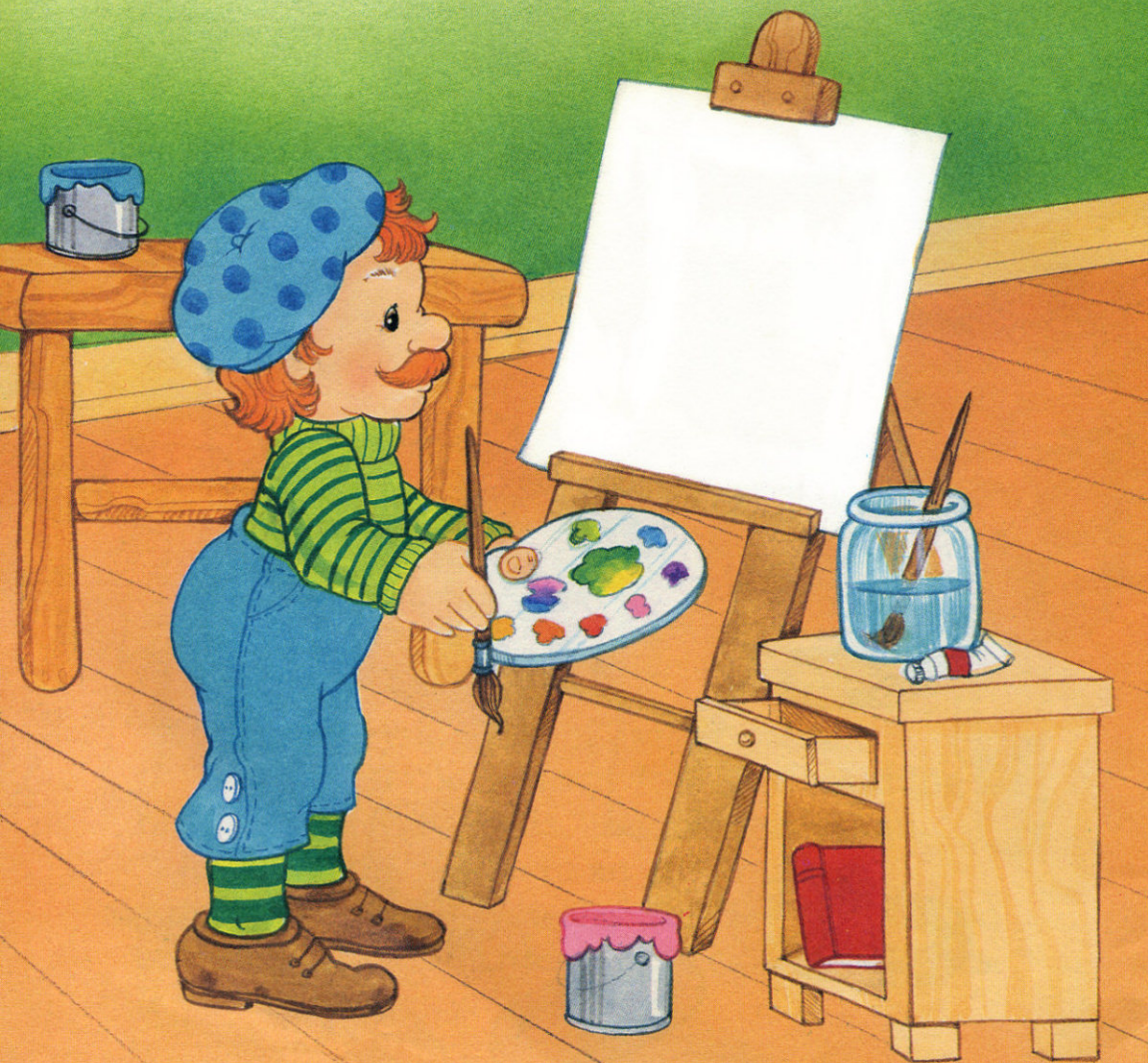
Just then they came to an elf who was painting designs on jewelry. He drew flowers on bracelets and little kittens on necklace pendants. It was all so pretty!



The other dolls soon moved on, but Raggedy Ann stayed by the elf's side.

"Excuse me," she said shyly. "Would you paint a portrait of all of us, as a Christmas present?"

"I'd be happy to," said the elf. Raggedy Ann called her friends back. The elf took a large sheet of paper, arranged his paints just so, and set to work.



“Ooh, it’s beautiful!” exclaimed Babette when the picture was finished. All the other dolls thought so too!





The elf who had carved the puzzle made a wooden frame for the picture. The important-looking elf brought over a large box, ribbon, and brightly colored paper for the dolls to wrap the present with. Raggedy Andy put his finger on the ribbon and Raggedy Ann tied a bow and pulled it tight. The gift was ready.



Once again Marcella's dolls climbed into the sleigh and the Santa doll took them home.

"Thank you, Santa Doll. Maybe we'll see you next year," the dolls called as he rode off.

Raggedy Ann placed their present under the tree. She could hardly wait for Christmas morning to arrive.





Marcella woke up early the next day and rushed into the playroom. “Merry Christmas, dolls!” she cried.

Then Marcella saw a brightly colored package. She opened it, and there was the portrait of all her dolls! “How beautiful!” Marcella exclaimed. “A present from Santa!”

“You mean Santa *Doll*,” Raggedy Ann thought happily, “with a little help from us!”