

A Christmas Time Tale

It was springtime at the North Pole. I suppose springtime is a funny place to start a Christmas story, but time is a funny thing. Sometimes it passes ever so slowly, and other times it can flash past like the wind. Yugo had been thinking a lot about time that spring. He explained his thoughts to Iggy and Sam as they drove in Yugo's snowmobile across the windswept northern frontier.

"Time," he said, "is like a river, it only flows in one direction. And a boat on a river flows in the same direction."

"What are you getting at Yugo?" asked Sam, who was getting quite bored with the philosophical bend the conversation had taken.

Yugo continued. I got to thinking, a good oarsman can paddle a boat upstream, and so a clever elf should be able to travel upstream through time."

"Oh, now you aren't making any sense at all!" Said Sam. "Are you talking about time travel?"

"Exactly," said Yugo. "I've been making a few modifications to the snowmobile, and I think I have figured out a way to turn it into a time machine!"

Iggy, who had been calmly staring out the window, perked up. "Really?" he asked. "How does it work?"

"Well," said Yugo, pleased that somebody was interested in his project. "I've installed these two counters in the dashboard. This one is the year we are in now." He pointed to a digital display, which read 1987. "And this other one is the year somebody might want to go to." He pointed to another counter that read 0000. "I haven't set it yet, but we could travel to any year you like, just by setting the counter and pushing this blue button." He gestured to a flashing blue button.

"How does it work?" asked Iggy, fascinated.

"Its hard to explain. But I can say that I've developed a time-fluxion reverberator. When it is vibrated at precisely the right frequency it disrupts the time-space continuum, and allows the snowmobile to slip through to another point in time and space.

"That is the most ridiculous mumbo-jumbo I have ever heard in my life," said Sam. There is no such thing as a time machine and you both know it!"

"Well," said Iggy, "most people say there is no such thing as Santa's elves, but I know that's not true. Besides, just because some people say something is impossible, it doesn't mean it is!"

"Oh yeah," said Sam, "well I say that time machines are impossible and I'll prove it!" With that Sam reached across Iggy and pressed the flashing blue button.

"No, don't!" yelled Yugo, but it was too late. He could already hear the resounding gong of the time-fluxion reverberator. The snowmobile started to shake. There was a brilliant flash of light, like the explosion of a star. The white northern snow blurred and faded into different splotches of colour that flashed and sparkled around the snowmobile. Sam had butterflies in his stomach that felt kind of like pterodactyls. He felt like he was falling. He was about to be sick when the colours faded and the world started to come into focus. The snowmobile lurched to a halt.

They were in the middle of a desert. It was very hot outside, nothing like the weather at the North Pole. Even in springtime, it never got hot at the North Pole. Sam was a little dizzy. He looked up at the dashboard and saw that both digital counters, the one on the right, which was the year they were going to, and the one on the left, which was the year, they were in, read 0000.

"I think I believe in time travel now," moaned Sam.

All of the elves looked a little weak, and none of them were in any hurry to travel through time again. Iggy would say later it was kind of like going on a

giant roller coaster after eating six hot dogs, a cotton candy, and a large coke. Either that or having your entire body turned inside out. None of those feelings were very pleasant.

"Where are we?" groaned Iggy.

"I have no idea," said Yugo, but we traveled back in time to zero A.D. That can take a little something out of a guy. When you travel through time, you shift through space as well. I'm pretty sure we're not at the North Pole anymore, but I don't know where in the world we are." He looked at the sand that stretched for miles in all directions. "Could be Egypt," he added.

"Or Arizona," suggested Iggy.

"Let's go back home," said Sam. "If I'm going to die, I want to do it at the good old North Pole."

"That's the only sensible thing you've said all day," said Yugo. He reached for the dial beside the right hand counter. He was going to set it for 1987 so they could go back, but when he turned the dial, the counter stayed on 0000. "Oh no, the gears must be stripped!" he said.

"Now what will we do?" shrieked Sam, "I don't intend to stay here forever! They don't even have T.V. or video games or hamburgers or anything in zero A.D. We've got to get home!"

"No problem," said Yugo, "I'll just fix the dial mechanism. It is just an easy adjustment with a screwdriver." He reached under his seat, then groaned. "I left my tool box at the workshop."

"Great," sighed Sam. "Just great. I'll never find out what is going to happen on *Dallas*!"

"We'll just have to go get a screwdriver," said Iggy. "I'm sure we can find one in that town over there". He pointed to a brown dusty looking village on the horizon. Yugo put the snowmobile into 4-wheel drive mode and slipped it into gear. Big thick rubber tires popped out of the sides of the snowmobile and

churned up the desert sand. They bounced up a dune and skidded off towards the little town. As they pulled up to the walled village they noticed that hundreds of people were parading into the city gates. Men, women, and children, dressed in robes and turbans marched inside one after another.

"Yugo, we had better ditch the snowmobile," said Iggy. "It'll attract too much attention inside the village".

"Yeah," said Sam, "these guys aren't going to see a snowmobile for another few hundred years."

They pulled over to a nearby sand dune and hid the snowmobile under the sand as well as they could. The elves then took a few supplies and headed in through the village gates, holding marching where no elf had gone before, marching in search of a screwdriver.

The dusty road was crowded with people. There were people in every window of every dirty wooden building, and more people in every doorway and alcove. "Well somebody around here must have a screwdriver," said Yugo. "We'll just pop into one of these little shops and pick one up."

They stopped before a little hovel with hammers and chisels hanging in the doorway. "This looks like a great place to start," said Iggy stepping inside.

The shop was little more than a closet. Behind a counter stood an enormous fat man wearing a fez. Great globs of flab bulged out of his robes from all angles. His dark little eyes were sunk deep in his sweaty porcine head. The moment he saw the elves walk into the room, a smile spread across his face. A wide, malicious, rotten, evil smile.

"Good afternoon," said Iggy, "my friends and I are looking for a screwdriver, you wouldn't happen to have one would you?"

"Screwdriver, hmmm," said the fat man, whose name happened to be Grel-fazil. He had never heard of a screwdriver in his life, perhaps because it would be another 1,200 years before Waldo Screwdriver would invent it at his little workbench in Amsterdam. Unfortunately, neither Grel-fazil nor the elves realized this at the time.

Still, the fat man didn't care. He had other plans for these three curious looking fellows who each stood two cubits high and had little pointy ears. People would come from leagues around and pay to see freaks like that. He only needed to stall them until he could get his friend Abdul to help him with the plot his wicked mind was hatching.

"I don't have one in the shop today fellas," the fat man lied, "but I could contact my eastern suppliers and get one here in no time."

"Gee," said Yugo, "we're kind of in a hurry, do you know anybody else who might have one?"

"You could try the shop at the end of the next road. It's run by a fellow named Harold," said Grel-fazil.

"Thanks," said Sam, then whispered to Iggy and Yugo "come on, let's scam, this guy gives me the creeps." The elves turned and left the shop. They walked into the next block and found the shop the fat man spoke of. The doorway had a beaded curtain. Inside was a variety of tools, handicrafts, and gizmos of all descriptions. A portly fellow with a broad red sash and a thick black beard walked up to the elves. In contrast to Grel-fazil, something about this big, jolly gentleman was very soothing. His hand reached out and grabbed Iggy's.

"How do you do, son," he said. "My name is Angells, Harold Angells. What can I do for you?"

Iggy thought the fellow looked familiar. He knew it was ridiculous, he couldn't have seen any of these people before, but he was sure he had met Harold Angells. "A screwdriver," Iggy said, "we need a screwdriver".

"I've never heard of a screwdriver," said Harold Angells, "what does it do?"

"Well," said Yugo, "it drives screws. It's about this long with a flat end. A screw is like a nail surrounded by a spiraling ridge around the shaft. By twisting the screwdriver, the screw can be inserted or removed from another object."

"I see, I see," said Harold Angells. "I could probably make one in my shop, but it would take a little time. Funny, I've never heard of it. Where do you boys come from that has such marvelous devices?"

Iggy had never thought of the screwdriver as a marvelous device before, although Yugo had. "We're from the, um, north," said Yugo.

"Ah, that explains it," said Harold Angells. "I don't get up north much. You boys must be in town for the census. I hope you've found a place to stay."

"No," said Iggy, "we've only just arrived. We hadn't really planned on being here, but you see, our uh, wagon broke down just outside of town. That is why we need a screwdriver."

"Well, come back this afternoon and I'll see what I can do for you in the way of a screwdriver. But do be careful, you fellows look mighty peculiar. A lot of rogues in this town might try and take advantage of you."

"Thanks for the warning," said Iggy. "We'll go get some lunch and come back. See you soon."

The elves stepped back outside. "Imagine us being taken advantage of," laughed Sam. "What ever could he be talking about? With our twentieth century know-how, I'd love to see them try!"

Suddenly Sam stopped short, as standing in the road in front of them were Grel-fazil, and his friend Abdul.

Abdul was a thin weasel of a man, with a wiry black moustache and a little pointed black beard. He had rotten yellow teeth that smelt like vinegar. Sam and the others turned and ran. They charged down the crowded street, weaving between robed Bedouins and street urchins. The elves were fast, but Abdul and the fat man were gaining on them quickly. Abdul caught up to Sam outside a used donkey lot. He made a fine lunging tackle, catching Sam around the knees. The two of them rolled about in the dust and before Sam could do anything, Abdul had tied him up tightly with a thick leather strap.

Meanwhile, Grel-fazil barreled after the other two elves. They both knew they were in trouble if they didn't think of something quickly. They could hear and feel the heavy footsteps of the fat man falling in behind them. He was starting to pant-heavily and Iggy and Yugo thought they might get away. Then Yugo stepped on a thick brown pile of something that looked like it might have come from a used donkey. He slid for about five meters and then fell on his face in the dirt. As if that was not bad enough, Grel-fazil slid on the same pile of donkey chips and landed on top of Yugo. There was no escape.

Iggy was able to use this diversion to get away; he found a rug merchant nearby and slipped under a table in his shop. He waited there for a long time, trying to think of how he could find his friends in this crowded dirty city, and how he could ever hope to get back home to 1987. He mulled over the problem for quite some time before he thought of a plan...

Iggy's hiding place under the table was relative luxury compared to where Yugo and Sam spent the rest of that afternoon. Abdul and Grel-fazil took them back to Abdul's shack on the east side of town. While the main business district looked dirty and untidy, it was much better than the squalor that greeted the elves when they reached Abdul's neighborhood. There wasn't a building there without a hole in its walls, that is, those buildings that had walls. Most of the houses were like Abdul's that was a tent made out of canvas and blankets.

Yugo and Sam were pushed into the tent and then locked in a big bamboo cage. "I used to keep monkeys in here," said Abdul with an evil wink. Grel-fazil spoke in his deep gravelly voice. "We'll take them down to the main square and charge everyone two gold pieces to see them! With all of the people in town for the census, we will make a killing!" Yugo and Sam didn't like the way Grel-fazil said the word "killing".

Abdul dragged the cage into the alley where an old mangy looking donkey was quietly chewing some weeds. He threw the cage on the donkey's back and lashed it there tightly with some greasy black twine. The donkey looked as though it was about to collapse, but Abdul threw a thick roll of canvas, some poles, and two worn rugs around the cage and then bound the works together with the twine. The two villains then led the donkey slowly towards the centre of town.

You could say Yugo and Sam were a big hit that day. Grel-fazil and Abdul pitched a gloomy tent in the town square near a dried out porcelain fountain. A brass bucket stood near the door where they dropped every gold piece that anyone paid to see the two elves whom Grel-fazil described to the passers-by in the following way: "Come one, come all, see the eight and ninth wonders of the modern world! If you've seen the pyramids, or the Gardens of Babylon, you can't afford to miss these pointy-eared dwarves from the north!"

Yugo and Sam were beginning to wonder if anyone in town could afford to miss them. Hundreds of people paraded through the gloomy tent and dropped their two gold pieces in Grel-fazil's bucket. By the time the sun went down, the bucket was overflowing and Abdul and Grel-fazil were passing a gourd full of some awful smelling stuff back and forth.

Harold Angells was puttering about in his little workshop when his beaded curtain rattled. He looked up from his bench to see Iggy slip in. "Well, little friend, it's about time you got here. I was beginning to think you were never coming back!"

"Well, here I am," said Iggy. "And I think that I need your help."

Harold Angells held up a familiar looking tool. "I have your screwdriver right here."

Iggy examined it. It was a little crude, but there was no doubt that it was a screwdriver. Iggy looked at the workbench. It had an assortment of carved wooden animals, balls, carts and toys of all descriptions. "You make toys?" inquired Iggy, looking up at Harold Angells.

Harold chuckled, "well, I like to give them to kids. I like the way they smile when they get something for just being nice. I have big plans once I make myself one of these screwdrivers..."

Iggy laughed, too. "I make toys too, back where I come from. My boss gives toys to kids every Christmas."

What a terrific idea, thought Harold Angells, though he had no idea what Christmas was.

"Anyway," said Iggy, "my friends and I are in a terrible mess. A big fat fellow and a skinny guy with bad breath have kidnapped them. You're the only person I know in this place, and I don't have any idea how to rescue them on my own."

Harold Angells leaned back in his chair. "Sounds like Grel-fazil and Abdul to me. I've run into those two troublemakers before. They probably have some scheme up their sleeve to use your friends to make a few gold pieces. We'd better go find them before they get hurt." He stood up, slipped into an alcove and emerged with a large bag over his shoulder. "I've packed a few supplies. Come on. Let's go find your friends."

Grel-fazil and Abdul had finished off two gourds of bean wine and were working on a third when Abdul fell off his stool and started snoring loudly. Grel-fazil laughed and drank deeply from his gourd. In another few minutes he too had passed out. Sam looked at this scene from inside the cage in disgust.

"Look at them," he said. "We haven't had a thing to eat since we got here, and they're so drunk they can't even sit up."

"Oh quit your belly aching," said Yugo, who wasn't having the best time of his life either. "Quiet down while I try and think of a way out of this mess."

"Pssst" a voice hissed from the corner of the tent.

"I thought I just asked you to quiet down," Yugo sneered at Sam.

"I didn't say anything!" Sam whined. "Pssst" the voice repeated.

"There you go again," yelled Yugo, "if you don't clam up there will only be one elf on display tomorrow!"

"Psst," said the voice. "Both of you quiet down so we can get you out of here." Sam and Yugo stood gaping as Iggy and Harold Angells skulked into the tent. Iggy crept between the dozing Grel-fazil and Abdul and snuck up to the

cage. Harold followed. Iggy looked at the lock and whistled. Harold reached into his bag and pulled out the screwdriver. He forced it into the lock and cranked it back and forth a few times. He grunted a couple of times and then the lock popped open.

Sam pushed the door open and jumped out onto the floor. Yugo jumped out after him. Iggy, Yugo, and Harold started towards the back door, but Sam ran over to the big bucket of gold. He filled his pockets and dragged it towards the others.

"These bozos made a bundle off us today, and I'm collecting my percentage," he said smugly. Harold laughed in a jolly sort of way and dumped the rest of the bucket into his big bag. The four of them then crawled out of the tent. Unfortunately, Sam's legs caught on a tent pole, and the canvas fell on top of them in a heap. Both Grel-fazil and Abdul sprang up. You would never know they were both dead drunk only moments before.

"They're getting away!" screamed Abdul.

The four of them squirmed out of the tent and started to run down the black street. Only the occasional lantern lighted it. Grel-fazil and Abdul raced after them. "Stop them," they cried, "they've got our gold!"

Despite the lateness of the hour, there were still a great number of people in the streets. Some of them were sleeping there. The elves had to run around them, but Grel-fazil and Abdul just jumped over the sleeping bodies and were quickly making up the distance between them. Harold stopped outside a little shop with a sign that read "Frank's Incense" over the door. "Quickly, we'll lose them in here," he said. The elves followed him inside.

Frank was sitting on a stool in a corner, surrounded by some enormous jars of sweet smelling powder. He jumped down from his stool as they ran in. "Harold Angells," he said smiling, "how nice to see you again!" The two of them shook hands. Harold reached into the sack and dumped a handful of gold coins onto the counter.

"Sell me a big bag of your best incense," he said. Frank's eyes bugged out of his head and he rushed to fill Harold's order. He passed the big bag to Yugo.

"Let's get moving," said Harold, and the four of them bolted back out onto the street.

Grel-fazil and Abdul were just a few meters away. "Quickly, the incense," shouted Harold. Yugo reached into the bag and threw a great fistful of incense into their faces. The two rogues were instantly blinded and began sneezing with enormous whooping blasts-Harold and the elves took advantage of the diversion and fled down the road and into the next block. From there they turned right, then ran left then turned left again. They finally sat down gasping.

"I think we finally got away," wheezed Iggy. "That was a great idea you had using that incense Harold."

Yugo chuckled. "The look on their faces...." Soon all four of them were laughing hard; so hard that Iggy was sure he was going to cry, and Sam was afraid that he would wet his pants. Their laughter was interrupted with a start. "There they are!" a gruff voice roared.

Iggy looked down the street, and saw Grel-fazil and Abdul approaching. Their eyes were red and puffy, and their faces flushed from sneezing. They ran towards our heroes. Harold reached into his sack and pulled out a wide jar. It was filled with a perfumed sludge. He passed the jar to Iggy. "Spread this out on the road," he said.

Iggy splashed the stuff in a puddle on the street, just as Grel-fazil and Abdul reached him. The moment their curl toed boots touched the puddle their feet slipped out from under them and they landed in a heap. Iggy turned and ran after the others while Grel-fazil and Abdul struggled in the greasy sludge. He ran alongside Harold.

"What is this stuff anyway?" Iggy asked, eyeing the jar.

"It's called myrrh," answered Harold. "Rich folks oil their bodies with it, but I keep it in the shop to grease parts of my toys. It doesn't stain, and it's pretty slippery stuff."

"Yes, so I see," said Iggy. They passed the front of an inn, and Iggy noticed there were people sleeping in the lobby. "Gee," he thought, "no room in that inn." Behind the inn was a stable.

"We could hide in there," suggested Yugo, "they'd never find us". They ran up to the stable and looked in. A strange glow filled the entire stable. There were already a number of people in the barn, and everybody's attention seemed to be focused on the centre of the room.

"Hark", Harold Angells sang. "I think something very important is happening here..."

The elves quietly walked up to the middle of the room where a man and a woman looked down into a trough. The glow was coming from there. It was filled with hay, and on top of the hay, wrapped in blankets, lay a baby.

Iggy looked at the baby dumbfounded. "I think I figured out where we are," he whispered.

"Yeah", agreed Yugo. "I just realized what happened in zero A.D."

"What?" asked Sam. He still hadn't caught on yet, but then, he had had a hard day.

"You dope," Yugo said to Sam. "We're in Bethlehem. This is the first Christmas."

"Well then, where is the Christmas tree," said Sam. He was just about to go on and say something really stupid when he looked over at the baby and it all became very clear to him.

"Did you say we're in Bethlehem?"

Iggy nodded.

"In zero A.D.?"

Yugo nodded.

"Then that's ... that's ... " said Sam, pointing to the baby. "Oh my God..." he said, clasping his hands over his mouth.

"Something like that," agreed Yugo. He looked over at Iggy- "We should really give him something. Baby Jesus, I mean. Some token of our respect."

"All I have is this screwdriver," said Iggy. "And this," he added, holding up the half full jar of myrrh. Yugo had already walked up to Mary and handed her the bag of Frank's incense. "I know it's not much," he began. Mary smiled at him, and Yugo felt warm inside. Iggy looked at the jar of myrrh and all the pieces fell into place.

"No one ever said the three wise men were tall," he thought. He walked over to Mary and gave her the myrrh. Iggy and Yugo looked over at Sam.

"Do I have to?" said Sam.

"Yes," they hissed.

Sam shrugged. He walked over to the manger and spilled two big handfuls of gold coins into the straw. "Thank you," said Mary.

"My pleasure," said Sam, between gritted teeth. He looked over at the others and said, "Now what are we supposed to do, sing some Christmas carols?"

"No," said Harold, "I think we should get out of here." He pointed down the road where Grel-fazil and Abdul were running towards them.

"Stop them," screamed Grel-fazil, "they stole our gold!" Sam looked at the others. "Let's go before it's too late" he said. The others didn't need any encouragement. They charged out of the stable, knocking over some kid who was playing a drum. "Sorry" Sam shouted back, as they tore down the street.

"Now that we have the screwdriver," said Yugo, "we should get back to the snowmobile and go home."

"Best idea I've heard all night," agreed Sam. They raced through the town square and down the main street that led to the city gates.

They reached the gates and ran to the sand dune where the snowmobile was hidden. It took them some time to find it, but Yugo finally stumbled into it. Harold let out a whistle. "What do you call that contraption?" he asked.

Iggy replied, "a snow, er, I mean sand mobile." "That really is something," said Harold.

"Say," said Sam looking around, "where are Grel-fazil and Abdul?"

"I don't know, we must have lost them," said Yugo, taking the screwdriver from Iggy and turning his attention to the damaged dial.

Iggy looked at Harold and shook his hand. "You don't know it yet, but we just saw what Christmas is all about," he said.

Harold looked puzzled. "First screwdrivers, then a sand-mobile, and now Christmas. You fellas sure have some strange ideas. What is Christmas?"

Iggy looked at Harold. "It's hard to explain, but it's a time of giving and sharing and peace and good will and lots of wonderful stuff."

"That's Christmas, eh," said Harold rubbing his chin. He smiled at Iggy, his green eyes twinkling merrily. Iggy again thought he knew Harold Angells from somewhere. "Iggy, you've just given me an idea," he said.

Suddenly, Sam screamed.

"Quiet," yelled Yugo, "I'm trying to concentrate".

Sam screamed again. "It's Grel-fazil and Abdul, they're coming!" Iggy and Harold looked back towards Bethlehem and watched, stunned, as the two bandits rode towards them. They had stolen a camel from the stable, and were approaching our heroes at a murderous pace.

Yugo looked up and dropped his screwdriver. "Get inside," he yelled, "we'll try to out run them."

Iggy looked at Harold again. "I guess this is good-bye," he said.

Harold wiped a tear from his eyes. "I haven't known you long Iggy, but I'm sure going to miss you guys!"

"Come on Iggy, get inside," yelled Sam. "I have to go," said Iggy.

"Yes, now hurry," said Harold, pushing Iggy into the snowmobile. "I'll stall them while you get away,"

Iggy took his seat beside Sam as Yugo started the engine. The big black tires spun in the sand and they started to move forward. Grel-fazil and Abdul were bearing down on them. Harold stepped in front of the camel and reached into his big sack. He pulled out a gourd and removed the stopper. The camel immediately reared on its hind legs.

"Camel repellent," laughed Harold, "you boys will never catch the elves now!"

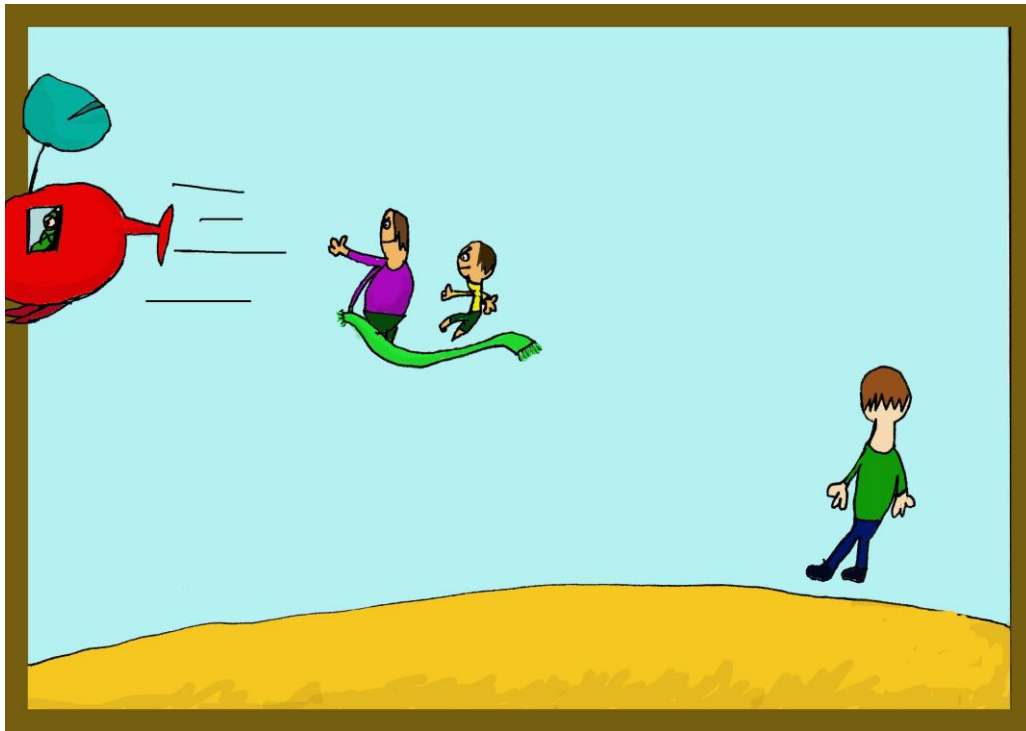
"That's what you think," sneered Grel-fazil. Abdul was unrolling a worn rug on the sand while the camel quivered. Grel-fazil and Abdul sat on the carpet.

Iggy had been watching all this through the rear window. Yugo passed the controls to him. "You steer," he said, "I'll work on this broken dial."

"Let's take to the air," said Sam. "They'll never catch us in the snow-copter." Yugo turned the snowmobile into the snow-copter mode. It soon lifted up into the air.

"Up, up and away," said Abdul. The carpet rose up quickly into the air and shot across the sky towards the snow-copter.

Sam looked back at the flying carpet. "Oh no," he whimpered. "They can fly after all, we're done for!"



The snow-copter flopped and weaved through the air. Iggy didn't really know how to steer the snow-copter and Yugo was still trying to fix the broken dial. "I've almost got it," he grunted. They were hovering over Bethlehem, not far from the stable where the nativity was still taking place.

The flying carpet closed in on the snow-copter. Sam covered his eyes. "There," said Yugo. He sat up and spun the dial. The counter advanced until it read 1987. "Here goes nothing," he said, punching the flashing blue button. The time-fluxion reverberator chimed. There was a blinding flash of light and everything went hazy.

Grel-fazil and Abdul caught the flash up close. Neither of them saw again for about a month. Without anyone to guide it, the flying carpet spun out of control and crashed into a pigsty in west Bethlehem.

Not far from Bethlehem, a shepherd was tending his flock; he looked up at the searing flash that hung over Bethlehem like a star. A little boy spoke to him. "Do you see what I see?" the boy asked...

* * *

1987 years later, the snowmobile appeared in the cold North Pole skies. Yugo steered it to a rough landing. It bounced across the frozen ground and skidded to a stop. The elves stepped out and weaved their way towards the workshop.

"I forgot how bad time travel is for the stomach," moaned Sam.

A bunch of other elves were running towards them, led by a big fellow dressed in red. The big fellow got to them first.

"Where have you boys been?" asked Santa. "We have been looking for you for three weeks!"

"Three weeks?", said Iggy, "we've only been gone for a day!"

Yugo looked at the snowmobile. "Well, we arrived in 1987, I couldn't get it any more precise than that."

Sam squawked, "you mean we came back three weeks after we left? Oh no! I've missed three episodes of *Dallas*! What will I do?"

"Ho ho ho..." Santa laughed. He smiled broadly at the elves, his green eyes twinkling brightly. Iggy's mouth fell open. Suddenly he knew where he had seen Harold Angells before. Of course, his beard was white now, but there could be no doubt that Harold Angells was Santa Claus.

"You were there, too" Iggy whispered.

Santa nodded. "Yes I was there. After all, how could you have Christmas without Santa Claus?" Iggy laughed. He and the others then followed Santa back to the workshop. Even though it was only late spring, there was a lot of work that had to be done before Christmas.

THE END