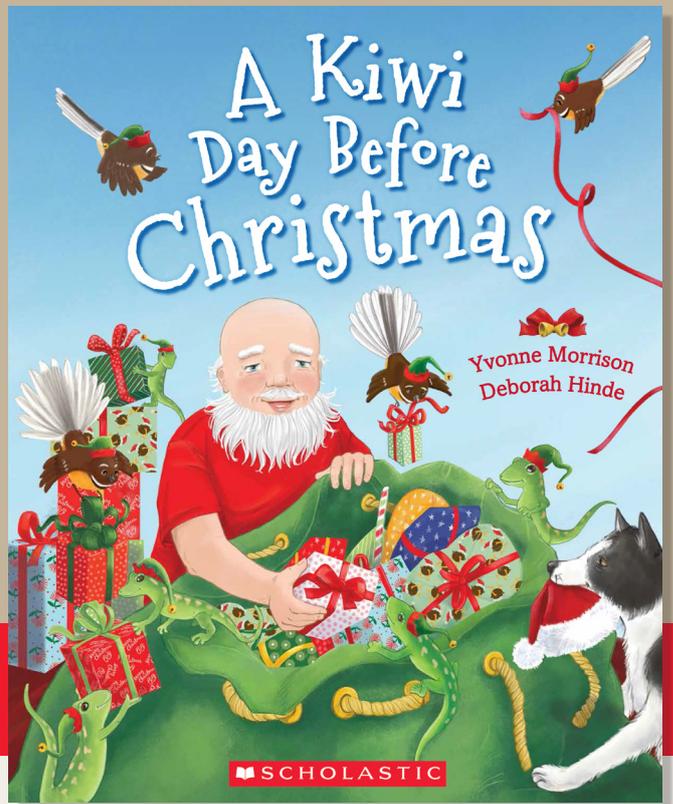


A Kiwi Day Before Christmas

Text by Yvonne Morrison
Illustrations by Deborah Hinde

- Art • Reading • Writing •
- Thinking Skills • Oral Language •



Synopsis

You might have already read *A Kiwi Night Before Christmas*. In this ‘prequel’, Yvonne Morrison explores what Santa does on the day before Christmas.

At dawn Santa is down at the lake fishing ... he just wants to catch one more fish. Then Mrs Santa comes bustling down to the lake telling him he needs to get cracking – they’ve got a big day ahead. Santa has just got a bite, but then he remembers it’s the day of Christmas Eve. He packs up his gear and races to his toy shed to see if everything is in order. He finds the fantails and geckos have been busy wrapping presents, the wetas have been cleaning up, and all the presents are safely stacked in his sack. Santa takes his tractor down to the petrol station and puts it through the carwash. Meanwhile, Santa’s dog is ready to round up the sheep – but some of them are missing. They haven’t come back from their holidays. After tracking them down through such modern devices as ‘EweTube’ and ‘Insta_Ram’, Santa has all but one back and ready to tow the tractor sleigh. Can they find the missing sheep amongst the flock? Yes, they can. They are now ready to launch into flight ...

About the Author

Yvonne Morrison is a zookeeper, swing dance instructor, former school teacher, and children’s book author of the Scholastic NZ hits *A Kiwi Night Before Christmas*, *Wacko Kakapo*, *The Tuatara and the Skink*, *The Ugly Hatchling*, *Down in the Forest*, *The Three Bears (Sort of)* and *Little Red Riding Hood (Not Quite)*. Yvonne is passionate about animal welfare and loves to travel the world seeking out strange and unusual species. She is currently living in the UK.

About the Illustrator

Deborah Hinde is the illustrator of numerous popular children’s books, including Scholastic NZ’s bestselling *A Kiwi Night Before Christmas*, *Santa’s Kiwi Holiday*, *10 Kooky Kiwi*, *10 Greedy Goats*, *10 Goofy Geckos*, and *10 Plucky Penguins*, among others. Deborah lives in Te Awamutu, NZ.

Writing Style

The story is written in rhyming couplets (aa, bb), third-person point-of-view in a 32-page picture book, with 32-50 words per page. Based on the Clement C Moore poem 'A Night Before Christmas', it adopts similar traditional language, but with a modern Kiwi twist: *'Twas the dawn before Christmas and, down at the bach, Santa was fishing . . . just one more he'd catch.* It has a lot of fun Kiwi colloquialisms like 'rattle yer dags, hon' and 'You need to get cracking!'

The introduction introduces the main character, setting, and sets the tone of the story. The middle of the story shows Santa checking everything is ready for Christmas night. The climax shows the sleigh can't take off without the sheep. In the conclusion Santa and the sleigh take off into the sky to deliver presents for the sleeping children.

Illustration Style

Deborah Hinde created the illustrations in Adobe Photoshop on the computer. Most of the bright, primary-coloured illustrations cover a double-page spread. She has carried on the humour of the text in the illustrations, with well-known brands having a kiwi theme to them, and by giving the sheep expressive faces and modern holiday destinations. For example, Fluffy has been partying with her friends, she carries a mobile phone and wears a striped hat. The hat is also foreshadowing how to find her when she is one sheep amongst hundreds.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- Look at the cover. What do you think is the tone for this story?
- How has the author set the scene on the first page?
- What is Santa doing on Christmas Eve morning?
- Who comes down to see Santa at the lake and what does she want him to do?
- What does Santa do before setting off for the toy shed?
- Who wraps the presents?
- What are the wetas doing in the Wetas' Workshop? What do you think they need that stuff for?
- Why is Santa pleased with his sack of 'prezzies'?
- What does Santa do at the petrol station? Why do you think he does this?
- What does Santa need the sheep to do?
- What is lying on the ground waiting for the sheep?
- What have the sheep been doing for their holiday?
- What do you notice about the social media posts? What clever things have the book's creators done to make these sheep-related?
- Who hasn't come back and where is she?
- Why does one sheep wear reindeer horns and a red nose?
- What helps you to find Fluffy?
- How do sheep talk?
- Who is Santa talking to when he says, "Kia ora to all, and to all a good night!"
- Find some rhyming words from the story that rhyme with these words:
 - catch
 - lake
 - ahead
 - bite
 - fun
 - toes
- Name some of the Kiwiana-themed items in this story.



teacher toolkit

 SCHOLASTIC

Activities

ACTIVITY 1: HOLIDAY TIME!

The sheep went off on different holidays. Shaun had gone diving and swimming with seals, Jason and Flossy had gone wine tasting, Buffy went shopping, Bossy went Zorbing, while Fluffy went partying. What do you think Santa, the fantails, gecko and weta might do for their holidays? Draw pictures to show where Santa and the others went for their holidays.

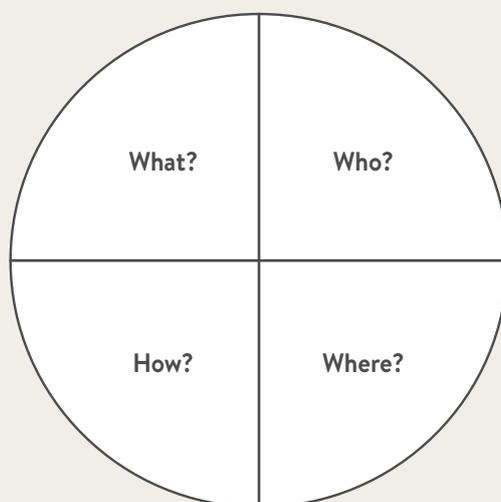
ACTIVITY 2: WHAT IF ...

What if the fantails, gecko and weta had gone on strike! What would Santa do then? Who might he replace them with? Write three paragraphs telling us what could have happened in this part of the story and how Santa solves the problem of his helpers going on strike.

ACTIVITY 3: BREKKIE TIME

Redraw Santa's breakfast table and include what you and your family had for breakfast this morning. Change the name of cereals or spreads to Kiwi names (just like the illustrator has done on pages 6-7). Give it a Christmas theme, too.

ACTIVITY 4: QUESTION TIME!



First, make a spinner. Draw a circle on card paper and draw a line down the middle and across the middle so that you have four sections. Label each quarter one of the following: What?, Who?, How? and Where?

Next, unfold one end of a paper clip and poke it down through the centre of the card paper. Bend the end that is sticking out of the bottom, to hold it onto the card paper.

Then, in pairs, one person spins the spinner (paperclip) and whatever it ends up pointing to, asks the other questions beginning with the selected word: What, Who, How or Where? For example: What happened in the story? Who is the main character in this story? How did they solve the problem in the story? Where did the story take place? The other person answers the questions.

Lastly, they swap places and spin again, asking and answering different questions.

ACTIVITY 5: 'EWETUBE' AND 'INSTA_RAM'

Study the sheep-related social media posts on pages 20-21. Ask the students what they think is funny about these. Have the students work in pairs to think of some other holiday destinations and make up some clever sheep-related social media posts of their own.

Teaching notes by Maria Gill