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# Santa's Stowaway

Marsha D. Broadway

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Dorman, Brandon. *Santa's Stowaway*. Illustrated by Brandon Dorman. Candlewick Press, 2009. ISBN 9780061351884. \$16.99. 32 p.

Reviewer: Marsha D. Broadway

Reading Level: Toddler, Preschool, Primary

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Christmas stories;

Subject: Christmas--Juvenile fiction; Elves--Juvenile fiction; Santa Claus--Juvenile fiction;

Books--Reviews;

Sam, Santa's newest elf, stows away in the sleigh to discover what makes Christmas special. After hiding under the seat, Sam creeps into Santa's bag and swooshes down the chimney to watch Santa fill stockings and put presents under a tree. When a young girl appears in the doorway, Santa takes gives the doll that Sam has made to the smiling child. As the reindeer turn toward home, Santa asks Sam if he has found his answer. Sam thinks about the hard work and love put into the toys and the girl's smile, and he knows.

Dorman's warm and richly colored digital illustrations enliven the story. The double-page spread of the living room that Sam and Santa visit foreshadows the encounter with the little girl by revealing her shadow cast from the doorway. Abundant details--full moon, stars, bedecked reindeer, cookies and milk, snow-encrusted windows, candlelight, a nativity scene, a cherry-cheeked doll, and matching missing buttons on the doll's dress and the girl's nightgown--give young readers ample Christmas eye-candle to encourage return visits to the story.

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