Leo and the Christmas Eve Hockey Game



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For Leo, with all our love this Christmas


Leo

Leo loved hockey more than anything. He loved the swish of his skates and the tap of his stick. On Christmas Eve, he could hardly sit still. Tonight, he just knew, something special was going to happen.



The house was quiet and the stars were bright. Leo looked out the window and saw the frozen pond behind the house, shining like a silver plate. "Just one little skate," he whispered.



He tiptoed past the sleeping cat and found his boots. He pulled on his hat and wrapped his scarf twice around his neck. Then he slipped out the back door into the crisp, snowy night.


Leo

Leo laced up his skates on the snowy bank. Swish, swish! He glided across the pond, round and round, as smooth as a snowflake. The ice felt like it was singing just for him.



Then Leo heard a jingle. Then another. Down from the sky came a team of reindeer, landing softly beside the pond with a flurry of snow. One of them sneezed, and everyone giggled.



"Leo!" said a booming, merry voice. It was Santa himself, with a twinkle in his eye. "We are in a pickle. The big North Pole hockey game is starting, and we need one more player!"


Leo

Leo gasped. "Me?" Santa nodded, and the reindeer cheered. In a whoosh of sparkles, the pond stretched wider and wider, until it became a great glittering rink at the top of the world.



Elves in stripy socks zoomed onto the ice. A polar bear pulled on a tiny helmet. Leo joined his team, tapped his stick twice, and smiled his biggest, gap-toothed smile. "Let's play!"



The puck dropped and off they flew! Elves slipped and slid. The polar bear spun like a top. Santa tried to stop the puck with his tummy, and it bounced right back. Everybody laughed.


LEO

The score was tied, and only one minute was left. A reindeer passed the puck to Leo with a gentle nudge of her nose. Leo's heart went thump, thump, thump. This was his moment.



Leo zoomed down the ice, quick as a rabbit. He swerved past an elf, hopped over a reindeer hoof, and swung his stick. Whack! The puck sailed, spinning and gleaming, straight into the net!


Leo

"GOAL!" everyone cheered. The elves tossed their hats and the reindeer jingled their bells. Santa lifted Leo onto his shoulders and said, "The winning goal, scored by our newest star!"



Soon it was time for Santa to go, and for Leo to go home. A reindeer carried him back to the garden, and he crept into the kitchen. There, warm and sweet, a cup of hot chocolate was waiting. Merry Christmas, Leo.

The end

Written and illustrated with the help of an artificial intelligence