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Front endpapers: Walt Kelly, Mo Gollub; back endpapers: Walt Kelly
Many, many centuries ago Santa Claus was just as kindly and generous as he is today—but there was one big difference.

He didn't wear a red suit!

He wore yellow cloaks or purple, black waistcoats or white, green trousers sometimes, other times blue. In fact, he wore whatever suited his fancy. Santa was very proud of his many happy costumes.
THEN ONE CHRISTMAS EVE, SANTA DRESSED IN AN ORANGE CAPE, A GREEN JACKET AND YELLOW TROUSERS, HE WORE A RED CAP AND HIS BOOTS WERE A SHINY BLACK. ALL THE GNOMES, HIS HELPERS, THOUGHT HE LOOKED VERY BEAUTIFUL.

BUT WHEN SANTA ARRIVED THERE HE COULD SEE NO PLACE TO LAND HIS TEAM. HE STOOD ON A CLOUD AND SURVEYED THE SCENE.

SOON SANTA'S WORK WAS NEARLY DONE. HIS FIRST STOP WAS THE FOREST OF ST NICHOLAS.

FINALLY HE SLID DOWN A ROPE TO FIND A LIKELY SPOT.

AND WATCHING HIM WAS MISCHIEVOUS JACK FROST.

JACK LEAPED TO THE ABANDONED SLEIGH AND WHIPPED UP THE TEAM.
JACK FROST! COME BACK WITH MY SLEIGH! MY BAG OF TOYS AND GIFTS IS IN IT!

HO, HO! GOODBYE, SANTA! I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO DRIVE THIS TEAM!

HOW UNFORTUNATE! THAT MISCHIEVOUS SPRITE WILL SPOIL THE CHRISTMAS OF ALL THE CHILDREN OF ST. NICHOLAS FOREST!

WELL, NOTHING FOR IT BUT TO FIND SOME HOSPITABLE PERSON TO GIVE ME SHELTER FOR THE REST OF THE NIGHT.

THERE'S A LIGHT NOW!

MY SAKE, WHOEVER LIVES HERE? TOO SMALL FOR ME TO ENTER, BUT I'LL KNOCK AND ASK DIRECTIONS TO THE NEAREST SHELTER.

WELL, Bless my soul! AN ELF! MERRY CHRISTMAS!

MERRY CHRISTMAS, YOURSELF! COME IN! COME IN!