

Sheepdog in the Snow

Lucy Daniels

Christmas was coming. Mandy Hope's school had broken up for the holidays. Brightly wrapped presents were stacked under the tree in the cosy kitchen at Animal Ark, and Mandy and her friend, James Hunter, were hunched over the table surrounded by invitation cards.

"Let's make a list," James suggested. He chewed the end of his pen. "In alphabetical order."

"What kind of list?" Mandy pushed her blonde hair behind her ears and scribbled away. She was making out an invitation to Gran and Grandad Hope, and Smoky the cat. Each card was hand-designed by James and Mandy. They'd cut out squares of bright yellow card, drawn the black outline of a Christmas tree on to each one, and written the words 'PARTY TIME' across

the top.

"A list of guests." James liked to be organised. He didn't want to miss anyone out. He saw Mandy was rushing into things a bit too fast. "Shall we put pets or people first?"

"Pets," came the prompt reply. Mandy filled out her grandparents' card. "A Christmas Eve Party!" it read. "Pets, bring your owners to Welford Village Hall on Saturday, 24 December at 8.30 p.m. Music and Food!" It was signed with a miniature cat's paw print, from a stencil which James had made.

"OK." James began his list. "Barney and Button ... Blackie ... Dorian ... Eric ... Houdini ... " He ran through the names of some of the pets they'd helped in the past. "Rosa won't be able to come because she's hibernating ... but Sammy probably will, because squirrels only semi-hibernate, and—"

"Hang on a second; you missed out Ruby and Prince." Mandy remembered the piglet and the pony as she tucked the invitation into an envelope.

"Hmm ... Can we get a pony into the village hall?" James wondered.

Mandy thought carefully. "I suppose Susan could bring him and stay outside with him. Prince could stick his head through an open window and enjoy things from there."

"And what about pigs?"

She imagined cheeky, adventurous Ruby trotting in and out of the trestle-tables, rooting for food. She nodded. "Pigs are fine. We want everyone to come, remember. It's going to be the biggest, best Christmas party for pets anyone's ever seen!"

Mandy's blue eyes shone. Animals were the love of her life, and the idea of giving them a Christmas treat, where all the past patients of Animal Ark could get together with pets which Mandy and James had helped to rescue, and farm animals they'd managed to save, promised to make this a Christmas to remember.

1.

Highlight one word from this sentence that tells us the presents were colourful.

"Brightly wrapped presents were stacked under the tree in the cosy kitchen at Animal Ark, and Mandy and her friend, James Hunter, were hunched over the table surrounded by invitation cards."

2.

Highlight one word from this sentence that tells us that the kitchen was warm and homely.

"Brightly wrapped presents were stacked under the tree in the cosy kitchen at Animal Ark, and Mandy and her friend, James Hunter, were hunched over the table surrounded by invitation cards."

3.

Highlight one word from this sentence that tells us that there were cards all over the kitchen.

"Brightly wrapped presents were stacked under the tree in the cosy kitchen at Animal Ark, and Mandy and her friend, James Hunter, were hunched over the table surrounded by invitation cards."

4.

Why does James think Mandy is rushing into things too fast?

- 1) ☐ She is writing the invitations before making a list.
- 2) ☐ She has not asked her mum before writing the invitations.
- 3) ☐ She has not agreed anything with James yet.
- 4) ☐ She is writing too quickly.

5.

What was unusual about the invitations they were writing?

- 1) ☐ They were brightly coloured.
- 2) ☐ They were addressed to the pets.
- 3) ☐ They were very large.
- 4) ☐ They were for a Christmas Eve party.

6.

Why was James concerned about asking Prince?

- 1) ☐ He was always busy.
- 2) ☐ He was too big and might not fit.
- 3) ☐ He might fight with the other animals.
- 4) ☐ He was too noisy and messy.

7.

What two words does Mandy think of that describe the pigs?

- 1) ☐ dirty
- 2) ☐ cheeky
- 3) ☐ adventurous
- 4) ☐ noisy

8.

What do you think Animal Ark is?

- 1) ☐ a home
- 2) ☐ a floating boat
- 3) ☐ a hospital
- 4) ☐ a pet shop

9.

Match these events in the order that they occur in the story.

School finished.	4
Mandy finished writing a card to Grandad Hope.	5
They discussed asking Sammy and Rosa.	2
They decided to invite the pigs.	1
James suggested making a list.	3

10.

Using information from the text, decide if each statement is true or false.

	True	False
It was Christmas Eve.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mandy and James were writing letters.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mandy loved animals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
They were organising a party.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>