

SNOW PROBLEM

THE CASE OF THE

Mushing Madness



Marianne Meyer

TOFANELLO

Snow Problem

The Case of the Mushing Madness



LEARNING
TRIANGLE
P R E S S



*Connecting
kids, parents, and teachers
through learning*

An imprint of McGraw-Hill

New York San Francisco Washington, D.C. Auckland Bogotá Caracas
Lisbon London Madrid Mexico City Milan Montreal New Delhi
San Juan Singapore Sydney Tokyo Toronto

McGraw-Hill

A Division of The McGraw-Hill Companies



This novel is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data applied for.

Copyright ©1998 by **The American Association for the Advancement of Science.**

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. Except as permitted under the United States Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this publication may be produced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a data base or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 DOC/DOC 9 0 3 2 1 0 9 8

ISBN 0-07-006693-0

The sponsoring editor for this book was Judith Terrill-Breuer, the senior producer was Joe Shepherd, the editing supervisor was Jane Palmieri, and the production supervisor was Clare B. Stanley. It was set in Century Old Style by Dennis J. Smith of McGraw-Hill's Professional Book Group in Hightstown, New Jersey.

Printed and bound by R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company.

McGraw-Hill books are available at special quantity discounts to use as premiums and sales promotions. For more information, please write to the Director of Special Sales, McGraw-Hill, 11 West 19th Street, New York, NY 10011. Or contact your local bookstore.



We scrambled out of the igloo as fast as we could, but we were too late. The sled, with Arnold barely holding on, was already a hundred yards down the road. The dogs ran at full speed, howling happily while Arnold bounced wildly on the rear runner.

We stood there for just a moment in shock. Then Fernando jumped on the KC Snow Tracker. He shouted to the rest of us in a take-charge voice . . .

“Curtis, Megan, you guys stay behind. Maybe the dogs’ll come back when they’re tired or hungry.” He pointed to the seat behind him on the Snow Tracker. “Keisha . . . ? C’mon with me.” Fernando gunned the engine and we burst forward, following the trail left by the dog sled.

Then, just as we whipped around a blind corner, I saw a dark shape step into the trail ahead of us. A moose!

There was no time to stop and nowhere else to steer. Unless we wanted to smack into a spruce tree instead, we were going to hit the side of that moose like a freight train.





**Other Books in
The Kinetic City
Super Crew Series**

Catch of the Day:
The Case of the Helpless Humpbacks
by Emily Lloyd

Forest Slump:
The Case of the Pilfered Pine Needles
by Emily Lloyd

Hot-Tempered Farmers:
The Case of the Barbecued Barns
by Chuck Harwood

Metal Heads:
The Case of the Rival Robots
by Marianne Meyer

One Norse Town:
The Case of the Suspicious Scrolls
by J. A. Warner

Rock the House:
The Case of the Meteorite Menace
by Chuck Harwood

Tall Tales:
The Case of the Growing Suspicions
by Emily Lloyd

This School Stinks:
The Case of the Secret Scent
by J. A. Warner

About the Crew

It is the near future. Peace has broken out all over the world, and the President of the United States has decided to donate the world's most sophisticated military vehicle, the X-100 Advanced Tactical Vehicle, to "the youth of America, that they might use this powerful tool to learn, to explore, and to help others."

Since the X-100 was designed in a top-secret factory in Kinetic City, the vehicle was renamed the **Kinetic City Express** and the first young crew was dubbed the **Kinetic City Super Crew**.

But who would be the members of the Crew? Kinetic City's mayor, Richard M. Schwindle, puts out a call to the young people of the city. Many answer the call, and seven are chosen: Keisha, Derek, Megan, Curtis, Fernando, PJ, and Max.

Now the Crew travel the world, along with their talkative supercomputer ALEC, in a tireless quest for truth, justice, and the perfect deep-dish pizza. Their quest may never end.

About the Train

CIA Top Secret Document #113057

DECLASSIFIED: 9/12/99

Originally designed to carry military intelligence teams to trouble spots throughout the world, the X-100 is capable of ultra-high-speed travel, under the control of the Advanced Logic Electronic Computer (ALEC) Series 9000. The vehicle can travel over land on existing train tracks and on tank-style treads. For crossing bodies of water, the X-100 can seal its waterproof bulkheads and travel underwater, using an advanced form of Magneto-Hydrodynamic Drive propulsion. The X-100 has several small vehicles within it which can travel with or without human passengers, including a small submarine and a jet copter. Finally, the X-100 has sophisticated information-gathering capabilities, using 'round-the-clock, high-speed access to the Internet, an extensive CD-ROM library, and the ability to generate realistic science simulations in its "Cyber Car."

Contents

About the Crew	<i>vii</i>
About the Train	<i>ix</i>
The Phone Call	1
1 A Chilling Tale	3
2 Bundle Up!	21
3 The Fall Guy	29
4 Hey, Arnold!	43
5 Mush Puppies	59
6 Chillin' with ALEC	69
7 Meet Musher Stewart	79
8 Doggone It!	91
9 Don't Sweat It!	107
10 Musher's Sense of Snow	121
11 Between a Brock and a Hard Place	129
12 Bad News Brock	139
13 Lights, Camera, Arnold!	149

14	Arnold's Big Break: The Sequel	163
	Home Crew Hands On	169
	Get Real!!	173
	Puzzle Pages	175
	Other Case Files	185

The Phone Call

“Kinetic City Super Crew. When you want the facts, we hit the tracks. Keisha speaking.”

“Yah, this is Arnold Rutabegger. I am going to be in a movie!”

“Wow, that’s cool, Arnold!”

“No, it is *freezing*! We are making the movie in Alaska. But I am not just shivering because of the cold.”

“What do you mean?”

“I am shaking with fear, too! This movie has been cursed!”

CHAPTER ONE

A Chilling Tale

Kinetic City Express Journal: "Snow Problem: The Case of Mushing Madness," Keisha reporting.

Whenever the hotline rings with a call from our old friend Arnold Rutabegger, you can bet the Super Crew is in for a crazy time. Arnold is a very big but not very bright guy. He's a beefy body-builder type—a huge man with huge muscles—but he doesn't have a lot going on upstairs, if you know what I mean. So even though he's so much older and bigger than any of us, Arnold kinda looks up to the Crew. Basically, that means that he's always getting into trouble and asking for our help. This time was no different. He called us

from Alaska, of all places, with good news and bad news.

The good news was, Arnold was finally fulfilling his lifelong dream to be in the movies! He had gotten an awesome job, working on a film starring his action movie idol, John-Clod Van Dumm. The bad news was, something was going really wrong with the film's production. Arnold said a bunch of the stunt people had been hurt in various strange accidents. For a big action flick like this one, that meant big trouble.

It also meant that crazy rumors were flying around that the whole production was cursed! That sounded totally silly to me, but poor Arnold was scared stiff. With so many people hurt, the director had given Arnold a chance to do some stunts in the movie. At first, Arnold was totally excited, but now, with his big test stunt just a few days away, he was terrified the curse would get him too.

To make matters worse, poor Arnold was also frozen stiff! His teeth were chattering the whole time we were talking. I tried to calm him down

over the phone, but he was just too worked up. He wanted to make a big impression on the director, but he had convinced himself that he was the curse's next victim. It was pretty obvious that the Super Crew was going to have to go up there and look after Arnold in person. Anyway, I couldn't give him the cold shoulder. (Hey, I'll have to tell the Crew that one. Did I tell you I love puns? Maybe even more, I love hearing the rest of the Crew groan at them.)

I knew the other members of the Super Crew would want to help Arnold, too, especially since this case had a glamorous, show biz angle. So I went off to gather them together. Fernando was in the KC Express Train's Video Car, watching a cheesy sci-fi thriller, "Attack of the Deranged Dingoes." Megan was in the Library Car, reading the latest edition of her favorite weekly tabloid magazine, the National Tattler (Their motto: "Stories So Hot You Should Be Reading with an Oven Mitt"). And Curtis, as usual, was tinkering with his latest "improvements" to the train--this time he said he

was getting the heating system in shape, even though it was only early September.

We all met in the KC Express Train's command headquarters, the Control Car. That's where we always go to discuss new cases with the help of our talking supercomputer ALEC. Fernando came bouncing in first . . .

"Okay, Keisha, what's the spoon?" he said, full of energy.

"The *spoon*?" I replied.

"Yeah, you know, like 'what's the scoop.'"

No, I didn't know, but I was used to being stumped by Fernando's talk. He just loves to use whatever phrase is currently on the trendy-meter. I can usually figure out what he's talking about, but sometimes he just loses me. "Well," I said, "the, uh, spoon is this: we got a call from Arn . . ."

"Oh, wait!" Fernando interrupted. "I forgot to tell you my totally wide new idea! 'Kinetic City Super Crew: The Movie!'"

"What? What are you talking about?" I

asked. Fernando always has some wild idea to liven up the train. Some of them are totally crazy—like the time he wanted to have a weenie roast in the Garden Car. Let's just say that bonfires and automatic sprinkler systems don't mix. Anyway, I figured today's movie epic idea must have been inspired by the cheesy movie he had just been watching.

“Remember the time the Crew helped Claude Cloulez save those whales in Nova Scotia?”

“Sure,” I said. “‘The Case of the Helpless Humpbacks.’ I’ll never forget that one. My blue jacket still smells like fish.”

“Well I think it would make an awesome adventure movie, and I know just how we can do it! First, I put some toy boats in the bathtub and shoot them in extreme close-up . . .”

I thought Fernando was out of his mind, but while he was talking, Megan walked in. Right away she was hooked. (Get it? Hooked? I kill myself.) “Sounds cool,” she began, “but what are we gonna do for whales?”

Fernando was on a roll. “Keisha, doesn’t your little sister have a whole bunch of those Bean-Bag Pals? She’s gotta have a whale! We can use that.”

Megan shook her head furiously. “Wait! Forget the whales,” she cried, snapping her fingers. “There’s big bucks to be made in disaster flicks. Let’s *sink* the boat!”

“Yeah,” Fernando agreed. “That’s what sells—explosions, disaster, screaming! We’ll sink the boat, maybe blow up the train . . .”

Right then, Curtis walked in, totally confused. “Sink the boat? Blow up the train? I don’t like the sound of this.”

Fernando gave a quick description of his movie—a “high-concept pitch” he called it—but Curtis wasn’t interested. “Fernando, man, why don’t you use your time more productively? You could give me a hand fixing the train’s heating system.”

“The heating system? Why are you messing with that, Curtis?” Megan asked suspiciously. “It’s not even October yet.”