

On 24th December we all woke up and saw two meters of snow outside. My husband squeezed my arm, his lazy smile instantly turning into a grimace of horror.

"Take the girls to the basement." I said, forcing a calm tone. Without a word he grabbed Alice and Veronica, our twin daughters, by their hands and led them to their room, telling them to get a few of their favorite toys and books. I was proud of him; I could tell he was scared, but his voice didn't even quiver.

I rushed through the house, closing the windows, pulling all the curtains shut. I took a glimpse outside and saw our neighbors doing the same. I hoped they were prepared, I had grown quite fond of them. It would have been a shame to lose someone after such a long time.

But this... This wasn't supposed to happen, never again. That's why we moved to the south. This little town hadn't had more than a meter of snow for over 60 years! And now what? I cursed quietly, making sure I locked the front door. I saw my family making their way downstairs, the girls carrying matching little backpacks with their 'necessities'. Of course, everything we actually needed was already in the basement. Food, water, blankets. Enough for a few days. Me and my husband took care of it the moment we moved in here.

"I'll be with you in just a moment." I smiled. I checked the house one more time, turning off all the lights. Flicking the last switch, I suddenly felt a faint smell of cinnamon and honey. Gingerbread cookies. Shit. They're close. I ran through the dark hall and to my family, locking the basement door behind me. My husband glanced at me worried, and I nodded slightly. I came up to the girls, sitting on the little cot in the corner of the room.

"I need you to be very quiet now, okay?" I whispered, taking their little hands in mine. "You can read your books, or play with your toys, but try not to make any noise. It's very important."

"What's going on, mama?" Alice asked.

"Is something wrong?" Veronica added, her lip trembling. They were both scared and about to cry. I hugged them to my chest, shushing them quietly. My husband joined us, wrapping his arms around me and the girls. Even down in the basement we could hear the ominous sound of hundreds of little bells jingling outside. Our daughters were too young to remember, they didn't know what it meant. We knew.

Santa Claus is coming to town.