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MICHAEL MORPURGO

# The Snowman



*A new story inspired by the original tale by*

**RAYMOND BRIGGS**

*Illustrated by Robin Shaw*



PUFFIN



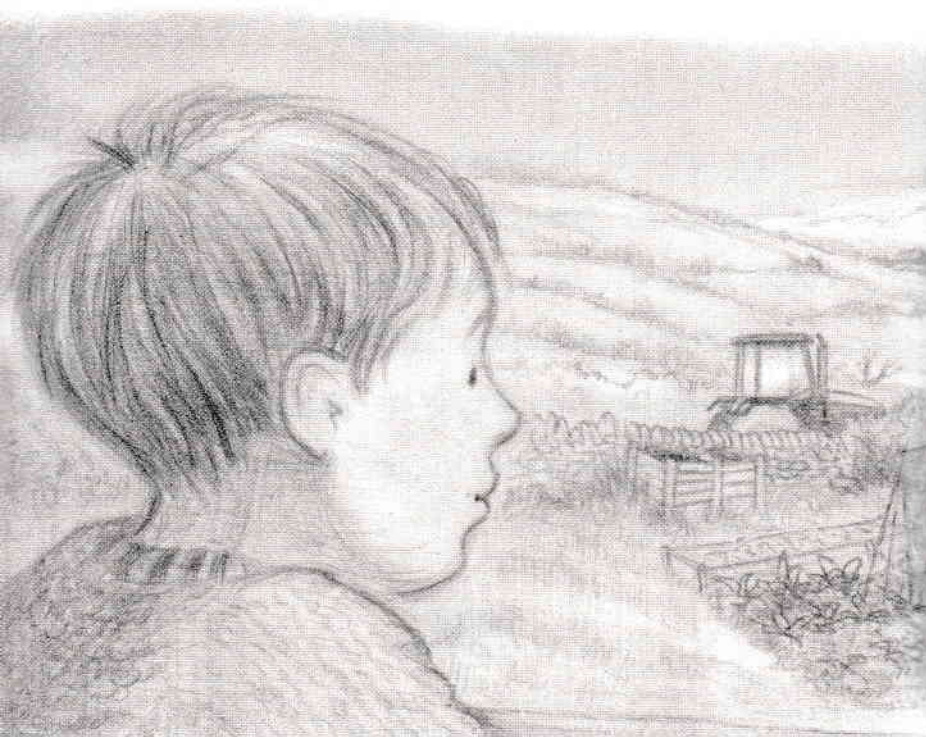
## Chapter One

Once upon a Christmas there was a little boy called James. James lived with his mum and dad, and Bertie, their sheepdog, on a farm deep in the countryside. They had cows and pigs and sheep and hens and ducks and geese, and they had a horse they called Big, and a donkey they called Little.





When James looked out of his bedroom window – which he did a lot because that’s where he did most of his dreaming – he could see his dad’s shed at the bottom of the garden, the weedy duck pond, his mum’s vegetable patch, the swing, and the trampoline that Grandma had given him the Christmas before. And beyond the garden hedge he could see



fields – Oak Tree Field was his favourite because that was where the owl hooted from. There were so many fields on the farm, and hedges and trees – more than he could count – and a river running along the bottom of the valley like a silver ribbon. And beyond the river, high on the horizon, were the rolling hills of the moor.



Grandma always came for Christmas. She often said – and she did say things too often sometimes – that mostly you couldn't see the hills around the farm because it was raining; but if you could see them, that meant it was going to rain soon, or snow. Grandma, who lived in a town, didn't mind the rain and snow as much as the birds that woke her up early every morning, or the smell of pigs and cows that James often brought back into the house on his wellies when he had been out on the farm. She didn't much like green either, and of course there was a lot of green about in the countryside.

What Grandma liked best was when James had had a bath and was all nice and clean, and in bed in his nice clean jimjams – as Grandma always called his pyjamas. She loved sitting

on his bed and telling him a story before he went to sleep. And at Christmas time, once the tree was decorated downstairs in the sitting room, once they had put up the holly and mistletoe, and once she had made the mince pies, her favourite story was *The Snowman* by Raymond Briggs.



Well, one night, after James had had his *Snowman* story, Grandma said goodnight, hugged him tight and, as usual, told him not to let the bedbugs bite. Bertie came up and jumped on his bed to say goodnight, as he often did, if he could get away with it. When Mum and Dad came up, they shoed Bertie off downstairs, and then kissed James goodnight and snuggled him down. Mum told him to be a good little boy and go to sleep, because Father Christmas only brought the Christmas presents you *really* wanted if you were a good little boy.

The trouble was, James didn't feel like being a good little boy and going to sleep at all. He was far too excited about Christmas. It was coming closer and closer – the next day was Christmas Eve, and then Father Christmas would be coming to see him. He would be

hitching up his team of reindeer to the sleigh, piling it high with presents, and setting off around the world, riding through the skies, the reindeer galloping, the bells jingling, to drop off presents to all the children in every country on earth. Christmas was coming!

And as if that wasn't exciting enough, James kept thinking about the story Grandma had just told him. He loved that story so much and was always sad when it was over. He longed to see snow outside his window; wanted the *Snowman* story to happen again. But every time he looked out there was no snow. There *had* to be snow, he thought, or there could be no snowman.

Time and again he sat up in bed to see if any snow was falling. He went over to the window and pressed his face up against the

