

Soraya & the Yeti

by Salima Alikhan

Friends. Soraya has to pinch herself to believe it. Ever since she shared a dragon adventure with them, Naomi and Christoff actually seem to like hanging out with her. Now they're on a ski trip with their fourth-grade class. When Soraya discovers another magical creature in danger, will her new friends stick by her? And can she find the courage to open up to her mom, who is chaperoning the trip? What would Soraya's comic-book hero, Nimbla Moony, do?

Don't miss the other Soraya books!



Soraya

& the Yeti



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REYCRAFT BOOKS



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by Salima Alikhan

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"Basil Goes to Panama"
illustrated by Jennifer Naalchigar

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A Crystal Kingdom

Nimbla Moony's magic gripper boots pierced the ice as she scaled the highest peak on the snow-planet Arborg. In the distance, ice palaces built on great floating icebergs soared into the blizzardy sky. At the very top of the mountain, a little lost Snarfdrizzle clung to a crag, terrified. It had about two minutes before it would freeze to death.

"Hold tight, little Snarfdrizzle—I'm coming!" said Nimbla, as giant snowflakes the size of dinner plates whizzed past her head.

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Soraya looked up from the page she was reading and peeked outside the school bus window at a snowy world as white as Arborg. Then she slipped her new comic, *Nimbla Moony and the Snarfdrizzle*, back into her pocket.

Nimbla Moony, Soraya's favorite comic book heroine, had done just about every daring thing in the universe. But even Soraya had to admit that Nimbla had never visited a ski lodge as cool as the one sitting on the hill in front of her school bus.

"It's like a crystal kingdom," her friend Christoff whispered, pressing his nose to the cold bus window.

It *was* like a crystal kingdom. Little frost crystals laced the sides of the windowpane, framing the world outside the bus like a Christmas card. It looked as if they were at the top of the world. Soraya imagined a glittering ice castle somewhere up there and all sorts of ice-fairy creatures with veils of dusty snow.

"The snow must be at least four feet deep," said Soraya's friend Naomi. "You two should stop sticking your noses right up to the window. They could freeze to the glass."

Bold white mountains rose all around them. The school bus wheezed up the endless driveway of the Alpine Ski Lodge, which stood on a slope below Mount Bergen. To Soraya, Mount Bergen might as well have been Mount Everest—it rose impossibly high, its snowy peak lost in the clouds.

Both fourth-grade classes at Soraya's elementary school were going to the lodge for a weekend ski trip. The lodge looked cozy and inviting. It was a big, three-story wooden building with warm yellow windows and smoke pouring out of the chimneys.

"This is even cooler than Balabrook Caverns," Christoff said.

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Soraya privately agreed, but she didn't want to say anything bad about the caverns. That was where the class had gone on their last field trip, and where Soraya and her new friends Christoff and Naomi had rescued a sweet dragon named Humphrey. They'd discovered him in a hidden chamber of the caverns and helped reunite him with his family.

Soraya pinched herself to make sure it was all real. Friends. That word still felt weird. Making friends was a new thing for Soraya. She wasn't the best at it. It still felt odd that Christoff and Naomi *wanted* to hang out with her.

"Why are you pinching yourself?" Naomi asked her. "Doesn't that hurt?"

"No reason," said Soraya.

Christoff stared thoughtfully at the lodge. "You know," he said, "if it wasn't so cheerful, that lodge looks like it could be haunted. Aren't ski lodges always haunted?"

"It's definitely not haunted."

Soraya's mom popped her head up from the seat behind them. As the bus slowed down, she started collecting luggage.

"The PTA worked so hard to raise money for this trip," she said. "We wouldn't have booked a haunted lodge." She made a stern face. "Not that there even is such a thing, Soraya."

Soraya bent to pick up her suitcase, trying to hide her scowl. The only un-fun thing about this trip was that her mom was one of the chaperones. In Soraya's opinion, this was completely unnecessary. Didn't they have enough adults already?

In addition to Soraya's mom, there were the two fourth-grade teachers, Ms. Staples and Mr. Haroyan, and four parent chaperones. But when Soraya's mom heard that the classes had been given permission to rehearse their play, *The Snow Queen*, on the lodge's stage, she had volunteered to come too.

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It was the weirdest thing. Soraya hadn't even realized her mom had ever heard of *The Snow Queen*. Her mom was an accountant who liked numbers and wore beige. The only time she'd ever seen her mom use her imagination was when she was deciding what color pen to buy.

When Soraya had first found out her mom was coming on the trip, she'd said, "Mom, are you sure you want to do this? I'm sure it'll be noisy and messy."

"I know," her mom had said brightly. "It will be fun. Since the lodge owners have agreed to let us use their stage, we'll do a dress rehearsal there for the guests! Plus, it'll be a chance for you and me to bond."

"But I'm not even *in* the play," Soraya reminded her mom. "I hate being on stage."

"I know," her mom said, her shoulders drooping a little. "But we'll be at the lodge together, at least."

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