(fb2) The Santa Claus Girl by Patricia P Goodin

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In New York City, 1952 - the height of the polio epidemic - a young WWII veteran must race against time, public fear of the disease, and demons from his past, to help save the life of a little girl. The Santa Claus Girl, a novel inspired by true events. Yes, Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus. Virginia grew up. Yes, that Virginia-who became a teacher-encouraging students through the Great Depression, WWII, and the Polio epidemic. New York City cab driver Ben Wilson was enjoying his drive to the airport that February morning in 1952. His passenger was his WWII Army buddy, pilot Joe Martinez, who'd just formed a small air cargo company with two weathered C-47s, luck, and a prayer. With the best of intentions, the men promise to stay in touch. The year passes quickly, filled with extraordinary news events. The height of the polio epidemic spreads across America-with no vaccine in sight. A Presidential election year, immigration reform, and Russian spies. July becomes the hottest month ever recorded for New York. A good year for news, and a banner year for newspapers. In December, a cocky young reporter named David Lindsey is assigned to interview Virginia O'Hanlon Douglas, "the Santa Claus Girl," now a principal at P.S. 401 at New York General Hospital, where classes are held for children unable to attend traditional schools. After an eye-opening interview, David learns that a little girl was recently hospitalized with the onset of polio. The girl's life depends on treatment in an iron lung, but because of the scale of the epidemic none are available. The reporter stumbles upon the story of Ben and Joe who've devised a daring plan to procure a respirator for the young patient. Ben reveals they were inspired by their former teacher Virginia O'Hanlon, the subject of David's interview. Unaware of the story's front-page potential, the rookie reporter unwittingly amplifies the plans of the humble do-gooders. But Ben must overcome a race against time, public fear of the disease, and demons from his past, to transport the life-saving machine to New York City. When a snowstorm threatens to close the airports, can the cabbie's colleagues mobilize in time to rescue the mission before it's too late? Armed with a new angle on his holiday story, the once cynical reporter discovers the power of the press is matched by the larger power of the people who unite for the greater good. tags:

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