Photoshop Tutorial - 'Santa Lost Rudolf'

We start with 5 photo's :
landscape.jpg
santa.jpg
bags.jpg
flying papers.jpg
snow.jpg

Start
Open a new document.
Select the 'forground colour' and make it 'nearly' black.
Select the 'Paint Bucket Tool' and fill the layer.
Open the photo 'landscape.jpg' and import it into the main document.
Resize to suit.
Click the 'Create Layer Mask' icon at the bottom of the 'layers window'.
Select the 'Gradient Tool' from the left side toolbar - with it set on black to white and 'linear gradient' draw a line from the horizon to half way to the big rock.
Click the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' icon at the bottom of the Layers Window and select 'Hue & Saturation' attach this to the layer by 'Alt+clicking' between them.
Adjust the : Hue -170 Saturation -80 Lightness -20

Santa
Open the photo 'santa.jpg'.
With the 'Quick selection tool' select as much of santa as you can, use the 'Polygonal tool' to add and remove the parts which will not select.
Click the 'Refine Edge' icon at the top and 'Feather' by 1 pixel and 'Shift Edge'' to -20%.
Use the 'Refine Edge Brush' (second brush on the left) and run it over the furry bits.
Tick the box 'Decontaminate Colours'.
Import this layer into the main document.
Resize and position to be sitting on the rock.
Click the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' icon at the bottom of the Layers Window and select 'Hue & Saturation' attach this to the layer by 'Alt+clicking' between them.
Adjust the : Lightness -20

Bags
Open the photo 'bags.jpg'.
With the 'Quick selection tool' select the bags.
Click the 'Refine Edge' icon at the top and 'Feather' by 1 pixel and 'Shift Edge'' to -20%.
Tick the box 'Decontaminate Colours'.
Import this layer into the main document.
Resize and position to suit.
Click the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' icon at the bottom of the Layers Window and select 'Hue & Saturation' attach this to the layer by 'Alt+clicking' between them.
Adjust the : Saturation -80 Lightness -20

The Naughty List
Open the photo 'flying paper.png'.
Import this layer into the main document.
Resize and position to suit.
Click the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' icon at the bottom of the Layers Window and select 'Hue & Saturation' attach this to the layer by 'Alt+clicking' between them.

Adjust the : Saturation -10 Lightness -20

Shadows
Click the 'Add New Layer' icon at the bottom of the layers window and move it to be just below the 'santa' layer.
With a soft black brush paint in the shadows - reduce 'opacity' to suit.
Do the same for the 'bags' layer and the 'flying paper' layer.

Finishing
Open the photo 'snow.jpg'.
Import this layer into the main document.
Resize and position to suit.
Change the 'blending mode' to be 'screen'.
Reduce 'opacity' to 80%.
Click the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' icon at the bottom of the Layers Window and select 'Gradient Map' - select black to white - change the 'blending mode' to 'soft light' - reduce 'opacity' to suit.
Click the 'Add New Layer' icon at the bottom of the layers window and move it to the top of the 'layers stack' - with a soft black brush set at 20% - paint a vignette.
Click the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' icon at the bottom of the Layers Window and select 'Levels' - move the 'black' and 'white' pointer in a touch to increase the contrast.