

"Santa's Disgruntled Elves"

by: Peter Addison

"That one," said one of three pointy eared fellows extending an unnaturally long finger with shards of red and white candy cane wedged under the nail.

"Which one?" sneered another through his cavity riddled teeth as he studied the scenery with an openmouthed frown. His friend leaned in until his shoulder touched the cheek of the scowling retch.

"There, do you see him?" He asked. His arm was straight and pointed with that sticky finger toward the target. "The guy in the blue shirt with the spiky yellow hair."

"The big guy. The one with the dog? Are you kidding? Look at the size of him...and he has got a dog!"

"Yea," said the third of the pointy eared trio. He had been twirling a candy cane around his finger but had stopped and was now pulling his floppy red cap down lightly over his miniature head. "I see him. He's perfect."

"Are you two crazy?" Sounded the second in an alarmed tone. His openmouthed frown widened making the lines from his nose to his chin deeper, darker. They seemed to point up to his yellow eyes expressing impending doom to his two companions. "Look at the size of him. He's huge! And what about his dog? That's a big dog."

"Look at him," his friend said beginning to pick at the clear wrapping encasing the candy cane he had been twirling, not bothering to look down, as he was too busy studying the newly acquired target.

"Look closely."

"I see him. He's huge, and he has a dog! How is he perfect?"

"Look at his eyes," he said slowly as his pointed fingernail had successfully breached the plastic wrapping of the candy cane.

"Ohhhh," his buddy said with understanding. His openmouthed scowl turning up into an openmouthed smile. "I see. He's blind!" He said enthusiastically turning back and forth between his friends. "He's bl...li...li...nd," he laughed. His friend popped the fresh candy cane into his mouth and twisted it around and around in a rhythmic, celebratory manner as the other dropped his pointing arm and slung it over the laughing elf's shoulders and repeated, "He's perfect."

"He is," said the elf still twisting the candy cane in the corner of his mouth. "But what about the dog?"

"Bl...li...li...li...n—" He stopped laughing and turned toward his friend. "Yea, what about that dog?" The openmouthed frown had returned.

"I'll handle the dog. I know just how to deal with dogs. Can I have a quarter?" He asked without removing his arm from his frowning friend's shoulders.

"Yea, here you go," he said running his tongue between his bottom teeth and lip as he palmed the coin in his partner's outstretched hand with a loud slap. "What-cha need it for?"

"You'll see." And with that, the elf with the quarter strode away, accentuating each step with jarring, twisting, body jolts. The bells on the tips of his curled shoes

ringing out with each swaying step. He swung the arm holding the coin violently to-and-fro with each strutting step while the other arm remained bent and still at his side.

The two remaining elves leaned against the bus stop wind shelter. Both were dressed from top to bottom in the uniform they had worn their entire working lives. Their heads were kept warm with long pointed cap that hung like a sock, red in color to match their baggy pants. The caps kept their heads plenty warm but there was not enough fabric to cover their long pointy ears. Their shirts were green and short sleeved for safety. Sleeves could get snagged in the turning wheels of machinery or under a nail or screw or anything while building in the Workshop, especially these days when sleep deprivation was so common. Their pants were tucked into stripped socks colored green and red stretching up to their knees. Their shoes pointed in the front topped with a little bell that jingled when they walked. The bells had not always been decorating the tips of their shoes. Santa had had them sewed on a couple of decades back. He said it was to increase the "Christmas spirit." But some of the elves believed they had been placed there so the big guy could keep, not just an eye on the workers but an ear as well. Since the population of the planet had grown so rapidly in the last forty years or so, breaks had been eliminated and the working day extended. Some elves (it was rumored), had snuck away here and there for a bathroom break or a quick nap or simply time to relax their fingers. This (it was rumored), had cut down on production and now, with the bells in place it was far more difficult to sneak off the assembly line.

Their companion returned with a newspaper in hand. "This will take care of the dog," he said to his friends, both of whom looked confused but neither had asked just how the newspaper could help. "Where is he?" the elf asked while rolling the newspaper up as lightly as he could manage with his undersized hands.

This time the elf popped the candy cane out of his mouth and used its wet, sharp tip to point at the blind man and his seeing eye dog. "He's over there."

"Oh no, he's getting away," said the elf with his ever present openmouthed frown. "What are we going to do?"

"Whoa, hold up a second. Do you see what he's doing?"

"Yea, he's making his getaway. He's fleeing into that store!"

"First of all he doesn't know we are about to jump him. So he can't be getting away from something he doesn't know he should be getting away from!"

"Wait... What?" The frowning elf looked confused staring down at his kneeling friend struggling with the paper.

The elf with the paper sighed. "Never mind. Trust me when I say he's coming out. Secondly, he's walked into an ice cream store so naturally he'll be coming out with an ice cream!"

Now both elves looked at him confused.

He had finished rolling up the newspaper and was attempting to slide a rubber band down the shaft. "If he comes out with an ice cream..." he waited wide eyed for his companions to finish his sentence as he snapped the rubber band into place successfully holding the newspaper's cylindrical form before standing patiently with his hand gesturing for his companions to finish his thought. Neither of the two were able to read his mind. "Holy Christmas you guys, are the training wheels in your heads square or something? If he has ice cream...and we jump him... **WE GET THE ICE CREAM!**"

"Ohhhhhh," said the elves simultaneously, high-living each other. There were twinkles in their eyes.

"When he comes out we'll go after him just like we practiced. You two remember what we practiced?"

The two elves nodded their heads. Both reflected on the snowman they had built outside the gingerbread house they had been living in since fleeing Santa's Workshop. It wasn't a real gingerbread house. The elves had used cardboard collected from recycle bins and had constructed a high quality replica of a gingerbread house complete with replica frosting. They had used newspaper; wetted it until it turned to pulp, then laid it appropriately around the windows and over the roof circling the top of the chimney. They had fabricated a nice pulpy line over the top of their free standing cardboard mailbox as well.

Outside, when the house was finished and they had decided to act as menacing as possible to the "gift getters" of the world, they had built a snowman to practiced punching and kicking. They had practiced lifting his wallet from a snowy pocket that had been carved on the side. They had even attempted to mount each other's shoulders in an attempt to form a single, tall unit with the necessary height to punch a medium height man in the nose. On several dismal occasions they had attempted to, "Knock the carrot off the snowman's face," as they had called the game (correction, the training), but this did not work so well. The elves were master builders to be sure, but gymnasts they were not.

At any rate, their training had been somewhat successful and it seemed this was the preordained day they were going to put it all to the test. This was the day when Santa's elves were going to make a name for themselves. This was the day that would go down in history, the day when people would say, "Santa and his intolerable work schedule, poor pay andretched treatment of elves caused them to snap!" From now on people would not think of elves as Santa's helpers. They would think of them as individual people that had been; Enslaved? Mistreated? Misused and

underappreciated for centuries before these three...heros, said enough! Today was the day of reckoning.

If they caused a big enough commotion, if they could mustard up a scene of such detest, people would have to take notice. They would talk about the incident to each other and questions would arise. Questions like, "Why would the elves do this? What brought about this behavior? What could be so bad that these elves acted in such a deplorable fashion?" And eventually it would all come back to the big guy, the man in red. It would all end up in the big fat lap of old St. Nick himself and then people would see. Then they would know. Then they would understand why these elves had to act out!

The blind man and his seeing eye dog emerged from the ice cream store with a pinkish ice cream cone in hand and began walking toward the three disgruntled elves. The first picked his newspaper up off the ground and rested it on his shoulder. He looked to his right and saw his companion shove the remainder of the candy cane into his mouth and begin chomping rapidly. His jaw working up and down sent shards of broken candy flying from his sharp toothed face. The third with his mouth hanging open in a ghastly frown, stared at the poor blind bastard and his dog stepping walking their way.

The two turned their heads and stared at their friend holding the newspaper and had the same thought, I wish we would have made a snowdog as well as a snowman to practice on.