

Holiday Spirit for Hive - Excerpt  
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I settled into bed with my favorite boyfriend, my laptop. Before long I had updated my resume, applied for a half dozen jobs, checked flights home, and Facebooked with all of my friends to see if anyone had any leads. I was about to shut down when the pop from my email caught my attention.

I closed the other tabs and stared at my inbox. It was from the OAC. The Otherworld Alignment Council was a group of magical beings, things that go bump in the night, and people that made sure that there were universal laws and regulations used across all the realms. They made sure there was a common language, rules about magic, and laws that kept peace between the different races. Why they were emailing me I didn't know.

To: Grace MacGregor  
From: OAC  
Subject: The North Pole Needs You

Dear Ms. MacGregor,

It has been brought to the attention of the OAC that you are no longer employed during this busy time of the year. Every Holiday season we rely on the help we get from the Otherworld community to make the season bright. Your talents could be used now through the end of the year helping deliver joyful winter holidays across all the realms.

Please see the attached application. Applicants will be considered for a paid position. Please send a resume, two letters of recommendation and magical aptitude test scores to the email listed below. If chosen we will need you to report immediately for work.

Thank you and Happy Holidays,  
Otherworld Alignment Council

I looked at the email again and shrugged. "Why not?" I asked myself. I attached my resume, two recommendation letters and a quick note explaining my father was a Scottish Werewolf Clansman and that I was half human. I figured my lack of magical abilities would keep me out of the fray. My father told me to always answer the OAC right when they contacted you because they made the IRS look patient.

With a giggle to myself I closed the windows on my laptop and shut it down. Snuggling deep into my pillows I closed my eyes, giggling about what use I could possibly be to the Great Holiday Front up North. Strangely enough I fell asleep with thoughts of sugar plums dancing in my head

I awoke the next morning to the sounds of clinking, clicking and power tools. I opened my eyes involuntarily when a particularly loud noise sounded right over my head. It was then I noticed my bedroom was swarming with Gnomes and they seemed too busy to care I was sleeping.

"Excuse me!" I yelled. "Why are you in my bedroom?"

A few of them stopped, exchanged looks with shrugs, and returned to work. I wasn't answered until a man with a heavy red braid down his back appeared.

"You are in their workshop, and it's about time you got up." I climbed out of bed angrily, prepared to demand that they leave. "Nice pajamas," he said with a grin as he looked me over. "If you follow me we will get you assigned duties, uniforms and the rest of your paperwork filled out."

I looked around what should have been my room. I was on a toy factory floor. Only it looked like FAO Schwarz met Ikea. Bright colors with industrial-grade shelves mixed with the old world charm of hand-carved wooden trim. All around me Gnomes were hustling to complete toys. I looked in the direction the redheaded man had gone and chased after him, abandoning my bed to the factory.