

Chapter 3

Uh Oh, There's a Problem

Well, like I was saying it was the night before the night before Christmas, and things seemed to be going rather smoothly at the North Pole, at least for the moment.

“Santa, oh Santa, I think we have a problem!” shouted Paula Plumlee the littlest of all the elves. Paula forgot that she was not supposed to bother Santa when he was checking his list. “Uh, oh,” said Paula suddenly remembering that Santa didn’t like being disturbed when he was checking his list.

“A problem why that is impossible, there cannot be any problems at the North Pole the night before the night before Christmas! Why, I simply won’t allow it!” bellowed Santa. “Remember Ms. Plumlee I am not to be disturbed.”

You see, the first lesson that an elf learns at Santa’s Helper Academy is that you do not disturb Santa when he is checking his list because this might make Santa very grumpy. Why Santa even had his, “Do Not Disturb,” sign hanging on his desk just in case an elf would forget that first

and very important lesson. The elves just could not believe that Paula Plumlee was disturbing Santa now, not when he was checking his list, what was Paula Plumlee thinking!

All the elves began whispering amongst themselves, “A problem, oh no not a problem, Santa hates problems. Why the last time we had a problem was back in... Why I can’t remember when the last time was we had a problem. Do you?”

Peter Whitbread Senior Elf Supervisor pushed his way through all the elves almost stepping on a Mouse Timekeeper who scurried away just in a nick of time. In a very nervous squeaky voice, Peter Whitbread said to Santa, “Sorry to disturb you sir, but Santa I assure you there isn’t a problem, not the night before the night before Christmas, no - no problems...”

“Oh but Santa, I can assure you we do have a problem,” said Paula Plumlee defending herself.

Santa was still sitting behind his giant desk, hoping to finish checking the names of all the good little girls and boys on his list. He peered through his spectacles looking straight at Paula Plumlee the tiniest of all the

elves, and at Peter Whitbread Senior Elf Supervisor. He was losing his patience. Santa had a scowl on his face – yes, Santa was definitely GRUMPY!

“Santa, I know you don’t like to be bothered when you are checking the names of all the good little girls and boys, but I can assure you we do have a problem.”

Santa who was now becoming more than just a little grumpy looked up from his list and said, “Ms. Plumlee, if you are so sure we have a problem then what is it? Speak up. What is the problem?” It was so quiet that you could hear a pin drop. The laughter had stopped and all the tiny silver hammers were quiet. You see, all the elves had stopped what they were doing, and were waiting to hear what the tiniest elf Paula Plumlee would say next.

The tiny Mouse Timekeepers were huddled in a corner whispering, “I thought we were on schedule... Oh, I don’t know what the problem could be.” Even Mrs. Claus had stopped baking her gingerbread cookies, and was standing next to Mr. Claus. The room was silent except for the

squeaking of the sign out in front of the workshop, and the occasional sound of reindeer landing on the roof.