

December 23, 1997

The North Pole

“No, no, no!” Alabaster picked up the wrench he had been holding and threw it as hard as he could against the side of the gigantic furnace that was currently belching smoke out everywhere. He had been notified by the other elves that the ancient device had been acting up again, overheating some parts of the Workshop and freezing out others. Power fluctuations were happening across the grid, and some of the conveyor belts had stopped running completely. He had taken a small team to the basement, only to discover that the problem was far worse than he had feared.

The furnace itself was a relic of a long-forgotten age, a faerie artifact that had been built around containing the powerful energy of a sun stone. Sun stones were extremely rare objects capable of emitting more heat than they absorbed, and the magic furnace had been built to properly contain such a device and allow the elves to do their work unhindered in the desolate cold of the North Pole.

The wrench bounced off the side of the furnace and clattered onto the stone floor. His assistant Pepper knelt down and picked up the wrench with a scowl on her face.

“There’s no reason to get so upset,” she told him, her face scrunched up. Pepper was a sweet elf with dark skin and glittery freckles sprinkled across the bridge of her nose. “We can still be ready by Christmas, even if the furnace goes down for a day or two.”

“You don’t understand.” Pepper was new to his team and had only been around a decade. The elves lived for thousands of years and were constantly being rotated through job duties to prevent them from getting bored. Alabaster was one of the few elves who stuck with their primary job, his being the security and maintenance of the facilities. “Something is wrong inside of the furnace, and we need someone to crawl in there and fix it.”

“Okay, so? I can go in there if you don’t want to.”

“No, not just inside the furnace. Something is clogging the vents.” The furnace was built to house a power source similar to a star, which meant the inside of it was infinitely larger than the outside.

“Oh sparkles, seriously?” Her hands went to her face in distress. “You can’t go in the vents, they’re constantly changing, you’ll never find your way out!”

“I know. That means...” He made a grim face, then turned to look at the furnace. It wouldn’t keep Christmas from coming, and the job itself would be difficult, but none of those things worried him.

“Is there any other way?” Pepper asked him. “Any at all?”

He shook his head. “Nope. We’re going to have out source this job, and there’s only one person who can do it.” Even he could hear the slight tremor in his voice.

“We’re going to have to bring *her* here, aren’t we?” Pepper made a face, then shivered. “But she’s so *naughty*.”

“I know, Pepper, I know.” He patted the top of her head through her hat. “Santa help us all.”

Her name was Holly, and when she received the snowflake-shaped Emergency Retrieval Order, she spit out her cocoa when she saw who it was for.

Ordinarily, Holly’s primary job was to get her hands on the new toy of the season and bring it back to the shop for the elves to replicate. Back in the old days, Santa was easily able to keep up with demands, it was no problem to manufacture dolls or bikes. But ever since the Tickle Me Elmo fiasco last year, Holly’s trips had become far more frequent in an attempt to make sure the Workshop had access to whatever the hot toy was this holiday season.

Expecting to be able to kick back and relax for a couple of months, she had been hanging out with some of the elves on break and watching the monitors. Children from around the world were on display, and last-minute updates were being made to Santa’s list.

“Everything okay, Holly?” asked her friend Noelle.

“Um, excuse me.” The order had come from Alabaster himself, and she needed to double-check that this was what he really wanted.

She walked through the long ice tunnels that connected the monitor room to the central hub of the North Pole. Two days before Christmas, the hub was a flurry of activity as elves ran in every direction, looks akin to panic on their faces. They were just stressed because of Christmas, but if they were to learn about Holly’s business, a full-blown panic could ensue.

The service elevator was marked out of order, a result of the recent power fluctuations. She took the stairs instead, and met Alabaster just outside his office. It was clear he had just finished briefing his team, and the mood of the room was a somber one as they spoke in low tones to each other.

“Excuse me,” she said, interrupting everyone. “Can I speak with you about this?”

Alabaster turned the meeting over to his assistant Pepper and pulled Holly into his office. Alabaster had been named for the pale hue of his skin, but he had taken on a ghastly hue of gray.

“Is this for real?” she asked him and held out the request.

He walked over to his desk and pulled out a flask full of eggnog. He took a giant swig, then wiped his mouth with the back of his sleeve before putting the flask back.

“It is,” he answered. “How soon can you get her here?”

“In an hour, but...” Holly dropped her voice. “Does the big man know?”

“He’s really busy right now, and I don’t want to bother him.” Alabaster shook his head. “Look, I know this isn’t optimal, but if we can get it done when everybody is busy, maybe it won’t be as bad as last time.”

Holly felt the heat in her cheeks at the mention of last time. “Can’t we just... I don’t know, just borrow her goggles or something?”

“We tried.” He opened the drawer back up and slammed another shot of eggnog. “We offered her everything under the sun, and she wouldn’t agree to it. Said it was her job to protect the goggles, and when we pushed her on it, she bit someone. Even if we got the goggles from her, there’s a chance they wouldn’t work for us. Divine Objects tend to work only for certain people.”

“But Allie,” she said, using his nickname. “She’s a fudging *goblin*.”

“Just... go get her. My team is ready, bring her directly here with minimal fuss. I’m thinking if we can just get her in and out, maybe it won’t be as bad as last time.”

“I don’t know that it could be worse,” Holly muttered. Alabaster clearly heard her, as he downed another swig of eggnog.

“Let’s just get this over with,” he said.

Holly nodded, then left him behind and headed back up to the central hub. From there, she headed toward the giant fireplace across from the hub's entrance. Thousands of stockings hung over the fireplace, each one with an elf's name. Though the flames crackled and gave off tremendous heat, she tossed a handful of glitter into the air and walked through it, feeling a winter chill spread through her entire body.

The flames parted for her, and she stepped through them and across the world. She walked into the living room of an old home with beautiful furniture decorating the front room. The house was quiet, and it was apparent that everyone had long ago gone to bed.

Well, almost. A trio of fairies seemed to be playing with the ornaments on the tree. Though Holly's magic would keep her invisible from most living creatures, fairies were one of the few creatures that might spot her, so she took her time moving across the room and staying out of sight.

Down the hall she went, and then out the back door. The air was cold, and a thin blanket of snow had settled over the yard. A layer of ice had formed in the fountain, and the nymph that lived there was busy star-gazing with a dryad. They didn't notice Holly's passage, nor did the gargoyle on the roof. Many stories had been told about this home in the dark recesses of the North Pole, and it took all of Holly's willpower not to stay and watch. She found herself wishing she had come for one of them, but it wasn't meant to be.

She moved into the garage and past the boxes of books that had been stacked by the door. Along the back wall was a flight of stairs that went beneath the garage itself. Once upon a time, it had been a carriage house with a maintenance pit, but the pit itself had been transformed into a room that wasn't tall enough for the average human.

It was, however, tall enough for the creature that lived there. She was asleep in her bed, her tail curled up beneath a thin blanket, and a pair of old goggles strapped to her head just beneath her horns.

"Tinker," Holly whispered. "Wake up. Santa needs you."

The goblin's eyes opened, and she looked at Holly in fright, then anger.

"What you want with Tink?" the goblin demanded, then slid out of bed and grabbed a nearby hammer. She wore a plain dress that looked like it had been stitched from canvas.

“Wait, hold on.” Holly pulled a pinch of snow out of her pocket and blew it into the air. The tiny crystals landed on Tinker’s face and made her pause, as if in mid-thought.

“I’m an elf from the North Pole,” Holly told her. “Do you remember?”

“Tink remember,” she said, recognition dawning in her yellow eyes. “Tink help pointy ears before, but always make Tink forget after.”

“Yes, that’s right.” Holly let out a sigh. So far, so good. She pulled a spare Christmas hat out of her belt. “I need you to put this on so we can sneak off to the North Pole.”

“Tink wear hat.” She took it from Holly and pulled it onto her head. The magic hat was one-size-fits-all, and it expanded to fit along Tinker’s forehead, the goggles disappearing inside. Her ears stuck out just beneath the white brim, and the goblin ran to check herself in the mirror.

“Tink can’t see Tink,” she announced. “Tink ready.”

Maybe it won’t be so bad this time, Holly thought, then led the goblin back through the house. They moved quietly and were soon back at the fireplace. The faeries were giggling at each other in the tree, and Holly led Tink behind the couch where she threw a handful of glitter over Tink’s shoulders.

“Ten seconds,” she warned the goblin, and they ran at the fireplace. The brick gave way to the blasting flames of the hub, and they both emerged unscathed.

However, Tinker tripped over one of the logs on her way out. She tumbled forward and hit the stones of the hearth hard enough that her hat popped free just as her dress slid up to reveal her bare bottom. Nearby elves that stopped to see the commotion froze in shock and several of them dropped the heavy loads they had been carrying to cover their eyes.

“Why aren’t you wearing panties?” Holly asked, averting her gaze.

“Tink no need panties,” the goblin growled, then stood up and pulled her dress down. “Tink wear what Tink want.”

“Oh my Santa, please!” Holly reached into the pouch on her waist and dug around. The pouch allowed her access to a mystical storage space that was full of all kinds of items that she might need on her various jobs, and she hoped that what she needed was still in storage. Her fingers pinched a thin piece of cotton

fabirc, and she pulled out a small pair of red and white striped panties. "Please, Tinker, put these on."

"Tink is not shitty candy," she growled, and someone dropped a box full of glass ornaments. The nearby elves were now hustling away from the area, muttering to themselves in shock.

"Just put them on, and please watch your mouth," Holly begged, then shoved the panties at the goblin.

Tinker rolled her eyes and snatched the panties from Holly. "Tink think elf rules are bullshit, but Tink play nice." She slid her legs into the panties and pulled them up, made a face, then took them off again.

"What are you doing?" Holly asked, then looked over her shoulder. Several elves were now engaged in deep discussion with each other. So much for keeping Tinker's visit a secret.

"Panties fit bad," Tinker explained, then bit a hole in the butt. After pulling them on again, she fiddled around with her tail and pulled it through.

"Please, we need to go." Holly picked up the hat, then grabbed Tink's hand and ran toward the service elevator. She was given a wide berth by the others, and when the door opened, the elves that were inside all got out. When the doors closed, Holly let out a sigh of relief.

"Which floor?" Tinker asked. "Dumb elves push too many buttons."

"What?" Holly looked at the panel and groaned. They were going to stop a few times on their way down, and there was no way to cancel it out.

They rode in silence. Every time the door opened, they were greeted with shocked faces who agreed to take the next one, and by the time they got to Alabaster's floor, Tinker was openly laughing.

"Goody two-shoe elves afraid of Tink," she said, her hands on her waist. "Know Tink way smart."

"It's not that," Holly explained. "It's your language. Please, try not to swear while we're here, it makes the others... you know."

Tinker rolled her eyes. "Tink only use good words, try hard not to say fuck."

The doors had started to open just as the goblin spoke, and the moment the swear left her lips, the poor elf who had been waiting on the other side

retched loudly, then threw up. It was clear that he had been eating candy canes and cookies just beforehand, and as he made a mad dash to the bathroom, the goblin cackled.

“It’s... it’s not funny...” Holly told her, one hand on her stomach and the other on the wall for support. The swear had knocked her off balance, but she had heard worse traveling in the human world. Naughty acts were very disorienting to the elves in person, and she hoped to avoid a repeat of Tinker’s last visit. The goblin had smashed her foot under a steel beam and the litany of swears that had come from her mouth had put over a dozen nearby elves in the clinic for a week.

When they approached the furnace, Alabaster’s team turned to face them. Several of the elves bolted from the room, ready to tackle their assigned tasks and avoid whatever calamity Tinker would bring down on their heads.

“What break this time?” Tinker asked.

“Not sure. Something is clogging up the vents, and heat is getting redirected.” He stepped away from a large metal cart that was full of tools. Each tool was made of a special type of unbreakable silver that would allow her to tackle any job that she might find inside the vents. “You do remember that the vents keep changing, yes? And do not, under any circumstances, open up the door to the core. The heat will incinerate you instantly.”

“Oh, Tink remember. Goggles keep Tink safe.” She tapped the goggles, then slid them down over her face. A series of lenses flicked back and forth over her eyes, and she tilted her head back to survey the large heating system. “Some rooms hot, some rooms cold. Tink see...” the goblin went silent, then nodded her head and grabbed a large hammer off of the cart.

“Surely you’ll need more than a hammer,” Alabaster suggested. The hammer that Tinker had picked up had a large head and the handle was wrapped in white and red leather, giving it the appearance of a candy cane.

“Maybe.” She pulled a toolbelt off the cart and belted it around her waist, then slid the belt through the loop. This was followed by a large wrench, a ratchet, and a screwdriver, all things that had been wrapped in the same festive colors as the hammer. While she was putting everything on, she bumped into Alabaster hard enough that he nearly fell over.

“Watch out,” Holly warned, using her hands to steady the nervous elf.

“Tink sorry, excited to fix magic furnace.” The goblin grinned, revealing sharp teeth. “Tink like seeing North Pole, always fun.”

Holly personally disagreed but kept the thought to herself. The sooner the goblin could finish, the better.

“Anyone come help Tink this time?” she asked, then adjusted her belt, her tail flicking about behind her.

“No, it’s too dangerous.” Alabaster shook his head. “You know that.”

“Oh, Tink know.” She grinned again, and Holly knew that she was up to something. But what?

The door to the furnace was large enough for a grown man to enter, and it made Tinker look that much smaller. That part of the furnace was safe enough to enter, and required a good cleaning every couple of months as well as having the filters changed. It was a job that required many elves and direct supervision to make sure none of them strayed too far from the safe zone.

At the far end of the safe zone, Tink pulled something out of her tool belt and put it to her lips, taking a swig.

“Hey!” Alabaster reached for the pocket of his pants. “That’s my eggnog!”

“Tink’s eggnog now!” the goblin called in response and then vanished down the distant corridor.

“That... is that safe for her to drink?” Holly asked.

“No, it isn’t!” Alabaster’s already white face somehow went whiter. “That stuff is strong, even for the elves, and also magical. Even a goblin will easily get drunk off of it!”

“Calm down,” Holly said, then gave him a tight hug. “I’m sure it will be fine, hopefully, she gets it fixed—”

A loud clatter of metal on metal reverberated down the corridor, and both of them inhaled sharply. They waited several moments, certain that the worst was about to come. When it didn’t, she let out a sigh of relief.

“FUCK YOU, STUPID METAL BAR!” Tinker roared from deep inside the furnace. Alabaster stumbled backward, and an elf who was checking the maintenance logs dropped her clipboard. Holly felt slightly nauseous and put a

hand against the wall to steady herself. Deep in the furnace, the sound of metal groaning and then being smacked with a hammer reverberated outward.

“Sparkles, that was louder than normal,” she said, looking over at Alabaster.

“Yes, it really was.” Concerned lines formed on the elf’s face. “There’s no reason for you to stay, I’ll let you know when she’s back so you can take her home.”

“Okay, thanks.” As much as she wanted to support Allie in this, she didn’t want to be exposed to the goblin’s naughty behavior. She took the elevator up the hub and traveled along one of the ice tunnels toward the Hot Cocoa lounge. If anything could make her feel better, it would be a hot mug of the good stuff.

Midnight came and went, and the heat kicked on and off intermittently. The elves were busy working their magic all through the Workshop, and never questioned it. The rumors of Tinker’s appearance had spread like wildfire, and everybody was hoping to avoid any further appearance by the goblin.

It was now Christmas Eve, and Holly felt like everybody but her was working. waiting for Tinker to finish was her only priority right now, and she felt bad watching her fellow elves move around in a state of panic, eager to finish their final tasks before Santa left.

Nobody noticed it at first, and it wasn’t until there was a slight break in the hustle and bustle that her sensitive ears even picked it up. Somebody was singing Christmas songs, and doing so very poorly. As more elves heard the clamor, Holly looked around the room, trying to find the source.

Down by the floor, it came from a solitary gold foil vent the size of a letter. Once the lounge was quiet enough, she could make out the words.

“Silent night... holy night... FUCKING SCREW! Tink UNDO!” This was followed by the loud screech of metal on metal and the sound of elves dropping cocoa mugs and fleeing the lounge. Holly abandoned her seat and ran to the vent, then knelt down to look inside.

“Tink’s a gob-lin with a fine ASS! Mess with her and get gob-lin SASS!” Metal screeched again at the end of each sentence, and Holly yanked off her hat and shoved it into the vent, hoping it would block out the goblin’s singing. Not only was it off-key, but she was fairly certain that Tinker was drunk off her tail.

“Here, use mine too,” an elf named Snowflake said, then handed over his hat. Nearby elves handed over anything they could find to plug the hole, and Tink’s voice faded away.

“Kris Kringle, that was awful,” Snowflake said, then wiped his exposed brow with his hand. “That goblin’s language is simply dreadful.”

There was a murmur of assent, and Holly nodded.

“Hopefully, she won’t be here too—”

“GAH! FUCKING SHIT EATING—” Tinker’s tirade began, and the elves spun around in horror to see that her voice was now coming from a vent on the other side of the room. Already, elves were falling over and becoming visibly ill as everyone rushed from the lounge, many elves stopping just long enough to drag out their fallen brethren. The heavy doors of the lounge were slammed shut, and Holly found herself leaning over a trash bin, her stomach fluttering around in her chest.

The Cocoa Lounge was locked shut and a guard posted to keep anyone from going in until the goblin had moved on. A couple of elves were taken to the infirmary for injuries and Holly ran to the elevator to go back to the furnace.

Once out of the elevator, she saw that Alabaster stood outside the device with a look of concern on his face.

“Allie, there’s a—” she started, but he stuck his hand to her face, then a finger to his lips.

In the distance of the furnace, she heard Tink singing again.

“Why can we hear her? We shouldn’t be able to hear her.”

“I don’t know,” he admitted. “The furnace vents change constantly, but I’ve been able to hear her this whole time. She could be a mile inside, or maybe just a hundred feet, there’s no telling.”

“We had to evacuate the Cocoa Lounge.”

“Wait, what?” He listened to her as she explained what had happened upstairs. “That’s impossible, her voice should have been cutting in and out.”

“Well, it wasn’t.”

Tinker’s voice rose in pitch, her song breaking off.

“Stupid metal fuck,” she growled, which was followed by the sound of tools being dropped. “Tink fix your shit with bare hands and... ow, shit!”

Holly shook her head, the curses triggering her gag reflex again.

“Hmm. Tink bleeding bad. Use stupid panties to fix.” There was the sound of tearing fabric, and both Holly and Alabaster groaned.

“At least she isn’t where the others can see her.” Alabaster said, his face grim.

Holly shook her head, then patted him on the shoulder. “Just... let me know when she’s ready to go home, okay?”

“Count on it,” he said, his green eyes on the opening to the furnace. She left him behind and took the elevator back upstairs to the hub. She felt bad for Allie, and knew that the other elves would likely snub him for awhile as a result. Still, the goblin was the only being right now they could trust to fix the vents, regardless of how naughty she was.

Back in the hub, she took a deep breath and walked across it with a mind to return to the monitoring room. If she couldn’t enjoy cocoa in peace, maybe she could stay busy by watching for naughty children instead.

“Shit!” Tinker’s voice came from several vents in the hub, and several elves dropped what they were doing to look around for the source of the noise. “Stupid cut stings.” She sounded like she stood just on the other side of the vents, and her voice was coming out of them in surround sound.

Cries of alarm came from the others as they stumbled about and tried to run for safety.

“Tink drink more eggnog. Maybe cut won’t hurt so bad.”

“No, Tinker, stop!” Holly ran to the nearest vent and yelled into it. “Stop drinking eggnog, just fix the vents!”

If the goblin heard, she gave no indication, and Holly could hear her taking huge glugs of the alcoholic concoction. Clearly Alabaster had recently filled his flask, because after several seconds of silence, Tinker let out a whoop and then dropped some of her tools.

“Tink better now, head all floaty.” The goblin resumed her work, and a steady stream of Christmas carols infused with swear words permeated the air of the hub. Elves ran for safety, covering their ears, and it was with much horror that

Holly realized that the goblin's voice was moving now. Her squeaky voice was growing louder near the other side of the hub, and then the vents went quiet.

In one of the tunnels, Tink could be heard singing about a new kind of reindeer game that Santa wouldn't approve of.

"Sparkles!" Holly swore, then ran down the tunnel as fast as she could. When she arrived at the monitoring station, the staff members there were already in an uproar, frantically stuffing hats, shoes, and stockings into the floor vents. Unfortunately, there were vents on the ceiling, and even stacked three high, the elves couldn't reach them.

"Make it stop!" an elf named Tinsel cried. She was holding on to the railing of one of the monitoring stations, her legs weak beneath her.

There was a loud bang from the vents, and the goblin went silent. The elves all looked at one another, hope on their faces.

"Tink done," the goblin declared, and a cheer went up from the monitoring room. If the goblin was done, it meant she was about to head home, and it couldn't happen any sooner.

There was the clatter of tools, and then Tinker giggled.

"Pointy ears make Tink go home. Tink not ready yet." More shifting in the vents, and the goblin cackled. "Tink go home when Tink ready."

"No!" Holly cried, then pulled a hat from a nearby vent and yelled. "Tinker, come back, you need to go home right away!"

"Hmm?" The sound of footsteps on metal. "Just Tink imagination. Tink imagine all sorts of things. Maybe Tink come work for Santa, build best toys ever."

"Hey? Hey!" Holly pounded on the vent with her fist. "Get out of our vents!"

"Pointy ears no like Tink though. Everywhere Tink go, someone hate Tink." The morose goblin let out a small wail, which was followed by slurping noises.

"Stop drinking the eggnog!" the elf screamed. If Tinker could hear Holly's pleas, she was ignoring them.

"Tink okay on her own. Make her own toys." A minute passed, and then the goblin cackled. "Tink all floaty, have fun first."

“Fun doing what?” Tinsel asked, her voice barely a whisper.

“Tink think hammer best. Good handle, no pointy edges. Mmm... good hammer, be Tink’s Christmas present.”

The elves looked at one another in horror. What was she planning?

The goblin let out a loud moan. “Oh yeah, Tink always nice and tight.”

Tinsel dropped to the floor, her silken hair forming a halo around her head. The other elves cried out in panic, and the monitoring center was evacuated as the goblin let out small cries of delight. Holly helped the others as best she could, and found herself stumbling down the tunnel, barely able to keep her legs beneath her. The goblin’s foul mouth had always been difficult to deal with, but this was simply too much.

A triage had been set up in the hub, and the elves from the monitoring station were being diagnosed and carted away. When Holly arrived, she was out of breath, but waved off a concerned doctor.

“I’m fine,” she gasped. “Get them to safety just in case—”

“OH YEAH, TINK LIKE THAT A LOT!” The goblin’s voice came the vents nearest the tunnel, and it was followed by the sound of metal striking metal. “TINK IS THE HAMMER NOW!”

The screams of the elves did little to overpower the goblin’s voice, and the hub became a cluster fudge of epic proportions as the elves tried to evacuate as others were coming in, unaware of what had transpired. Presents, ornaments, and cookies were all over the ground now as the elves swarmed, desperate to get away from the goblin’s naughty behavior.

The elevator dinged, and a squad of the Elven Defense Force stormed in with a handful of thick, cotton-candy colored earmuffs. They placed them on the heads of the able-bodied, who then helped the EDF pull the others to safety. Pandemonium now reigned supreme, and Tinker’s voice moved around the room and headed toward one of the other tunnels.

Above the tunnel, carved into a piece of wood that was hundreds of years old, was the word Toys.

“No!” Holly cried, then yanked a pair of earmuffs off of a nearby elf and sprinted down the hallway. The earmuffs didn’t block the sound, but they did

block the effects of being exposed to naughty behavior. Otherwise, the EDF would never be able to deafen the North Pole from its various threats.

“Tink nailing herself,” the goblin said from a nearby vent, then let out a laugh. “Mmm, hammer go in much better than one at home!” Her moans of delight jumped dozens of feet forward to the next vent, then the next, and when Holly arrived in the Workshop, she saw that the elves had dropped whatever they were working on to cover their ears and flee. Unfinished toys crashed to the ground as they tried to leave through the tunnel that Holly had entered from, but it was far too small for the hundreds of elves who had been working overtime.

“Go, get out!” Holly pulled the switch by the tunnel that stopped the conveyor belts that carried materials into and out of the Workshop. “Quickly, go!”

Elves poured into the belt system, crying out in terror as Tinker let out a moan that became a high-pitched scream of delight. It immediately took Holly back to a time when she had been sent out to deliver a missing present to a kid for Christmas, only to stumble on the kid’s parents having sex in front of the Christmas tree. She had been put on leave for nearly a month to recover from the sight of the naughty things they had done in front of her, and she had earned a commendation for being injured in the line of duty.

That moment enveloped her, and tears ran down her face as she gripped the conveyor belt handle. The sound of Tinker’s guttural cries had elves crawling across the floor, desperately holding their ears shut in the hopes of drowning her out.

“Ho ho HO! Ho ho HO!” On every third ho, there was a loud smack of the hammer on the vent, and eventually the goblin worked herself into another orgasm. Holly clutched the earmuffs to her head to keep another elf from stealing them, then looked around in horror at those who had been unable to flee.

Disorientation was the first sign of Naughty Sickness, followed closely by nausea and blackouts. However, the next symptom was perhaps the worst of them all, and she was watching it manifest in small pockets around the workshop.

Emulation. When exposed to high levels of naughtiness, an elf was likely to mimic or indulge in the same behavior. It was why elves took so long to recover, because they needed to be properly quarantined to prevent the effect from spreading. Maybe it was something as simple as swearing like a sailor, or stealing from the other elves, but what Tinker was doing was a special kind of naughty,

and the floor was now littered with discarded hats and stockings as the elves disrobed, their mouths and hands all over each other.

Holly could no longer make it out via the tunnel. Six elves had stripped down and were now playing Make The Snowflake, only instead of lying in the snow to make patterns, they were finding ways to connect together that both boggled and intrigued the young elf. Nearby elves fell into the same pattern, and those who weren't lucky enough to pair off fell into small clusters, their hands eagerly reaching for anybody nearby.

Tinker had triggered an elf orgy, and Holly made a dash for one of the conveyor belt tunnels, hoping it would be clear on the other side.

It wasn't. Holly gasped when she found herself looking at the exposed labia of an elf named Whisper, who had the dick of an elf named Cane buried deep in her mouth. When she tried to turn around and flee, she bumped her head on the top of the belt, which caused her earmuffs to fall off.

"No, no, no!" She tried to grab the muffs, but they fell beneath the belt, and the smell of peppermint filled her nostrils, followed by the groans, moans, and cries of her fellow elves.

"Oh, fudge," she whispered, her stomach jumping from nausea immediately to something else. The effects of Tinker's behavior were only the catalyst, and now she was caught up in the heat of the moment. She shoved her face into Whisper's pale pussy and inhaled the sweet scent of Christmas.

The following hours were a blur. She dimly recalled multiple hands pulling her away from Whisper, and soon she was naked on the floor. When there wasn't a mouth on hers, there was either a cock or pussy. When she wasn't being filled with dicks or fingers, she was eaten out, and she swallowed enough marshmallow flavored cum that her stomach was bulging. The orgy continued for quite some time before a sturdy set of hands grabbed her and pulled her away from the mess.

It was Allie, and he wore a set of earmuffs on his head, his green eyes narrowed in seriousness.

"She's done," he told her, his voice strained. "We need you to take her home."

“Maybe later,” Holly told him, then yanked down his pants to expose the biggest dick she had ever seen. When she pulled it into her mouth, Allie let out a sigh and placed a spare pair of earmuffs on her head.

“If this is what it takes,” he muttered, and she played with his balls and sucked, doing her best to drain his Christmas spirit. When he came, it was with a loud grunt and another hot belly full of cum. Holly fell backward, her hands on her stomach as she let out a burp.

“Oh. *Oh.*” It had taken the muffs some time to filter out the dirty thoughts that swirled around in her head, but now that they were fleeing her, she realized that she was completely naked, except for the earmuffs. When she sat up, the fluids on her body made a sucking noise when she unstuck herself from the floor.

She buried her face in her hands. “Oh Santa, I’m so sorry.”

Allie shook his head. “You can do that later. We’re going to be log jammed for months after this incident, but right now, I need you to take her home.”

“Can’t someone else do it?” she asked.

Alabaster rolled his eyes. “There’s nobody else. After what happened in the Toyshop, her voice moved all over the place. The Workshop is... gonna need some time. A bunch of us hid where we could, and the EDF pulled some of us out to the stables. It was easier to block the vents there with hay, and they rotated us through to keep us from getting sick inside or freezing outside. I came looking for you because I know you will get her home where she belongs.”

“But... what will Santa think?” She didn’t know if she could live with letting Santa down.

“Do you think this is the first time something like this has happened? Granted, it’s never happened on this scale, but...” Allie crouched down and offered her a hand. “The big guy has a wife. He knows about these things. It’ll be okay, but we need to get the Workshop up and running as fast as possible so we can get these last toys finished. And that means getting Tinker home.”

She shuddered, a movement which pushed a large glob of cum out of her swollen labia. “I need some clothes.”

“I’ve got some in the hub, c’mon.” He walked her down the tunnel, and the two of them picked their way past a few clustered orgies that were in progress.

The action seemed to be slowing down, as sex was a naughty behavior that required tremendous physical exertion.

“Santa is going to be so mad,” Holly muttered, but put it from her mind. She had a job to do, no matter how much she didn’t want to do it.

When they stepped into the hub, she spotted Tink standing by the fireplace and surrounded by several members of the EDF. The hub had been evacuated except for a few naked elves that chased each other around. Everyone who had their wits about them were wearing earmuffs. Tink’s candy-cane panties were wrapped around one of her hands as a bandage.

“You,” Holly said accusingly, then pointed a finger at Tinker. “You did this.”

“Not Tink fault,” the goblin said, her eyes hidden behind her goggles. “Tink drink too much, make poor choice. Not first time, not last time.”

“Get her out of here,” Alabaster said, then handed Holly a bundle of clothes. She dressed in a hurry, grateful that Allie had brought her backup gear from her locker. She took enough time to shove a hat onto Tink’s head and then threw a handful of snow onto both of them.

“Ten seconds,” she reminded the goblin.

“Tink remember.” The goblin hopped onto the hearth, then yanked her own tail upward, revealing her bare ass. “Merry Christmas!” she hollered and then jumped into the flames.

Holly followed her, and they arrived at Tinker’s house. The faeries were no longer in the tree, and she practically frog marched Tinker back to her room. Once they were in the safety of the goblin’s lair, Tinker let out a huge laugh.

“Tink have too much fun this time!” she shouted, then tossed Holly the hat and pulled up her goggles to reveal that the goblin was crying tears of laughter. “Dirty elves have good time because of Tink!”

“It’s not funny,” Holly yelled, then stuck her hand into her pouch. “Those elves have to work with each other, and our schedule is a mess!”

“No, Tink have big fun. Redirect air vents so everyone can hear Tink.” A smug grin passed over her lips.

Holly had pulled a cookie from her pouch, but paused. “You... you did that on purpose?”

“Yep. Pointy ears always mean to Tink, need to lighten up. Tink put on big show, have great time and teach elves great time, too!”

“That’s... that’s... disgusting! How could you?”

Tinker rolled her eyes and moved close to Holly. “Tink see things that need fixing. Elves need fixing, need big shake. Things change for better, you’ll see.”

“I have no idea what you—”

Tinker snatched the earmuffs off of the elf, causing Holly’s stomach to churn and her legs to ache. She let out a groan and fell to her knees, her pussy tightening.

“Silly elf never forget this feeling. Want more than just make toys, right?” Tink pressed herself into Holly, her breath reeking of egg nog. “Tink teach you many things, if elf ask nicely.”

“I... I...” Holly couldn’t concentrate on the goblin’s words, her focus now on the four, rigid nipples beneath Tinker’s dress.

“Christmas come once a year,” Tinker explained, her hands undoing Holly’s coat. “But good elf come many times. Tink show you.”

And she did.

The early hours of morning came and went, and the two of them lay exhausted on the floor of Tinker’s lair. The fatigue overshadowed Holly’s libido, and clarity finally came for her when she realized that it was only thirteen hours until Christmas based on a small clock that sat on a tool bench.

She and the goblin had done things that would stick with her, and it was hard to even be mad at Tinker for what she had done. Something had changed inside, a new perspective that Holly knew she would take with her. With trepidation, she put her earmuffs back on and got dressed, then picked up the cookie she had been holding.

“Time for Tink to forget?” The goblin asked, her wide eyes on Holly.

“It’s the rules.”

“Holly eat cookie when she go home to other pointy ears?”

She shook her head. "I've got a lot to think about, and that means remembering." It was the truth, and she knew that some of the others would think the same way. Tinker's actions had sparked something in her that she was hesitant to let go of.

"Good." Tinker took the cookie from Holly's hand. "Tink make one request."

"Um... okay."

"Tink know Tink is naughty. Try hard to be good, but..." the goblin shrugged, her naked breasts reflecting the light from the ceiling. There were tiny bite marks around the goblin's nipples, all of them Holly's. "If Tink ever get good present from Santa, Tink want somebody who likes her for who she is."

"That's... kind of a weird wish."

"You tell fat man. He knows what Tink means. Tink get lonely, want someone special to love." She took a giant bite of the cookie and scowled. "Oatmeal raisin? Fucking gross."

Holly laughed. "You deserved it." She watched Tink's eyes go wide and unfocused. It was only a matter of moments now, and she needed to go. She put her hat on and watched the goblin sway on her feet before stumbling over to her bed and lying down.

Snores filled the room, and Holly walked toward the door, then looked back. The goblin had fudged everything up, but maybe there was more to the little monster than what she seemed.

"I'll tell him for you," Holly whispered. "But not this Christmas. Maybe next year."

With a wink, she was gone.