



December 2015
Clausplex Situation Room
The North Pole

A Plea For Help!

Dear Festive Friend,

Um, well, hello there! Okay, sure, this might look like your every-day, mild mannered letter, but hey, I have news for you: IT'S NOT! This is, in fact, a GINORMOUS PLEA FOR HELP! The situation is dire!

It's a bit complicated, so let me explain. You see, every so often, Christmas cheer needs a reboot. This is required more and more these days, probably because stores put out their Christmas decorations too early. I mean, seriously.... What's with stores having Christmas sales before Halloween? Or pre-packaged Christmas treats that expire before December? Oh, I'd best not get started or we'd be here all day...and there is a crisis at hand!

So yes. Occasionally, humanity's collective festive spirit wanes. If this goes unchecked, Christmas would of course be ruined and civilization as we know it would decay rapidly.

Of course, there are a lot of clever people at the North Pole, so we've put protocols in place to deal with such crises. I won't go into the details, but we put our best programmers on the job, and now all we need to do when there is a dip in cheer is load up our super-secret Santa software and click a button. Our automated system fixes everything, and festive cheer immediately begins to swing upwards.

Such powerful software must be kept super secret, for obvious reasons. If it fell into the wrong hands, there's no limit to the damage it could do. Just imagine if stores began pumping Christmas cheer into the world all year 'round – we'd have festive zealots running amok...and, if that cheer were channelled into devious directions, we'd end up with Black Friday every day of the week! Chaos would descend, and it would be just as bad as having no Christmas cheer at all! Oh yes, Christmas cheer is something that must be carefully calibrated, and our super advanced tools for regulating it must be meticulously guarded.

Here's the deal. We learned our lesson a few years ago about not giving elves holidays. You may recall the incident when Bumbleton Blunderbus became disgruntled and stole all the Christmas music? Well, he now sits on a committee to ensure that elves get proper breaks during the working day, and substantive vacations throughout the year. We've been working hard to implement these new HR policies, and we may have, um, been a little too effective at doing so.

You see, the only two elves who know how to reboot Christmas cheer are both on holiday at the same time! Normally, we'd just ring them up on their mobiles, but they've both chosen to participate in some rather extreme adventures in their time off.

The main button pusher, Hildegaard Von Kringlebrain, is off on a six-week underwater puzzling competition that takes place in a secret location in some ocean. The only people who know the location of the competition are the organizers and contestants, and none of them seem to have waterproof phones. We just get voice-mail. She had cover; Philbert McSmartiesmock also knew how to operate the system, but unfortunately, he independently booked holiday to go to the very

same underwater puzzling competition! There was a bit of an administrative hiccup there, to say the least.

Of course, there was a contingency plan; Hildegard was to leave instructions as to how to access and deploy the reboot should the need arise, but all we found were some utterly baffling ramblings about what she likes about Christmas. All of us at the Clausplex have been scratching our heads, trying to make sense of it. I mean, why would she leave us this journal? Could there be more to it?

This is where we could use your help, o festive family! Could you have a look at the document that Hildegard left behind, and see if you can work out how to reboot Christmas for us?

Please please please please please please pretty please?

If you don't, well, I'm afraid this might be the end of Christmas...of festivity...of EVERYTHING!

The document can be found here:

<http://www.ingridj.com/currentpuzzle/xmasjournal.pdf>

Thank you in advance for your help – we're counting on you!

Yours sincerely,

**Agent 003 1/2, Senior Elf Secret Agent
& all of us here at the Clausplex**

PS Now, try to relax and be calm. I'm sure that's better for thinking...waaaaaaaaaughh!

PPS Check out www.ingridj.com/ for any notes, errata, random thoughts of ours, etc. If you think you've found an error, please contact elf@ingridj.com with the details.

PPPS We are sure that all passwords will only involve lower-case letters. Don't ask us how we know. We just do.