

Perplexing Polar Problems

Jack Coberly





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PERPLEXING POLAR PROBLEMS

By Jack Coberly

CAST

NARRATOR

KLARA

SANTA

EARNEST: Production foreman.

ELVES:

ELVIN

ELOISE

EVELYN

ELVIS

ELMER: Chief Elf Supervisor.

PERPLEXING POLAR PROBLEMS

ACT 1

Setting: *Santa's Polar Parlor*

At Rise: *Klara is knitting. Santa is checking his books.*

NARRATOR: When we last visited with Santa Claus, he was discouraged by the lack of respect he was getting and was considering retirement. He changed his mind. Now as problems arise, he ponders whether he made the right decision when he chose to stay on. Our scene opens with Santa and wife Klara sitting in their polar parlor. Klara is knitting and Santa is checking his *Naughty and Nice* book.

KLARA: Santa dear, I need to talk to you.

SANTA: Can't you see I'm busy?!

KLARA: Too busy to talk to me??

SANTA: I need to concentrate when I'm checking my book.

KLARA: You have already checked it twice. By now you must know who has been naughty and who has been nice.

SANTA: OK. I just need to make sure. What do you want to talk about?

KLARA: I hate to complain, but I need some additional household help.

SANTA: Help? What kind of help? Why?

KLARA: Partially because old age is creeping up on me. I can no longer do all the things I used to do. I hardly have time to feed the reindeer. I also have additional time-consuming responsibilities.

SANTA: Like what?

KLARA: Menu planning. The elves are no longer satisfied with frozen dinners. My staff has to spend more time shopping and preparing dinner and other chores are being

neglected. Solar dust is piling up and dirty laundry is stacking up! On top of that, the dishwasher is broken and we have to do the dishes by hand. The washing machine keeps breaking down and the dryer — (*Santa interrupts*)

SANTA: WHOA!! I'm sorry I asked. I didn't know you had so many problems.

KLARA: I haven't told you the biggest problem. I have got to have more help. I need cooks, maids, waiters, and laundresses. I don't like to complain, especially at Christmas—the one day you work all year—I know the children of the world are depending on you—but I depend upon you, too.

SANTA: Of course, my dear. I will get right on it, but there may be a problem. I can replace the equipment but getting you the help may be a real problem. I don't know where to begin.

KLARA: Please do everything you can do. If you can make reindeers fly and you can deliver presents all over the world in one night, surely you can find me some more help. It would be a great Christmas present to me. (*KNOCK! KNOCK!*)

SANTA: That must be Earnest, my production foreman. I was expecting him. He asked to meet with me.

KLARA: I'll get it. (*She opens the door. Earnest is standing there with four more elves*). It is Earnest, and he has two male elves and two female elves with him.

SANTA: That's strange, but show them in. (*They enter, led by Earnest*) Hello Earnest. I thought I was meeting just with you. Who are your friends? Please sit down.

EARNEST: Hello Santa and Mrs. Claus. I am sorry to surprise you, but under the circumstances I felt it best to bring them along.

SANTA: Circumstances?? It sounds like something is wrong. Are they?

EARNEST: This is Elvin, Evelyn, Eloise, and Elvis. They are on the Grievance Committee of the Council of Elves. They want to talk to you about some concerns they have. They are very upset and are all threatening to go on strike.

SANTA: ON STRIKE? ON STRIKE?! Elves don't go on strike! It's almost Christmas. They can't do that!

EARNEST: I'm afraid it has already started and may spread. We have an elf on the shelf.

SANTA: You're kidding, right? "Elf on the shelf" — it's just a saying like, "There's an elephant in the room."

EARNEST: No, really. Ralph, the elf, climbed up on a shelf and has refused to come down unless conditions improve. The others are threatening to join him.

SANTA: This is preposterous! I won't be intimidated by a bunch of little people!

ELVIN: EXCUSE ME! Don't refer to us as LITTLE people. We prefer to be referred to as vertically challenged. We become depressed and develop low elf esteem. We don't like always coming up short! We are capable of big things!

ELOISE: Yeah! Don't minimize us! I've contacted OSHA regarding working conditions.

SANTA: What working conditions?

ELOISE: Sexual discrimination in job assignments, lack of adequate restrooms for female elves, and a cut-back on cookies and milk breaks.

SANTA: (*Sarcastically*) Oh my! What a shame!! (*Turns to Evelyn*) And what is your problem, sweetheart?

EVELYN: (*Exasperated*) Sweetheart?! That's just it—us females are subjected to sexual harassment in the workshop and nothing is done about it. We also need some new clothes. We're tired of wearing these silly green outfits and silly hats and shoes. We're elves, not clowns!

SANTA: Complain, complain! Never satisfied! I can easily remedy your complaints—NO PROBLEM!

ELVIS: Excuse me, SANTA, but the complaints you just heard are not the major problem.

SANTA: They aren't?? What else could possibly be wrong?

ELVIS: Our toy inventory is rapidly declining. We cannot keep up with the demand.

SANTA: Why not? We have never had a production up till now.

ELVIS: We need more elf power and we need it now. Our work force has dwindled due to retirement and our retention rate is low. Our young people are moving to Ohio where it is warm. And on top of that, the new-dangled toys are much more complex and require longer assembly time.

ELOISE: And don't forget that there are more children out there. It is a tall order to fill in a short time.

SANTA: Wow! You really are a disgruntled bunch. I never dreamed you were so unhappy. I thought you made toys for the joy of making children smile.

EVELYN: You need to pay more attention to us. All you do is sit and watch children 364 days a year. Some of us are beginning to wonder about you.

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!