

## Big Brown is Coming To Town

By Michele Dutcher

“Logistics,” said the man in brown.

“Logistics?” asked the female elf in red.

“Exactly! The management of materials as they flow through an organization, from raw materials through placing the product into the hands of the customer – which would, in this case, be children around the world. Big Brown – we know how to ship stuff.” The salesman looked over at a pixie that was hammering away on a manual Remington typewriter, taking down every word being said between the two.

“Of course our only concern is making absolutely certain the children receive what they ask for. My dad, Mr. Claus, wanted to send his pardons for not meeting with you himself.”

“I’ll only forgive him, if I can call you by your first name, Ms. Claus. I believe its Ruby?”

The petite, height-and-weight-proportional elf, giggled. They didn’t get a lot of human visitors at the North Pole, and all of her peers were under 3 feet tall. “And what should I call you Mr. Brown?”

“You can just call me what all the ladies call me – Mr. Big.”

The lonely elf squirmed just a little, and smiled at the tall, dark, and handsome-enough salesman.

He continued his pitch. “The bottom line in this business is getting the product into the recipient’s greedy little fingers, right or wrong? - and Big Brown is the prince of packaging, the duke of delivery, the king of – you get my drift.”

“I appreciate your concern, Mr. Big - but we always manage to give the children what they want.”

“I don’t mean to belabor the point, Ruby – but how about that whole Zhu-Zhu pet fiasco last year? Supply certainly did not equal demand. There were parents desperate enough to try to buy the little buggers themselves resulting in that whole, ugly Jeff the Giraffe scandal. Whose fault was that really? – a hard working zoo animal - or your father’s lack of logistics?”

Ms. Claus thought about this for a moment. “But our percentage of happy children throughout history far outweighs the disappointed ones.”

“Perhaps it wasn’t your dad’s end of the business. Perhaps it was the production end – the elves.”

Ruby looked over quickly at the elf on the typewriter. “Oh, no, no – the elves are hardworking employees, more like a family really – a family who doesn’t need a union...”

“Say no more, sweetheart, a wink is as good as a nod. Just remember that Big Brown won’t be happy until you are 100% satisfied, Ruby...100%...whatever it takes.”

The tapping on the keyboard continued until the elf punctuated the period with his index finger.

“Does he have to do that?” The rat-a-tat of the keyboard started again.

“Well, daddy gets kind of suspicious, so he pays for Elmer to take down all my words in triplicate.”

Mr. Big Brown looked rather sheepish now. “Well, it’s time for me to let you think it over.”

Ruby Claus held out her hand, and was surprised when the human brought it to his lips, kissing it softly.

“Just remember, if you’d like to talk again before I leave...Big Brown’s deliveries are always right on time.”

Ms. Ruby Claus practically purred. The salesman exited the room quickly and efficiently.

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The crowd at the Polar Bar was sparse, even for this time of day - which was just after noon. It was pitch dark outside, of course. The salesman sat on the barstool furthest away from the door, drinking a malt & mistletoe concoction. He noticed a severe blast of air as the elf from Santa’s office came in and sat down among some friends, leering at the North Pole dancers in the back. The Elf shot him a quick, evil sneer as he launched into a recollection of the day’s events with his evil elfin buddies.

The salesman raised his glass to his lips, taking a deep swig of the bitter brew. “I thought you guys at the North Pole were all about the Christmas Spirit – but I haven’t seen much of it since I arrived a few days ago.”

The bartender crossed his arms. “The Christmas Spirit? – you can’t handle the Christmas Spirit.”

“I think could handle a pleasant ‘Merry Christmas’ or two.”

The six-foot elf backed up and put his hand upon a luminescent bottle of a red and green, swirling liquor. “I’d be happy to pour you a snootful of the Christmas Spirit, friend. The first shot’s on me!”

“What do I have to lose?” he asked, banging his fist upon the counter for emphasis.

By the time the liquid was trickling down his throat the evil ice gnomes were upon him. He was, however, in an unbelievably jolly mood, as they dragged him out of the bar. “We heard about the whole ‘Maybe the whole Zhu-Zhu-pet disaster was cause4d by the elves’, Mr. Big Brown. Who’s so big now?” The pack of elves began kicking him, surrounding him.

But the salesman didn’t care; he was under the influence of the Holiday Spirit. “I didn’t mean to upset you – my mistake. I trust that kicking me is helping you have a Holly Jolly Christmas. Here’s my wallet, take all my money as a gift. Here’s my coat –I don’t need it, I have the Christmas Spirit to keep me warm.”

Suddenly there was a sound of growling and, through a misty haze, the blazing red eyes of six rabid reindeer appeared out of the darkness.

“Please, God, please don’t eat me!” he shouted, lifting his arms to cover his face.

“Step back! He said the magic word,” shouted one of the elves, and the mob dissipated almost immediately.

“The magic word - God?” questioned the salesman.

“NO, the magic word is ‘Please’ – obviously,” said the remaining elf, leaving the human to enjoy a peaceful night of bleeding to death in the cold.

From a jolly voice in the distance,  
Big Brown thought he heard,  
“Have a merry freaking Christmas  
May you get what you deserve.”

The End