

The Season's Gift

By Richard Tornello ©

Ja-pas, the Christmas elf in charge of writing the assembly instructions for the toys, was in a very good mood. A few too many eggnogs only added to his dyslexic bliss. "Ah the spirit of giving," he thought. "What might I do to make some one special human feel the true warm spirit of the winter solstice?"

"I have an idea." He map Googled. Yep, there he was and as easy as pi to find the right one. He procured the elements necessary for the gift and sealed them in a dense metal box when he completed his "joke". He also included detailed instructions but for a few important specifics, just like a cook giving out his favorite recipe. "He'll have to look these particular technical issues up. And that might just have some interesting results." He wrote furiously, drinking more eggnog as the night wore on. Usually he had a proofreader to correct his twisted mistakes, but not tonight.

Finally his work completed, he sealed the gift in only a manner a Christmas elf can. "If he can open this," Ja-pas laughed, "it will make a believer out of him." Ja-pas used his invisibility- teleportation ticket to deliver the gift.

The Gift was magically left on the cave threshold, wrapped in a solid gold ribbon. The recipient, our hero, looked at it. He looked around. He was wary of anything new, as he should be. With the telescopic infrared scope attached to his AK-47 our hero scanned the hills.

Nothing unusual other than the gold wrapped box. He wondered "How did this get here? What might it be? A golden gift from my god?" The thought made him laugh. I'm beginning to believe in false prophets and gods. Next it will be Santa Claus. Let's see what we have here.

It was extremely heavy and dense. He had a number of his minions lug it to his inner cave laboratory. The gift was sealed and except for a microscopic indentation there was no appearance of an opening. He had it x-rayed, ct-scanned and MRied . Nothing penetrated the metal container. It didn't blow up either.

Welding torches were brought. "No that's not a good idea at this time. I would guess that this has to be opened in some subtle manner, unlike some of our operations." He smiled.

"You have a point," his number two opinioned.

He sat before it and meditated. Maybe there might be something to this god stuff after all. His rhetoric was beginning to seep into his brain and take hold in the darkest recesses. For forty days and nights he meditated. He moved it out doors and placed it underneath his favorite tree. He sat again for forty days and nights. Nothing happened.

He remembered the Buddhist statue they destroyed. It gave him an idea. He then decided to just put it in his lap sitting in the lotus position and prayed over it. It opened in eighteen days. He looked inside. The technology within was astounding. He reached and located the assembly instruction sheet written by Ja-pas in every language. This was just like his electric tooth brush. "My god, anyone can assemble this! A gift, and what a gift." He bowed toward Mecca and as a joke; he bowed toward the North Pole.

He commanded everyone to leave save his number two and a few trusted technicians. There they assembled the device. "Oh joy of joys the gift I have been waiting for all my life. The Great Ships of Desert Pilot be praised." The funny thing is he was beginning to believe in miracles. "I must be a fool, but here it is in front of me. My wildest wishes have been answered, they have come true!"

Those around him said nothing. They couldn't begin to fathom the workings of their leaders mind except to admit he had been right up until the present, for the most part.

In the mean time Ja-pas had recovered from his drunken stupor. He wondered if it had been a dream or had he actually done what he thought he had done. He said to himself, his head still splitting, "Damn, this is a really big one. Nah, gotta be a dream. I wouldn't, couldn't do something as insane as that." He looked around. He looked in every conceivable location. One of the energy sources for the sleds was missing. So it wasn't a dream. He was in deep. Now what?

A few weeks later:

As Ja-pas was again recovering from another preholiday celebration and still working on a cover for his extreme mistake. If discovered, the mistake, if you could even call it that, major screw-up would be more like it, would cause him to be turned to a human as punishment by the former patron saint of sailors St. Nick, who himself was now demoted, due in part to a delicate indiscretion, discovered by a jealous elf, in flagranti delecto with a daughter of Zeus. For punishment, Nick was charged with schlepping cheap lead painted Chinese made products to children and was loading up the "sky barge" as he so named it. He was going through the preflight checklist. Low and behold, no fuel!

"JA-PAS why the hell isn't there fuel in the sled?"

Ja-pas held his head. The loud voice hurt. "Ah, not sure boss. Seems we never got a reorder from the Russians as per usual. I think it was diverted." Quick thinking he thought.

"What do you mean, I personally signed for it." Nick shouted. "I'm late already damn it."

"Well, it's missing then." He shrugged his elf like shoulders. And gave his best hung-over innocent face as possible.

St. Nick was in no mood to cross examine the hung-over little elf in what he obviously knew was a lie, and had no time to beat the living hell out of him to elicit a true confession. They were late for the annual obligatory toy and gift deployment.

Nick, a former maritime type god was used to "on the spot situations" which required instant solutions, thought quickly and said, "You know that weird former soviet reindeer, the one that glows red, the one we keep in the leaded paddock? You know the one that worked near Chernobyl? He might be an answer."

The boss commanded, "Let's hook him up. Attach one power line to his antlers and plug the other into his butt. Here's a big cork. Run the lines to the propulsion system. That will give us a complete circuit. We'll use him as a power source for the propulsion systems. But when I get back you had better have an explanation and the missing material or it's off to the toy manufacturing gulag in Mongolia."

"Yes boss." What the hell am I going to do now? He wondered. He knew it was the salt mines. "Yes boss," was all he repeated.

Ja-pas wondered, "What the hell am I going to do? I still have no idea who I gave.... It... oh crap!" The besotted memory kicked in. He remembers his bright idea. No way, that's the stupidest thing I've done in centuries. This is worse then the boss getting caught with that bimbo daughter of Zeus'

Meanwhile, our hero, the recipient of the Gift had all the technical issues worked out. The final detailed instructions he required were available from the Princeton University library. He remembered an article some years back where some college or high school science majors found the details for this type of device in a library. Amazing, he thought. It's all still there. WHAT FOOLS. And The Great Camel Pilot gave me the tools. How grateful can I be?

He explained his plan to the locally assembled group, "I will wire this up. On their great religious holiday season, at the turn of their new year I will have it delivered to their Holy Land. Oh Nameless Blameless One be praised."

In December of that year, the Gift recipient, our hero, had managed to travel through no mans land of Afghanistan without discovery along with his device. He arrived in the country of centrifuges, caves and stoning deaths for profit and gain. He sat with his hosts. They were amazed at the level of sophistication he demonstrated. They were astounded by his plans.

Our Hero explains, "Look here, the instructions are in every language of this planet." And then he says in a most boastful tone, "But I am the chosen one."

"Well how will it, your plan work," they inquired?

"Simple, very simple. He explained the situation and concluded, "We get a remote flying vehicle which you have just built and tested, if I am not mistaken. The gift is embedded within a timer is set with an altimeter. As the vehicle descends, Happy New Year."

Meanwhile, Christmas Eve, St. Nick is having trouble keeping up teleport speed no less airspeed with the nuclear reindeer as an energy source. The power line keeps popping out of his butt. One of the smaller elves that acts as crew had to work hand over hand on the reins to reach the line and plug it back in. He then returned to the toy-laden sled in the same fashion. "This is the worst job I've ever had," he complains. Nick gave him a dirty look. "It a job. We have to do it and you're the lightest one on board. Lucky you. Go clean up. Open one of the diaper wipe presents."

The plans have been made. Everything has been made ready. There is one last celebration. The hosts of our hero, all flush with joy, wonderment, and forbidden drink, ask him again to illustrate the method of wiring for the final solution. They have never seen such a complex device. They are completely overjoyed. The excitement is infectious.

All are in wonder. How he of all, receive this gift? We thought he was a kook. The gods must think differently. We stand corrected.

Our hero looks around. One thing you have to admit he has a knack for acting. He has his audience breathless, in the palm of his hand with anticipation. Our hero begins the well rehearsed act again.

Mean while, Ja-pas is looking for the power source he misplaced. He comes across the original wiring instructions. Pretty funny he says to himself. The green goes into the cathode and the red into the anode. That would allow for the necessary timed released of energy. Boy if anyone got that in reverse. He laughed, what idiot would do that? He thought about and considered his dyslexia. Nah not possible.

Off in a distant underground facility, our hero reads the instructions and for some liquid sloshed based reason, gets the wiring procedures in reverse.

A giant mushroom cloud appears over the desert of Iran in the vicinity of the weapons labs.

St. Nick has just delivered a new true replica AR-15 and Uzi toy to a young girl who always wanted one like her brother's. The toys these kids want today. I don't understand it. He looks up at the sky and notices the glow to the East. He looks at his Russian reindeer.

Just wait until I get back. His ass is grass. He mumbles some other oaths and swears by a number of forgotten deities.

The End

All characters are real as are the events, just not in this universe.