

## SANTA'S PROBLEM PUP

CHAPTER 4  
By Bob Boyle

When they got to the kennel, hundreds of little puppies came running toward him.

"See, Peak, you'll have lots of company here," Miss Kay Nihn said.

But evidently Peak didn't want the company of hundreds of other puppies.

He held his head high, pranced off and ignored all of them.

"Well you'll just have to get used to them," Miss Nihn said.

Peak went off to a corner by himself and sat down.

"Well, when I bring your dinner you'll be friendly," Miss Kay Nihn called to Peak as she left.

After she had gone the other little puppies gathered around Peak.

He sniffed at them and started to lick a few.

But as soon as Miss Kay Nihn returned he put up his head and again ignored the puppies.

"So, you're still being difficult, Peak," she said. "Well here is your supper."

The little pups all lined up at their bowls as Miss Kay Nihn put dogfood in each one.

Under her arm she carried a new dish.

"This is for you, Peak," she said. Your very own dish.

She put it down and placed a heaping spoonful of dogfood in the bowl.

Peak sniffed at it, turned his head and walked away.

"Peak, Peak," she said. "You better eat or the other pups will finish it for you."

But Peak went to the corner and refused to budge.

"Okay, you'll go to bed hungry," Miss Kay Nihn said.

"I can't give you special treatment."

With that, she went out into the howling North Pole wind.

As soon as Peak realized that she was gone he went to the door.

One of the puppies came up to him and shook its head as if to say, "It's dogproof, Peak, you can't open it."

Peak didn't give up.

He opened his mouth and grabbed the doorknob and twisted. But still the door wouldn't open.

He sat down and scratched behind his left ear with his left front paw.

He got up and again took the door latch in his mouth.

And with one bounding leap he made a complete somersault. Click went the door.

Peak had opened the dogproof door.

The cold wind came howling into the kennel.

Peak pranced out.

When he got out he seemed to realize that the other pups would freeze with the door open.

Standing on his hind legs he pressed against the door and it shut.

But as soon as he started to walk away it opened again.

He stood up and shut it again and realized the door latch would have to be turned to keep it closed.

He put his mouth to the door knob, made a complete somersault again and the door went "click."

He then started to walk up the path to Santa's house.

When he got to Santa's house, all the groundfloor windows were covered with snow.

Peak turned his back to one of the windows and started to wag his tail back and forth.

Like a big windshield wiper it cleared away the snow.

He peeked into the window.

The elves were getting ready to sit down to their evening meal.

Peak licked his lips and started to bark for attention.

But the elves were so busy eating, and the wind was howling so loud that he wasn't heard.

With a prance he walked to the front door.

He breathed on the cold handle to make it nice and warm.

And, again he put his mouth on the handle, did a somersault and the door opened.

Peak, knowing that he wasn't to be away from the kennel, tiptoed toward the dining room.

When he was sure that no one was looking, he crept to

Santa's big chair and hid beneath it.

"Boy, this is a good meal," Juniperper said to Mrs. Claus. "I love chicken-doodle-doo."

He reached for a piece and it dropped on the floor.

"Pick it up," Mrs. Claus said.

Juniperper reached down to pick up the piece of chicken-doodle-doo.

"Hey, what is going on," he shouted. "It's gone. The piece of chicken is gone."

"Now Juniperper, it couldn't be," Mrs. Claus said.

"But it is, it is," he said.

"Feel around and you'll find it," Mrs. Claus said.

Juniperper reached down and felt around the floor.

Suddenly he shouted.

"A cold nose, I feel a cold nose."

With that, Peak came out from under Santa's chair.

CHAPTER 5  
By Bob Boyle

Peak ran around the table and then jumped right up on Santa's lap.

He started to lick Santa on his big red nose.

Santa scratched Peak behind the ears with both hands.

"Santa, let's keep Peak here instead of the kennels," Jasman said.

"That's a good idea, Santa," Jude said.

"Can we Santa, can we?" said Juniperper.

Mrs. Claus said, "Now I don't think Miss Kay Nihn would like that."

"That's true," Santa replied.

"Miss Kay Nihn has rules and regulations and puppies, even cute ones like this, belong in the kennel."

"Phooey on Miss Kay Nihn," Juniperper said.

"Oh, I'm surprised at you, Juniperper," Mrs. Claus said.

"That certainly isn't a nice way for one of Santa's elves to talk."

"But she is so mean," Juniperper said.

"Now, now," Santa said.

"She isn't mean. She is simply doing her job. She is in charge of the kennels and we must obey."

"But Santa, you're the boss of the North Pole," Juniperper said.

"You can tell her what to do and she would have to listen to you. You're in charge and she isn't."

"I put her in charge of the kennels," Santa explained.

"And I have to do as the rules say, too. I just can't go and change rules."

Just then the door to Santa's house flew open and a piping mad Miss Kay Nihn came roaring in.

"What's going on here?" she called. "What's going on here. I see that dog. Who took him out of the kennels? Santa, I will not put up with this. If an elf left him out of the kennel, I want that elf punished. I'm in charge of the kennels and I will not stand for misbehavior."

"Settle down, Miss Kay Nihn," Santa said. "I know you're angry but let's find out what happened."

"All right, Santa," she replied. "But I don't want people disobeying me."

Santa turned to the elves and said, "Now did any of you elves leave Peak out of the kennel?"

"Not me," said Juniperper.

"A likely story," Miss Kay Nihn said.

"Miss Kay Nihn," Santa said. "You should know that elves don't lie. I have never met an elf who ever, ever told a lie."

"That's right, Santa," said Jinkersnipes. "None of us let Peak loose. Maybe Miss Kay Nihn did."

"Don't be silly," she said. "I would never let a puppy run loose. I still think that one of the elves left him out."

"I don't think so," Santa explained. "All the elves were here eating their supper."

"Well they must be punished," Miss Kay Nihn said.

"I can't punish them without reason," Santa said.

Peak snuggled closer to Santa and Santa continued to scratch the back of Peak's ear.

"See, Santa, even you are spoiling that dog," Miss Kay Nihn said. "And I still demand

to know how he got out of the kennel."

With that Peak jumped to the floor and ran to the door.

He took the door latch in his teeth and did a complete somersault and the door opened.

"Oh, that was sweet the way he opened the door," Mrs. Claus said.

"Let's keep him here," Jinkersnipes said.

"No, no, no," Miss Kay Nihn warned. "He must go back to the kennel."

Peak, on hearing this, ran to Santa and jumped up on his lap.

"He doesn't want to leave Santa," Jinkersnipes said.

"Let him stay with Santa," Juniperper pleaded.

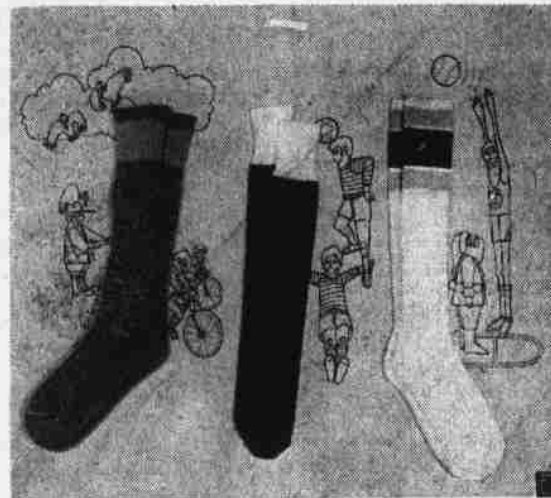
"I said no, no, no," Miss Kay Nihn said. "We MUST follow the rules and Peak must be returned to the kennels."

"I guess you're right, Miss Kay Nihn," Santa said.

"Well, I will take him now."

(Continued on Page 9)

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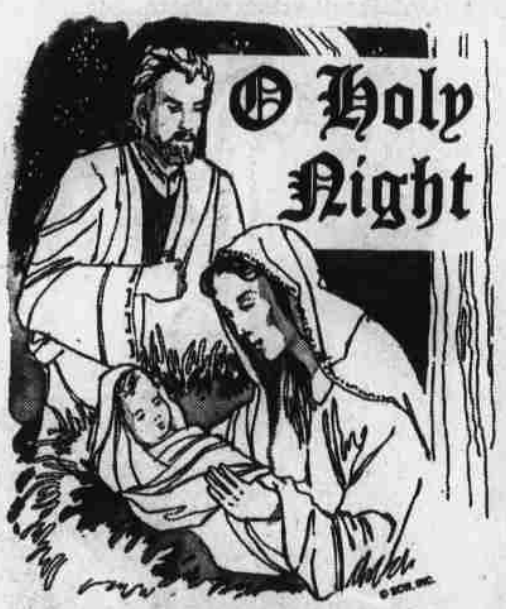
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