

Elf Express

Treatment based on a completed full script by

Mark Lambert
206 Kristen Lane
Chester, Virginia 23836
310-351-1961

LOGLINE: What if Santa flew off from the North Pole on Christmas Eve and left one present behind?

FLAPS and Z are two lovable, clumsy young elves ending their first year of making toys but, because of an unfortunate accident on the toy line, they've been told they'll "never make a toy again!". After gloomily watching Santa leave the North Pole on that most magical of nights, they discover that one toy has fallen off the conveyor belt and been left behind. For these two elves, a group of hilarious retired (and a bit rotund) reindeer and SANTA's old sleigh, it becomes a mission to get that present to its rightful child. Battling blizzards, airplanes, barking dogs and sealed up chimneys, our two elves prove what they are made of ... and of course, along the way they may just discover that there is a greater gift at Christmas than a present under the tree.

The following are the major beats of the story.

- In a workshop room in Santa's North Pole, we see elves on a toy assembly line. Two young elves catch our attention. Z is focused and finishing his last toy. FLAPS is, well, trying to put a sticker on each toy on the line using one of those tools used for price tags, the ones with a spool of stickers. Unfortunately, he is more like Lucille Ball in the chocolate factory. The rest of the elves are finishing up, packaging their toys and leaving. FLAPS is chasing after packages,

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wrapped up in his stickers, he causes Z to mess up his toy, then comically trashes one of the packaging machines. On his way out, the boss yells at the boys for screwing up, "This will be your first and LAST year making toys!". FLAPS is completely dejected, Z comes over to comfort him as they leave to watch Santa's departure.

- We follow a conveyor belt of toys. Opening title sequence rolls. Behind the titles, toys are jostled as other toys join the main line ... and we continue to track out to the big courtyard where the toys fall into SANTA's sack
- Z and FLAPS watch the festivities from a distant balcony. Worst seats in the house. Down in the courtyard, SANTA wishes all a good night and takes off in his sleigh. Z and FLAPS discuss how important Christmas presents are. We also learn how FLAPS has screwed some things up this first year. Making toys is what FLAPS has always dreamed of and now he may be banned from the toy line ... "that toy is what Christmas is all about!"
- Z and FLAPS head over to the big elf banquet. They are heading back along the conveyor belt and FLAPS sees a present that has fallen off the line. It's Z's last present and FLAPS freaks out. Eventually he calms down and we discover that there is no way to call SANTA back once he has left the North Pole. The boys decide they should take it over to the big elf banquet and let the senior elves take care of it. FLAPS, of course, goes running off ... he knows a shortcut.
- When the boys arrive at the hall, the party is in full swing (little musical number). As they walk up to the main table, a hush falls over the crowd when they see the present. The head elf, ARTAN, blames FLAPS, but Z defends him and points out it was his toy, and what's more, he had warned them about that overloaded conveyor. All the elves start chiming in and the senior elves start talking about committees to investigate this and working groups, bureaucracy at its finest.

FLAPS asks “What about the present?” and is told there is nothing that can be done now (the “we can’t call SANTA” thing). As ARTAN goes on talking about committees and studies, the chaos and yelling build up again. Without anyone noticing, FLAPS grabs the present. He starts off the stage and tells Z to follow and they leave the hall (FLAPS has an idea).

- They arrive outside the reindeer stables and Z figures it out. “You are NOT thinking about Santa’s old sleigh ... tell me you are not (etc.)”. FLAPS outlines his plan, the old sleigh, the retired reindeer, they fly in, they fly out, badda bing, badda boom. Z agrees to at least find Quin, the old stable manager, and see what he thinks.
- Z and Quin are going over the old sleigh. Quin is all over the sleigh like a NASCAR mechanic, sliding under it, rolling out, tightening bolts, QUIN says “Of course she kin do it, built to last these are (etc.)” He explains why he built a new one (SANTA’s “bowl full of jelly”) and more about his many inventions for the new one. “But you’ve got one problem sonny, are ye forgettin’ you got to have reindeer to fly it ”. Up walks FLAPS with a group reindeer that are well past prime (and many have their own “bowl full of jelly”).
- Three reindeer in particular are our Greek chorus, each from their own era from the past. MOONSTAR from the 60s, Jerry Garcia cool, far out and a major dude. BRAZER, from the 50s, all business, a bit blustery but with a heart, a reindeer with a flattop haircut. And DONDER, from, well, the Roosevelt era ... could be Franklin, could be Teddy; doesn’t hear well, always with the off comment, but with the occasional wise word.
- Z tries to convince everyone this is insane, MOONSTAR is the youngest of the bunch and he hasn’t flown since ’68 ... or was it ’69 ... it’s kind of a blur to

MOONSTAR. Z is finally persuaded. When it's finally decided, a cheer goes up and a Rocky montage with lots of comedy as the reindeer "limber up" with lots of pops, groans and sight gags. QUIN presents them with a bag of some of his inventions. QUIN pulls out a magic map that shows their route (North Pole GPS) and more stuff. MOONSTAR is like "Whoah, man, the Q-man's gizmo bag, far out". BRAZER, however, is a bit more skeptical of Q's inventions. As they go through the inventions, there are a few jokes. MOONSTAR is talking like Sean Connery "Yesh Money penny, I never travel anywhere without my cloaking device... (the other reindeer laugh) ...would you like to (raising his eyebrows a few times in a flirting way) shee my cloaking device?" QUIN is flustered but recovers and we get all the reindeer into the harness and QUIN reminds them to be careful, etc. More comedy from the reindeers as they get ready.

- Everyone knows what comes next! Z snaps the reins as the reindeer start off running ... they're running ... they're running ... the sleigh begins to lift ... and drops back ... one reindeer glances at another, worried (what have we gotten into) ... then they put their shoulder into it, BRAZER shouting "Come on guys!" With a collective grunt, we lift off, sailing into the sky! Smiles all around.
- From up in the sky, we see the sleigh leave the North Pole. Z and FLAPS talk about their mission, FLAPS is on an adrenalin high, even when a wind blows them around a little bit, reminding them they've never done this before. The reindeers chime in with a few jokes.
- We begin a song montage as the sleigh continues on : polar bear families, the first trees on the ground, the "You are here" dot on the map, FLAPS talking a mile a minute, lights from houses, back to the map as we go from Maine to New York, a view of the Statue of Liberty as they buzz it.
- The song continues with views down on the ground. Several views of people on

the street, the ones that have to work on a Christmas Eve, the policeman waving hello to someone and reaching out to shake hands, a group of good samaritans pushing a car out of the snow, an electrical worker fixing a line as the lights come back on and a family in a window cheers, a taxi driver helping a pregnant woman into the cab as the husband comes out the door of their brownstone and spills out the baby bag in his excitement and the driver smiles and comforts the wife ... Flaps and Z looking down on this, seeing things they've never seen before ...

- FLAPS wonders why everyone's not at home waiting for their presents. More jokes from the reindeer. Meanwhile, the weather starts to get worse and worse; a blizzard is coming and the elves begin to doubt themselves as the old reindeer struggle to keep the sleigh moving. They debate going back, but when they both look down at the map, they realize they are almost over the girl's house.
- Suddenly, Brazer yells and they look up to see a plane coming out of the snow, straight at them!. We cut to a girl looking out the window of the plane and talking to her mother. "Mommy, I think I just saw Santa's sleigh... and, and reindeer ... and elves." The mother keeps reading her magazine, not looking up. "That's nice dear. What were they doing?". The LITTLE GIRL thinks for a moment, trying to make sense of what she saw. She looks back out, "I ... I think they were screaming."
- We cut to a closeup of Flaps with mouth wide open, screaming his heart out right into the camera as the plane rapidly falls away behind him. "Aaaaaaaaahhhhhh!" We cut to a wide shot with the sleigh plummeting down (still faintly hearing Flaps scream). Following the sleigh, we see the ground approaching.

- The reindeer pull out at the last moment. Up ahead is an old lady walking along the snow covered road, pulling a cart full of groceries. The reindeer almost miss her but send her flying. The sleigh plows into a snow bank, an explosion of snow and then ... hooves and horns poking out, lots of sight gags and MOONSTAR going “Dude, that was wicked”. Z and FLAPS run over to the old lady and help her up, picking up her groceries. She thinks they are elves from the local mall. FLAPS wonders why she isn’t home with her family. She quickly explains that she has lost her husband some 4 years back and her son’s family is in Florida, but it’s OK, she’s going down to visit them in January (cheaper to travel then, you know). FLAPS explains they are on a mission, and the old lady tells them where to find the house they were looking for.
- The old lady leaves, Z and FLAPS talk to the reindeer who need a little more time to recover. The boys disappear into the blizzard to find the girl’s house (good spot for another little musical number as the boys walk through the driving snow).
- Z and FLAPS arrive at the house. FLAPS insists that they go in the chimney (it’s tradition!) But how to get up there? They try the swingset in back to launch FLAPS up and he goes splat into the side of the house. FLAPS (after several attempts) stands on Z’s shoulders to get in the window. A dog appears at the window, barking at them. They finally decide to try QUIN’s bag.
- Mission Impossible theme: They swing a grappling hook around the chimney and walk up the wall in “plunger shoes” like Batman and Robin. Turns out the chimney is capped so they pick a skylight to go in. Z hooks FLAPS up to a rope and lowers him down Tom Cruise style. The rope gets stuck with FLAPS a couple feet off the ground. The dog growls and then smiles when he realizes FLAPS is stuck. “Nice doggy ...” The dog (still grinning) raises a paw, slightly

cocked back and flicks the paw in a perfect sidearm swipe. Flaps is sent into a high velocity spin. “Aaaaagghhh”. The dog looks quite happy with himself and ... whump ... sits down to watch. His head moves right to left, right to left, as Flaps spins around on the rope.

- Z yanks FLAPS back up with a huge pull on the rope. FLAPS flies out of the skylight and, in a beautiful arc, over the side of the house. Z has the other end of the rope tied around his waist and, after a beat, is yanked over the side as well.
- We see two elf shaped holes in a large snowbank next to the house. On his hands and knees, Z tunnels out of the side of his hole, onto the back porch. Z then realizes the back door is open when he pulls himself up with the door knob. FLAPS is excited, but Z reminds him of the dog. FLAPS has a plan about the dog. He taunts the dog who flies toward the door, Z opens the door, the dog flies out and they go in.
- FLAPS is overcome with a house decorated for Christmas. They look in awe at snow globes, tinsel and finally a Christmas tree. They congratulate each other and then, finally, they reverently place the present under the tree.
- FLAPS wants to hang around and see the girl open the present the next morning. Z firmly says no, but eventually agrees to at least let FLAPS look in on the girl sleeping. They tiptoe upstairs.
- When they get upstairs, they discover the little girl is crying in her bed. FLAPS thinks she is crying about her present, he wants to tell her it's OK, they got her present. He runs down and brings it back up but Z reminds him that she doesn't know it was ever lost. But whatever is wrong, it'll be all fine tomorrow morning.

- As they start to leave, the girl comes out and asks who they are. They explain about the present and that it's all right, she doesn't need to cry. They give her the present, but it's still not OK. She tells them she's crying because her dad is stuck in Chicago because of the storm and won't be home for Christmas. FLAPS comes up with the idea of getting her dad. Z objects, but there is no stopping the combined force of FLAPS and a crying little girl.
- Back outside, the reindeer have found the house. A bit of comedy with the reindeer and Z, FLAPS and the little girl (with present) mount up.
- They take off and FLAPS is stricken by the girl. He's talking a mile a minute about the North Pole and they even get into a snowball fight. Z gets angry and tells them to settle down, this is serious. Suddenly, the storm gets realllly bad and Z is telling them they have to give up, turn back. The sleigh is tossed around and they almost fall out. The reindeer are struggling and Donder tells FLAPS they need to turn back. Things are bad And FLAPS turns to the little girl.
- Suddenly, they hear a "Ho, Ho, Ho" and SANTA and his team appear in the storm. SANTA gracefully wonders "What are you boys doing out .. and in this storm". BRAZER is shocked "Storm? You call this a storm? Why back in 54 ...". SANTA convinces them to climb higher out of the storm.
- The moon is shining down on the top of the storm clouds as BRAZER and his team emerge from a cloud. SANTA's sleigh follows a few seconds later and they pull alongside each other. SANTA wonders " who can tell me why you boys are out in this weather? I'm guessing that it isn't just for the exercise! Ho, Ho, HO!" Z meekly replies "Uh... well, sir...". SANTA recognizes him "Z? Is that you?" Z is slightly boldened by SANTA knowing who he is ... "Uh, yes sir, well, you see,

there was a package left behind...” To which SANTA shouts “LEFT BEHIND!”

- Z and FLAPS explain about the present and how they brought it down. SANTA commends them on that but is curious about a little girl riding with them (which, last he knew, was against the rules). They explain about her DAD. He understands and he thinks he just might be able to find her DAD. They fall in behind his sleigh ... so the retired reindeer can critique the new guys form (of course).
- They land at a small hotel. Z puts his arm around FLAPS as we see SANTA and GINNA at a door that opens and GINNA’s dad comes out. He looks at SANTA and then down at GINNA... pauses... then bends down and picks her up hugging her and spinning around.
- Over at the door, we see GINNA talking to her dad and then turning to point at Z and FLAPS. They both realize they are being talked about and stand up a little and smile. FLAPS waves a little. Dad walks over and thanks them.
- GINNA motions to her DAD to put her down and runs over to hug both of them. They both have silly grins as DAD walks over to hug the group.

MOONSTAR

(tearing up)

Oh man! That is ...

BRAZER

(tearing up too)

Right on ... uh, man!

Merry Christmas Moonstar!

SANTA comes over to tell them that he will take the girl and her dad back home. Z and FLAPS need to get back to the North Pole. FLAPS remembers that the girl's present is in their sleigh, but when he checks, finds that it fell out in the blizzard.

FLAPS

I'm so sorry, we... we lost your present!

We see GINNA realize what they are saying. She thinks about it and then a smile appears on her face. She looks up at her DAD.

GINNA

No... no you didn't. You gave me the best present I could ... I could ever hope for.

FLAPS and Z stop their searching and look over. Santa looks down and smiles.

SANTA

Ho, ho, HO! Yes they did GINNA!
And that was very wise of you.
And I think you may have discovered
one of the greatest gifts of Christmas.
Now, we need to get going, presents to
deliver and all that... and I might
just have something for a little girl too.

SANTA's sleigh pulls out with DAD and the little girl.

Z and FLAPS head back to the North Pole... dissolve to ... the banquet. They are heroes. They are the guests of honor at the head table as ARTAN spouts off speeches, lots of singing and chaos. We close in on a private conversation between our heroes. FLAPS is thinking ... "It's ... it's not all about the presents,

is it?" They talk about how presents are a gift of love, of sharing ... and what's really important at Christmas, sharing time with family and friends.

FLAPS

Hey Z...

Z

Yeah...

FLAPS

Uh, I got an idea...

The camera pushes in to the top floor of an apartment building. The sun is rising in the distance. As we push in, we are looking into a window of an apartment. Our heroes are sitting at a table and we see GRANNY approach with cups of hot chocolate. The boys and GRANNY talk more about Christmas. FLAPS says he's so happy he feels like singing.

We are pulling back to a beautiful sunrise as we start to hear the first lines of FLAPS' song.

FLAPS

Grandma got run over by a reindeer...

GRANDMA laughs.

GRANDMA

Come on Z. Clap along.

CREDITS ROLL.

