

# Trouble at Workbench 19

by RV Staff Writer J.C.

Snowdrop was the head elf in charge of the toy workshop in Santa's castle. It was her job to make sure all the elves were making toys at their stations, and at each workbench, a pair of elves was working hard to get their tasks done in time for Christmas Eve. Snowdrop liked to wear roller skates, and she zipped around the workshop, checking in with each station to see there were no problems.

She skated past Tinsel and Mistletoe building train sets at Workbench 12. She rolled past Noël and Harmony painting faces on pretty dolls at Workbench 17. She whizzed past Bongo and Picklemitten – and stopped. The elves at Workbench 19 weren't working. They had put their tools down and were shaking their heads.

"What's going on?" asked Snowdrop.

The elf team looked at her with embarrassed expressions. "We've run out of glitter," said Picklemitten.

"That's impossible," replied Snowdrop. "There's no way you could run out of glitter." Santa's workshop had gallons of glitter for painting and decorating. These two elves couldn't have used it all.

Bongo pointed to his partner. "Picklemitten used too much. Instead of sprinkling it on the toys, he's been dumping it on them. And himself."

Snowdrop took a long look at Picklemitten, who was, indeed, covered from his hat to his jingle-belled slippers in red and green glitter. He sparkled like a festive disco ball. Snowdrop sighed.

"All right, Picklemitten, time to hit the showers. Bongo, why don't you clean this up and see if you can keep working by yourself for a while, okay?"

"But what about the glitter?" Bongo asked. "There's none left."

"Forget the glitter," replied Snowdrop. "A new report just came in that said glitter is bad for the environment anyway. Just work with the paint colors you have instead."

Snowdrop glided over to the next workbench. Everything was going smoothly with the building blocks. The elves at the next station were building remote-controlled vehicles. All coming along nicely, she thought.

With everything under control again, Snowdrop decided it was a good time to grab a cup of peppermint hot chocolate and a gingerbread cookie. She zoomed out of the workshop and headed

for Mrs. Claus' kitchen. She deserved a little break.

She entered the workshop minutes later to the sound of laughter. A crowd of elves surrounded Workbench 19. "Salty snowflakes!" she exclaimed. "What now?" Snowdrop headed over to see.

Somebody was sneezing, and each time, the elves would start giggling again. Snowdrop watched as Bongo, paintbrush in hand, tried to paint the wooden rocking horse at his station. His nose wiggled, and then he let out a sneeze, making the paint splatter everywhere except where it was meant to go.

Snowdrop frowned. "Back to your stations, please," she told the crowd of merry faces. She looked at Bongo and shook her head. As his nose wiggled again, she handed him a tissue.

"Maybe the glitter has gone up my nose and is making me sneeze," Bongo said, feeling quite miserable.

"Or maybe you are catching a cold. You don't look so good," Snowdrop realized. "I think it's best if you head back to your bed for some rest." Bongo nodded sadly and headed out of the workshop, sneezing as he went.

Snowdrop surveyed the damage. The toys were splattered with paint. The elf knew they were ruined. She was going to have to start again. Time was running out, and soon it would be Christmas Eve.

"When you want something done right, sometimes you just have to do it yourself," she said, and she sat down to work. She knew she could easily put the rocking horses and pretty ponies together, but she was not too handy with a paintbrush. She needed help, but all the other elves were busy. Snowdrop took a sip of her drink and a bite of her cookie while she wondered what to do. It was then she noticed the delicate, pretty icing designs on the gingerbread man. Snowdrop had an idea.

"Excuse me, Tinsel?" The elf at Workbench 12 looked up. "Will you please go into the kitchen and ask Mrs. Claus if we can borrow one of her cookie decorating elves?"

**Questions**

1. What were the two problems at Workbench 19?
2. Snowdrop wore roller skates. Find four different verbs that describe how she moved.
3. What did Snowdrop want the cookie decorating elf to do?
4. Do you think Snowdrop was a good manager? Why or why not?