



Arthur, the Christmas Elf lives in a cozy house at the North Pole near Santa's Workshop. Every December first, Arthur's job is to start his rounds to visit all the unhappy children on his Endangered Children list by midnight on Christmas Eve. And, every year, Santa and Arthur talk about how the list is getting longer and longer, not shorter and shorter.

"I don't know what to say, Santa," Arthur said with a heavy sigh. "I still remember when everyone made gifts, but now most people, kids and grownups too, think a handmade gift just isn't good enough."

"Yes, I have the same problem," Santa said, shaking his head sadly. "Children of all ages want the newest thing on the market, and parents feel they must give these things to their children even if they can't afford them. The toys we make here aren't appreciated much anymore, and even though we know this is an old problem, each generation grows more resistant than the last to remembering that Christmas is all about giving and not so much about receiving."

"Even so, I have to convince the kids on my list to make gifts for the people they love. They need to know that if they don't, they will grow up to be selfish and unable to enjoy giving to others. But, it is getting harder and harder to convince them. This year I will just have to get tougher about showing these children the consequences they face if they don't lighten up and make a few gifts."

"Well, Arthur, if any one of my elves can do this, you can. That's why I appointed you Keeper of the Endangered Children List. It is such an important job, and every year it gets more important than ever." Santa put his arm around Arthur's shoulder as they walked toward the door of the workshop. "I know you are going against the times. I know your job is not just hard, it is nearly impossible. But, I also know you have the heart to make a difference in the lives of the children on our list."

**16** "Thanks, Santa. I won't let you down. I won't let the kids down!"





Arthur and Snowflake set about their work, flying from country to country, from town to town, from home to home wherever there was child on the Endangered Children's List. Again and again, Arthur gazed into the Christmas Globe, a crystal earth filled with a magical clear fluid.

"Just listen to that, would you?" Arthur said. "My shoe bells are ringing off my toes. Santa's list of selfish children is longer than ever this year!"

Snowflake, a runt reindeer with a white snowflake design on his forehead, was Santa's gift to Arthur ages ago. Over the years they had become inseparable friends. Snowflake shook his head in agreement, and they flew on to the next child on the list until they had been to the home of every child in every town in every country across the globe.

"I guess that's it, Snowflake. We didn't convince them all, but more than half the kids on the list did make presents to give on Christmas. That's better than last year."

Snowflake shook his head and looked at Arthur as if to say, "You'd better count again."

"I know, I know. Who am I kidding? It's the same number as last year. I need more kids to make presents or we'll go back to the North Pole without doing a better job this year than last."

One more time, Arthur shook his globe. He saw Angie and Timothy as the blizzard closed in around them.

"Well, well, well, would you look at that, Snowflake?" Arthur pointed at the globe. "There's one greedy little rich girl who has more than everything, and one angry little poor boy who has less than nothing. Looks like one more ripe situation in need of our attention. Should we try to help these two kids believe in the Spirit of Giving?"

Snowflake shook his head up and down and snorted to say "yes" in response.

"There are only a few more hours until midnight this Christmas Eve." Snowflake nodded his head again in agreement. "Looks like we got this last call with barely enough time to spare," said Arthur.