

BEHIND THE SCENES

By

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She loves him with her whole heart, of course... Everyone does; that's the problem!

"You'd be dead if it weren't for me, or at the very least in a diabetic coma. So don't give me any more guff about me not baking you any cookies. Cookies, candy canes, hot chocolate with marshmallows. Those kids think that they are treating you kindly. Well, little do they know how hard I have to work all year long just to get you stuffed into your outfit," she says, with both care and exasperation in her voice, while she transfers the last of her homemade yogurt into a crock.

"Broccoli, tomatoes, some carrot sticks, that's what I'd tell them to leave you. Heavens! Your blood sugar is off the charts by the time you and the team get home." She looks down to keep her eyes from meeting his - this is no time for them to go all twinkly. Instead, she focuses on the small drip that's fallen onto the knee of her yoga pants.

He thinks over her words carefully before replying. Certainly, he loves her with every fiber of his being - that goes without saying. Or, rather, it had gone without saying. For too long.

Too little said, and, yes... too little fiber in his being without her. She was right, of course. Love can't be all candy floss and marshmallow - sometimes a bit more crunch is just the thing needed to keep a heart merrily ticking along.

She looks up, waiting for him to finally respond, and a smile spreads over his face as slowly and gently as a fresh snowfall. "I know sweetheart. Thank you for always looking out for me, and for all the children of the world. Don't think I've forgotten, it was you who wanted to make the gifts a little more special; you taught the boys how to wrap and ribbon each one. To think that we'd been chucking them down the chimney in any old bag."

"And the suit you designed for me! You keep it clean, and repaired, and the boots... well, you're everything that makes them shine. If it weren't for you, I'd hate to think of the stink coming from me. And your insistence on a well washed, curried, and combed team surely makes a better impression flying through the sky than a bunch of smelly beasts with dung in their hoofs and clumps of matted fur on their rumps."

He dances over to her, swipes the last available drop of yogurt into his mouth, and his cheeks plump happily. "You are a gift to the world Mrs. Claus. You are my very own North Star."

She meets him squarely in the eye, struggling to hold back her own grin, and surely twinkling now; charmed by the old elf, as always.

"Oh, Mr. Claus." She gently taps him on the nose with her spatula three times, as she makes one last mock-serious