

FIRST WEEK ON THE BENCH

By Jeff Dunne

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CHARACTERS

- FLINKY A highly caffeinated elf who has gotten a little side-tracked in his excitement.
- TINGLE A shift supervisor in Santa's workshop.

SETTING

Santa's workshop.

SCENE

(FLINKY is working diligently, feverishly at his station in Santa's workshop. He's rather jittery, and jumps in surprise when the shift supervisor, TINGLE, sidles up to check on his progress.)

TINGLE

Flinky, isn't it?

FLINKY

Yes sir, Mr. Tingle.

TINGLE

Just Tingle, Flinky. Just Tingle. So, how are you enjoying your first week on the job?

FLINKY

Oh, sir, this has been everything I dreamed it would be!

TINGLE

Good, good. And I couldn't help but notice that you've been very hard at work. First one here, last one to leave every day so far. Very impressive.

FLINKY

Thank you, sir! This really has been an honor.

TINGLE

Keep hammering away like this, and I'm sure you'll be through your initial workload assignment in no time and ready for another batch, eh?

FLINKY

(Suddenly nervous...)

Uh... what—

TINGLE

So what are you working on there?

(Tingle peers forward to look at the Transformer-like toy that Flinky is building.)

FLINKY

I... um... it's...

TINGLE

A little army robot, I see. Very nice. And who's the lucky little boy?

FLINKY

Ummm.... Alex Portman.

TINGLE

Portman? *Alexandra* Portman? She's at the *top* of your list. Did you start at the bottom or something?

FLINKY

No, sir. From the beginning.

TINGLE

Are you telling me that after four days, you've haven't even...

(Tingle grabs a list and reads.)

It says here that she asked for an angel doll.

FLINKY

Yes, sir. That's right.

TINGLE

But this is a robot.

FLINKY

Yes, sir.

TINGLE

But she asked for an angel doll.

FLINKY

Yes, sir. You see, sir, I thought that rather than just building the usual one, I'd make something... unique. I thought, why do angels always have to be little *people*? Why not make a dog angel, or- or a tree angel? And then I thought, why not... a robot angel!

TINGLE

This is highly irregular.

FLINKY

Right! Exactly! Cool, huh? Her parents will never see it coming!!

TINGLE

No, not *cool*. We *have* a design for angel dolls. And this isn't it.

FLINKY

Right. I thought, why not make something really memorable?

TINGLE

You're way behind schedule, Flinky. We have quotas to meet.

FLINKY

I know. I kinda ran into some difficulties. You see, I thought it be neat if the robot was able to emit angelic rays of light, you know? She would never see that coming.

TINGLE

Flinky, I think you need to—

FLINKY

And then I thought, wait! Why use the same boring old LEDs being used in all the other toys? Why not have the robot emit actual laser beams? You know? Something that could be used to cut through all the demons and stuff?

TINGLE

Demons?

FLINKY

I figure that's probably why she wants it. Why would a little kid want an angel if not to defend her against a bunch of demons? So this is perfect. The demons will think it's just a plastic toy, then BAM!! The lasers power up, and mow 'em down!

TINGLE

Flinky...

FLINKY

They'll never see it coming. Not in a million years.

TINGLE

Flinky?

FLINKY

Yes sir?

(Tingle picks up a mug from nearby, sniffs it.)

Oh, that's eggnog, sir.

TINGLE
It smells like coffee.

FLINKY
I-I've been switching back and forth.

TINGLE
Flinky, when was the last time you slept?

FLINKY
Ooohhh, a couple of days before Santa interviewed me.

TINGLE
That was over two weeks ago.

FLINKY
I was pretty nervous for the interview, and then after I got the job I was so excited that couldn't sleep. And then, when I started, it was all just so new and wonderful, that I didn't want to go home.

TINGLE
But you *have* been going home.

FLINKY
No, actually. I've been going to the library. I needed to do some research. On lasers. I didn't want to just use any old laser, and—

TINGLE
Flinky...

FLINKY
And there's been some really exciting developments at the Fudan University in China...

TINGLE
Flinky...

FLINKY
I had to read up on it, and it took me a little longer than I expected to figure out how to make the silicon nanocrystals using the gingerbread oven, which is—

(Tingle has started walking Flinky away from the workbench.)

FLINKY (CONT)

Wh-where are we going?

TINGLE

Just taking a little break.

(Flinky reaches for his mug, but Tingle stops him. He escorts him out of the workshop over the remaining lines.)

No, no. You can leave that here. It'll be okay.

FLINKY

But the carbon nanotubes for the collimation chamber are going to be finished in just a few minutes. And and and the lithium tungsten for the hydrogen fuel cells should be delivered tomorrow morning when...

(Flinky fades off as they exit. Lights out.)