

## To Santa's ?Elves? Everywhere

by SHERALYN ROMAN

For many families, this time of year is special, whether it's because of a visit from the big guy in red or for more faith-based reasons. For some families it's both. That said, I'll be clear, this column is for those of you who celebrate Christmas in all its crass, commercial glory. More specifically, it is an ode to Santa's ?elves.? You know who you are ? mothers. Yeah, I'm sure there are some great Dads, caregivers or grandparents out there, but on average, Christmas (and more specifically Santa himself) relies on ?Team Mom? to make the real magic happen.

First, a shout out to Moms who wrestle. I'm not sure what the ?it? toy of the season is this year but no doubt mothers do and they've already been camped outside of a Walmart or Toys R Us for days in anticipation of a ?smash and grab? style assault to make sure they're one of the few who obtain said toy. I get it (and may, or may not, have done similarly.) While I obviously don't condone violence, with tongue firmly planted in cheek I'll say this: If you are one of those grown adults wrestling on the floor of your local store for the sake of your child and not for the sake of reselling the item on Facebook marketplace for 8x the regular price, I've got your back. If you're the other kind - there's a special place in ?H.E. Double-Hockey Sticks? for you. Actually, now that I think about it, these days all you have to do is point and click on something, drag it into your online basket, pay and the ?it? toy of the year is delivered straight to your front door. You new age moms have it so easy!

This next special shout-out goes to all those moms who wake up from a dead sleep at 3 a.m. in a panic, because they realize they've forgotten to move an elf. Not just any old elf - ?that? elf, the one with an affinity for shelves. Much like the commercial Santa we are most familiar with was the marketing genius of some male advertising executive at Coca-Cola, so too is the Elf on the Shelf the work of a man. Only a man could have come up with such a punitive way to keep kids quiet and mothers everywhere consumed by both existential guilt AND dread. I mean if you ask me, which you didn't, but here we are, that whole elf business, what with him watching over you all the time AND moving around the house in the middle of the night ? it's just creepy! It would have scared the crap out of me when I was a kid. As for putting all that pressure on moms to remember to move him, it's just one more item on the long list of ?to dos? at this time of year and places a ridiculously unfair burden on your already burdensome list. Oh yeah, and for all you ?perfect? people out there posting your super creative, staged scenes of ?cute? Elf mayhem?thanks for putting all that additional pressure on the rest of us regular moms who are lucky if we even remember to move the \*\*\*\* elf at all.

Not so much a shout out, but a commentary on the one holiday item I think women might have had a hand in. It's a delightful ditty known as the Twelve Days 12 of Christmas. Surely this song is some kind of allegory for the commercialism and nonsense related to the countdown to Christmas that has mothers madly spinning like tops in order to top last year's gift-giving creativity.

Cranky old lady alert: When I was a kid you got a tiny, paper door to open, with a pretty picture behind it. In later years that picture was upgraded to a piece of chocolate that you and your siblings fought over whose turn it was to eat, because there certainly weren't custom-curated chocolate cartoon calendars on the fridge for every kid in the house! These days, the countdown isn't just 12, but a full 24 days of creativity is required where moms are expected to mark each day as unique - as if December 25th isn't enough. Hence the song, an allegory for moms everywhere pointlessly searching for something far more than mere swans-a-swimming because they are SO yesterday. I think the song represents the incessant search for that perfect gift (which, for the record, is never, ever going to be noisy birds whether they're calling, doves, hens or a bleeping partridge in a pear tree!) As for the pipers piping and lords-a-leaping, you can keep them. The last thing we need is more men, making more noise, and uselessly leaping about in tights while we women try to buy the turkey, donate a turkey to the food bank, cook a turkey (plus all the trimmings) AND do it all while not losing our cool and calling our mother-in-law a turkey!

It's at about this time that some of my male readers might chime in with ?yeah, but we put up the outside lights,? and ?baby it's cold outside.? Here's the thing; first of all, I'm nobody's ?baby? and if you had put the d\*\*m lights up on that mild day in mid-November like we told you to, it wouldn't have been so cold out would it? By the way, who was the one who untangled and tested all the lights you just threw in the box when you took them down last year? That's right, chances are it was a woman and if you live in my house

(and at least two of my immediate neighbours' homes) it WAS the women putting up the outside lights because YES, we really can do everything.

Ahhh, Christmas, just another day on the calendar where men do all the dreaming, are not held to unrealistic beauty standards and get to be 'fat and jolly' in a red velvet tracksuit plus they get all the credit while the real Santa's elves 'moms everywhere' do all the work!

Dear gentlemen readers, do yourselves a favour and buy your wife a day at the spa. Trust me, she deserves it.