THE NIGHT I MET FATHER CHRISTMAS

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THE NIGHT I MET FATHER CHRISTMAS

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It was quarter to midnight
on Christmas Eve.

The lights were out all over the land and children everywhere were asleep in their beds, dreaming of the big day to come.

Well, *almost* everywhere . . .

Jackson was awake.
And however tired he felt . . .

however heavy his eyelids . . .

he was going to STAY awake until Father Christmas came.

The clock struck twelve. First, there was the sound of bells in the sky. Then from the roof came a loud . . .
BANG!
The whole ceiling shook. Jackson raced down the stairs and burst into the front room . . .
Soot and ash were falling from the chimney. An echoey voice drifted down . . .
Then with a sudden . . .
WHOOOSH!
a tiny figure dropped into the fireplace.
A tiny . . .

. . . elf!

"Oh!" said Jackson.
"Argh!" said the elf, stumbling backwards in surprise.
He was rubbing his ankle. "I think I've twisted it."
"You're Father Christmas," said Jackson. "But you're an ELF."

"Father Christmas?
No no, I'm a, um . . . chimney inspector!
Come to inspect your, um . . . chimney.
And it's fine! So, I'll be off now, thank you."

The elf tried to walk away but winced
in pain. Jackson raced to the freezer
to fetch him a bag of frozen peas.