

The Tragedy of Christmas— Multiple Personalities



WHO better watch out?
Santa better watch out,
I'm telling **YOU** why!

*Those reindeers got no
teeth, not like mine anyways.
Least, I don't think they do...*

Whut?
liii've been goood!

*And I'm a puppy, too, so I'm
just cute anyways.*

*Not like them big clumsy
reindeer prancing and pawing
on them rooftops...you can hear
each tiny hoof, get no sheep
herded thataway...*



*Happy Christmas to all,
and to all a good bite.*

Visit us at finchester.org or wordwhirled.blogspot.com,

Just In Time for Holidays 2005—



—Well, OK, a wee bit late—

*Join our friends for another
exciting adventure at Dogwarts!*



Chapter 1: The Riddle of a House

The villagers of Little Finchleton called it “the houseboat” although it once was clearly meant as a porch. They all agreed, often waving to include the disintegrating greenhouse next to it, that something terrible had happened sometime in the 30 years before Ellen bought the place—something horrific involving discolored fiberglass, mismatched paint, rust, and rude, snobbish, Dark Arts termites.



Chapter 2: The ELF-House Liberation Front

With a simple wave of the wand and hundreds of hours of labor involving ELF, her sister Linda and fiancé, and a couple of dozen friends from Defense Against the Dark Arts classes, the house-back and yard are transformed. The empty paint cans, concrete and metal debris, drop cloths, hammers, saws, putty, widgets, gadgets, gidgets, ogres, and evil serpents are cleared away just in time for—



Chapter 3: The First Task

The Goblet of Fire selects Linda and Paul to represent Dogwarts at the Biwizard Tournament, and for their first task—they must wed. And so they do, at the end of July in Ellen’s backyard in a crowd of muggles. The entire Levy side of the family attends: parents, all five sisters, two spouses, six grandchildren, cousins, and visiting teams from many other schools of wizardry.



Chapter 4: The Second Task

Our intrepid heroine skips 463 pages explaining how she ends up at a self-service Sierra Club lodge in March in a couple of feet of snow with flying-broom substitutes strapped to her feet. These enable her to whisk across several miles of snow-covered trails to retrieve the prize—a magical egg. Or at least it might have been an egg, it was white and round and cold and hit the side of her head abruptly—



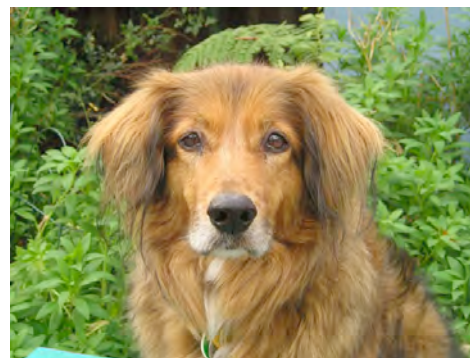
Chapter 5: Mayhem at the Ministry

Our educational chapter begins with the manifestation of Boost—a purebred blue merle Border Collie whose conjuror-breeder Ellen knows—on Ellen’s birthday. Sharing birthdays is powerful magic—she joins the household at 3 months and is the blue merle collie that Ellen’s wanted since reading Terhune’s *Grey Dawn* *mumble* years ago as a girl. Or some such excuse. The complete backstory can be summoned with the incantation: Finchester.org/BoostsPage.html.



Chapter 6: The Fur Champions

Tika becomes quite the Quiddagility competitor, running fast and having a blast. Despite course traps set by judge Voldemort, Tika earns her USDAA Master Agility Dog title and her first Quiddagility championship, in CPE (her C-ATCH is only the 24th Californian one, and Ellen only the 4th CA handler with two C-ATCH dogs (missed 3rd by a couple hours)). At the USDAA Nationals in Arizona, Tika places 8th of 160 dogs in agility Snooker.



Chapter 7: Mad-Eye Jakey

Turning 14 in November, Jake curmudgeonly repeats the forbidden I’m-The-Boss-Around-Here spells on the puppy, landing him in trouble with the head wizard. He still competes at a minimum level despite the head wizard’s attempts to retire him (he rebelled). His increasing deafness proves a challenge to both of us. His arthritis remains mostly under control but, despite sometimes still beating agility dogs half his age, he also sometimes needs help climbing the stairs.

Chapter 8: Aboard the Dogwarts Express

This continued to be a year of dogs and dog agility, despite Ellen’s attempts to regain a toehold in Real Life. We cut way back on agility weekends this year: 20 compared to 2004’s 21. Threw in puppy-training seminars with Boost and a rattlesnake-avoidance class with Tika after we encountered one in our suburban yard. Did some hiking with friends; attended my first-ever ballet (*Nutcracker*), a San Jose Giants game, and the usual season of plays at San Jose Repertory Theater; sadly bid goodbye to our L.A.-bound housemate and her cute little black dog and welcomed a new housemate who plays daily with the dog mob; took a couple of small photography outings; kept in touch with the Master Composters but taught no workshops; saw some movies in actual theaters. Marked 11th anniversary working as tech writer for Expert Support.