Santa's Workshop

ADVENTURES FROM THE NORTH POLE

BOOK 09

Arthur's Quietest Day



As told by

Imogen Quillworth

KEEPER OF THE STORY LIBRARY

Arthur’s Quietest Day

Adventures from the North Pole

Book 9

Told by Imogen Quillworth, Keeper of the Story Library

SantasWorkshop Press

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Chapter 1: A Very Good Morning



Arthur put his screwdriver into his tool bag and fastened it shut. When he lifted it by the carrying strap, Miss Bramble's neat stitches held firm.

There. Everything he had meant to mend was mended.

The door opened smoothly. The carrying basket had a firm handle. His little folding stool unfolded without a groan.

It had been a very good morning.

Arthur carried the stool out of Mr. Puddlesworth's Shop and set it on a clear patch of cobbles in Lantern Square. Snow lay around the base of the Christmas tree. A lantern stirred on its hook, and someone's footsteps crunched across the square.

He sat down, stretched his legs and let his shoulders settle.

For a little while, nobody needed him to fetch a screw, hold an end or have a look underneath something.

“Arthur!”

Mr. Puddlesworth stood in his shop doorway.

Arthur drew his legs in again.

“Is something wrong?”

“That is what I’m trying to establish.”

The shopkeeper stepped backwards into the shop. He shut the door, then opened it again.

The bell above the entrance rang brightly.

Mr. Puddlesworth frowned.

“You hear it?”

“The bell?”

“No. The other thing.”

Arthur waited.

“The squeak,” said Mr. Puddlesworth. “The door usually gives a little squeak halfway open. This morning, nothing. Just the bell.”

“The door opens all right?”

“Beautifully. That’s the puzzling part.”

Arthur smiled and stretched his legs out again.

Mr. Puddlesworth went back inside. A moment later, the bell rang once more.

“The carrying basket’s quiet too,” he said. “Penny borrowed it before I opened. No rattle when she picked it up.”

Arthur looked down at his closed tool bag. He had hoped to leave it closed until after his break.

“Did she pick it up easily?”

“Very easily.”

Arthur rested his hands on his knees.

Mr. Puddlesworth came over, thinking hard.

“Two missing noises,” he said. “On the same morning.”

Arthur glanced at his stool. Perhaps he ought to mention the third.

Then again, mentioning it might take longer than his whole break.

“Would you like to solve it?” he asked.

Mr. Puddlesworth straightened.

“I would.”

“A short detective walk, then. Three clues. After that, I’m sitting down.”

“Three?”

“You haven’t found the last one yet.”

Arthur picked up his stool. Mr. Puddlesworth was already walking towards the shop.

Chapter 2: The Squeak That Wasn’t There



At the entrance, Arthur held the door open.

“First clue. Have a look at the hinge.”

Mr. Puddlesworth leaned closer. A little wet shine showed where the two parts moved against each other.

He touched it with a fingertip and rubbed his finger against his thumb.

“Oil.”

Arthur waited.

The shopkeeper took the handle and opened the door slowly. It moved easily beneath his hand. He paused where the squeak used to be, then opened it the rest of the way.

Nothing squeaked.

“It was dry,” he said. “You’ve put oil on it.”

“That’s one,” said Arthur.

Mr. Puddlesworth smiled at the hinge.

“I was so busy listening for the squeak, I hadn’t noticed how easy that was.”

Arthur folded his stool beside the counter.

It folded quietly.

Mr. Puddlesworth turned.

“Hang on. That usually makes a noise too.”

“We’ll come to that.”

“I’m collecting quite a few things you’ve stopped.”

“I prefer to think of them as things I’ve fixed.”

“Yes. Quite right.”

The shopkeeper looked up at his bell.

“You haven’t done anything to that?”

“No.”

“Good. I need that noise.”

As if to prove it, the bell rang.

Penny came in carrying the empty basket.

“Here you are,” she said. “And thank you, Arthur. That was much easier to carry today.”

Mr. Puddlesworth looked from the basket to Arthur.

“My next clue?”

“Just arrived.”

Chapter 3: Penny's Perfectly Steady Handle



Penny set the basket on the counter.

"What have I arrived in the middle of?"

"A mystery in my shop," said Mr. Puddlesworth. "Three missing noises. We've found out about the first."

"And the basket is the second?"

"Exactly."

He took the handle and gave it a gentle wiggle. It no longer wobbled at the side where it joined the basket.

"It used to lean," Penny said. "I had to keep one hand underneath when I carried anything in it. This morning I could carry it properly."

Mr. Puddlesworth bent closer to the place that used to wobble. A small screw held the handle's metal fastening against the basket.

"That screw used to stick out a little," he said. "Now it's in tight."

He looked at Arthur's closed tool bag.

"You didn't need oil for this one."

Arthur shook his head.

Mr. Puddlesworth rested a finger beside the screw.

"It was letting the handle wobble. You've tightened it."

"That's two," Arthur said.

The shopkeeper lifted the basket. Its handle stayed steady, and there was no rattle.

"Thank you," Penny said to Arthur. "I noticed the easier carrying. I hadn't noticed the quiet."

"And I noticed the quiet," said Mr. Puddlesworth, "but hadn't got as far as the carrying."

Arthur smiled. Between them, they had noticed everything he had hoped for.

Mr. Puddlesworth set the basket down.

"Two clues solved. Now, where's the third?"

Arthur picked up his folded stool.

"Coming outside with me."

Penny held the door as they went out.

"Good luck with the last one," she said. "And with your break, Arthur."

"Thank you," he said. "I'm getting closer."

Chapter 4: A Perfectly Good Noise



Arthur set his stool down on the cobbles. Mr. Puddlesworth crouched beside it.

“Another hinge,” the shopkeeper said.

Arthur kept his hands on the seat.

Mr. Puddlesworth looked carefully. There was no wet shine this time. Beside the hinge, a small patch of wood was paler than the rest.

He ran a finger over it, then over the wood beside it.

“Smooth here,” he said. “Rough just beside it.”

Arthur began to open the stool slowly. Mr. Puddlesworth watched the folding leg pass the pale patch without catching.

“The wood was rubbing there,” he said. “You’ve smoothed it so the leg can get past.”

“That’s three.”

Arthur unfolded the stool, checked it stood firmly and sat down.

Mr. Puddlesworth looked pleased.

“An oiled hinge, a tightened screw and a smooth patch of wood.”

“Mystery solved?”

“Solved.”

Arthur stretched out his legs. This time he left them stretched.

The shopkeeper’s pleased expression grew brighter.

“I could tell everyone what you’ve—”

Arthur looked up.

Mr. Puddlesworth stopped.

“After your break,” he said.

“If anyone asks.”

“If anyone asks,” the shopkeeper agreed. He looked at Arthur’s empty hands. “Would you like a warm drink?”

“Very much.”

“Tea?”

“Please.”

Mr. Puddlesworth went into the shop. Arthur heard the bell, the quiet closing of the door and, a little later, the bell again.

The shopkeeper returned with a warm mug.

Arthur took it carefully, wrapping both hands around it.

“Thank you.”

“Enjoy your break.”

Mr. Puddlesworth went back to his counter. This time he stayed there.

Arthur watched a small bit of snow loosen from a branch of the Christmas tree and fall softly onto the snow below. Footsteps crunched across the square. As the lantern stirred, its hanging ring tapped gently against the hook.

None of those sounds needed fixing.

From the shop came one clear, cheerful ring as someone opened the door.

Arthur took a sip of tea.

He could leave that one alone too.