



Chapter One

Can you see a living room?

Small and cosy, with a warm fire flickering in the grate?

And can you see the CUTEST little dog, with the SOFTEST fur, curled up on the floor?

Then you can see me! I'm Kado, and I'm keeping a close eye on the other two golden labradors in the living room.

You'd SO better like dogs.

Gran and Granda are normally really calm, though right now they're both fizzing – with stress. Gran's trying to hide it. She's lying on the other side of the fire from me with her chin up on her paws. Granda's not – he's GRUMPY.

‘He’s late!’ Granda growls as he turns back and forth, his tail whacking into our battered old armchair.

Granda’s been doing this for AGES. He only stops pacing to nose the thick red curtains aside with his whiskery old muzzle. He stares into the mass of snowflakes swirling in the darkness outside, the worry coming off him in waves. It makes me realise that I’ve been worrying too.

And not just about the HUMAN who’s out there!

What about the reindeer?

What about Stella and Trudi? Rocco, Vixen and Tundi? Not to mention my best friend, Lemmi!

‘Are they really late?’ I ask, my voice all wobbly.

‘He’s always late home,’ Gran tells Granda. ‘Every year. And you always worry! Kado, go back to your book.’

She means the encyclopedia that’s open on the floor in front of me. I’ve been goggling at the Pyramids in Egypt, though when I turn back to that page, Granda snaps, ‘But never THIS late! And with this weather. Look at it! Every year it gets worse. Every. Single. Year.’

‘Wait,’ says Gran. ‘What’s that?’

Gran pulls her head up and I do the same. I prick my ears, hoping SO MUCH that Gran has heard little bells jingling in the distance. I can’t hear anything, though, and nor can Granda – or Gran. She settles back down, trying not to show her disappointment while Granda huffs again, about to have yet another hard stare out of the window.

When it comes—

First, the snowing stops.

The last of the flakes run away from the window like they’re scared of something. Then there’s a trembling in the air that makes my fur spring up. It makes my ears prick again, every atom in my body jumping to attention – as an awful, wrenching groan sounds from outside.

And that’s not the end of it.

It’s followed by a *THUD*, and that’s followed by a

B-O-O-M,

after which comes a massive, echoing, totally terrifying

!CCCCC

RRRRRRR

AAAAAAA

CCCCCK

KKKKK!