

North Pole Records Office – Solution

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This puzzle consists of two lists, one with 7 nice children and one with 7 naughty children. As the flavortext suggests, the clues in the naughty list are *devilish* – specifically, they are examples of *printer’s devilry*, sentences in which a string of characters has been removed (adjusting word breaks and punctuation if desired) to create a different surface reading. The solutions to the printer’s devilries are given below:

1. Are magic spells used by clerics? Likely won’t work.
⇒ **Arcane** magic spells used by clerics likely won’t work. **CAN**
2. The basil is old. It spews at a huge markup!
⇒ The basil**ica** **resold** it’s pews at a huge markup. **CARE**
3. Only the hart plants survived the frosty winter.
⇒ Only the hard**iest** plants survived the frosty winter. **DIES**
4. The Doctor Start OBE, able to change shape before the chameleon circuit broke.
⇒ The Doctor’s Tard**is used** to be able to change shape before the chameleon circuit broke. **DISUSED**
5. I saw some boat afloat and now I want root beer and ice cream, too.
⇒ I saw some**body** eat a float and now I want root beer and ice cream, too. **DYE**
6. A path I try will preserve curve length but not all other proper ties.
⇒ A path **isometry** will preserve curve length but not all other properties. **SOME**
7. A certain duke popularized scandalously short cuffs.
⇒ A certain Duke popularized scandalously short **cut-offs**. **TO**

The seven ‘nice’ words match up with the solutions to the printer’s devilries in antonym pairs. Ordering by the nice list (since the naughty words were given alphabetically), these pairs are

RECKLESSNESS	CARE
ACTIVE	DISUSED
FROM	TO
BLEACH	DYE
ALL	SOME
MUST	CAN
LIVES	DIES

Read in this order, the naughty words form one final printer’s devilry:

Care disused to dye some candies (5).

⇒ **Car**mine**** red is used to dye some candies. **MINER**

Construction Notes: While MINER may not feel like a particularly Christmas-y answer, its close association with coal and the fact that it’s a homophone for “minor” create an opportunity to write a flavorful puzzle about children on Santa’s naughty list. This flavor suggests the printer’s devilry as the puzzle’s main mechanic.

The final cluephrase was constructed first, with care taken to ensure that it was comprised of 5-10 words made mostly out of common letters so they could each be hidden inside another devilry. Then, the second set of devilries was constructed. As an aid to solvers, it was determined that there should also be a list of “nice” clues for antonyms to the devilries.

Here are a few alternate devilries that didn’t quite make the cut:

- I enjoy listening to barks, folk dances, and concertos. (2)
- The inbuilt citadels all over Peru. (4)
- The robot fell into Mori Sunny Valley. (3)
- The set line is a good approximation to the tangent line. (3)