

FATHER
CHRISTMAS –
THE PANTOMIME
BY
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FATHER CHRISTMAS

- The Pantomime

By Mark Llewelin

Characters:

Father Christmas

Reindeer Ruby

The Toy Professor

Reindeer Ronnie

Rudolph

Snaffle

Snatchitt

Dreadful Deirdre

Smithers

Chorus: The elves, toys.

Scenes:

The action takes place just after Christmas.

Act One:

1. Prologue.
2. The Stables.
3. A Corridor.
4. The Toy Factory.
5. The Stables.

Act Two:

1. The Toy Factory.
2. A Corridor.
3. The Toy Factory.
4. Father Christmas's Office.
5. The Toy Factory.

FATHER CHRISTMAS

- The Pantomime

By Mark Llewelin

ACT ONE:

1. PROLOGUE

Live or recorded Christmas music plays until, as the lights dim, there is a shriek in the dark and the music comes to an abrupt halt. We hear footsteps and then the light begins to brighten. In front of a cloth, or the tabs, the figure of Dreadful Deirdre.

DEIRDRE: Where are you? Snatchitt, Snaffle – I want you here now! CLICKS HER FINGERS

SNATCHITT AND SNAFFLE APPEAR, COWERING. SNATCHITT HOLDS A PARTLY OPENED PRESENT BEHIND HIS BACK. THEY BOTH WEAR CHEAP PARTY HATS.

SNATCHITT: You hollered your Dreariness.

DEIRDRE: It is December the 25th isn't it?

SNAFFLE: That's right!

DEIRDRE: So, it's Christmas morning then?

SNATCHITT: Oh, we forgot –

BOTH: VERY CHEERY Merry Christmas!!

SNAFFLE BLOWS ON A PARTY HOOTER.

DEIRDRE: We've been forgotten – again!! SHE HOLDS OUT A CHRISTMAS STOCKING, SHE TURNS IT UPSIDE DOWN BUT NOTHING FALLS OUT. IT'S EMPTY.

SNAFFLE: OH DEAR: Oh no, not again.

DEIRDRE: Father Christmas hasn't been. Has he?

SNATCHITT: Um, no -

DEIRDRE: How many letters did I write to the North Pole? Eh, eh?

SNAFFLE: One hundred and sixty three your miseriness.

DEIRDRE: And still – not a sniff of a reindeer. Nothing shoved down my chimney! For another year.

SNATCHITT DROPS HIS GIFT.

DEIRDRE: What's that?

SNATCHITT: What?

DEIRDRE: That!!

SHE PRODS THE GIFT WITH HER SHOE.

SNATCHITT: Oh – that. Oh, nothing – QUIETLY Just a gift. From my aunt. She lives abroad you see. She didn't know it was Christmas. It was just a co-incidence.

SNAFFLE: Yes, she's an explorer.

DEIRDRE: Really?

SNATCHITT: Yes, Aunt Dora – the Explorer.

DEIRDRE: If she didn't know it was Christmas why's it wrapped in Christmas paper?

SNATCHITT: In, in – oh, yes. I see.

SNATCHITT PICKS UP THE GIFT. THE JUMPER INSIDE FALLS OUT.

DEIRDRE: Knitted it herself – SHE HOLDS IT UP – did she?

SNATCHITT: How did you guess?

DEIRDRE: Well, you wouldn't buy one like that, would you?

SHE RIPS A SLEEVE OFF IT.

SNATCHITT: Madam – have you ever thought there might be a reason for all this? A reason why you don't get any presents?

DEIRDRE: I know the reason alright – Father Christmas is a miserable fat fraud! He doesn't deliver Christmas cheer to *all* the children around the world he only delivers to the ones he likes. And he doesn't like – me!!

SNAFFLE: Maybe he delivers to all the *nice* children.....

SNATCHITT: Anyway – the clue's there oh great one, he delivers to *children*. I mean, you may have the figure of a 22 year old, the hair of a 21 year old and the brain of a 6 year old but –

SNAFFLE: Add them together and you're a 49 year old.

DEIRDRE: That's it! If I can't have a proper Christmas then no one shall.

SNAFFLE: What are you going to do?

DEIRDRE: I want you pair of imbeciles to get your sorry carcasses up to the North Pole –

SNAFFLE: But it's cold up there – and you know how I pick up germs and sniffles.

SNATCHITT: Yes, and in Santa Land you're also prone to the Christmas illness.

DEIRDRE: What's that?

BOTH: Tinsel-it is! THEY LAUGH

DEIRDRE: Get packing now, get up there - and finish off Father Christmas once and for all.

BOTH: Finish off Father.... We can't do that!

DEIRDRE: It's him – or you. I've waited 49.....39 years for that fat old man to deliver a gift to me well now, I'm gonna have the biggest gift of all – Santa's head on a plate!!

SNAFFLE AND SNATCHITT COWER AS SHE LAUGHS.

Get packing!

2. THE STABLES.

As the curtain opens, the elves are closing the doors on the stables. There are signs on, or over, the doors reading 'Rudolph', 'Dasher' and so on.

NUMBER Elves.

AT THE END OF THE NUMBER, ENTER RONNIE.

RONNIE: Are all the reindeers safely locked away for another year guys?

ELF 1: And *girls*, Ronnie!

RONNIE: And girls. I just can't get used to having boy and girl elves this year. Sorry!

ELF 2: It's about time we had some equality in the ranks! Thanks!

RONNIE: It's a pleasure. Treasure.

THE GIRL ELVES CHEER.

RONNIE: Now, let's see.

HE PRODUCES A CLIPBOARD AND PEN.

Father Christmas will be wanting to check that everything is cleaned and preened and safely packed away for the summer. Are the reindeer all in their stalls?

ELVES: Yes!

RONNIE: Just to be sure - Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen!

ON EACH NAME THE ELVES SHOUT 'YES!'

Marvellous!

ELF 3: Aren't you forgetting one Ronnie?

RONNIE: Let me see – Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen and My mind's gone blank! I know there's one more but – what's he called?

ELVES: Ask the boys and girls!

RONNIE: Oh! Yes. Well, why not! TO AUDIENCE: Welcome to the North Pole, I am Reindeer Ronnie and it's my job to look after all the reindeer for Father Christmas. And I'm your official guide for your visit here. It's very cold so you must stick together – in fact, it's so

cold you probably *will* stick together. Now, Christmas is done and dusted for another year and the reindeer will be going to sleep for the summer. Well, we all do! Yes, up here it's either night all day long when we never see the sun at all or we get sun all day when we never see the dark. But you see, when it's sunny we have to go to sleep – we hibernate. So, once everything is put away we'll all be going sound asleep. But first I have to swill down the sleigh, rub down the reindeer and tidy the toy factory. And I have to do it all on my own!

ELVES REACT NOSILY TO HIS LIE.

Well, alright – calm down! They help me too! In fact, you can lend a hand if you like – I have accounted for 8 of the reindeer but I can't remember the name of the 9th. Any ideas? AUDIENCE SHOUT Randolph? THEY SHOUT AGAIN Oh, that's it – Rudolph! How could I forget! I counted them all out, and I've counted them back in again. So, elves, anyone seen Rudolph?

ELF 1: He's at the electricians.

ELF 2: Having the bulb in his nose changed.

RONNIE: Bright sparks! That's it – Rudolph is being readied for his nap. Right everyone, there's work to be done!

THE ELVES LINE UP FOR THEIR ORDERS. THEY RUN PAST HIM AS HE HANDS EACH ONE A SHEET OF COLOURED PAPER FROM HIS CLIPBOARD – THESE ARE THEIR INSTRUCTIONS. HE CALLS OUT THEIR NAME & JOB AS HE HANDS EACH PAPER OUT.

Rusty, re-fuel the sleigh! Sammy, sluice the stables! Popeye, pick the presents! Rita, sort the ribbons! Goffy, get the gift tags! Blanco, buff the boss' boots! Hilda, those hooves! Colin, those collars! Trudy, touch up the sleigh! – and Fudge, fluff up Santa's fur! And the rest of you – take one of these each! HE HANDS THE OTHER SHEETS OUT DURING THE FOLLOWING NUMBER.

NUMBER Ronnie and the Elves

THE ELVES RUN OFF IN ALL DIRECTIONS TO CARRY OUT THEIR TASKS. WE HEAR A CAR HORN OFF STAGE.

RONNIE: Oh blimey, I know who that'll be. My mum! You see, when I said that I was in charge of the elves and the reindeer and..... Well, when I said me I actually meant me and my –

ENTER REINDEER RUBY.

- mum!

RUBY: You called??

RONNIE: Hiya mum!

RUBY: IN SHRILL VOICE You called??

RONNIE: Hiya mum!

RUBY: SHRILLER You called??

RONNIE: Hiya!

RUBY: Oh, I can't go any higher – I'll shatter me snowballs! Now then, now then, it doesn't quite look the hive of activity I was hoping for -

RONNIE: You just missed it – I gave all the elves their orders.

RUBY: And what are *you* doing?

RONNIE: Time and motion! Someone's got to be in charge.

RUBY: And that someone is me! Now, get to it!

RONNIE GOES TO EXIT.

Ooh, just a minute. I've got a bone to pick with you!

RONNIE RETURNS.

Do you remember giving me a new carpet for Christmas?

RONNIE: Yes – a new fireside rug for the bestest mum in the Pole.

RUBY: I thought you said it was in mint condition!! It has a hole in the middle.

RONNIE: Yeah, polo mint condition!

RONNIE RUNS OFF.

RUBY: Sometimes I wonder about that boy! TO AUDIENCE: Well, now, let's get a look at you lot. Came on the Polar Express did you? So, who have we got in today then? Any little kiddie-winks? REACTION Oh, lovely! Any terrible teens? REACTION Marvellous! Any mums and dads? REACTION Fantastic! Now then, any wrinkly grannies and granddads? REACTION Brilliant! It comes to us all you know. Let's have a gander. FROM HER HANDBAG SHE PRODUCES A CAMERA. This is in case anything goes missing you see. For security reasons. Now, can we have the lights up! HOUSE LIGHTS ON That's it – ooh my goodness, I was going to ask all the ugly ones

to move down the front but I see you've already done that. LAUGHS TO HERSELF Now, on the count of three I want you all to smile and say cheese. Are you ready? SHE LOOKS THROUGH HER CAMERA AND MOVES BACK I can't seem to get everyone in. You've been stuffing yourselves, haven't you? Can you all shuffle up a bit towards the middle. That's better. MOVES BACK FURTHER You don't half look bonny. This'll be very good on Crimewatch. Now, I'm still not getting the people right on the edges – could the people on the edges please stand up and sit on the laps of the people next to them. Can you do that? PAUSE Ooh, now that's better. But not quite – I tell you what, I'll photograph one half of you and then I'll do the other half. Now then, let's do this side first – that's it POINTS TOWARDS ONE SIDE OF THE AUDITORIUM – now, the lady in the middle – can you either decide which half you're on or close your legs! Thank you. Right, say cheese! TAKES PICTURE OF ONE SIDE Oh, that is a good one. I'll let you all have a look later. Now, this side - cheese! TAKES A PICTURE. Smashing! I shall put that on our gate to keep the kids away from the polar bears. Now please, HOUSE LIGHTS DOWN – can I introduce myself. Ooh, before I do – anyone want to take my picture? STRIKES CHEESEY POSE There we are – my modelling days for Heat Magazine – they stood me in good stead for this job. Yes, I am Reindeer Ruby. I'm not a reindeer you know, no, I just smell like one after all these years in the stables. Ooh, I've mucked out more times that you've had hot dinners, I have!! I'm always working me – WIPES HER BROW. Do we have anyone in who works for the council? Look at that! HOLDS HER HAND UP Sweat! You won't have come across that before. I'm only joking! Yes, and we had a party from Virgin Trains booked in, are you here? NOTHING Points trouble again! No, I look after the reindeer – and I do the cooking – and I help with the presents - and my son Ronnie helps me. Of course, we don't *own* the reindeer. Oh dear me, no. I bet you know who owns the reindeers, don't you? SHOUTS FROM KIDS That's it – Father Christmas, or Santa Claus – he has two names! But we call him Father Christmas and this is where he lives, yes, this is his house! You won't get to see him though – no, you are the last tour group of the season and I'm afraid that once all the presents are delivered Santa does one last round to check on everyone before he goes to sleep until next year. That's right – he sleeps all through the summer. We all do! Well, it takes it out of us you know, making all the presents and poor Santa and the reindeer having to fly all round the world in one night. I mean, he's no spring chicken – he's 175 next birthday! Yes!

MOBILE PHONE RINGS.

Ooh, excuse me – that's my phone. SHE TAKES IT FROM HER BAG AND ANSWERS. Hello, Reindeer Ruby here. To whom do I have the pleasure of pleasuring? Oh, hello Mr Fizzle – ASIDE It's Mr Fizzle, the electrician. Oh yes, oh is he. Right oh, thanks now! PUTS PHONE AWAY. Mr Fizzle has been fitting Rudolph with a new bulb

in his nose. You didn't know that, did you? SHOUTS FROM KIDS
Who told you? Ronnie! Goodness, you know it all! So, Rudolph is
on his way over to get ready for bed!

CLIP CLOP OFF STAGE.

Ah, here he is now!

EITHER A PANEL IN THE SET OPENS SO THE HEAD OF RUDOLPH CAN
APPEAR OR RONNIE LEADS ON A REINDEER (LIKE A PANTO COW).

RONNIE ENTERS.

RONNIE: Mum, all the elves are hard at work!

RUBY: Good. Now Rudy, you've got your new bulb. I shall plug you in
forthwith and immediately, if not sooner.

RONNIE: You see kids, Rudolph has a shiny nose for a very special reason.

RUBY: Yes, you see, it's very dark when Father Christmas sets out to deliver
the presents. Very dark indeed and after his, when was it –

RONNIE: After his 135th birthday his eyesight started to go and so he needed
headlights on the sleigh!

RUBY: It looked like that Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.

RONNIE: Yes, not good at all. So, we came up with this idea! And Rudi became
famous!

NUMBER Ruby, Ronnie and Rudolph.

THE ELVES RUSH IN.

ELF 2: We've finished our work Ronnie!

ELF 3: The sleigh is shining!

ELF 4: The toy factory is ready for next year!

ELF 1: And the reindeer's hooves and collars are the best ever!

RUBY: You've all done very well! I shall treat you all to North Pole Pizza –

ELF 4: North Pole Pizza?

RUBY: Yes, deep pan crisp and even! Rudolph, you'd better bed down for the
summer with your friends – Ronnie plug his nose into the battery
charger!

RONNIE EITHER SHUTS THE STABLE DOOR AND EXITS OR TAKES
RUDOLPH OFF.

RUBY: I shall inform Father Christmas that our work is done! Well done
elves, well done!

RUBY EXITS.

REPRISE: Elves

3: A CORRIDOR

IT IS DARK. SNAFFLE AND SNATCHITT, ENTER CARRYING LANTERNS.

SNAFFLE: This is definitely the place.

SNATCHITT: Are you sure? PRODUCES MAP

SNAFFLE: The sign over the door said: Welcome to Father Christmas' House. That could be a clue!

SNATCHITT: I thought it would be a bit brighter than this. All fairy lights and – you know, like the grotto in (LOCAL STORE).

SNAFFLE: What did the book say – after Father Christmas has delivered all the presents he goes to sleep until next October. No wonder the lights are out.

SNATCHITT: You might have a point!

SNAFFLE: Now, give me the map!

SNATCHITT HANDS HIM THE MAP. HE UNFURLS IT, LOOKS PUZZLED, TURNS IT UPSIDE DOWN, SCRATCHES HIS HEAD.

SNAFFLE: I've got it, I've got it!

SNATCHITT: Well don't give it to me.

SNAFFLE: You nincompoop! I know where we are on the map.

SNATCHITT: Where?

SNAFFLE: Here! HIS FINGER GOES THROUGH THE MAP.

SNATCHITT: Where that hole is?

SNAFFLE: Don't get funny with me!

SNATCHITT: This must be Santa's place. I don't know why I still work with you!

SNAFFLE: Now isn't that charming – 17 years we've been together. Through thick and thin.

SNATCHITT: Mainly thick. Out of those 17 years, how many have been good ones, eh?

SNAFFLE: You have to accept that some days you're the pigeon and some days, the statue! No, we work well together – we're a team.

SNATCHITT: Exactly, and if we weren't together – well, we'd only ruin two other people's teams.

SNAFFLE: Exactly! So, onward, onward. Remember what Dreadful Deirdre said – we have to bring back Santa's head on a plate.

SNATCHITT: Don't remind me. What is it we're looking for exactly?

SNAFFLE: The toy factory. I think it might be this way!

SNATCHITT: But you know, it's awfully creepy in here in the dark. You don't think there are any ghosties and ghoulies, do you?

SNAFFLE: In Father Christmas' castle? No, of course not.

SNATCHITT: Only I wouldn't want to be grabbed by the ghosties.

SNAFFLE: Being grabbed by the ghoulies ain't much fun either. No, no, no, the worst you're going to come across in here is an elf and a pile of reindeer poo.

SNATCHITT: I can smell something – do you think that's the elves or the poo?

SNAFFLE: Could be either!

SQUIDGING NOISE.

SNATCHITT: Well, make up your mind – because I've just stood in one of them!
And Deirdre is waiting for us at the gates.

NUMBER Snaffle and Snatchitt

AS THEY HEAD OFF WE GO INTO:

4. THE TOY FACTORY

THERE'S A PLANK COMING IN FROM EITHER SIDE AT AN ANGLE. THERE ARE BOXES EVERYWHERE, SOME PLAIN CARDBOARD ONES AND OTHERS WRAPPED AS GIFTS. THE TOY PROFESSOR APPEARS CARRYING A SMALL BLACK BOX WHICH HAS AN AERIAL ON TOP.

PROFESSOR: TO AUDIENCE: Ah, you must be the visitors they told me about – welcome, I am the Toy Professor! And this is my toy factory and laboratory. Please don't touch anything. I am getting everything ready for when we start again on next Christmas. And this is the device which will make everything so much easier. This is my latest invention! HE HOLDS THE BLACK BOX UP. It's called the Automated Mechanical Gifts Into Packaging Simplification Unit. I call it the A-M-G-I-P-S-U for short. Much easier to remember! Of course, I can't show you what it does – only Father Christmas is allowed to push the button. Oh yes, dear me, yes. So, this – boys and girls – is where we make magic. This is my Wond-orium! This is where I invent all the new toys each year – and where all your letters to Father Christmas come for processing. Look!

HE PRODUCES A SACK OVER-FLOWING WITH LETTERS.

These arrived this morning – I'm not sure if they're late for last year or early for next year. You see, the world is a wonderful place, full of puzzles, questions, queries and conundrums. Have you ever wondered why, if swimming keeps you fit, whales are so fat? Eh, eh? How do you know when you run out of invisible ink? TO AN AUDIENCE MEMBER Can you tell me sir? Can you? Yes you! Can you tell me why there is only one monopolies commission? I thought not! Or you madam – do you know why in the world – super glue doesn't stick to the inside of the tube? Why don't sheep shrink in the rain? The world is a fascinating place alright!

HE PULLS AT THE FLOWER IN HIS BUTTON HOLE WHICH IS REALLY A SCARF TIED TO ANOTHER AND ANOTHER. HE PULLS THE LONG LINE OF COLOURED SCARVES OUT AND TWIRLS THEM AROUND.

NUMBER Toy Professor

DURING THE SONG HE COULD GO TO VARIOUS BOXES AND PRODUCE TRICKS (THINGS ON SPRINGS BURSTING OUT ETC)

PROFESSOR: Life is one long laugh as far as I'm concerned!

ENTER EITHER AN ELF, A PENGUIN (or anything else suitable) CARRYING A RINGING TELEPHONE.

Excuse me, I must take this call – it could be a delivery of whirligigs or a consignment of thingamabobs or a sack of shenanigans. HE PICKS

UP THE RECEIVER Hullo! Toy Professor speaking! There's a delivery? Of what? Toys!!! But I didn't order any toys. We're just about to close up for the summer months. Arriving now??? Well, you'll have to leave it with me. REPLACES RECEIVER. Well now, that is most irregular. Normally the toys arrive in October ready for the Christmas rush but.....oh dear me! HE BLOWS ON THE WHISTLE WHICH HANGS ROUND HIS NECK.

THE ELVES, AND SMITHERS, RUSH ON.

We have an emergency!! There's a delivery of toys on its way right now.

ELF 1: Toys? But....

PROFESSOR: I know Rusty, I know – they were delivered to the South Pole by mistake and now they're headed here. Action stations! HE BLOWS THE WHISTLE.

THE ELVES RUSH ABOUT CHAOTICALLY. SMITHERS TO THE FRONT.

SMITHERS: I have an idea!

PROFESSOR: You do? But Smithers – you've never had an idea in twelve years as my valued assistant. PAUSE This is Smithers boys and girls – say hello Smithers.

SMITHERS: Hello Smithers.

PROFESSOR: No, no – oh, never mind. Smithers, this is your one big chance – what is your idea?

SMITHERS: Why don't we sound the emergency claxon and get the reindeer staff in to help?

PROFESSOR: Sound the claxon? Call for help?

THE ELVES CHEER.

Well? You really think so? You know Smithers – that's a wonderful idea!

THEY ALL STAND THERE DOING NOTHING.

Well! What are you waiting for? Sound the claxon!!

SMITHERS RUSHES OFF THEN A CLAXON SOUNDS.

RONNIE AND RUBY RUSH ON.

RUBY: Where's the fire??

PROFESSOR: We have a delivery of toys. Arriving right now.

RONNIE: But....

PROFESSOR: I know!

RUBY: What will Father Christmas say?

RONNIE: I'll take the elves to the warehouse and start clearing the shelves. Ruby and Ronnie, perhaps you would collect the toys as they get delivered. But remember, break nothing!!

PROFESSOR AND ELVES EXIT.

RUBY: Unload the toys.....Ronnie, have you ever unloaded the toy deliveries before?

RONNIE: No mum, we're normally busy with the reindeer.

CLAXON SOUNDS.

RUBY: Well, I wonder where they deliver them to?

A PARCEL SLIDES DOWN ONE OF THE PLANKS.

(There are two planks, which must be slippery, leaning from the stage floor off into the wings to a height of about 6 feet. There's one either side and the parcels are pushed down them from the wings. It's better to use boxes with something in them to give them some weight.)

RONNIE TURNS JUST IN TIME TO SEE IT. HE RUSHES TOWARDS IT AND CATCHES IT BEFORE IT HITS THE FLOOR.

RONNIE: Well, we know now – you take this one and I'll take the other.

RONNIE ONE SIDE (SIDE A) AND RUBY THE OTHER (SIDE B).

RUBY: Well, LOOKS OFF It's not so bad, is it?

PARCEL DOWN SIDE A. RONNIE CATCHES IT. ANOTHER. HE CATCHES IT. HE STACKS THEM BETWEEN HIM AND RUBY.

RUBY: So far so good!

ANOTHER DOWN SIDE A. HE CATCHES IT. ANOTHER. HE CATCHES IT. QUICKER NOW – ANOTHER. RUBY RUSHES OVER TO HELP HIM. SHE STANDS ON ONE OF THE PARCELS ON THE FLOOR. SHE MISSES THE ONE THAT CAME DOWN THE SLOPE. ONE DOWN RUBY'S SIDE AND RONNIE'S SIDE. RUBY RUSHES BACK AND CATCHES HERS. RONNIE CATCHES HIS.

ANOTHER TWO DOWN BOTH SLOPES. THEY CATCH THEM. A PAUSE AS THEY STACK THEM ON THE FLOOR.

RUBY: Do you think I should go and get help?

RONNIE: Don't go anywhere. I'll go!

RUBY: But you can't leave me!

RONNIE: I won't be long!

RONNIE RUSHES OFF.

SLOW PARCEL DOWN A, SHE CATCHES IT. SLOW PARCEL DOWN B, SHE CATCHES IT. FASTER DOWN A, MISSES. FASTER DOWN B, CATCHES. ONE DOWN EITHER SIDE. MISSES. ANOTHER DOWN BOTH. CATCHES. TWO QUICKLY DOWN SIDE A. CATCHES. STACKS IN THE MIDDLE. TWO DOWN SIDE B. SHE TRAMPLES ON THOSE SHE ALREADY HAS AND MISSES. TWO DOWN SIDE A. TWO DOWN B. SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHICH WAY TO TURN.. THREE DOWN A. SHE LEAPS AND FALLS IN A HEAP. SIX DOWN BOTH SIDES AT ONE, HOPEFULLY ON TOP OF HER. IF YOU CAN, SEND ABOUT SIX DOWN BOTH SIDES. RUBY SOBS. SHE CLIMBS TO HER FEET AS RONNIE AND THE TOY PROFESSOR ENTER.

RUBY: Don't worry – it's all under control!

PROFESSOR: Mrs Reindeer, I've never seen the like!

RUBY: It wasn't my fault, really it wasn't. Tell him our Ronnie –

RONNIE: Well, I....

PROFESSOR: Never mind, never mind – let's just get it all cleared away. Breakages will have to be paid for though!

RUBY: On my wages!

PROFESSOR: Elves! Elves! Curly, Jolly – and Fletcher!

THREE ELVES RUSH ON.

I am sorry – but Mrs Reindeer has had an accident with the automated parcel delivery belt and drive machine.

RONNIE: The what?

PROFESSOR: The A-P-D-B-A-D-M for short Ronnie – that's what I call it. I invented it you know.

RUBY: Well, you should have invented it slower.

THE ELVES TAKE ALL THE PARCELS OFF DURING THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE.

PROFESSOR: I haven't shown you my latest invention, have I?

RONNIE: What's this one called?

PROFESSOR: GOING OFF AND BRINGING THE BLACK BOX ON This is the A-M-G-I-P-S-U.

RUBY: The A-M-G-I-P-S-U?? What's that when it's at home?

PROFESSOR: It's the.....oh, now let me think, it's the Automatic, yes, that's it, the automatic – um, mechanical.

RONNIE: Mechanical what?

PROFESSOR: G – um? Giving, gone, gift?

RUBY: Let's have a look....

SHE TAKES THE BOX FROM HIM.

PROFESSOR: WANDERING OFF It's the Automatic Mechanical Gifts Into Packing uh –

RUBY: Simplification Unit!

PROFESSOR: How did you know that?

RUBY: It says it right here! On it!

RONNIE: So - it what? Wraps the presents for you?

PROFESSOR: Better than that my boy, better than that. It makes the presents wrap themselves!

RUBY: ASIDE He's crackers! It does what????

PROFESSOR: You'll see in October when Father Christmas puts it into service.

RUBY: Well, why can't we see it now?

THE ELVES ARE NOW OFF.

PROFESSOR: Oh no, no, no, only Father Christmas can press the red button on that box.

RUBY: I could if I wanted to!!

PROFESSOR: Oh no you couldn't!

RUBY: Oh yes I could!

THEY REPEAT WITH THE AUDIENCE JOINING IN A COUPLE OF TIMES.

RUBY: Oh, yes I could – and what's more, I am!

SHE PRESSES THE BUTTON. CLAXON SOUND. NOTHING.

RUBY: Well??

PROFESSOR: You shouldn't have done that!!

A CHORUS MEMBER AS A TOY WALKS ON (could be a doll, toy soldier or something like a Shrek costume) THEY MARCH STRAIGHT PAST AN ASTONISHED RONNIE AND RUBY AND OFF THE OTHER SIDE.

RONNIE: That toy's alive!

PROFESSOR: You see – I said not to push the button. Now, you've gone and woken all the toys up!!

NUMBER Chorus as toys.

DURING THE NUMBER THE TOYS (whatever costumes you have) PERFORM A DANCE. RONNIE, RUBY AND THE PROFESSOR WATCH IN AWE. AT THE CONCLUSION, THE TOYS STOP ON STAGE.

RUBY: I never saw such a thing.

RONNIE: That was amazing!

THE PROFESSOR TAKES THE BLACK BOX FROM RUBY.

PROFESSOR: And that is why this magic box must never leave my sight. Now then elves – clear the toys please!

THE THREE ELVES FROM BEFORE RUN ON AND USHER THE TOYS OFF. IN THE MIDDLE OF IT, SNAFFLE AND SNATCHITT ENTER DRESSED AS ELVES. THEY LOOK VERY FUNNY AS THEY ARE TOO BIG AND WEAR DAFT COSTUMES AND STICK ON BEARDS. SNAFFLE CARRIES A FISHING ROD. THE ELVES AND TOYS ARE GONE.

PROFESSOR: Thank you elves – off you go.

SNATCHITT & SNAFFLE LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

SNAFFLE: Does he mean us?

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RUBY: Of course he means you. What are your names? I don't think I've seen you two before?

SNAFFLE: We're new round here.

SNATCHITT: Yes, we used to live over the hill but now we live here.

SNAFFLE: That's it – yes, we had no gnomes to go to. Do you get it – no gnomes to go to! LAUGHS

RONNIE: So what are your names?

SNATCHITT: Snatchitt and Snaffle.

SNAFFLE PULLS HIM DOWNSTAGE.

SNAFFLE: Now you've given the game away – they're our real names. We need to invent some elf names.

SNATCHITT: Elf names? Where do we get those?

SNAFFLE: Ah ha! HE PRODUCES A BOOKLET FROM HIS POCKET. Here we are – everything you need to know about being an elf.

SNATCHITT: Where'd you get that?

SNAFFLE: On the National Elf Service.

THEY TURN BACK TO THE GROUP. SNAFFLE LOOKING IN THE BOOK.

SNAFFLE: Our names are – Hermione and Dandelion.

RUBY: Hermione and Dandelion? But they are girl's names.

THEY RIP THE BEARDS OFF AND GO INTO GIRLY MODE.

SNAFFLE: That's right – we are little girls.

THEY SKIP A BIT.

SNATCHITT: Now, if you'll excuse me – we have to go and see to the reindeer.

RONNIE: The reindeer? But that's our job.....

RUBY STOPS HIM.

RUBY: Yes, you go and do that – run along Hermione and Dandelion.

THEY GO TO EXIT.

Oh, by the way, which reindeer are you going to be looking after?

BOTH: Rudolph and Olive!!

RONNIE: Olive?

SNATCHITT: Yes, she's famous.

RUBY: What for?

BOTH: In the Christmas song.

PROFESSOR: What Christmas song?

SNAFFLE: SINGS: Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer had a very shiny nose, and if you ever saw it you would even say it glows. Olive, the other reindeer....

BOTH: Nah, ne, nah, ne, nah, nah!!

THEY STICK THEIR TONGUES OUT AND RUN OFF.

PROFESSOR: My eyesight might not be the greatest but there's something about those two.

RUBY: Yes, I'll follow them and see what they're up to.

RUBY EXITS BUT AS SHE REACHES THE EDGE OF THE STAGE, SHE IS CAUGHT UP IN ALL THE TOYS AND ELVES RETURNING TO THE STAGE. SNAFFLE AND SNATCHITT ARE AMONGST THEM.

RONNIE: What's the matter?

ELF 3: Father Christmas is coming!

ELF 2: The great man himself!

PROFESSOR: This is most irregular.

RUBY: Santa – on his way to the factory floor? When we have guests? SHE POINTS TO THE AUDIENCE.

ELVES: He's coming alright!!

SNATCHITT AND SNAFFLE FIND THEMSELVES DOWNSTAGE.

SNAFFLE: This is our chance.

FANFARE. MAYBE A LIGHTING CHANGE. EVERYONE MOVES TO

CREATE A SPACE FOR THE ENTRANCE OF FATHER CHRISTMAS.

FATHER C: Goodness me, I thought you'd all be ready for the summer recess.

RUBY: We will be sir, just as soon as –

FATHER C: Save it, I've heard it all before. LAUGHS. It doesn't matter how many years we work here, how many seasons we do, I know. You can't help but spend time playing with the toys.

RONNIE: Yes, that's just it sir.

FATHER C: It was a wonderful delivery run again this year. Wonderful. And we delivered millions of presents – one to every *good* boy and girl on the planet. HE YAWNS But now, I'm tired. I'm not getting any younger you know.

RUBY: No, it's your 175th birthday this year.

FATHER C: You just had to go telling everyone, didn't you Ruby?

RUBY: You should never lie about your age sir.....

FATHER C: Told them you're going to be 64 in October, did you?

RUBY: Oh sir!!

FATHER C: Thought not. So – I'm getting ready and I shall dream of next year's Christmas run. Let's hope we get snow then – I do love flying through the snow!

NUMBER Father Christmas and Company

5. THE STABLES

A TABLE HAS BEEN SET UPSTAGE ON WHICH ARE 3 PRESENTS.

SNAFFLE AND SNATCHITT ENTER.

SNAFFLE: This must be the stables – where they keep the reindeer.

SNATCHITT: I have an idea – instead of bumping off Santa why don't we do something to the reindeer? Without the reindeer he can't deliver any presents anyway.

SNAFFLE: That's a good idea – but I couldn't hurt a reindeer. Could you?

SNATCHITT: No. No, I couldn't.

ENTER RUBY.

RUBY: Ah, so this is where you're hiding – Hermione and Dandelion.

THEY SKIP ABOUT A BIT.

SNATCHITT: Yes! We're new here.

RUBY: Well, we need to start your classes. You have to learn all about working here at the North Pole – there are exams to take you know.

BOTH: Exams! GULP

RUBY: Oh yes – let's try a few questions shall we?

THEY MOVE BEHIND THE TABLE SO THAT EACH HAS A PRESENT IN FRONT OF THEM.

We call this Real or No Real.

SNAFFLE: I'm nervous all ready.

RUBY: Ok Hermione – there's a value in that box and if you get the right answer then that's what you're going to win.

SNAFFLE: Ok – and if I don't get it right?

RUBY: We'll see. So, thinking of the Nativity story now – in Italy there is a difference in the story. They have 3 shepherds, 3 kings and –

SNAFFLE: 33 wise guys.

RUBY: That's the real deal – open the box.

SNAFFLE OPENS HIS PRESENT AND INSIDE THE LID IT SAYS 'NUTS'

RUBY: Nuts!

SNAFFLE: There's no need to be rude.

RUBY: No, that's what you've won – for Christmas, some mixed nuts. Right Dandelion –

SNATCHITT: Yes.

RUBY: Your question is – What's white, light and sugary and hangs from trees?

SNATCHITT: I think I know this – a snow drift?

RUBY: No, a meringue-tang.

PHONE RINGS. SHE PRODUCES HER MOBILE PHONE.

It's the boss –

ANSWERS IT.

He says -

SHE PULLS THEIR HATS OFF.

He says you're not elves – and we're not fooled!

CLAXON SOUNDS AND THE TOY PROFESSOR, FATHER CHRISTMAS, RONNIE AND SOME OF THE ELVES RUSH ON.

FATHER C: What's going on Professor? You normally have your finger on the pulse as far as the T-C-P-S-S is concerned. URNS TO AUDIENCE
The Top Class Polar Security System.

PROFESSOR: LOOKING AT HIS BLACK BOX Yes sir, we have an intruder.

DREADFUL DEIRDRE ENTERS FOLLOWED BY MORE ELVES AND SMITHERS.

DEIRDRE: An intruder? Yes you do!

EVERYONE COWERS.

Recognise me Santa?

FATHER C: No, I don't think we've had the pleasure. HOLDS HIS HAND OUT TO SHAKE.

DEIRDRE: No, we've never met because you've never delivered a present to me!!

FATHER C: Well, there must be an explanation. Every child.....

PROFESSOR: Sir –

HE HAS TAKEN A NOTEPAD FROM HIS POCKET AND SHOWS IT TO FATHER CHRISTMAS.

FATHER C: Ah, now I see. The E-B-M-S has all the details.

PROFESSOR: That's the Electronic Behaviour Monitoring System.

FATHER C: You've never been a *good* girl, have you?

DEIRDRE: Who cares? I should still get those presents – but no, you and your horses with hatstands never even stop at my chimney.

HE GOES TO PUT HIS ARM AROUND HER.

FATHER C: You've written hundreds of letters, I know, but no one gets anything in this world without working for it. And you have to be good in order for Rudolph and me to call. Now, why don't you stay with us the night and then we can teach you how to be good.

PROFESSOR: Yes, what a wonderful idea.

DEIRDRE: Well, I don't know.....

RUBY: We could have a party!

DEIRDRE: I've never had one of those before.

RONNIE: What a great idea.

PROFESSOR: Mind you, a party in here – we'd better tip off Elf and Safety.

RUBY: Yes, come on! For one night only!

NUMBER The Company

EVERYONE CONGRATULATES DEIRDRE, SNATCHITT AND SNAFFLE.

DEIRDRE: Enjoying yourselves boys?

SNAFFLE: I prefer partying to doing in Santa any day.

SNATCHITT: Yeah, what a crowd!

DEIRDRE: You don't honestly think I'm turning over a new leaf?

SNAFFLE: Well. I did.

DEIRDRE: Forget it! Smithers!

ENTER SMITHERS.

SNAFFLE: Who's this?

DEIRDRE: My secret weapon – Smithers. During the night I want you to get Father Christmas – once and for all. Then I'll have all the presents I want!! And reindeer burgers for supper.

SHE LAUGHS. SNAFFLE AND SNATCHITT SHAKE AND LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

CURTAIN.