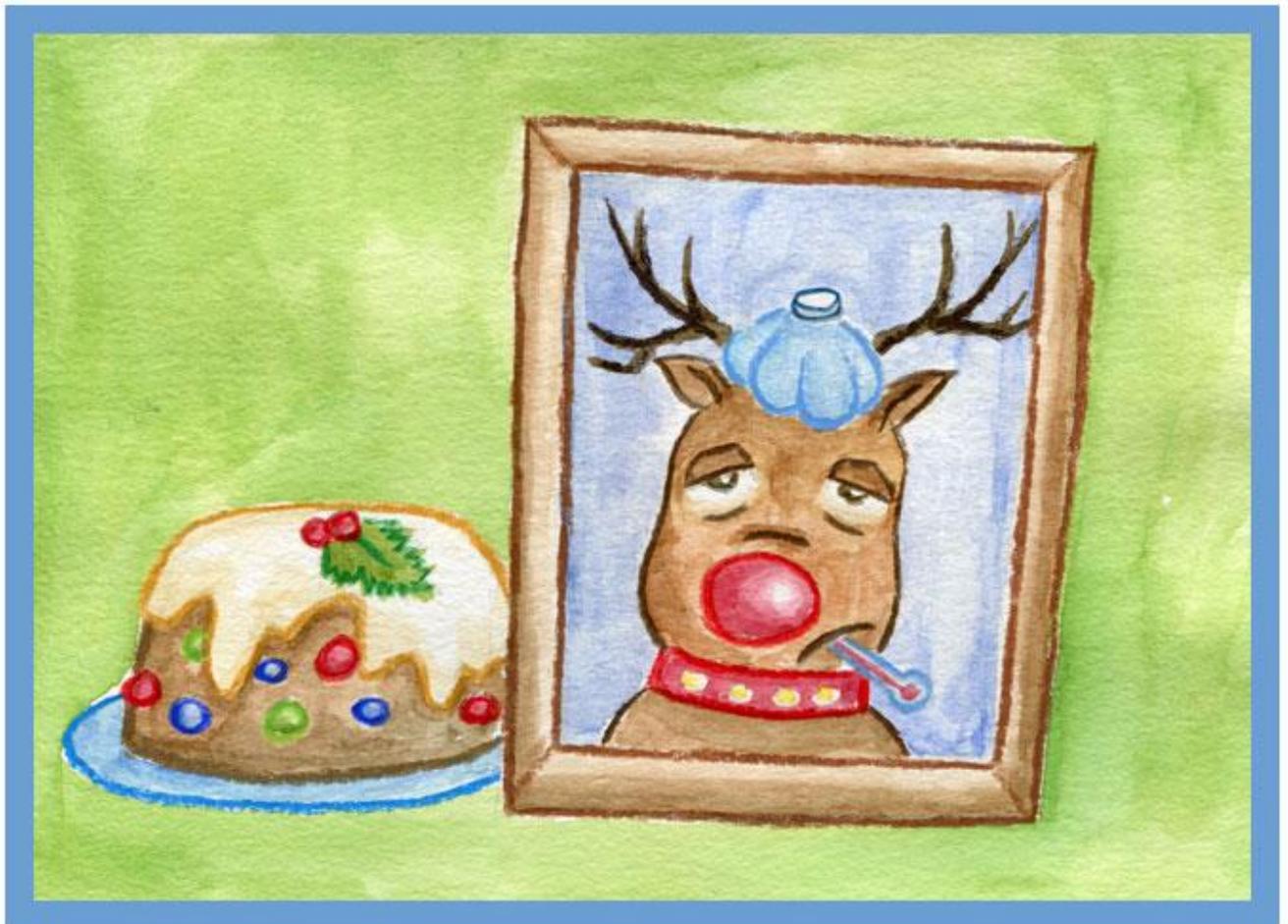


# A CHRISTMAS CRISIS



BY ALEXI ALFIERI

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## A HOLIDAY PLAY

WRITTEN BY ALEXI ALFIERI

### CAST

#### LARGE ROLES

SANTA (M)	<i>The Big Guy</i>
PEANUT (M/F)	<i>Santa's Assistant Elf</i>

#### MEDIUM ROLES

FILBERT (M)	<i>North Pole Tour Guide Elf</i>
CASHEW (M/F)	<i>Sleigh Mechanic Elf</i>
PECAN (M/F)	<i>Sleigh Mechanic Elf</i>
HAZELNUT (F)	<i>Head Holiday Coordinator Elf</i>
DOCTOR WALNUT (M/F)	<i>Reindeer Doctor Elf</i>
MRS. CLAUS (F)	<i>Wife of the Big Guy</i>

#### SMALL ROLES

RUDOLPH/BURRO #1 (M/F)  
DASHER/BURRO #2 (M/F)  
DANCER/BURRO #3 (M/F)  
PRANCER/BURRO #4 (M/F)  
VIXEN/BURRO #5 (M/F)  
COMET/BURRO #6 (M/F)  
CUPID/BURRO #7 (M/F)  
DONDER/BURRO #8 (M/F)  
BLITZEN/BURRO #9 (M/F)

## **SYNOPSIS**

It's almost Christmas Eve and everything's falling into place. That is until a crisis hits: Santa's reindeer have become terribly sick. Immediately, Santa's elf assistant Peanut goes into "emergency mode," trying to figure out how Santa will possibly travel around the world that night without his reindeer. Peanut has discussions with the reindeer doctor, special visitors to the North Pole, a couple of sleigh mechanics, and the Head Holiday Coordinator, but nothing is coming together. Mrs. Claus and the rest of the elves seem too busy to help. While Peanut grows increasingly panicked about the dilemma, Santa seems maddeningly calm. And in the end, the Christmas crisis is solved, but in a way no one could have predicted.

## **SETTING**

The North Pole

## **CAST**

Adjustable up to 17 players

2 Female, 2 Male, and 13 Female or Male--Flexible

## **PLAYING TIME**

Approximately 30 minutes without an intermission

**SCENE 1, SANTA CLAUS' OFFICE**

**SANTA CLAUS, PEANUT, CASHEW, PECAN, and HAZELNUT**

*(Santa Claus enters stage left and strolls to center stage while Cashew, Pecan, and Hazelnut hurry across stage, right to left, carrying harnesses without acknowledging him.)*

**SANTA:** Ho, ho, ho! Isn't this wonderful? Tonight is Christmas Eve, and everything's coming together so easily!

*(Cashew, Pecan, and Hazelnut rush across stage, left to right, carrying blankets.)*

**SANTA:** It's all falling into place.

*(Cashew, Pecan, and Hazelnut rush across stage, right to left, carrying buckets.)*

**SANTA:** Everything's moving quickly towards the moment of...

**PEANUT:** *(Enters stage right in a panic, carrying a clipboard)* Crisis!

**SANTA:** *(Calmly)* Crisis?

**PEANUT:** Crisis, Santa! You know—disaster, catastrophe, *(dramatically)* impending doom!

**SANTA:** Oh, now, Peanut, as my assistant, it seems like you're always worrying about something. Everything seems just fine to me. Sure, there's some hustle and bustle, but what do you expect? It's almost Christmas!

**PEANUT:** Santa, do you have any idea what's going on?

**SANTA:** I believe I know perfectly well what's going on around here. Presents are getting wrapped, the sleigh's getting loaded, Mrs. Claus is baking cookies, and the reindeer are...

**PEANUT:** *(Frantically)* Sick!

**SANTA:** Sick?

**PEANUT:** Sick, Santa! You know—under the weather, very ill, *(dramatically)* on death's doorstep!

**SANTA:** Really? But I was just in the reindeer barn yesterday afternoon, and they were perfectly fine. Ready to fly! In fact, Rudolph had just gotten a care package from his Granny and was telling us this funny story about...

**PEANUT:** Santa, please, listen! The reindeer are very, very sick! There's a good chance they won't be ready for tonight! We've called in the doctor to take a look, and...oh, here's the doctor now!

**DOCTOR WALNUT:** *(Enters stage right)* Greetings, everyone.

**PEANUT:** *(Voice rising and nervous)* Have you had a chance to look at the reindeer, Doctor Walnut? Do you know what's wrong? Do they just have a bad cold? Or is it something terrible like pneumonia?

**SANTA:** *(Putting one hand on Peanut's shoulder)* Now, now, Peanut.

**DOCTOR WALNUT:** Well, to be honest, I'm not certain what they have.

**PEANUT:** *(Panicking)* Could it be the chicken pox? Or the swine flu?

**DOCTOR WALNUT:** Doubtful. I do know they're going to need lots of fluids and plenty of rest.

**SANTA:** Sounds like a good idea.

**DOCTOR WALNUT:** *(Shrugging shoulders)* And then we'll just see.

**PEANUT:** Maybe it's scurvy! Or typhoid fever! Oh, no. *(Pauses and drops into dramatically low voice)* What if it's the black plague?

**SANTA:** Peanut, please calm down. *(Turning and shaking hands with Doctor Walnut)* Doctor Walnut, thank you. I appreciate you tending to the reindeer.

**DOCTOR WALNUT:** Well, I just wish I could be of more help. I could stick around and keep my eye on them if you'd like.

**SANTA:** Oh, I'm sure that won't be necessary.

**PEANUT:** Yes! Stay! We need you!

**DOCTOR WALNUT:** I could do some further tests.

**SANTA:** No, no, Doctor. That doesn't seem like anything we...

**PEANUT:** *(Interrupts)* Yes, yes, further tests! That's a great idea! Take a hoof sample, shine a light up their nostrils...

**SANTA:** Now, Peanut, let's let the good doctor be on their way.

**DOCTOR WALNUT:** We could just give it a little time, and I'll come back to check on them.

**SANTA:** Excellent plan! And don't forget to ask Mrs. Claus for a cookie or two on your way out. She's baking gingerbread!

*(Peanut is banging head slowly and dramatically on clipboard.)*

**DOCTOR WALNUT:** Thank you, I will. And Merry Christmas!

**SANTA:** Merry Christmas!

*(Doctor Walnut exits stage right while Peanut whimpers.)*

**SCENE 2, SANTA CLAUS' OFFICE**

**SANTA CLAUS, PEANUT, and NINE BURROS**

*(Santa Claus sits down in comfortable chair set on stage and takes a sip from a mug on the small table beside it.)*

**SANTA:** Ah, now there's nothing like a mug of hot chocolate on a cold winter day. The only thing missing is a few marshmallows.

*(Mrs. Claus bustles across stage, left to right, carrying a tray with nine mugs in one hand.)*

**SANTA:** *(Spotting Mrs. Claus as she first enters)* Oh, my darling Mrs. Claus. Can I have a few marshmallows for my hot chocolate?

**MRS. CLAUS:** *(Without pausing as she crosses the stage, she reaches into her apron pocket, pulls out a few marshmallows, and drops them into Santa's mug as she goes by.)* Here you go! *(Promptly exits stage right.)*

**SANTA:** *(With a delighted grin at his mug)* Thank you, dear!

**PEANUT:** Santa! How can you be so calm? The reindeer are sick, the doctor has left, and it's only a matter of hours before you have to take off on your sleigh!

**SANTA:** Yes, you're right. Christmas Eve is just hours away.

**PEANUT:** Don't you think we better consider a plan B?

**SANTA:** A plan B?

**PEANUT:** A plan B, Santa! You know—a second choice, a back-up plan, an emergency option?

**SANTA:** *(Casually)* Well, if you think we should...

**PEANUT:** *(Pacing with clipboard and talking aloud as Santa sips from his mug)* Maybe we could find a set of emergency substitutes for the reindeer. But who could we get at this late hour? Who would be available? I could make some calls.

**SANTA:** You know...*(draws out the words, gazing into his mug, as Peanut looks at him hopefully, believing he has an idea)*...hot chocolate is just so much better with the little floaty marshmallows.

**PEANUT:** *(Throws up hands in frustration)* Santa! Please! We need to figure out...

**FILBERT:** *(Enters stage right)* Hey, Peanut, do you know where there's some extra feed buckets around here?

**PEANUT:** *(Distracted and still pacing)* Feed buckets? I have no idea, Filbert.

**FILBERT:** How about blankets? Do you remember where we packed the extra blankets in the barn?

**PEANUT:** Filbert, I'm sorry, I don't know. We're in a crisis right now! *(Stops pacing and looks at Filbert)* Why do you need extra feed buckets and blankets?

**FILBERT:** Because our special guests are here today. Don't you remember?

**PEANUT:** *(Lights up)* That's right! They're here to tour the North Pole!

**FILBERT:** Ya, they just arrived.

**PEANUT:** Send them in!

**FILBERT:** Send them in? I don't think they're interested in seeing Santa's office on the tour.

**PEANUT:** No, no, Filbert! This has nothing to do with the tour! We need them!

**FILBERT:** Fine, fine, if you say so. I'm just the tour guide around here. But I'm warning ya. They've had a long trip, they're a little smelly, and they haven't had anything to eat yet.

**PEANUT:** Filbert! This is an emergency! Send them in!

**FILBERT:** Ya, okay, okay. *(Exiting off stage right while calling out)* Hey, Burros, come on in!

*(Nine Burros enter stage right, moving slow and gazing about. They talk in a western drawl.)*

**PEANUT:** Welcome, Burros, to the North Pole! Am I ever glad to see you!

**BURRO #1:** Ya got anything to eat around here?

**BURRO #2:** I don't see grass or weeds anywhere.

**BURRO #3:** We like front yards.

**BURRO #4:** Or back yards.

**BURRO #5:** Ya, and I'm freezin'.

**BURRO #6:** It don't get cold like this where we're from.

**BURRO #7:** I could use a blanket.

**BURRO #8:** And some ear warmers.

**BURRO #9:** And a hot cup of coffee.

**PEANUT:** Well, I suspect you've come a long way. Where's home for you?

**BURRO #1:** *(Begins to sing to the tune of "Home on the Range")* Oh, give me a home...

**BURRO #2:** *(Joins in enthusiastically)*...where the burros do roam...

**ALL BURROS:** ...through the fields with a long, lonesome bray.

Where seldom is heard

a discouraging word.

And the weeds can be grazed on all day.

Home, home on the range...

**PEANUT:** *(Interrupts)* Very nice, Burros, very nice! But I have to ask you something really important. Do you have any flying experience?

*(Burros look at one another and frown.)*

**BURRO #1:** Only flying we've done is in the jumbo jet to get here.

**PEANUT:** So you've never tried to lift off and fly on your own?

**BURRO #2:** Nope.

**BURRO #3:** I like to keep all four hooves on the ground, if you know what I mean.

**BURRO #4:** I like to mosey myself.

**BURRO #5:** Most burros move at a real slow pace.

**To Be Continued...this is a 10-page sample of the playscript**