

Dialogue Samples from JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME

Copyright © 1994 Linda Daugherty
All rights reserved.

Sample #1

[SANTA is missing and detective RED MISTLETOE goes to SANTA's office to question his new secretary HOLLY who is in cahoots with the villain BOB HUMBUG.]

(HOLLY, sits at desk, reading a magazine.
The phone rings. HOLLY answers it.)

HOLLY

No. No. No. No. No!

(SHE hangs up phone. RED enters.)

HOLLY (Continued)

May I help you?

RED

I'd like to see Santa Claus.

HOLLY

He's not in.

(SHE resumes reading.)

RED

No?

HOLLY

No. He's a busy man.

RED

I'd like to make an appointment.

HOLLY

(Looking at appointment book)

Why, look at this. He's all booked up. I could take your name and put you on the waiting list.

RED

The name's Red ... Red Mistletoe.

HOLLY

(Reading magazine)
We'll call you if we get a cancellation.

RED

You're new around here.

HOLLY

I'm a temp - a permanent temp. I just relocated from ... uh ...

RED

North of the South Pole?

HOLLY

(Confused)
Uh, yeah ...

RED

And you are miss ... ?

HOLLY

Wreath. Holly Wreath.

RED

Well, Miss Wreath, a lot of people are looking for Santa but they're not seeing him.

HOLLY

(Sarcastically)
Isn't that the way it always is.

RED

You have a real sense of humor, Miss Wreath.

HOLLY

Thank you, Mr. Mistletoe.

RED

That's Detective ... Detective Red Mistletoe.

HOLLY

(Nervously)
Detective? Oh ... oh ... oh ...

RED

Just one more thing, Miss Wreath.

HOLLY

(Voice shaking)

Yes ... Detective ... Mistletoe ...

RED

You've got nice hair ... and I know my redheads.

(HE starts to go.)

Oh, Miss Wreath ... one more thing. Just curious. You're from the South Pole, right?

HOLLY

Uh ... that's right.

RED

Well, down at the South Pole - I was just wondering - you got a lot of polar bears down there?

HOLLY

Polar bears?

RED

You know ... the big bears with the white fur.

HOLLY

Polar bears. Yeah. We got polar bears by the hundreds ... by the thousands.

RED

I was just curious ...

(HE writes in small notebook.)

Well, see you around.

(RED exits. HOLLY grabs phone and frantically dials. Lights up on HUMBUG's house.)

HUMBUG

(Answering phone)

Yeah?

HOLLY

(Hysterical)

Humbug! They're on to us. I told you so. Why I ever let you talk me into this --

HUMBUG

Calm down! What are you chattering about?

HOLLY

He was here in the office! Asking questions!

HUMBUG

Who?

HOLLY

That detective! Red Mistletoe!

HUMBUG

Relax. We're right on schedule. They don't know anything. It's already starting to work. We'll break their spirit all right. Powder your nose and sit tight.

Sample #2

[RED MISTLETOE cracks the case. HOLLY WREATH has a change of heart as SANTA is found just in the nick of time for Christmas Eve.]

RED

(Indicating bundle)

This is from me to you, Mrs. Claus.

MRS. CLAUS

Thank you, Detective Mistletoe, but what is it?

(RED opens the bundle to reveal the guilty HUMBUG and FRUITCAKE.)

MRS. CLAUS (Continued)

(Confused)

Oh, how nice ...

RED

These two tried to spoil Christmas for everyone.

FRUITCAKE

(Pointing at HUMBUG)

It was all his idea!

MRS. CLAUS

Good work, Detective Mistletoe, but can you tell me where Santa is?

RED

Holly?

HOLLY

(Tearfully)

Mrs. Claus, your husband is the kindest nicest person I ever met. I'm really, really sorry. Here he is! Santa Claus!

(SANTA enters in his red suit which is the only color on the stage. EVERYONE gasps at SANTA in his red suit.)

SANTA

Merry Christmas! And it's going to be a very Merry Christmas to all - thanks to Detective Mistletoe ... and Miss Holly Wreath.

MRS. CLAUS

Oh, thank you. Thank you. This is the happiest Christmas Eve of my life.

(SANTA and MRS. CLAUS embrace.)

MRS. CLAUS (Continued)

Tell me, Detective Mistletoe, how did you solve this mystery?

RED

It's all thanks to the polar bear.

SANTA

The polar bear?

RED

Yes, the polar bear, Santa. Both Holly and Fruitcake claimed to have moved from the South Pole to the North Pole. When questioned, they allowed as how the South Pole was swarming with polar bears. Polar bears, *Thalarctos maritimus*, are inhabitants of the Arctic and are rarely observed over 750 miles south of the Arctic Circle.

SANTA

I see.

RED

You might see a polar bear just south of the North Pole, but you'll never see a *Thalarctos maritimus* just north of the South Pole!

SANTA

Red, you're a genius.

RED

No, I'm a detective. And now I have a question. Why, why did you do it, Humbug? Why did you try to wreck the holiday?

HUMBUG

Because I hate Christmas.

MRS. CLAUS

Surely you haven't always felt that way?

HUMBUG

Always!

SANTA

Even when you were a little boy?

HUMBUG

(Bitterly)

Let me tell you about the "happy holiday" at my house. There was no singing, no colored lights bubbling, no gingerbread house, no cookies, candy, punch. And a tree? We didn't have a tree. We had a twig. How well I remember that miserable Christmas Eve.

MRS. CLAUS

Oh dear, what happened?

HUMBUG

On that December 1st - long ago - I wrote Santa a letter. I still remember it. "Dear Santa - It's not much of a holiday at my house. But it would be the greatest Christmas ever if you wrote me a letter back. I'll be waiting. Your friend, Bob. P.S. And if you could, I'd really love a red tricycle." Sure I wanted that shiny red tricycle but I needed Santa's letter more ... a reason to believe.

RED

So what happened?

HUMBUG

That Christmas Eve I woke up from my happy dream of peddling down the sidewalk with Santa's letter snug in my pocket. I remember it vividly. It was still dark. I went to the twig and looked under the branch. There was nothing - no letter, no red tricycle - nothing. I ran away that night and I've been on my own ever since.

MRS. CLAUS

Oh, I'm so sorry, dear.

SANTA

(Realizing)

It's you - you're the little boy who ran away!

HUMBUG

What do you mean?

SANTA

If only you'd waited. I have so many houses to visit on Christmas Eve. So many children to remember. When I got to your house, there was no little boy there. And the red tricycle - I've saved it all these years for the little boy with the sad Christmas tree - the little boy who ran away.

(SANTA nods to ELF #1 who pushes out a new red shiny tricycle with a big bow and a large note.)

SANTA (Continued)

And here it is ... Why don't you read the card?

HUMBUG

The card?

(Reading)

"Dear Bob - Here is your letter. Usually children only ask for toys but you asked for something I work all year to bring -

HUMBUG (CONTINUED)

the spirit of Christmas. I hope this is your greatest Christmas ever. Your friend, Santa. P.S. Be careful on your new red tricycle."

(Overcome)

Oh, Santa, I'm so sorry. What can I do? I've ruined Christmas for everyone.

SANTA

No, Humbug, you have the Christmas spirit at last. And that spirit is contagious.

FRUITCAKE

Contagious? You mean it's catching - like a cold.

SANTA

That's right. The joy and spirit of Christmas will spread over the world tonight and I predict a happy, peaceful, colorful Christmas morning.

MRS. CLAUS

Santa, dear, It's six o'clock. Time for your send-off.

SANTA

Why, so it is. Let the fun begin!

HUMBUG

But what about the color?

SANTA

Let happiness take its course! It's beginning to brighten up already!

(MRS. CLAUS holds up her hands and is surprised that her gloves are bright red.)

MRS. CLAUS

Why, it is! Merry Christmas!

(ELF #1 is surprised to see he's wearing a yellow sash.)

ELF #1

Merry Christmas!

(ELF #2 is surprised to be wearing a blue vest.)

ELF #2

Merry Christmas!

(FRUITCAKE is surprised to be wearing an orange apron.)

FRUITCAKE

Merry Christmas!

(DOC GREEN is surprised to have his old green coat back.)

DOC GREEN

Merry Christmas!

(The PURPLE GUMDROP, now in her purple costume, runs on and shouts happily.)

PURPLE GUMDROP

Look at me, everybody! I got my color back!

(HUMBUG, needing a handkerchief to wipe his tears, is surprised to find a giant red and green polka dot one in his pocket.)

HUMBUG

(Overcome with emotion)
Oh, oh, oh! Merry Christmas!

SANTA

(Reaching in his pocket)
Oh, Bob, I almost forgot. Here's something else for you.

(SANTA hands Bob a box of crayons.)

HUMBUG

For me? Crayons!!!

MRS. CLAUS

Places, everyone.

(Lights dim as CHILDREN scurry to their places. A spotlight downstage picks up RED and HOLLY. RED is wearing his red hat and the gray collar on HOLLY's dress has been replaced with a green one. The spotlight catches HOLLY putting on her red lipstick.)

HOLLY

(Embarrassed)
Oh, Detective Mistletoe, I'm glad you brought me to my senses.

RED

The first moment I saw you, I knew you had a kind heart. And call me ... Red.

HOLLY

(Full of emotion)
Okay ... Red. You saved Christmas ... and me. Just in the Nick of Time!

RED

(At a loss for words)
Oh ... oh ... Holly ... Merry Christmas! Say, after we send Santa off, would you join me for an eggnog?

(RED and HOLLY smile at each other and turn to watch. All the "color" characters have entered for the final scene. Snow falls softly as "Santa's Send-Off Celebration" begins. The SNOWFLAKES glide beautifully among the TREES, the CANDY CANES play their triangles on cue and the GUMDROPS wave "goodbye" as SANTA flies away into the

night.)

END OF PLAY