

Santa Inc.

SCENE 1. CENTRE STAGE. THERE IS AN OFFICE  
DESK & CHAIR. ON THE DESK ARE A LAPTOP  
AND A PHONE AND A HUGE PILE OF PAPER-  
WORK.

SANTA WALKS IN FROM OFF-STAGE CARRYING  
A LOOSE WHEEL AND GRUMBLING AND  
MUMBLING UNDER HIS BREATH. HE SLUMPS  
INTO THE CHAIR

SANTA: That's it! I've had it with this stupid new system. I can't stand it anymore.

TAKES OFF FAKE BEARD AND PICKS UP THE  
PHONE AND DIALS A SHORT NUMBER

(PAUSE)

SANTA: Workshop? Santa here. I need to you send someone up for the sleigh... Hello? What? What? 'Press 1 for bookings or press 2 for enquiries'? What's all this? Hello? Hello? One...One... I'm pressing one, dammit! (BEAT) Hello...Workshop? Are you a real person this time? Yes Elves count as real! I need you to send someone up for the sleigh right away, the wheel attachments to the runners are simply not working properly! I had two punctures last night and the off-side rear kept seizing up at high speed; it nearly caused a terrible accident... What do you mean you can fit me in on Thursday? I need it doing right now! Well...I can understand you're busy....we're all busy...look if I bring it in this afternoon will

Santa Inc.

you have one of your chaps look at it? It might be something simple you could fix then and there?

Yes I know rules are rules but surely just this once. It *is* me, after all!

I see. Yes. No exceptions. Thursday at nine o'clock it is...(BEAT)

Clause. That's spelled C-L-A-U-S-E not C-L-A-W-S

First name? Santa

Oh do you have a courtesy sleigh I can use while you work on it? Oh dear. No, no....I'm sure the White Witch needs it just as much as I do. I'll think of something...perhaps I can borrow my brother-in-law's van. Goodbye.

HANGS UP

SANTA:

Just quickly check the email...junk, junk, junk, circular, junk, junk, round-robin, junk, gas bill, junk, junk, Jack Frost wants to be my Facebook friend; no thank you Jack! Junk, junk oh how exciting the new 'Company Procedures Manual' and the 'Revised Easter Delivery Schedule'. I'd better see if I can borrow that van.

PICKS UP THE PHONE AND DIALS A LONG  
NUMBER

SANTA:

Hello! Who's that? Ahh hello Sophie! Is your Daddy there?  
(BEAT) It's your Uncle Santa here. Yes it really is. Yes I know it's not Christmas. Can I speak to your Daddy please? Not until I say it? Say what? Oh alright...

PUTS ON JOLLY SANTA VOICE

Santa Inc.

SANTA: HO! HO! HO! And what do you want for Christmas Sophie?  
(BEAT) A Pony?

BACK TO NORMAL SPEAKING VOICE

SANTA: Sophie didn't I get you a pony last Christmas? What have you done with it? (BEAT) 'It went on holiday and enjoyed it so much it didn't want to come back'! Daddy told you that, did he? I see. Well can I have a word with him now? I'll see what I can do about Buttercup's holidays. Bye Bye. Love you too.

(PAUSE)

SANTA: Colin? Is that you? How could you tell Sophie that her pony, Buttercup, went on holiday and didn't want to come back?  
(BEAT) Yes I can appreciate that your back yard is a little cramped for a Shire horse foal but that's what Sophie wanted! I tried my best with the guinea pigs you'd suggested but she was insistent! I did also try very hard to sell her on the idea of a Shetland pony but she really had her heart set on the Shire horse. (BEAT) No, I'm NOT trying to undermine you but I am Santa Clause and it's my job to give children what they ask for! OK I'll try to tone it down this year, how's a Lipizzaner stallion, no? A Texan Mustang, no? The Shetland pony then, surely that'd be OK? No? Oh, Colin how can you say no to the sad little face of a Shetland pony? You're heartless. A 'My little pony' doll! Are you mad? Right if you insist, a 'My little pony' it is.

Santa Inc.

Anyway the reason I'm ringing is I need to borrow your van for a few days. Thursday night until Sunday night? I'll fill the tank and I'll valet it for you.

What for? Well it's Easter isn't it? (BEAT) Yes, Easter is my thing. Didn't Yvonne tell you? That sister of mine! She didn't tell you about the merger? You'll have to give me your email address Colin, she clearly never shows you the updates I email out! I know. Oh, I know, she was just the same when we were growing up. Scatter brained. Sweet, but scatter brained.

Anyway; early last year there was the big merger. It was in the Financial Times, on BBC News 24, Robert Peston interviewed me and everything! You missed it all eh? True, I suppose 'Plumbers Monthly' was quite unlikely to cover it. Oh, it'd been a possibility for a long time but the economic meltdown badly affected our whole sector. We had to cut costs, try and take advantage of the economies of scale and the other business was such a good fit. Which business? Oh we merged with Easter Bunny plc. We were able to streamline research & development, we shared manufacturing and warehousing and obviously I took on all the distribution myself. Well it was wonderful; Bunny and I were getting on like a house on fire, his costs were down, my chocolate costs we're halved, the Elves loved making chocolate eggs; it looked like we'd solved all our problems. Happy days. (sigh)

What went wrong? I'll tell you what went wrong! A flippin' hostile takeover by Tooth Fairy Holdings plc! She's ruthless that one! She's tried to sell it as a 'merger' to the board and the city but it's a take-over plain and simple. She's frozen

Santa Inc.

wages, slashed budgets, introduced rigid procedures, new health and safety initiatives, she's even started weekly management 'briefings' – she sits in with me and the reindeer and we have to 'brain storm' new ideas and initiatives. It's all gobbledegook like 'blue sky thinking', 'paradigm shifts' and 'pushing the envelope'. I think Rudolph's on the verge of a nervous breakdown, the Elves are threatening strikes and the Easter Bunny put in for early retirement yesterday. It's terrible. I just don't know what we can do. Anyway none of that's your problem Colin. The thing is the sleigh's going into the workshop and there's no way they'll have it fixed in time for Easter so I'm going to need a van.

I've got my own insurance, it'll be third party only but I'll be very careful.

Ah thanks Colin. I'll pop round Thursday night. Oh I'd love to come for tea...yes I'll come in my 'civvies'. No we don't want a repeat of what happened at Sophie's birthday do we? It's a good job I always carry some sample toys with me in the sack.

Oh and if Sophie has any wobbly teeth don't, whatever you do, put them under the pillow at night when they come out. Just give her the cash yourself. At the moment all she'll get from us is some lousy discount vouchers and a pamphlet on improving dental hygiene.

Thanks Colin. See you Thursday.

HANGS UP. PICKS UP THE PILE OF  
PAPERWORK AND STARTS TO LEAVE

Santa Inc.

SANTA:

I suppose I'd better take this list home with me and start checking the names to see who's been naughty or nice. It'll be Christmas sooner than you think!

I don't believe in fairies, I don't I don't. I don't believe in fairies, I don't I don't....

END: