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Santa Claustrophobia

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“You know,
I think I’d rather
clean out the gutters
than go shopping.”

—Melvin

Santa Claustrophobia

CHRISTMAS COMEDY. A grumpy substitute teacher moonlighting as a shopping mall Santa Claus gets trapped in a mall elevator with an overly cheerful Elf, a Christmas shoplifter, a cell-phone addicted cashier, a worn-out mom, a man giddy that he has a temporary respite from shopping with his wife, and two kids determined to find out if Santa is a fake. It doesn't take long for this set of quirky captives to get on each other's nerves, but when the elevator doors are finally pried open, the chaos only escalates as they find themselves mobbed by a crazed crowd of disgruntled Christmas shoppers. This witty play is chock-full of wordplay, one-liners, and double-entendre to delight audiences.

Performance Time: Approximately 35-40 minutes.

Characters

(2 m, 4 f, 3 flexible, 2 girls, extras)

SANTA CLAUS: Substitute teacher who moonlights as a shopping mall Santa; cynical; wears a Santa suit with fake beard; underneath his Santa jacket, he wears a T-shirt, which has a rude message printed on it.

ELF: Santa's helper at the mall; annoyingly upbeat and helpful even when the situation calls for otherwise; she wears a green elf costume with a pointy cap or hat.

MELVIN: Elderly gentleman; giddy that he's not shopping with his wife; wears a heavy winter coat.

STEPHANIE: Christmas shoplifter; wears many layers of clothes that she has stolen from department stores.

ASHLEY: Bored and sullen cashier who is addicted to her cell phone; wears a store smock that buttons down the front; underneath the smock, she wears a T-shirt, which has a rude message printed on it.

MOTHER: Agitated, nervous, concerned that her daughters will find out Santa is a fake; wears a heavy winter coat and sweater.

TAYLOR: Eldest girl, an instigator.

JORDAN: Younger girl; states the obvious, no matter how out of place.

MAINTENANCE WORKER: Flexible.

MALL OFFICIAL: Flexible.

MALL SECURITY GUARD: Flexible.

EXTRAS: As crowd of Christmas shoppers and children waiting to see Santa.

Setting

In an elevator at a crowded mall sometime before Christmas.
There is an emergency phone attached to the elevator wall.

Synopsis of Scenes

SCENE 1: Inside a shopping mall elevator.

SCENE 2: Inside a shopping mall elevator.

SCENE 3: Shopping mall.

Props

Assortment of shopping bags
Soft drink cup

2 Cell phones

Sound Effects

Sound of elevator moving
Loud clanking sound
Elevator stopping
Cell phone ringing
Elevator doors being pried open

Musical accompaniment for
Christmas carol (optional)

Scene 1

(Darkness. In an elevator at a crowded mall sometime before Christmas. From SR to SL, the actors are arranged in this order: Santa Claus, Melvin, Mother, Taylor, Jordan, Elf, Stephanie, Ashley. Melvin and Mother have several shopping bags. Ashley is slurping on a soft drink from the food court and talking on her cell phone. There is the sound of the elevator moving, then several clunks and clanks, and then the elevator stops abruptly.)

ELF: *(Cheerfully.)* Uh oh!

MELVIN: *(Excited.)* Whee!

MOTHER: *(Nervous, agitated.)* What was that?

ASHLEY: *(Bored, sullen.)* Oh great, not again.

MOTHER: What's going on? Why are we stopping? Why aren't we moving?

TAYLOR: I think it's stuck!

JORDAN: Yay!

(Sound of dialing telephone.)

ELF: Hello, hello, please help us. This is Santa's elf and we're stuck in the elevator!

Scene 2

(AT RISE: In the elevator, ten minutes later. The elevator is still stuck. Ashley is leaning against the elevator wall, talking on her cell phone.)

ASHLEY: *(Into phone.)* So like, you won't believe this, but I'm, like, stuck in this stupid elevator at the mall and everything...you know, the one there by the food court that's always breaking down? Well, now it's done it again; this is so ridiculous...

MOTHER: How long's it been?

ELF: I'm sure they're working on it! They said they'd get right on it!

SANTA: *(Sarcastically.)* Yeah, just like they're working on my worker's comp claim, too.

MELVIN: They can work on it all day, for what I care. Beats following Madge around shopping, I say.

(Taylor points at Stephanie.)

TAYLOR: You could ask her! I bet she's got a watch!

ASHLEY: *(Into phone.)* So, yeah, well, it's not too bad. I was at the end of my break anyway, so I figure all this time is on the clock, you know? I mean, I figure they can't blame me for not being at my register when something like this happens, you know? So I don't have to work, and I still get paid. How great is that, huh?

MOTHER: *(To Stephanie.)* Ma'am, do you have the time?

(Stephanie shakes her head no, trying to remain inconspicuous, showing off her left arm to show she doesn't have a watch.)

ELF: I think we're going to be late for the picture-taking, though!

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SANTA: *(To Elf, in a low voice, sarcastically.)* Thank you, Miss Christmas Fairy. I wouldn't have known that otherwise.

MELVIN: I kinda liked that little thump it made just before it stopped. Reminded me of when I first met my Madge.

ELF: *(To Santa, whispers.)* It's elf! Not fairy. Elf!

TAYLOR: *(Chanting.)* We're stuck! We're stuck! We're stuck!

SANTA: *(To Elf, whispers.)* Whatever. They're all the same to me.

TAYLOR/JORDAN: *(Chanting, progressively louder.)* We're stuck! Stuck! Stuck! Stuck! Stuck! Stuck! Stuck!

MOTHER: Now girls, just stay calm. They're going to get everything fixed. We're not in any danger. No danger at all. *(To others.)* We're not in any danger, are we?

ASHLEY: *(Into phone.)* So like last week, the escalators just stopped working all of a sudden, you know, and when it stopped, it stopped with this lurch! And it threw this one lady off-balance, and she had all these packages, and I heard it was just like a row of dominoes, everybody came tumbling down one by one. They had to call for an ambulance and everything!

MELVIN: See, I had this old Packard that has transmission problems, and every time it turned over a digit on the odometer, the whole thing would just go...thump! Just like that!

JORDAN: So does this mean we're going to miss seeing Santa?

TAYLOR: No! He's right over there! See?

MOTHER: I've never been stuck on an elevator before.

ELF: Maybe we could all sing Christmas carols while we wait! You know, to keep up the Christmas spirit!

MELVIN: Actually, it was more like a thump-bump-a-bump.

(Jordan tries to see Santa through the people.)

JORDAN: *(To Taylor.)* Over where? I can't see anything.

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TAYLOR: Over there! Get down at the floor, and you can see his boots.

(Taylor and Jordan start crawling around on the floor.)

SANTA: *(To Elf, in a low voice.)* Or maybe we could all take off our shoelaces and strangle you right here.

ELF: *(Cheerful.)* Just trying to be Santa's little helper!

ASHLEY: *(Into phone.)* Hang on, I'm getting another call... Hello? *(Tone of voice change, starts to coo.)* Oh hello, Jeremy. How are you?

SANTA: *(To Elf, in a low voice.)* If you don't quit offering your "helpful suggestions," I'm going to turn you into Hamburger Helper.

ELF: *(To others.)* Oh, that Santa, he's a kidder! He's a kidder, all right. *(To Santa, whispers.)* I don't think you should say things like that in front of the children.

ASHLEY: *(Into phone, cooing.)* Oh not much. I'm just at work, but I'm stuck in an elevator. So, oh yeah, this is a real good time to talk. Whatcha wanna talk about?

SANTA: *(To Elf, in a low voice.)* It's your helpful suggestions that caused the incident with the Junior Scientist Chemistry Set, too.

(Jordan is on her hands and knees near Stephanie's ankles.)

JORDAN: Oh, look, she's got a tattoo on her ankle!

ELF: *(To Santa.)* Honest! I had no idea that just shaking the thing would cause it to go off like that!

TAYLOR: Not that one, the other one!

(Jordan pulls up Stephanie's pants leg.)

JORDAN: She's got a tattoo on the other one, too!

STEPHANIE: *(To Jordan, annoyed.)* Hey!

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ELF: *(To Santa, in a low voice.)* I mean, don't kids always shake their presents to see if they rattle?

MOTHER: Children! Please! This is an emergency!

SANTA: *(To Elf, in a low voice.)* If the school board would just approve that pay raise, I wouldn't have to sit through this kind of humiliation every week.

ELF: *(To Santa, in a low voice.)* But I must say you did a real good job staying in character even while your beard was on fire!

MELVIN: And then one day, I was taking Madge home from a date and the thing turned over 100,000 miles and...thump, bump, a-bump, kerplunk! The whole transmission fell out right then and there!

SANTA: *(Aside.)* It's bad enough dealing with bratty snott-nosed little kids every day at school. I don't know why I invite this kind of aggravation.

(Taylor has moved closer to Santa and is looking at his pants.)

TAYLOR: *(To Jordan.)* I mean all the over way over! Hey, look! There's a tag on the back of his pants that says, "Made in China."

(Jordan looks in direction of Santa.)

JORDAN: Oh, okay. I can see his boots now!

ASHLEY: *(Into phone.)* Me? Right now? Are you sure? Well, you know, the usual... *(She starts describing what she's wearing.)*

MELVIN: Of course, we couldn't go anywhere, so, heh-heh, I turned to Madge and put my arm around her and said, "Looks like we won't be going anywhere for awhile...why, we could be here all night waiting on a tow truck..."

SANTA: *(To Elf, in a low voice.)* I should have taken that early retirement deal when I had the chance.

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TAYLOR: *(To Jordan, indicating Santa's suit.)* The one at the other mall had a better costume.

JORDAN: Yeah, but this one is fatter.

TAYLOR: True.

JORDAN: And I think it's real fat, too, not just padding.

SANTA: *(To Elf, whispers.)* Fatter? What's she talking about?

ELF: *(Whispers.)* Just like a bowl full of jelly!

MOTHER: *(Fanning herself.)* It's getting hot in here.

MELVIN: Oh, and let me tell you, it was getting hot in that Packard with Madge. I tell you, she was a looker in her day. Whoo-hee!

MOTHER: I barely have enough room to breathe in here!

MELVIN: You know, that's what Madge said, too. The back seats in those Packards were pretty small, you know. *(He giggles.)*

TAYLOR: *(To Jordan.)* The other mall didn't have a fairy, though.

JORDAN: Oh, is that what she is? I thought she was supposed to be a dwarf.

ELF: *(Annoyed.)* Elf!

ASHLEY: *(Into phone.)* Yeah, I've got my name tag on. Why? Oh! *(She giggles.)*

MELVIN: Getting pretty hot over there, too, I'd say.

(Taylor inspects Santa's boots.)

TAYLOR: *(To Jordan.)* I wonder if these are steel-toed boots?

JORDAN: They must be if he crawls down chimneys and stuff, right?

MOTHER: I think I'm getting claustrophobic.

TAYLOR: *(To Jordan.)* Let's find out!

ASHLEY: *(Into phone.)* Uh-huh! Oh, Jeremy, I just love it when you talk that way!

TAYLOR: *(To Jordan.)* Count of three! One, two, three!

(Taylor and Jordan whack the toe portion of Santa's boots.)

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SANTA: (*Screams.*) Ow!

TAYLOR: (*To Jordan.*) Nah, they're regular.

JORDAN: I think he's a fake just like all the others.

ASHLEY: (*Into phone.*) No, that's not me. There's some fat freak on the elevator who just started screaming for no good reason.

MOTHER: (*To Santa.*) Oh, excuse me! Sir? Sir? Oh, Mr. Santa?

SANTA: (*Still in pain.*) Hmm? Me? What do you want?

MOTHER: Can't you do something?

SANTA: Me? Why are you asking me? They're your kids. Can't you do something about them?

ELF: Now, now, girls. Santa's still working on his naughty and nice list! You don't want to wind up on the naughty list.

MOTHER: I mean, about the elevator. You've got connections here!

ELF: (*To Jordan and Taylor, threateningly.*) Oh, believe me, he has connections all over the world! (*To Santa.*) Don't you, Mr. Claus...

TAYLOR: Mom! The fairy's threatening us!

SANTA: (*To Mother.*) Sorry, ma'am. It breaks down a lot, I'm afraid. Management's too cheap to fix it.

(*Elf grits teeth but tries to remain upbeat.*)

ELF: (*To Taylor, annoyed.*) I'm an Elf! A Christmas elf!

MELVIN: (*To Santa.*) Oh, you've been here before, have you?

JORDAN: (*To Elf.*) I thought elves had beards. Does that mean you're a fake, too?

SANTA: (*To himself.*) Every blessed weekend since Halloween. Second shift.

MOTHER: (*To Santa, indicating Taylor and Jordan.*) Please! Ssssh!

SANTA: What?

MOTHER: Children!

(Santa rubs his sore foot.)

SANTA: Oh, I've met the children!

ELF: *(To Santa, whispers.)* I think she means she doesn't want you to spoil the illusion.

SANTA: *(Unconvincingly.)* Well, ho, ho, ho. *(To Elf, whispers.)* I'd like to take their illusions and —

ELF: *(To Santa, whispers.)* Naughty, naughty, naughty. They told us not to break character.

SANTA: *(Whispers.)* But the little urchins nearly broke my foot!

ASHLEY: *(Into phone.)* Oh my, now look what you've made me do. I'm sweating! *(She fans herself.)*

MELVIN: *(Indicates Ashley.)* I think she's the one being naughty.

MOTHER: *(To Taylor and Jordan.)* What Santa means is when he comes down from the North Pole, he likes to come here to see us because Christmas is a special time of year...

ELF: *(Whispers to Santa.)* Me, I'm staying in character no matter what!

SANTA: *(To Elf, whispers.)* That's easy for you! You're a twit whether you're in character or not!

TAYLOR: *(To Mother.)* Is it true that in China they don't believe in Christmas?

MOTHER: Oh dear, well, you see it's like this, Taylor honey —

JORDAN: How can that be? Everything we get for Christmas is made there, so they must believe in it, right?

SANTA: I bet the parts for this elevator must have been made in China. That's why it's taking 'em so long to fix it.

ASHLEY: *(Into phone.)* So when are you coming to see me? I should be getting off work at three... *(Shouts.)* ...that is, if they can ever get this stupid elevator fixed!

TAYLOR: *(To Mother.)* What if they don't know we're in here? Would we get to spend the night here?

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MOTHER: They won't forget about us, darling. Remember, that nice Santa's helper called on the emergency phone and they said they'd be right on it!

JORDAN: But that was, like, hours ago!

MOTHER: It hasn't been hours, dear. It only seems that way.

(To others.) So how long has it been?

TAYLOR: *(Indicates Stephanie.)* Ask her. I bet she knows the time real well!

MELVIN: That reminds me of something my mother used to say, bless her soul. Whenever something would take a long time coming she'd say, "It's as slow as Christmas."

ELF: Maybe I should call them again!

(Elf picks up the emergency phone.)

SANTA: *(To Elf, whispers.)* You can tell them their jolly old elf isn't going to be so jolly if they don't get her out of here real soon.

MELVIN: Sometimes she'd say, "It's as slow as molasses," but usually she'd say, "It's as slow as Christmas."

JORDAN: *(To Mother, whining.)* I don't want to sleep in the elevator. It's all icky and sticky in here!

MOTHER: Well, that's just because they've cut off the fan, Jordan honey. It's getting rather warm in here now.

SANTA: *(To Elf, whispers.)* Maybe if people would just shut up, there'd be a whole lot less hot air in here.

MELVIN: *(Indicates Ashley.)* Oh, I think it's all the heavy breathing coming from over there!

ASHLEY: *(Into phone.)* No, I'm not mad at you, Jeremy. I'm just mad at this stupid elevator. If they don't get this thing fixed soon, I'm not going to be able to get off work on time. And then we won't have as much time together, and that's no fun, now is it? You know how much I like to have fun...

MELVIN: Reminds me of my Madge when we were first dating. There was this one time, well, I probably shouldn't tell that story in mixed company...

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SANTA: *(Under his breath.)* Thank you!

MELVIN: But it is a good one! He-he.

(Elf listens to receiver and dials. Listens to phone again.)

ELF: *(Disconsolate, for the first time.)* Hmmmm. The line's gone dead. *(Upbeat again.)* Oh well! Lets say we all sing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" to pass the time!

JORDAN: I hate singing. They make us sing in school.

TAYLOR: And they make us sing in church, too.

MELVIN: You know, I met Madge at a church social. Did I ever tell you that? Nowadays they have all these computer dating services, but in those days, we had church socials.

TAYLOR: So if they make us sing in church, how come they make us sing in school, too? I thought that wasn't allowed.

ELF: *(Cheerful.)* Oh, now how can anyone hate singing? Why, Christmas is all about singing. You've got carols, and hymns, and Christmas specials on TV, and Bing Crosby, and Charlie Brown, and –

JORDAN: Mom, can you make the fairy shut up? She's annoying me.

ELF: *(Grits teeth, forced smile.)* I'm an Elf!

MOTHER: *(To Santa.)* Can't you do something?

SANTA: *(To Mother, indicates Elf.)* Ma'am, she annoys me, too.

MOTHER: Please!

ELF: *(To Santa, whispers.)* Character!

MOTHER: *(To Santa.)* I mean about the elevator!

SANTA: *(In character, but forced.)* Ho! Ho! Ho! My trusty elf here has called our headquarters at the North Pole, and they say they're sending down another team of reindeer right away! *(Whispers to Elf, sarcastic.)* How's that for character?

ELF: *(To Santa, whispers.)* Very good, very good. And I appreciate the elf line.

TAYLOR: What good's a team of reindeer going to do?

JORDAN: Yeah, they'll probably just get stuck, too.

TAYLOR: I saw a dead deer by the side of the road once. (*To Santa.*) Was that one of your reindeer?

MOTHER: I wonder what's taking them so long?

ASHLEY: (*Into phone, sharply.*) What do you mean you've got to work tonight? You never told me anything about having to work tonight! Well, I don't care that something came up! You always have things come up at the last minute, and then I get stuck with nothing to do!

MELVIN: That's never a problem for my Madge. She's always finding things for me to do now that I've retired! "Melvin, come take out the trash. Melvin, go clean out the gutters! Melvin, take me shopping!"

MOTHER: It's so stuffy in here. (*Fans herself.*)

JORDAN: Hey, Santa, you ever been stuck in a chimney?

SANTA: (*In character.*) Well, uh, no, I can't say as I have.

JORDAN: 'Cause you're pretty fat. I thought you'd get stuck in a lot of chimneys.

TAYLOR: (*To Jordan.*) So how come he doesn't get stuck in a chimney, but he gets stuck in an elevator? Does that mean he's fake? The Santa at that other mall was a fake.

ELF: (*To all, cheerful.*) Well, let's look at it this way. This just gives everyone here more personal time with Santa!

MELVIN: Yeah, it gives me a break from Madge and her shopping spree! Whoo-hoo!

SANTA: (*To Elf, whispers.*) What the heck are you talking about?

ELF: (*To Santa, whispers.*) I'm making the best of a bad situation! (*To all.*) Maybe we should all tell Santa what we want for Christmas!

TAYLOR: (*Shouts.*) Oh! Oh! Oh! Me first! Me first! I want a dollhouse, and videogames, and a new computer, and a pony, and a bicycle, and—

SANTA: (*To Elf, whispers.*) I'll get you for this. You mark my words.

ELF: (*Whispers.*) Look at it this way...at least she doesn't want a chemistry set.

TAYLOR: And a chemistry set! I want a Junior Scientist Chemistry Set!

SANTA: *(To Taylor.)* Whoa, whoa, whoa, not all at once. Slow down, honey.

TAYLOR: Why are you calling me “honey”? That’s what daddy calls mommy.

JORDAN: Except when they’re having an argument and then he calls her some other things!

MELVIN: You know, I think I’d rather clean out the gutters than go shopping. At least with the gutters, you’re up there on the ladder by yourself. You can work at your own pace. It’s quite peaceful, really. Well, there was that one time the ladder broke, but other than that—

ASHLEY: *(Into phone.)* Well, be that way then! See if I care! *(She hangs up the phone in a huff.)* Hmmph! *(Takes the call she put on hold.)* Hey, Kelsey. You still there? So whatcha doing?

MOTHER: Is it just me, or is it getting hot in here? *(Fans herself.)*

MELVIN: Oh, my Madge went through that years ago. I tell you, she was H-E-double-toothpicks to live with there for awhile.

ELF: *(To Taylor.)* So do you two want to get up on Santa’s lap?

TAYLOR: He’s standing up. How can he have a lap if he’s standing up?

ELF: Well, he could sit on the floor.

SANTA: *(To Elf, whispers.)* I am not filing another worker’s comp claim!

JORDAN: I don’t want to do it here. I want to get my picture taken and get a sucker and all that other stuff! This is cheating.

SANTA: Smart kid. You know what, I’ve just moved you from the naughty list to the nice list.

ELF: Anybody else?

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(Stephanie's cell phone rings. She starts to hunt for it. It continues to ring.)

MELVIN: I think I'm a little too old to be sitting on somebody's lap.

TAYLOR: *(To Santa.)* Aren't you going to write all those things down? Or do you have it memorized?

SANTA: Write what down?

JORDAN: I hope he remembers that better than Dad remembers Mom's anniversary.

ELF: Well, I guess that's the end of that.

ASHLEY: *(Into phone.)* Me? Not much. Just the usual. I'm still stuck in an elevator at the mall. How about you?

MELVIN: Though when my cousin Bernie re-married after his wife passed on, some of the fellows down at the home threw him a bachelor's party, and we went down to this place where the waitresses would sit on your lap if you tipped 'em enough money...

STEPHANIE: *(Into phone.)* Hello? Yeah, this is Stephanie. Oh, hey, Jeremy. How are you?

ASHLEY: *(Into phone.)* No, it's no big deal. It just means somebody else'll have to do the register, but I don't care. It's not my problem. So, hey, you know what that jerk Jeremy just told me?

SANTA: *(To Elf, whispers.)* Well, now what, Einstein?

STEPHANIE: *(Into phone.)* Uh, yeah, everything's okay. I'm just, uh, running a little late, that's all.

MOTHER: *(To Santa.)* Could you, maybe, like, tell them a story?

ASHLEY: *(Into phone.)* Oh, you won't believe this. This is just too much! Listen to this... *(Pause.)* What? You've got another call. Yeah, I'll hold on. *(The more she waits, the more exasperated she gets.)*

SANTA: *(To Mother.)* A story?

MELVIN: I tell you, there's a story in old Bernie's bachelor party, that's for sure.

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MOTHER: (To Santa.) Yes, you know...something Christmassy.

ELF: Oh, that's a wonderful idea! And then we could all sing Christmas carols!

STEPHANIE: (Into phone.) What? Here? Uh, I dunno if that's such a good idea, Jeremy. There are a lot of people around. (Giggles.)

SANTA: (To Elf, whispers.) Will you shut up about the songs already?

MELVIN: See, Charlie Greer was making the reservations, but Charlie's kind of nearsighted, so he thought he was making reservations at one of those high-class dance studios where they teach you the tango...so we could surprise the ladies when we got back to the home, you know.

ELF: All right then, stories it is!

ASHLEY: (Into phone.) Hey, Megan. It's Ashley. Whatcha doing?

STEPHANIE: (Into phone.) Besides, I'm, um, you know, kinda wrapped up at the moment right now, if you catch my drift.

SANTA: I don't know any Christmas stories.

MELVIN: Let me tell you, the tango wasn't on their dance card! No sirree bob!

ELF: (To Santa.) Oh, of course you do. You could...you could tell them why Rudolph's nose is red.

ASHLEY: (Into phone.) Me? Oh, I'm just stuck in an elevator, and I've got Kelsey on hold on the other line. How about you?

TAYLOR: (To Elf.) Yeah, shouldn't it be brown?

STEPHANIE: (Into phone, embarrassed.) Oh, all right then. Red. Satisfied?

MELVIN: Speaking of red, Bernie's whole face was as red for days. We thought he was going to have an aneurysm or something.

SANTA: (To Taylor.) You know what, kid, I'm starting to like you.

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ASHLEY: (*Into phone.*) Hang on, I've got another call coming in...let me see who this is. Let me just put you on hold. No, wait, I've got Kelsey on hold. I'll have to call you back, okay?

TAYLOR: Well, I mean, most animals have brown noses.

MOTHER: I think I'm going to faint. (*Fans herself.*)

MELVIN: It is getting rather toasty in here!

ELF: (*Cheerful.*) Just like roasting chestnuts over an open fire!

SANTA: (*Whispers.*) Well, I think I'm going to roast my chestnuts if we don't get off this thing soon.

ELF: (*Whispers.*) Character!

TAYLOR: (*To Elf.*) So does that mean you're going to move me to the nice list, too?

MELVIN: Now Chester Harper did faint when those ladies came to dance for him. Just passed right out in the middle of the restaurant and everything. We thought his pacemaker had done shorted out!

SANTA: (*To Elf, whispers. Indicates Melvin.*) There's your character!

ELF: (*To Taylor.*) Oh, you bet, Santa keeps track of everything. He knows when you're naughty. He knows when you're nice—

JORDAN: So is she being naughty or nice?

STEPHANIE: (*Into phone.*) What? Oh, you're incorrigible! Okay. If you must know, they're white, but they've got little red hearts all over them.

MELVIN: Well, I guess it wasn't much of a restaurant. They didn't have much of a buffet, that's for sure. But the dessert was something else! Whipped cream on everything!

ASHLEY: (*Into phone, leaving a fake message for caller.*) Hey, this is Ashley. Sorry I've missed your call. But leave a message at the tone, and I'll call you back if I feel like it. (*She makes the sound of a tone.*)

SANTA: (*To Elf, indicating Ashley.*) Sounds like she's being a little of both.

ELF: (*Whispers.*) Character! **[End of Freeview]**