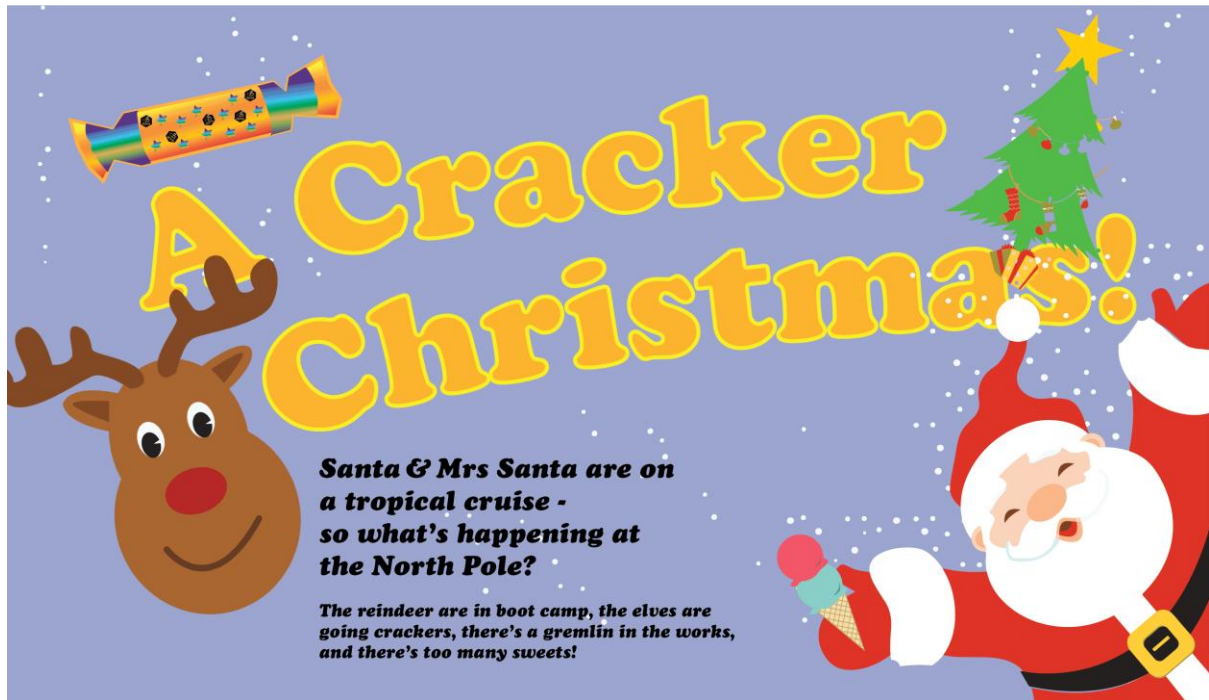


A Cracker Christmas!

by Joy Hinckley



All tunes for songs are in the public domain.

Note: The number of elves is up to the producing group. There can be the minimum to deliver the lines, or more, to have kids involved in the cast.

Requests to perform should be addressed to the author at Hinckley_joy@hotmail.com

A royalty fee of AUD \$20 per performance is payable for performances with a paying audience.

CHARACTERS

Eileen Elf

Santa

Mrs Santa

Snowballs, the North Pole dog

Computer

Tizzy Tinsel

Elves (Joylene, Noelene, etc)

Reindeers (Big-I-Deer, Bright-I-Deer, No-I-Deer)

Sparklepants the Gremlin

Old Lady (Voice only)

Santa's Village at the North Pole. Eileen Elf enters and looks at her oversized "smart watch".

Eileen Oh – it's almost time for my video call with Mrs Claus! I wonder how they're enjoying their tropical islands cruise? I'd better get set up. *(Speaking into smart watch)* Calling Computer. Come in Computer. It's time for my video call.

Computer's voice On my way.

COMPUTER enters and parks in front of a "screen" hole in a flat. Computer holds a keyboard.

Computer Here we are. Ready to call. Don't muck about, get on with it. I'm a very busy machine at this time of year.

Eileen types into the keyboard. On the "screen" appears Mrs Claus (live acted not recorded). Mrs Claus is wearing a tropical version of her regular outfit and holds a very fancy drink.

Mrs Claus Hello Eileen love. Everything going well?

Eileen Sure is. What's it like on the cruise ship, Mrs Claus?

Mrs Claus Ooh, it's very luxurious. Everything is so shiny and glamorous. And it's lovely and warm! I still worry about Santa and I not being there for the lead up to Christmas. How are things at the North Pole?

Eileen You mean apart from being very cold and not very glamorous? Everything is going really well. By the time you get home before Christmas Eve, I reckon we'll have everything all ready for Santa and the Reindeer to do the presents run. The Reindeer are in training on a special diet and exercise program designed by Computer. *(Computer looks self-satisfied.)* So enjoy your holiday. You know what the doctor said, it's important for Santa to rest up well if he wants to be good to go on Christmas Eve. He's not getting any younger. What's he up to at the moment?

Mrs Claus Probably at the ice cream station. He discovered it on the first day and I can't keep him away from it! Unlimited ice creams! He's in heaven. Lucky the reindeer are getting fit because there might be a bit more of Santa to carry this year! I'll tell you one thing I'm not too happy about though.

Eileen What's that?

Mrs Claus There's all these old single ladies on the cruise and they all fancy my Santa! Tickling his beard, buying him special cocktails, wanting to dance with him. One old billionaire lady asked him to come back and live with her in her Florida mansion. The cheek! I saw her off, though. Challenged her in the hip hop dance-off.

Eileen But Santa would never run off and live with a billionaire in her Florida mansion.

Mrs Claus Oh I know that. I just wanted to show off my hip hop dancing skills and put the cheeky old so-and-so in her place.

Computer Enough chit-chat. I've left the Reindeers on the treadmills. I'll have a riot on my hands, and you'll have a cruise ship Internet bill so big you'll have to charge the rich old ladies to dance with Santa to pay for it.

Mrs Claus Right, sorry. Anyway, what I wanted to tell you is that I've organised for my sister, Tizzy Tinsel, to come and help out while we're away.

Eileen Oh. OK. When is she getting here?

Mrs Claus Today, actually. Just one thing...

Eileen Yes?

Mrs Claus Just keep an eye on where she puts down her keys.

SANTA's head pops into the frame. He is wearing sunglasses and holding an ice cream cone.

Santa Hello Eileen Elf!

In the background, an old-lady American accented voice.

Voice Yoo hoo! Santa!

Mrs Claus Grr. Gotta go. Bye!

SANTA and MRS SANTA leave the screen frame.

Computer I've got to go. I'm doing a boot camp with the reindeers.

Eileen And I'd better check in at the Elf workshop.

They exit.

Computer re-enters, followed by the Reindeer. The reindeer are wearing their exercise shorts.

Computer Righto reindeers, In a line! *(Blows whistle.)*

The Reindeers form a line.

Computer Roll call. Big-I-Deer? *(Reindeer responds)* Bright-I-Deer? *(Reindeer responds)* No-I-Deer? *(Reindeer responds)*

Computer Let's start on the spot, with knees up. Hup hup hup! *(Blows whistle, poot poot poot, as the Reindeer do the knees up move.)*

Enter Eileen.

Eileen Um...sorry to interrupt, Computer, but I've had a request from the Elves. They've heard you're doing a boot camp, and wondered if they could join in? It would be good for them to have a break from work and do a bit of exercise.

Computer *(Rolls eyes. Deadpan)* The more the merrier. *(Calling out.)* Hurry up then Elves, no time wasters!

The Elves jostle in excitedly. They have exercise shorts over their suits, and are wearing an assortment of absurd boots – oversized army boots, gumboots, high heel boots, whatever. The Reindeer are still hup hup hupping, and the Elves join in enthusiastically.

Computer What on earth are you wearing on your feet??

Elf 1 Boots!

Elf 2 For boot camp!

Elf 3 Do we need tents?

Elf 4 I brought snacks for hiking!

Computer Oh dear. Come along then all of you! Outside for uphill snowball rolling! Hup hup hup.

Whistle - Poot poot poot as they all jog out, still knees-upping.

Sound effect: "Jingle Bells" doorbell. There is a "Woof".

Eileen *(Offstage. Calling out.)* Snowballs, can you get the door please? *(Entering, to herself.)* That might be Mrs Claus's sister. I do hope she fits in OK. An extra helper will make it easier to finish all our jobs, I guess.

Enter TIZZY TINSEL and SNOWBALLS. Snowballs has a bulging cheek and carries a suitcase. Tizzy has a basket which she carries around with her.

Snowballs Thish ish Tisshy Tinshel. *(Slurp)* She shays she's Mishus Claus's sh shishter.

Tizzy Hello! You must be Eileen Elf. Lemon Sherbet lolly? *(She takes a big bag of lollies out of her basket and offers them.)*

Eileen Um...thank you Ms Tinsel.

Tizzy Please, call me Tizzy.

Eileen *(Takes a huge round yellow sweet from bag and looks at it.)* They're pretty BIG lollies, aren't they?

Snowballs Delishush.

Eileen I'll just... hang onto it for later, ta. *(Stashes the sweet somewhere)* Welcome, Tizzy.

An ELF (JOYLENE) enters, flustered. During this speech, any other elves who've followed JOYLENE in can hold presents in varying degrees of crazy wrapping/destruction, and hold them up as evidence.

Joylene Eileen, Eileen, the Wrap-O-Matic conveyer belt has broken down! It chewed up a bunch of presents, then kind of... blew up! We've been trying to fix it, but it doesn't want to

work. What shall we do? We're getting so far behind already! We have to make replacements for the presents it wrecked, and we might have to wrap all the gifts by hand if the Wrap-O-Matic doesn't get fixed.

Tizzy Ooh... would that be the Wrap-O-Matic 5000 Series?

Joylene That's the one.

Tizzy I did a TAFE course on that one. Have to keep up the skills as we age, you know! *(Takes suitcase from Snowballs.)* If you can show me to my room, I'll get into my overalls and get straight to work!

Eileen Oh! If you're sure, that would be amazing!

ELVES go Yay! etc.

Snowballs bows, and indicates way to go. Tizzy picks up her basket and starts riffling through it.

Tizzy Now, where did I put my suitcase key? *(Getting increasingly flustered.)*

Snowballs spots a string around Tizzy's neck and makes polite noise to get Tizzy's attention. Rearranges Lemon Sherbet in cheek in order to be able to speak.

Snowballs Hmm hmm. Perhaps on the end of thash shtring?

Tizzy pulls out the string. Sure enough, there is the key.

Tizzy Hooray! Lead on, Snowballs!

They exit, leaving Eileen.

Eileen Well, Tizzy Tinsel sure seems keen to help, and it looks like we need it after all. This will be an interesting lead-up to Christmas, that's for sure! Now, to check the to-do list. I've checked it once, but now everything's changed I'd better check it twice. *(Takes a clipboard.)* OK, so. Reindeers getting into shape for Christmas Eve – check. Snowballs on front door and delivery pick-up duty – check. All presents being wrapped – drats! I hope Tizzy Tinsel can fix the wrapping machine in time.

Snowballs enters, still with Lemon Sherbet, but trailing a mess of unjammed Christmas paper.

Eileen Oh Snowballs, what's all that?

Snowballs *(Still has sweet in mouth)* Paper jam. I had to climb right into the Wrap-O-Matic to get it out. *(Starts to unwrap the shreds from himself. Eileen helps. They stuff the paper into a paper recycling bin.)*

Snowballs starts doing a breathing exercise, in with one nostril, out with the other. You know the one.

Eileen Snowballs, what are you doing?

Snowballs Nose yoga.

Eileen Nose yoga.

Snowballs Nose yoga. I did a workshop at the North Pole Community Centre. It calms, de-stresses and clears the airways. When you're a working dog, you need to keep your stress levels low and your ability to smell things levels high.

Eileen It is a stressful time. Maybe we all need nose yoga (*possibility for audience involvement?*)

Tizzy enters wearing a Rosie the Riveter overall and scarf and carrying a massive wrench and a tiny machine part.

Tizzy This is your offending article. A broken sticky widget. We'll have to order a new one. (*Takes another sweets packet from pocket and offers it around, taking one herself.*) This calls for a strawberry gobstopper lolly.

Snowballs stuffs the gobstopper into his other cheek. Eileen politely waves away the bag.

Eileen Order a new one? How long will that take? We have to get the presents wrapped!

Tizzy I'll get snap delivery. May I use your computer to order the part?

Eileen Of course. (*Speaking into smart watch*) Calling Computer. Come in Computer. Could you come to the front room please?

Computer enters.

Eileen Computer, this is Tizzy Tinsel. She's Mrs Claus's sister. She needs to order a part for the Wrap-O-Matic.

Computer Oh, is that what all the shouting and banging and running around has been about? Couldn't hear myself compute.

Tizzy Computer, could you please send an order off to Widgets-R-Us for a D54M-3mm sticky widget? And ask for snap delivery.

Computer Oh very well. Someone will have to go and feed the reindeers though. They're waiting at the table and they're very hungry after their big workout.

Tizzy Oh, I can do that! Snowballs, can you show me the way?

Snowballs and Tizzy exit one way, Eileen and Computer exit the other way.

A SNEAKY GREMLIN enters after they've gone.

Gremlin Hee hee! What fun! While the Santas are away the Gremlins will play! I do love mucking around inside machines! The Wrap-O-Matic was a blast! Hee hee! (*To children.*) Don't let on to Eileen that Sparklepants the Gremlin is here! (*Hides behind something as Eileen and Snowballs enter. Snowballs still has to cheeks stuffed with drool-making lollies*)

Snowballs (*Sniffs*) Grrr. Grrr.

Eileen What is it, Snowballs?

Snowballs *(Can't talk for gobstoppers and drool)* IcnshmlI Grmshlurpins shomwhsh aroush here.

Eileen Oh, Snowballs! You know all that sugar's no good for you! Come along right now and clean your teeth before they fall out! *(She drags Snowballs by the collar, as he protests.)*
Goodness! What is he trying to tell me, kids?

Hopefully children yell "Gremlin" as the Gremlin pops up behind Eileen.

Eileen What's that? Gremlin? Where? *(Turning around, but Gremlin is too fast.)* Where is the Gremlin?

Hopefully children yell "He's behind you!"

Eileen I can't see any Gremlins. You've probably ALL been eating too much sugar. Come on, Snowballs! *(They exit.)*

Gremlin pops up.

Gremlin Hee hee! What mischief can I make next? Maybe I could hack that grumpy computer!
Hee hee!

Gremlin sings a song and does a little dance. Tune: "Cruising Down the River"

Gremlin *(Sung):*

I'm a little Gremlin
I play inside machines
I make them rattle, I make them bang

I fill their works with beans!
So if your toaster blows up
Or if your car breaks down
Just look for little Gremlins
They are sure to be around.

(Laughs) Hee hee hee

Gremlin I know, I'll mess these Christmas tree lights up a bit. *(Goes around back of tree and fiddles with wires)* Make them act a bit funny, turning on and off at the wrong times. There. Not enough to be a problem, but enough to be a tricky puzzler! Hee hee!

(Exits)

Computer enters with Eileen. Eileen is holding a big bowl of white marshmallows.

Computer See? I went to check on how the reindeers were getting on with dinner, and I found them eating these bowls of marshmallows! I thought it was piles of snow at first, till I looked closer.

Eileen Oh dear. There goes their special fitness diet. Santa's on a cruise eating too much ice cream, and now the reindeers are eating sweets! How did they get all these lollies?

Tizzy enters.

Tizzy Hello! Anyone want a marshmallow?

Eileen Oh, Tizzy Tinsel! Did you feed these big bowls of marshmallows to the reindeers?

Tizzy Well, their dinner was just a bunch of oats and lettuce and raw carrots. I thought they might like a bit of dessert.

Eileen Reindeers have to live on that kind of food to be healthy, Tizzy. Big bowls of sweets are bad for them. In fact, big bowls of sweets are bad for everyone.

Tizzy It was just a little treat. Santa told me he gives them a little treat sometimes.

Computer I bet he gives himself a treat at the same time.

Eileen A little treat is maybe ONE of these. And not all the time!

Song (Tune: "Buffalo Gals" aka "The Wheels on the Bus")

Eileen:

A little bit of sugar once in a while, once in a while, once in a while
A little bit of sugar once in a while, can really make you smile.
Too much sugar all of the time, all of the time, all of the time
Too much sugar all of the time, and you'll lose all your smile.

Computer:

Your teeth will go bad and fall out of your head, out of your head, out of your head
Your teeth will go bad and fall out of your head, so stick to once in a while.

Tizzy Oh dear. I'm sorry. I wanted the reindeers to like me. Looks like I've made a bad first impression!

Eileen Not at all. We're very glad to have you here. It just takes a bit of time to learn how things work in a new place.

Tizzy *(Holds up marshmallow bag)* I'll lock these away in my suitcase, away from temptation. *(Pulls string out from top of clothes. No key!)* Oh dear, I must have taken the key off the string. I wonder where I put it? *(Tizzy wanders off.)*

Computer Hmf.

Eileen Now now, Computer. Everybody has to learn. Right. I'd better go and find out what presents got chewed by the Wrap-O-Matic, and get the elves started on replacements. *(Exits)*

Computer sits, and sighs, a big sigh. Tizzy Tinsel enters, and notices.

Tizzy Oh Computer, I'm so sorry. I got it all wrong with your reindeer, and now I've made you sad.

Computer What? Oh, don't worry. It's not you. Well, only a bit.

Tizzy sits beside Computer.

Tizzy What is it then? What makes you so sad?

Computer Well, I'm not sure how I fit in to things.

Sings. (Tune: "Streets of Laredo")

Computer:

I'm just a computer with no-one to love me
I'm just a machine with no heart it would seem
I'd like to exist in a world where I matter
A world where computers can all have a dream.

Tizzy Oh dear. You know, you should tell Eileen how you feel. I'm sure you matter to everyone here. And to Santa and Mrs Santa.

Computer I know that. But – the reindeers have other reindeers, the elves have other elves, Santa and Mrs Santa have each other – but there's no-one like me.

Tizzy I know what always cheers me up – a yummy bit of chocolate. I now know that sweets are not good all the time, but a little bit once in a while might make you smile, isn't that what the song said? *(She takes out a chocolate box and pops one in Computer's mouth, leaving the box behind.)* There. Now, I've got to get the Wrap-O-Matic cleaned up and ready for that new part, but we'll catch up later and hang out for a bit, hey? *(Exits.)*

Computer Chocolate. Wow. Never had that before. I don't think computers are supposed to eat chocolate, though. A little bit can't hurt though, surely? It was very delicious. Here's the box. I'll just go and look to see if there are any more chocolates in here. I won't eat any...

Computer exits.

Gremlin enters, rubbing hands gleefully.

Gremlin Hee hee! The coast is clear, so I can find another machine to mess with. Now let's see... oh! I know – the doorbell. That's a nice little machine. Hee hee! *(Exits.)*

Eileen enters.

Eileen That's got the elves sorted for a bit. Now, what's next on my list? Finalise addresses for presents delivery. Right, that's always a big job so I'd best make a start.

The doorbell rings. Something unexpected. Bach's Toccata and Fugue?

Eileen What's that?

Offstage, Snowballs woofs. Snowballs enters with a package.

Snowballs That was the doorbell. It's changed its tune. This parcel arrived. Snap delivery.
(Hands over parcel.)

Eileen Changed its tune? How could that happen?

Snowballs shrugs.

Eileen This must be the new part. I'd better find Tizzy and get it to her right away.

They exit.

Gremlin enters. Sings. Tune as before.

I'm a little Gremlin, and I just love to fiddle.
Once I've messed with your machines, I've left you quite a riddle.
I loosen all the parts inside, until they start to wiggle,
And leave you with a problem, but for me it's just a giggle.

(Laughs) Hee hee hee hee hee.

The Elves (minus Eileen) enter, carrying a basket of Christmas crackers, an empty basket, and an envelope with strips of paper with cracker jokes on them.

The Gremlin quickly hides.

Joylene We were so excited, what with the Wrap-O-Matic and boot camp, that we forgot to put the jokes into this special batch of crackers for our own North Pole Christmas party. We'll have to stick them in now, won't take a minute.

Making a little assembly line, one elf takes out a joke, passes it to the next elf, who reads it out and passes it along, and it's carefully stuck into the cracker, and the cracker put into the empty basket. Repeat as needed for number of elves and crackers. Jokes are at the end of the script. When the crackers are done, Joylene sits the basket somewhere onstage.

Joylene There. Now elves, let's get back to the workshop.

Gremlin Oohoo! Crackers! Not really machines, but I do so want to mess with them! I know! I knew this pepper pot I pocketed in the North Pole café would come in handy. I'll just shake some pepper into these crackers! Hee hee!

(Shakes pepper into crackers. Exits.)

Snowballs enters, sniffing suspiciously. To audience:

Snowballs Is there a Gremlin in here?

Audience responds. Snowballs sniffs all around. Finally shrugs, and cocks leg on Christmas tree. He gets a mighty shock and runs around in circles, yelping, leaping and flapping, etc)

Snowballs Yowp! Yowp! Yowp! Yowp!

Eileen rushes in.

Eileen Snowballs, what's wrong?

Snowballs The tree bit me!

Eileen It BIT you?!

Snowballs It bit me on the pee pee.

Eileen Hm. I think the lights may have given you an electric shock. I'll turn them off for now, till we can make sure they're safe. *(She turns off the lights.)* You know, Snowballs, water and electricity don't mix, if you get my hint.

Snowballs *(Doggedly.)* Bit me. Grrrrr *(He growls at the tree. For the rest of the play, every time he passes the tree, he growls/snarls/snaps at it)*

Eileen Come and have a lie down in your kennel. I'll get you a doggy treat. *(She leads him out.)*

Gremlin pops in.

Gremlin Woopsie. THAT wasn't supposed to happen. Oh well, at least he didn't get electrocuted deadibones.

Gremlin exits.

The Reindeer enter with Computer.

Computer All right, let's practice your new dance for our North Pole Christmas Party when Santa and Mrs Santa get back from their cruise.

Reindeer 1 (Big-idea) Ready when you are!

Reindeer 2 (Bright-idea) Me too!

Reindeer 3 (No-idea) Me three!?

Computer Here's your music – the Reindeer Rock. Let's go!

The Reindeers sing and dance to The Reindeer Rock.

Tune: "Ballin' the Jack". Sample video for steps: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWryDF_yyH0

First you put your two knees close up tight
Then, you sway it to the left and you sway it to the right

Step around the floor kind of nice and light
Then you twist around, you twist around with all of your might
Stretch your lovin' hoofs straight out in space
Then you do the Reindeer Rock-a with-a style and grace
Swing your foot way 'round and bring it back
Now that's what we call our Christmas dance—
The Reindeer Rock!

Computer Not too bad, not too bad. By party time it should be pretty good. Take a break for 15 minutes then assemble for Flight Safety practice in the sled hangar.

The reindeers exit.

Computer I'm feeling a bit funny. What could be the matter with me? I might just have another chocolate. That might help. *(Exits.)*

Tizzy Tinsel enters with Eileen.

Tizzy So yes, I thought you ought to know. Poor Computer is feeling a bit down, because there are no other Computers for her to be friends with here at the North Pole.

Eileen Thanks for letting me know. Poor Computer! I think we should call Mr and Mrs Santa and let them know.

Tizzy We can't do a video call, though. We'd need Computer for that. We'll just use my mobile. Here, I'll put it on speaker. I hope they've got coverage at the moment.

Tizzy calls on her phone.

Tizzy Oh, hello Sandy! It's me, Tizzy. Glad I caught you. How's the cruise going?

Mrs Claus *(Voiceover)* Oh, it's marvellous, so relaxing. But the main activity is eating too much lovely food! We'll have to go on Computer's diet and exercise plan like the reindeers when we get back.

Tizzy Ah. Speaking of Computer. I'm here with Eileen –

Mrs Claus *(Breaking in)* Oh, hello Eileen love!

Eileen Hello! Yes, speaking of Computer, we've got a bit of a problem. Computer is feeling a bit lonely, apparently.

Mrs Claus But there's all of the elves, and the reindeer, and Santa and I. We all love Computer, even though she can be a bit of a grump!

Tizzy But there are no other computers for her to hang out with.

Santa *(Voiceover)* Who's that on the phone, lovie?

Mrs Claus Eileen and Tizzy. You're on speaker.

Santa Hello!

Tizzy and Eileen Hello, Santa!

Santa Everyone behaving themselves? Being naughty or nice?

Eileen We are all being very nice! As always. Mostly. And you?

Mrs Claus Well, we're doing our best, but the all-you-can-eat buffet is awfully tempting.

Old Lady Voice in background Yoo hoo! Santa – you coming to the karaoke?

Santa It's not my fault! I'm trying to avoid them. I guess I'm just too much of a hunk!

Mrs Claus We'll have a think about Computer's problem. For now, I've got a pesky old lady to sort out.

Eileen and Tizzy Bye!

Mr and Mrs Santa Bye! Come on, Santa. We're BOTH going to the Karaoke.

Santa I'm doing Elvis. *(Elvis voice.)* "Here comes Santa Claus, Here comes Santa Claus, right down Santa Claus lane..."

Tizzy *(To Eileen)* Oh, by the way, I've installed the new sticky widget, I've just – ah – *(Looks embarrassed.)* got to find the Wrap-O-Matic ignition key so the elves can start it up again.

Eileen Oh, Tizzy Tinsel! Never mind, you got it going and that's the main thing. Come on, let's get Snowballs onto the scent. It can't have gone far. Snowballs! *(They exit.)*

Gremlin enters.

Gremlin Hee hee hee! I've just been having fun in the gym! No, not doing exercises. 'Fixing' the reindeer's treadmills! Hee hee hee! What fun!

There's a growling noise.

Gremlin Oh, no, it's that pesky dog. I'm outta here. *(Exits.)*

Snowballs enters and looks around, sniffing. Low growl.

Snowballs sings. Tune: "A Tisket a Tasket"

A gremlin, a gremlin, I smell a naughty gremlin

And if I catch it being bad

I might just make it cry.

A gremlin, a gremlin, if you can hear me gremlin,
Before you think of mucking up
You need to say goodbye.

Snowballs Now, where'd that key get to?

Snowballs exits. Gremlin enters.

Gremlin Maybe I do need to say goodbye to this place, before I get caught or accidentally do someone serious damage. But where shall I go next? I do so want to have some more fun! Hmm... *(Gremlin exits.)*

Noises off. Commotion. "Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!"

The reindeers stagger in.

Reindeer Big-idea Crikey! The treadmills have gone crazy!

Eileen and Tizzy rush in.

Eileen What's wrong? What's causing all the commotion?

Reindeer Bright-idea We decided to make Computer proud of us by doing an extra session on the treadmills to make up for the marshmallow eating.

Reindeer Big-idea And as soon as they started, they kept getting faster and faster!

Reindeer Bright-idea We were trotting and running.

Reindeer Big-idea And prancing and galloping.

Reindeer No-idea Then they all suddenly stopped, and we went flying!

Snowballs enters, growling.

Snowballs What's up? Is it that gremlin again?

Eileen Gremlin? What gremlin? *(To audience.)* Kids, did you see a Gremlin round here?

Snowballs My superior doggy nose can SMELL a naughty gremlin around here somewhere.

Tizzy Well, the reindeers were on the treadmills and the machines just went crazy. That DOES sound like the work of a gremlin. Plus there was the Wrap-O-Matic incident.

Eileen AND the doorbell changed its tune. And the Christmas tree lights gave Snowballs a shock. Well done, Snowballs, we'll have to keep a careful guard from now on. We can't afford any more calamities.

Snowballs starts sniffing around everywhere.

Tizzy Right. I'll go and fix the treadmills.

Eileen What about the Wrap-O-Matic key?

Snowballs pulls a key from behind or under something.

Snowballs Is this it? My superior doggy nose can also sniff out keys!

Tizzy Hooray! Oh, Snowballs, you are SUCH a clever dog!

They all exit.

Gremlin enters.

Gremlin Hee hee! Tinkering with the treadmills was fun! What next? Oho – here comes that Computer.

Computer Oh dear. I don't feel well at all. Ooohh...bleep bloop...plffplff.

Gremlin Hello. Looks like I got here too late. This Computer's already acting a bit busted.

Computer groans and makes funny noises.

Gremlin What's wrong with you? You look sick.

Computer It's all my fault. I ate a chocolate because I was feeling a bit down, even though I knew Computers shouldn't eat chocolate. Then I felt terrible, so I ate more chocolates to make myself feel better.

Gremlin Just how many chocolates did you eat?

Computer The whole box. Ohhh...oooh...plffplff...bloot...poot. Who are you anyway?

Gremlin thinks. A dilemma.

Gremlin Well I'm a Gremlin, and usually we like to make mischief and mess with machines. But – well, I think I could use my machine knowledge to fix you if you want.

Computer I'll try anything, even trusting a Gremlin. I don't want to admit to Eileen that I've mucked up so badly.

Gremlin Come on, I'll see what I can do.

They exit.

Snowballs enters, sniffing around.

Snowballs sings. Tune: "Click Go the Shears" Chorus

Sniff goes the nose now, sniff sniff sniff

I can find most things, just need to get a whiff

So if you lose something and you need to find it quick

Just call for clever Snowballs and I'll be there in a tick.

Snowballs exits, sniffing.

Enter Eileen and Tizzy.

Eileen What a relief! The Wrap-O-Matic is running, the presents are replaced, and the treadmills are fixed! I was getting worried. Santa and Mrs Santa are due back tomorrow. It was almost a disaster! Thank you, Tizzy Tinsel.

Tizzy I'm just glad to be able to help. And to make up for my mistakes with the reindeers. I'll have a look at those lights now. *(Goes around the back of the Christmas tree, taking pliers from pocket.)* Aha! A simple sabotage! Just a sec... there, all fixed. *(Turns the lights back on.)*

Snowballs is heard growling outside.

Eileen That's Snowballs! *(Calling out.)* What is it, boy?

Snowballs enters, shoving the Gremlin ahead of him, with Computer following behind.

Snowballs I found this naughty Gremlin in the act of trying to hack our precious Computer!
Grrr...ruff...ruff!

Eileen Oh, you wicked Gremlin!

Gremlin But – but – you've got it wrong!

Eileen Of course we have. NOT! How could you! That's our dear friend and helper you're trying to wreck!

Computer *(Coming forward.)* Wait, Eileen! Sparklepants is telling the truth! I did a stupid thing and messed up my OWN insides, and Sparklepants just fixed me.

Eileen Sparklepants?

Gremlin It's my name.

Snowballs snickers.

Eileen Is this true, Sparklepants? That you fixed Computer?

Gremlin It is. A bit out of character, but there you go.

Tizzy Was it YOU who messed with the Wrap-O-Matic?

Gremlin Yes.

Eileen And electrified the tree?

Gremlin Ah...actually, yes, sorry.

Snowballs growls menacingly and snaps at Sparklepants.

Eileen And the doorbell?

Gremlin Yes.

Tizzy And the treadmills?

Gremlin Guilty as charged, Your Honour.

Eileen But why?

Gremlin I'm a Gremlin. It's what we do. But don't worry. I'm leaving. Computer has explained how important the work you all do here is, so I'll leave you to it.

Eileen You can stay if you promise to change your ways.

Gremlin Hmm...I probably can't promise that. Messing in machines is just too much fun. Hee hee! Bye, everybody.

Computer Thank you for fixing me!

Gremlin You're welcome. Just don't tell anybody. I wouldn't want to get the wrong reputation. Ciao! (*Gremlin exits.*)

Eileen Well. All's well that ends well, I guess. Now, Santa and Mrs Santa are coming home tomorrow, so we'd better get this place cleaned and tidied up! Tizzy and Snowballs, can you run the vacuum cleaner around and tidy up please? Oh – and sort out some welcome home party snacks. Computer, can you and the reindeers please do the decorations? I'll go and make sure the elves are all sorted.

All Aye aye, Eileen! (*They all buzz around appropriately, then exit.*)

Effects to show time passing.

All characters enter.

Eileen Well, they'll be home any minute.

All Yay!

Eileen I hope they'll be happy with how we did. Now, final check. Reindeers, is your Reindeer Rock dance ready to go?

Reindeers Ready!

Eileen Snowballs and Tizzy, all tidy and party snacks set out?

Snowballs and Tizzy Check!

Eileen Elves, workshop all neat and tidy?

Elves Yes Boss!

The doorbell rings. It hasn't been fixed yet, so still Toccata and Fugue or whatever.

Eileen They're here!

Snowballs rushes to get the door.

Santa, Mrs Santa enter.

Eileen and all Welcome home!

Santa and Mrs Santa Thank you, thank you!

Santa Everything all right here? No dramas to report? The doorbell sounds funny.

Eileen No dramas. None that we couldn't handle, that is.

Santa Excellent, excellent. Well done all.

Mrs Santa *(To Tizzy)* Hello, Tizzy love, how's it going?

Tizzy It's been fun! How was your holiday?

Mrs Santa Relaxing and exhausting all at the same time! It's good to be home.

Snowballs enters hauling a big trolley full of wrapped up packages.

Santa Oh, thank you, Snowballs. We brought presents for everybody!

All Yay!

Mrs Santa Now, I've just got to pop out and get something else. *(Exits.)*

Santa starts handing out presents. Ad lib dialogue. Nothing for Computer?

Mrs Santa enters with a very big present wheeling along beside her.

Mrs Santa Now, Computer, we got something very special at Duty Free. *(Lifts the gift wrap cover. Underneath is another Computer – a laptop who unfolds perhaps?)* Computer, say hello to your new assistant, C2. Everybody, meet C2, Computer's new assistant.

Computer Oh! Another Computer! Welcome, C2!

All Welcome C2! *(They rush to welcome the new addition.)*

C2 Hello everyone! Oh, I'm so excited to be part of the Santa's Workshop team! My dream job!

Offstage noises. They all perk up and listen.

Old American lady voice off Yoo hoo! Santa! Where'd you get to, you handsome ol' devil?

Santa looks alarmed. Mrs Santa looks dangerous. Everyone else looks mystified.

Mrs Santa Sic 'em, Snowballs.

Snowballs runs out woof woofing and growling.

Old lady VO What the heck! OK, OK, dog, I'm leaving. Oh well, seeing as I came all this way, I might as well take an Arctic cruise! Oh look, a cute lil' Gremlin. Wanna come with? Let's go make some mischief!

Gremlin voice off Hee hee!

Old Lady and Gremlin together Hee hee!

Snowballs enters dusting off paws.

Snowballs I saw them off.

All Good boy, Snowballs!

Tizzy You deserve a *(Takes out a bag. Reconsiders and puts it away again.)* You deserve an award. Watchdog of the Year.

Computer C2 and I will make a Certificate later.

Eileen The elves can make a trophy!

Reindeer The reindeers can take Snowballs on a magical mystery sleigh ride!

All Yay!

Snowballs looks gratified.

Eileen And now it's time to party! Reindeers, take it away!

The Reindeers sing and dance to The Reindeer Rock.

Tune: "Ballin' the Jack". Sample video for steps, though othese can be changed to suit:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWryDF_yyHQ

First you put your two knees close up tight

Then, you sway it to the left and you sway it to the right

Step around the floor kind of nice and light

Then you twist around, you twist around with all of your might

Stretch your lovin' hoofs straight out in space

Then you do the Reindeer Rock-a with-a style and grace

Swing your foot way 'round and bring it back

Now that's what we call our Christmas dance—

The Reindeer Rock!

Tizzy Ahmm...I hope this is ok, but I happened to see the elves practicing the Reindeer Rock song and dance. *(The elves look sheepish and giggle.)* Do you think it would be all right if they had a go at doing it?

Reindeer Yay! We'd love to see it!

The elves do the song and dance. They have bells attached to their persons somewhere so they jingle. When they finish, everyone applauds.

Mrs Santa That looks like fun! Can you teach us all to do it?

Reindeers Sure can. Everybody up now! You too, kids and grown ups!

They demonstrate.

First you put your two knees close up tight

Then, you sway it to the left and you sway it to the right

Step around the floor kind of nice and light

Then you twist around, you twist around with all of your might

Stretch your lovin' hoofs straight out in space

Then you do the Reindeer Rock-a with-a style and grace

Swing your foot way 'round and bring it back

Now that's what we call our Christmas dance—

Shouted. The Reindeer Rock!

(Note: if desired, Santa can do his karaoke song here.)

Santa It's going to be a cracker Christmas!

All Yay!

Mrs Santa Here's to that! Let's pull one of these crackers to celebrate being home. *(She takes a cracker from the basket, and pops it with Santa. They mime breathing in the exploding pepper.)* Aachoo! Aachoo!

All Aachoo!

Snowballs *(Sniffing.)* Pepper in the Christmas crackers! Aachoo!

Eileen Elves, is this some cheeky trick of yours?

Elves No!

Tizzy I think I know who might have done it.

All Gremlin!

Eileen Well let's hope it was Sparklepants, and not a new one!

Gremlin *(Voice Off, getting fainter)* Hee hee hee hee hee ... bye now for really!

Snowballs sniffs. Nods, satisfied.

Eileen Really gone this time?

Snowballs Yep, really gone this time.

Santa Well, if we can't pull the crackers for a cracker Christmas, we'll have to SING a Cracker Christmas song. All together –

All We wish you a Cracker Christmas
We wish you a Cracker Christmas
We wish you a Cracker Christmas
And a Haappy New Yeeear!

CRACKER JOKES TO CHOOSE FROM!

What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations? Tinselitis!

What happens to elves when they are naughty? Santa gives them the sack!

Why couldn't the skeleton go to the Christmas party? He had nobody to go with.

What do frogs wear on their feet? Open toad sandals.

What athlete is warmest during winter? A long jumper.

What happened to the man that stole an advent calendar? He got 25 days.

What do Santa's little helpers learn at school? The elf-abet.

Who's Rudolph's favourite pop star? Beyon-sleigh!

Who hides in the bakery at Christmas? A mince spy.

Who delivers presents to pets? Santa Paws!

What do snowmen wear on their heads? Ice caps.

Who is Santa's favourite singer? Elf-is Presley

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire? Frostbite.

Where does Santa go when he's sick? The elf centre.

What was the snowman doing in the vegetable patch? Picking his nose!

Did Rudolph go to school? Nope! He was elf-taught.

How do snowmen get around? They ride an icicle.

What's a parent's favourite Christmas carol? Silent Night!

What does Santa spend his wages on? Jingle Bills.

Why did Santa's helper see the doctor? Because he had a low "elf" esteem!

How does Good King Wenceslas like his pizzas? One that's deep pan, crisp and even!