

SETTING: *Various locations in Christmas Town, the North Pole.*

AT RISE: *It is one week before Christmas Eve on Winter Meadow. Final preparations for Christmas are underway. DASHER, PRANCER, COMET and BLITZEN enter. DASHER is carrying a mail satchel, COMET is carrying a star that he is polishing, and BLITZEN is carrying a Christmas tree. They are all bustling about. PRANCER steps down center and begins to sing.*

PRANCER

*Christmas Time is here
The best time of the year
When every child young and old
Looks forward to the winter cold
The world is full of cheer
For Christmas Time is here!*

COMET

*Christmas Time is here
The best time of the year
The snow is swirling past in flakes
While the Christmas cookie bakes
And candy canes appear
Yes, Christmas Time is here!*

DASHER

*All the world is soft and white
All the stars shine extra bright
As we all wait for the night
When Santa takes his flight*

BLITZEN

*Christmas Time is here!
The best time of the year!
But we still have much work to do...
We're North Pole Reindeer, Level Two!*

THE REINDEER

(Saluting)
North Pole Reindeer, Level Two!

BLITZEN

There's still much to achieve
One week 'til Christmas Eve

(PRANCER, DASHER and COMET exit. BLITZEN is hauling the tree across stage as SANTA CLAUS enters opposite, sans hat and carrying a clipboard. He consults his checklist...)

SANTA

(To himself)
 Sleigh washed and waxed... Check. Jingle bells polished... Check.

(He looks up and spies BLITZEN.)

Blitzen! Where have you been?

BLITZEN

Just got back from making my last delivery, Santa!

SANTA

Every house has a Christmas tree?

BLITZEN

Yes, sir! I even have one left over. I'm taking it back to Christmas Forest now.

SANTA

Excellent! Carry on, Blitzen.

(BLITZEN carries the tree off. SANTA consults his checklist.)

Christmas Trees delivered... check. Stars polished...

(He calls off)

Comet?!

(COMET enters, carrying a star that he is polishing.)

COMET

Yes, Santa?

SANTA

Are all the stars in the Milky Way polished?

COMET

Finishing the last one now, Santa.

SANTA

Make sure it's nice and bright. Christmas Eve is in one week – I want those stars to sparkle!

COMET

Yes, sir!

(COMET hurries off. SANTA consults his clipboard. DASHER enters behind him carrying a mail pouch.)

SANTA

Stars polished... Check.

DASHER

Santa!

SANTA

Dasher, what are you doing here?

DASHER

Special delivery, sir.

(He takes a letter from his pouch.)

SANTA

Now? It's only one week until Christmas Eve. Let me see that.

(DASHER hands him the letter. SANTA reads it aloud.)

“Dear Santa, my little brother Billy is in the hospital...”

(He reads the rest in silence then hands the letter back to DASHER.)

Take this to the elves. Tell them to make this order Top Priority.

DASHER

Top Priority?!

SANTA

I don't like it. It's technology. I hate technology.

PRANCER

But think of it, Santa – no more wrong turns, no more breaking-and-entering charges... It's guaranteed to increase your Christmas Eve Delivery Efficiency by fifty-two percent! All you have to do is turn her on and then do what she tells you...

(PRANCER flips the switch. A sexy woman's voice emits from the G.D.S. saying "Hello, Santa. Merry Christmas.")

I call her "Irene."

SANTA

I still don't like it. The Air Team and I do just fine on our own.

PRANCER

But for how long, sir? At the rate the global population is expanding...

SANTA

(Ignoring this)

Thank you, Prancer.

(He starts to walk away.)

PRANCER

With the G.D.S you'll have more time to eat the milk and cookies left out for you by the children.

(SANTA stops.)

SANTA

Milk and cookies?

PRANCER

Yes, sir.

SANTA

I do love milk and cookies.

PRANCER

I know you do.

SANTA

I'll need to take it out for a test drive.

PRANCER

Of course...

SANTA

The Air Team will need to be hitched up...

PRANCER

The Air Team is hitched up and ready to go, sir.

(PRANCER holds up the G.D.S.)

I'll just attach her to the sleigh for you.

(PRANCER exits with the G.D.S. SANTA shakes his head.)

SANTA

(To himself)

Technology... Let's see, where was I...?

(He goes back to his list.)

Christmas trees delivered... Stars polished... Stocking stuffers... Stocking stuffers!
Where's Rudolph?

(He calls off.)

Rudolph...? Rudolph!

(COMET, BLITZEN and DASHER enter.)

DASHER

Is there a problem, Santa?

SANTA

I'm looking for Rudolph. Have you seen him?

DASHER/COMET/BLITZEN

No sir.

SANTA

The elves can't pack up the stocking stuffers until he gets here.

(PRANCER *enters.*)

PRANCER

Santa, the G.D.S. is attached. The Air Team is ready when you are.

SANTA

Oh, very well...

(*He hands the clipboard to PRANCER.*)

Find Rudolph. I need those stocking stuffers.

PRANCER

Yes, sir...

SANTA

Wait a minute. My hat. Where's my hat...?

(*He searches his head, his pockets, etc. to no avail.*)

Mrs. Claus has a fit when I go sleigh-riding without my hat.

PRANCER

I'll fetch it for you, Santa.

SANTA

No! I'll get it myself. You find Rudolph.

(*SANTA exits.*)

COMET

Why is Santa taking the sleigh out?

PRANCER

He's testing the G.D.S., a new device that will help him locate his target objectives more efficiently.

BLITZEN

Huh?

COMET

It sounds like technology. Santa *hates* technology.

DASHER

Maybe you should use your G.D.S. thing to locate Rudolph.

PRANCER

Very funny.

(Calling off)

Rudolph...? Where is he?!

COMET

He probably forgot what day it is.

PRANCER

How could he forget? It's the same thing every year. One week before Christmas Eve, we complete our tasks and report in.

COMET

But this is *Rudolph* we're talking about. He's not a Level Two reindeer like us.

BLITZEN

He barely made Level *Three*.

DASHER

Only because Santa took pity on him and gave him a job.

COMET

The dirtiest job in Christmas Town.

BLITZEN

He doesn't deserve any better. Not with that freaky red nose.

DASHER

It glows in the dark!

COMET

Reindeer are supposed to have brown noses – like us!

DASHER

His nose is so... so...

BLITZEN

Different. And different is *bad*. A herd depends on conformity, on being the same, on doing the same things. We run together, we rest together, we graze together...

PRANCER

We're *all* expected to complete our jobs on *time* together...

(Calling off)

Rudolph!

(SANTA enters wearing his hat.)

SANTA

The elves are asking about those stocking stuffers. Where's Rudolph?

PRANCER

He hasn't shown up, sir.

SANTA

If he's not here by the time I get back, Prancer, I'm sending you down after him

PRANCER

(Panicking)

RUDOLPH!

COMET

Look! There he is.

(COMET points. We see a red glow offstage.)

RUDOLPH (O.S.)

I'm coming! I'm coming!

(RUDOLPH enters, carrying a bucket of coal.)

RUDOLPH

Sorry I'm late, Santa. I had to dig deeper than usual but it was worth it. Look!

(RUDOLPH pulls a lump of coal out of the bucket and holds it up.)

SANTA

Wow...

(He takes the coal from RUDOLPH and examines it.)

That's one good looking lump of coal.

RUDOLPH

And there's plenty more like it – enough for every kid on the Naughty List.

(DASHER, BLITZEN, COMET and PRANCER *gasp in horror and cover their ears.*)

DASHER

Rudolph! Don't say that!

RUDOLPH

Don't say what? Naughty List...?

(*They gasp and cover their ears again.*)

SANTA

It breaks my heart to leave coal in a Christmas stocking, but I'm afraid some children leave me no choice. Nice work, Rudolph.

(SANTA *hands the lump of coal back to RUDOLPH.*)

Take this over to the elves so they can pack it up.

RUDOLPH

Yes, sir!

(RUDOLPH *hauls the buckets off.*)

PRANCER

I've set the coordinates on the G.D.S. for a short spin around the North Pole. All you have to do is follow the verbal instructions she gives you.

SANTA

All right, then. Here I go.

(SANTA *exits off.*)

PRANCER

(*Calling after him*)

Good luck, Santa!

DASHER

I love watching Santa take off in his sleigh.