

**Dialogue Samples from JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME**

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**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**