

GREAT DAY IN STARFLAKE COUNTY COURT

A Play for Children

By
MARY BUFTON

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SETTING

A courtroom. The judge's bench is at the left rear. Flanking it on the left side of the stage are chairs for the defendant and attorneys. Provisions for the court reporter should be near the judge's bench. The witness chair is at center back. The jury can be seated facing the attorneys and the right and front of the witness chairs. Chairs for witnesses and spectators are placed behind the jury.

Suggestions for music and props are general. They can be simplified or made elaborate according to your wishes. "Santa Claus Parade" and "When Santa Claus Gets Your Letter" appear in the book "Rudolph The Red Nose Reindeer," published by Belwin Publishing Co., Melville, New York.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 b, 6 g, extras)

JUDGE TERESA ELLIOT: Tough but fair.

MR. BRIAN MICKELSON: Attorney for the State.

MS. CYNTHIA CINDERS: Attorney for the defense.

SANTA CLAUS: The defendant.

TINKLE ELF: From Santa's workshop.

BAILIFF: Swears in the witnesses.

SANDWELL MCDUGAL: Officer on the Starflake County Police Force.

MRS. LUANN FOSTENBERG: Witness for the State.

MR. ROBERT HOOPER: Member of the ground crew at the airport and a witness for the State.

MS. ANNIE FARMER: Vice president of a well-known candy company, and witness for the State.

MS. HOPE MOYER: Airline stewardess and witness for the defense.

COURT REPORTER: May be boy or girl.

JURY: Several small children.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: As the curtain opens the COURT REPORTER, BAILIFF, JURY, WITNESSES, and COURT SPECTATORS are already seated in their places. MR. MICKELSON comes on stage carrying a briefcase, seats himself and begins to look over some papers. A COMMOTION is heard outside and loud VOICES are coming closer, those on stage turn to see what is taking place. TINKLE, SANTA and MS. CINDERS enter with OFFICER MCDUGAL following them.)

SANTA: Now, look here. Let me out of here!

MS. CINDERS: Can't you pay some attention to what I say?

I know what I'm doing. If you'll just cooperate I'll have you out of here this afternoon.

SANTA: I have no time to spare. I've got work to do.

TINKLE: *(Takes hold of SANTA'S hand and leads him toward his chair.)* Come on, Santa, let's give Ms. Cinders a try.

SANTA: I'll do it for you, Tinkle. But it better not be for long.

(They seat themselves. MS. CINDERS and SANTA in chairs and TINKLE on the floor in front of Santa. She takes out a big fan and begins to fan Santa.)

BAILIFF: All rise. The honorable Judge Teresa Elliot.

(JUDGE enters. Mounts to her bench. Raps.)

JUDGE: You may be seated. Let it be known that this session of the court of Starflake County is now to begin.

The case of Santa Claus vs. the People. Santa has been accused of quite a list, breaking and entering, unfair interstate trade practices, illegal parking, unfair wages, flying with no flight plan. My, my. Well, let's get on with it.

Ms. Cinders and Mr. Mickelson, are you ready?

ATTORNEYS IN UNISON: We are, Your Honor.

JUDGE: Let us proceed. Mr. Mickelson, you may call your first witness.

MR. MICKELSON: I call Officer Sandy McDougal to the stand.

(OFFICER MCDOUGAL goes to stand in front of the witness.)

BAILIFF: Raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you, God?

OFFICER MCDOUGAL: I do.

BAILIFF: You may be seated.

MR. MICKELSON: State your full name and occupation.

OFFICER MCDOUGAL: My name is Sandwell Herman McDougal, and I'm on the force of the Starflake County Police.

MR. MICKELSON: Where were you on the evening of December 24, ____? *(Use the year previous to your production.)*

OFFICER MCDOUGAL: At the corner of Beacon and Fairfield.

MR. MICKELSON: And what did you see there?

OFFICER MCDOUGAL: A flock of reindeer on top of a house.

MR. MICKELSON: Was that an unusual thing to see at Beacon and Fairfield?

OFFICER MCDOUGAL: I should think so. It's illegal.

MR. MICKELSON: What's illegal?

OFFICER MCDOUGAL: To park your reindeer on top of a house.

MR. MICKELSON: It's breaking the law then?

OFFICER MCDOUGAL: It surely is.

MR. MICKELSON: No more questions. Your witness.

(MR. MICKELSON seats himself in his chair and MS. CINDERS takes her place in front of the WITNESS.)

MS. CINDERS: In what special ordinance does it state that it's illegal to park your reindeer on a housetop?

OFFICER MCDOUGAL: Well, in no special ordinance.

MS. CINDERS: Then you're making up the laws as you go along.

OFFICER MCDOUGAL: Of course not. No one would park his car on top of a house.

MS. CINDERS: Not a car. But you admit that there is NO LAW in Starflake County that says one can't park his reindeer on a housetop?

OFFICER MCDOUGAL: I guess so.

MS. CINDERS: No more questions.

JUDGE: You may step down. Mr. Mickelson, please call your next witness.

MR. MICKELSON: I wish to call Mrs. Luann Fostenberg.

(MRS. FOSTENBERG comes forward from among the SPECTATORS and takes her place in front of the witness chair.)

BAILIFF: Raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you God?

MRS. FOSTENBERG: I do. *(SHE takes her place on the witness chair.)*

MR. MICKELSON: Where were you on the evening of December 24, ___?

MRS. FOSTENBERG: I was in my home. I was very tired, so I retired early, right after the news.

MR. MICKELSON: I see. Do you live alone?

MRS. FOSTENBERG: Yes, I do.

MR. MICKELSON: Can you tell me exactly what happened on that fateful evening?

MRS. FOSTENBERG: Well, as I said, I live alone and it's a lonely frightening thing sometimes. First of all, I listened to the news. I always do that, from ten to ten-thirty. I never miss it. Then I had my usual glass of milk and a cookie. I remember I had a plate with three cookies on it. I didn't feel that hungry, so I ate only one.

MR. MICKELSON: *(Holding out a paper plate.)* Have you ever seen this plate before?

MRS. FOSTENBERG: Yes, that is my plate. And that looks like a cookie that I might have baked.

SANTA: They weren't the best either.

JUDGE: (*Raps for order.*) Order in this court!

MRS. FOSTENBERG: They were excellent cookies! I used an old family recipe.

JUDGE: (*Raps again.*) Mrs. Fostenberg, I must ask for your cooperation. We must have order here.

MRS. FOSTENBERG: I'm sorry, Your Honor.

MR. MICKELSON: And when was the last time that you saw this plate?

MRS. FOSTENBERG: It had three cookies on it last Christmas Eve.

MR. MICKELSON: And it disappeared.

MRS. FOSTENBERG: Yes, it did. I thought a ghost must have spirited it away.

MR. MICKELSON: Your Honor, I submit this plate as well as the cookie as evidence for the State.

JUDGE: Very well. Please continue, Mr. Mickelson, Go on with your story.

MRS. FOSTENBERG: Then I went to bed. I must have dozed off but I heard then a clattering on the roof of my house and some tingles and some jingles and some pingles.

MR. MICKELSON: What did you do?

MRS. FOSTENBERG: Pulled the quilt up over my head, that's what.

MR. MICKELSON: Go on.

MRS. FOSTENBERG: I laid there just petrified, then I realized that there was someone in my house. I heard footsteps in the living room downstairs. And then that jingle and pingle and then everything was quiet again.

MR. MICKELSON: When did you go downstairs to investigate?

MRS. FOSTENBERG: Oh, not until morning.

MR. MICKELSON: And what did you find?

MRS. FOSTENBERG: A spot of soot on the kitchen floor and the plate of cookies was gone.

MR. MICKELSON: No more questions. Your witness.

End of Freeview

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