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presents . . .

“Who Killed Santa?”

Play version
for 10 to 16 guests

by Stephanie Chambers

First edition
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Although the characters in this mystery are loosely based on real people, the events depicted in this mystery are totally fictional.

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The Suspects

The portly gent who dresses in red won't be going down any chimneys this year. He is dead – possibly murdered – yes it's scandalous but true. It happened just before the Christmas party began. Did someone not want him to be here? Was it revenge for an unwanted present from Santa last year? Or was it just old age catching up with him?

We're here at Chatties Restaurant to find out the real juicy truth. The media are also here. But this time they aren't just reporting what happened. They are suspects too.

The people present at the party are:

Martina Finn – My husband and I are directors of the company. I work very hard but I enjoy my job as long as everyone behaves themselves. I am careful about the way I look and work in a very professional manner. I can hold my head high in the business community. In my spare time, I like to do sign language. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a modern stylish suit and carry a mobile phone and an organizer. Add long colored nails.

Nick Finn – I'm also involved in the business. Martina really runs it. She has most of the control. I spend a lot of my time just making sure everyone is pulling their weight and everything is under control. I'm a bit edgy because I've just given up smoking. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a suit and a jazzy tie. Add some pillows to make yourself look plump, wear a gray beard and act a little agitated.

Winnie Bailey – I'm the office manager at the company. I'm also a mother and a softball player. I've worked here ever since I left school. I'm very good at shorthand and can type 100 words a minute. I expect everyone else to be as efficient as me, but they never are. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a softball player's outfit. Carry a softball bat.

Glenda Drake – I'm a graphic artist. I'm one of the most creative people alive today. I'm also a mother. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a modern t-shirt and jeans. Carry a laptop computer (or a cut-out of one in cardboard) and a pen with which to doodle on your paper napkins.

Ebony Sutherland – I'm the production manager. I have an eye for detail. I love animals. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a t-shirt with an animal on the front and jeans.

Josh Fraser – I am an account executive and I'm a cool dude that the ladies love. I take care of the client liaison for the organization. My good looks and charm have won many hearts and attracted clients to the business. I am a great asset but they don't seem to realize that. *Dress suggestions:* Wear black clothes. Carry some weights. Add some extra padding to create fake muscles. Wear your sunglasses.

Barret Norcott – I'm the "fix it" man who repairs the company's computers and backs up all the data. I spend most of my time indoors and could do with a bit more exercise. I'm in love with Mrs Claus. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a t-shirt and add some pillows to make you look plump. Carry tools or a screwdriver.

Reg (short for Regina if female) Wells – I'm the President of Gas Plus More convenience stores and gas stations. I'm a great pilot and I love flying planes. I've been a friend of Martina and Nick for years and their company gets their gas from us. *Dress suggestions:* Wear some overalls as if you have dashed in from the gas station. Carry a mobile phone.

Rosemary Piper – I'm the boss at SDX TV. I'm into natural remedies but that doesn't mean I've got my head in the clouds. I'm a very effective and firm boss. I just believe everybody should eat healthy natural foods and drink lots of herbal teas. My children are teenagers now. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a stylish modern suit and carry a mobile phone. Carry a small portable TV (or a TV guide) and some herbal tablets.

Grant Lowe – I am a disc-jockey with Radio ZZZ. The company advertises on our radio station. I'm fit and healthy and mad about music and all sports. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a t-shirt for a new band. Wear headphones and carry a football.



Optional characters:

Freya Walker – I’m a sales rep for SDX TV station and a new mother. The company advertises on our TV station. As sales rep I try to dress well to give the image that our TV station is very successful, but I often find I have baby food somewhere on my clothes. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a modern suit. Carry some diapers.

Jack Fielder – I’m a sales manager for Radio ZZZ. I like going fishing when I have time off. I always carry a radio with me wherever I go because I need to know who is advertising on the other radio stations. *Dress suggestions:* Expensive jeans & a shirt. Carry a radio &/or a fishing line.

Gibson Downs – I am a journalist with the local newspaper. The company advertises with us and sometimes I write their advertorials. I love to play golf but more than that I love my wife. I just want all you women to know that I’m happily married to my beautiful wife. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a suit and carry a mobile phone and a golf club and/or golf balls.

Lorenzo Giueni – I am the owner of Chatties Restaurant and I am one of the world’s finest chefs. *Dress suggestions:* Wear chefs check pants, a white shirt and a chef’s hat.

Mrs Claus – I am Santa’s wife. I am the real boss behind Christmas. *Dress suggestions:* Wear a conservative red dress with your white hair tied back in a bun. You may like to add a red bonnet.

Rudolph – I am Santa’s main reindeer and I’m the famous red-nosed reindeer. The other reindeers used to be mean to me. They never let me join in any of their games. But then Santa gave me a job pulling his sleigh and then they all thought I was special. *Dress suggestions:* Wear some antlers on your head and a shiny red nose.

Suspects

Martina
Finn

Nick
Finn

Winnie
Bailey

Glenda
Drake

Ebony
Sutherland

Josh
Fraser

Barret
Norcott

Reg
Wells

Rosemary
Piper

Grant
Lowe

Freya
Walker

Jack
Fielder

Gibson
Downs

Lorenzo
Giueni

Mrs
Claus

Rudolph
(The Red-Nosed Reindeer)

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The Play

Note: *Although this is in play format, you do not have to take to a stage and act it out. You can just sit around a dining table and read out your lines or sit in a circle on sofas etc.*

Note: *If it says the line may be said by “Anyone”, we recommend that one of the optional characters take a turn to say the line. If there are no optional witnesses or not many of them, then everyone should take a turn saying one of these lines. Try and make sure everyone gets a similar number of lines to say. You may like to work out beforehand who will say each of these “Anyone” clues and write their character’s name next to each one. If a character isn’t present, read the instructions next to the character’s name. This will tell you who should read the line or whether you should skip it.*

- Martina Finn: My husband Nick and I run this business and believe me it keeps us as busy as tinsel makers around Christmas.
- Grant Lowe: For forty years all I’ve received for Christmas from Santa is chimney ash and last year he upgraded me to a lump of coal. Talk about discriminated against – why couldn’t I have a decent present like everybody else?
- Nick Finn: Martina gets stressed out by Christmas. I just go grayer (*pointing to your beard*).
- Glenda Drake: I’m an artist and I’m sick to death of drawing Santa. I’m also wife and a mother, but really I’m just an unemployed elf.
- Martina Finn: Why can’t we have celebrations all year round instead of everyone wanting everything at the same time? It’s crazy. By the time Santa comes to my house, I’m too tired to put out any milk and cookies for him.

Nick Finn: Santa had such a great job – playing with toys all year and delivering them at Christmas. I want his job! Why not? The position’s vacant now, isn’t it?

Glenda Drake: A few years ago, I applied to be one of Santa’s little helpers, but I didn’t get the job.

Ebony Sutherland: I’m the production manager. I try to get my husband who is a cop to arrest people who abuse animals.

Josh Fraser: Technically I am an account executive, but the real truth is that I’m Rudi Valentino in disguise.

Rudolph (*if not present, skip this line*):
I’m a reindeer. Some of the countries we travel to are really hot at Christmas. We pleaded with Santa that we didn’t want to go there, but he just ignored us.

Barret Norcott: I’m the photocopy boy and general rouse-about. I have a lot of relatives and friends who are overweight and I’m not that thin myself and I think Santa is a bad role model for “dieters”.

Grant Lowe: I am one of those people Barret talked about as not wanting Santa as a dieting role model.

Reg Wells: I’m the President of Gas Plus More convenience stores and gas stations and I admit that yesterday I officially banned Santa from our stores.

Freya Walker (*if not present, skip this line*):
I’m a sales rep for SDX TV station and a wife and mother of two non-toilet trained individuals. My life is a constant cycle of poo-poops – sorry baby talk has gone to my head.

Rosemary Piper: I’m the boss at the TV station. I’ve been swapping persona’s depending on which politician I’ve been dealing with.

Grant Lowe: I am a disc-jockey with Radio ZZZ.

Jack Fielder (*if not present, skip this line*):
I’m a sales manager for Radio ZZZ.

Lorenzo Giueni (*if not present, skip this line*):
I am the owner of Chatties Restaurant.

Rudolph (*if not present, skip this line*):
Santa was always receiving food and drink everywhere. But he never gave us anything to eat – only a bit of water now and then and a few measly carrots.

Gibson Downs (*if not present, Grant can say the second line*):
I am a sales representative from the local newspaper. I am married to a very pretty lady – not Julia Roberts but twice as nice.

Anyone: I’m so confused about politics and life in general – sometimes I think I’m Santa myself. Just don’t poke me in the belly or I’ll go “ho ho ho”.

Winnie Bailey: I run the office by day and at night I run my husband and two children. Sometimes I tie them all to the running machine and I just go and have a well-deserved lie down.

Glenda Drake: When I asked Santa why I didn't get the job of being one of his helpers, he couldn't give me a proper answer. I think it was female discrimination but I couldn't afford to take him to court over it.

Freya Walker (*if not present, have Winnie say this line*):
My diaper expenditure has reduced my Xmas budget to zero, so I can't afford to buy presents this year. I was afraid Santa would think I was awful and not come down my chimney and my kids would be disappointed. So now I'm glad he's dead as that solves that problem.

Anyone: I saw Reg taking down all the Santa decorations at his/her convenience stores and gas stations, yet he/she used to like his/her stores to display lots of Christmas spirit. You seemed to feel real nasty towards Santa Claus. Why was that Reg?

Reg Wells: I saw Santa shopping across the street at one of our competitors. So now you know the real truth – Santa had bad taste.

Winnie Bailey: Santa didn't have any kids of his own, so he didn't know what it's like to be a parent. He just dumps the toys for the kids to fight over and clears out before dawn.

Rosemary Piper: Everyone wanted Santa in their TV ad, but there was only one of him and his agent charged an absolute mint for his personal appearances. So after they've paid that much, advertisers didn't have much money to spend on the rest of their TV ad, so they end up with tacky lists of products, and our ratings fall as a result. My producers made it very clear that if the ratings didn't improve, I'd be out of a job.

Ebony Sutherland: I think Santa was cruel for making those poor little reindeer pull him and all his presents all over the globe.

Lorenzo Giueni (*if not present, skip this line*):
Santa generally had brunch at my restaurant after he had delivered his presents on Christmas day. No matter what fancy dishes we had on the menu, he always ordered a hot dog.

Jack Fielder (*if not present, skip this line*):
Santa came to my house when my children were young and he broke the chimney. And he didn't have any public liability insurance!

Martina Finn: The police said we should tell you all about our hobbies so that you get to know us a bit more. My hobbies are learning sign language and Spanish.

Nick Finn: I read a lot. That's my main hobby.

Winnie Bailey: My main hobby is softball. It keeps me fit. Sometimes I also kick boxes. No – I mean I do kick-boxing. But the birth of my second-child has slowed me down a bit.

Josh Fraser: I generally work-out at lunchtime and whenever I can, so I've bought a few weights with me.

Glenda Drake: I love to paint – trees mainly. I am trying to get fit by walking.

Ebony Sutherland: My main hobbies, when I get time, are taking pictures and traveling.

Rosemary Piper: My nick-name is "Voo-doo doctor" because I am into natural medications and remedies.

Freya Walker (*if not present, have Winnie say this line*):
I should take herbs or vitamins as well, but to be honest I just can't afford them – not with my diaper bill.

Barret Norcott: My hobbies are playing football and eating pasta and pizza and night-clubbing. Of course, I only ate pizza when I wasn't on a diet and I'd never have eaten it at all, if it weren't for Santa's bad example of course.

Anyone: I agree with Barret when he says that Santa wasn't a very healthy role model. It would have been good for Santa to pull that sleigh himself sometimes, and he could certainly have done with a better diet.

Reg Wells: My main hobby is flying my plane. I also walk a fair bit and work out periodically.

Jack Fielder (*if not present, Nick Finn can say the second line*):
I like fishing. I think it's time we all did a bit of fishing, but this time fishing for clues rather than fins.

Freya Walker (*if not present, skip this line*):
My main hobby is sleeping.

Gibson Downs (*if not present, Grant can say the second line*):
My main hobby playing golf. I also like reading murder mystery novels and action-packed stories.

Rudolph (*if not present, skip this line*):
We reindeers were fed up with all the hard work we had to do and how Santa never paid us anything – just gave us a few carrots. So we formed a union.

Mrs Claus (*if not present, skip this line*):
I really don't know why you like me Barret. I am not really your sort of girl. Santa, bless his dearly departed heart, was a much better match for me.

Martina Finn: I have pretty fingernails – see. It is my one luxury. I get them done.

Josh Fraser: Hope you guys won't mind me pumping a bit of iron while I'm sitting here. Us heart-throbs have to keep fit.

Nick Finn: I don't exercise a lot, but the good news is that I have given up smoking. So I won't be contributing to any smoke going up our chimney this year.

Gibson Downs (*if not present, Grant can say this line*):
Last year at Christmas when I was sneaking back to the tree to add another present for my wife, I found her and Santa kissing. Santa scurried up the chimney and my wife said I must have been hallucinating but I know I hadn't been.

Lorenzo Giueni (*if not present, skip this line*):
I love to walk my very large dogs though often I feel a bit like Santa's sleigh being dragged around the neighborhood.

Anyone: This should be a real celebration now that Santa isn't around to bother us.

Anyone: If Santa has magical powers like everyone thinks he has, why doesn't he just “zap” from house to house?

Grant Lowe: Last time I saw Santa I'd had a bit too much to drink, so I confused him for a Red-Butt Baboon. I told him to go swing in the trees and he gave me a really dirty look.

Ebony Sutherland: I am an animal lover and I have two cats and two dogs. Oh and I also have a one-year old baby which makes traveling difficult.

Rosemary Piper: My other hobby is doing "crafty" things around my home. And I mean things like painting flowers on pots, not sneaky things.

Rudolph (*if not present, anyone can say this*):
They say that people who are obsessed about traveling constantly around the world are a bit psychologically unbalanced. I think Santa was like that.

Reg Wells: Ebony has an interest in travel, so we often talk about all the places I have been to in my plane.

Josh Fraser: Barret cornered me when I came into the office. He wanted to know how you would go about cutting the brake cables on a sleigh.

Barret Norcott: I didn't ask you about brake cables, Josh. You must have not heard me right. I asked you about break dancing.

Grant Lowe: I am married and we have a ten-month-old little boy. I am really into sports, especially football. I'm a sportscaster for the Kellyville High School Panthers. Go the Panthers!

Rudolph (*if not present, skip this line*):
We are a very fast team of reindeers. But Santa was always complaining that we were too slow.

Lorenzo Giueni (*if not present, anyone can say this*):
Santa was so full of the cookies and cake and soft drinks that people had left out for him, that he never appreciated what he ate at Chatties.

Rudolph (*if not present, anyone can say this*):
In some countries, Santa gets really upset because they leave out better food and drinks for the man who collects their trash than they do for him.

Anyone: Just before the party, I heard Josh saying to Santa something about how he had something to show him.

Anyone: While I was at the office arranging for Santa's personal appearance at the Xmas party, I overheard Martina and Nick on a joint phone call with a travel agency. They were booking a relaxing holiday on a yacht in the Bahamas leaving tomorrow, yet this is usually their busiest time.

Mrs Claus (*if not present, anyone can say this*):
I saw Santa ditching his reindeer for a new motorcycle. He took his new motorcycle to a gas station to fill with gas. He should have taken it to a Gas Plus More but he didn't – the fool. I had to reassure Ebony that we would find a good home for Santa's reindeer, which Santa had traded in on the deal to buy a motorcycle. She seemed quite hysterical in her concern for those reindeer.

Rudolph (*if not present, skip this line*):
I'm just glad that Ebony was kind enough to care about us. No one else did. Thanks Ebony. That reindeer retirement farm you have arranged for us sounds really great.

Anyone: It's obvious to me that some sort of cocktail has gone on here today. What with people like Winnie around, there has to have been some mixing of spirits and motives hasn't there?

Rudolph (*if not present, anyone can say this*): Judging by the large number of kids who received play station games from Santa last year, I think Santa was probably corrupt. He was probably doing a deal with one of the large games manufacturers.