

Murder at the North Pole MASTER

Setting: It is Christmas Eve at the North Pole, and snow gently blankets Santa's workshop. But a dark cloud hangs over the festive scene. Mrs. Claus, the ever-smiling heart of the operation, was found murdered in her gingerbread house this afternoon! A newspaper headline is posted at the entrance: "Mrs. Claus Murdered: Found in her gingerbread house on Slay Bells Lane." It is Christmas eve day in current era.

Dead person: Mrs. Claus – she was the usual, cheerful Mrs. Claus with some issues with various other characters. She does not actually exist as part of the show as she is already dead. Her body might be featured in a corner of the room, face down with an ice cycle in her back. Several clues are also behind the crime scene tape where all can view the physical clues or MC can reveal clues.

Crime Scene: inside the front door of Shelter Distillery. Crime Scene tape around it.

- Mrs. Claus dead with an icicle stabbed through her heart or back.
- A half-eaten candy cane with lipstick marks was found near the body.
- A footprint in the snow, leading away from the crime scene, was identified as belonging to Blitzen.
- A map of the North Pole with the workshop, back room of the workshop, Claus's cottage out the back door, reindeer barn near the front of the workshop.

The Suspects

M Santa Claus: The jolly man in red had been acting strangely lately. He seems stressed and overworked, and there were rumors of financial difficulties at the workshop. Mrs. Claus vehemently denied the financial concerns which Santa kept trying to tell her about. Santa was extremely frustrated that she wouldn't listen. Santa felt that the elves were being grossly overpaid (due to minimum wage increases) and in particular, Jingle, the head elf, was horribly overpaid. Santa was increasingly angry with her as she wouldn't listen to talk of the finances. He threatened to kill her in a fit of rage several weeks ago (overheard by several). **Costume:** wears the classic Santa work clothes: flannel shirt, suspenders, jeans and boots. Wire rimmed glasses. May or may not have a Santa hat on. Hankerchief. **Motive:** he's tired of everything and wants to retire. Mrs. Claus has told him he can't and that she will continue to handle the finances as she always has. He is at his rope's end and wants to run the operation by himself or retire and give it all up to someone else. He must eliminate her in order to get control of things at the North Pole.

Relationship to:

- Jingle: working with Jingle as a partner to get Mrs. Claus to understand the dire financial needs of the workshop. They have worked together for centuries and are long-time friends. Santa knows that Jingle is nasty but has no other partner-in-crime.
- Blitzen: Santa kikes the reindeer but Blitzen has gotten too big for his antlers. Santa suspects that there is bad blood between Blitz and the Mrs. but initially doesn't know about the \$10,000 he owes her.
- Sugar Plum: Santa thinks she's sweet enough when she's with strangers but it doesn't take long for her to show her true colors which Santa does not like at all. He keeps requesting another fairy be assigned to the workshop. She's not doing a good job keeping morale up.
- Jack Frost: Santa is frustrated with Jack/Jackie. Jack could do lots more to assure that Christmas is white but he is always complaining about how much it costs to seed clouds. Santa doesn't like that Jack is living in the Claus' attic: never did like it but Mrs. Claus had a weak moment a few years ago and let him stay. Santa doesn't know why he/she is living in the attic and is annoyed with both Jack and Mrs. Claus.

M/F Jingle, the Head Elf: Jingle is known for his efficiency and sharp tongue. He often clashed with Mrs. Claus over her "sentimentality." Jingle is really a nasty one to deal with. He's arrogant and always right about everything. He doesn't like the reindeer – they make such a mess outside the door of the shop and as a result, often reindeer poop gets tracked into the shop. Has been in his job for too long and needs to retire but likes the paycheck every few weeks. He often fought with Mrs. Claus because she refused to listen to Jingle's concerns about pay rates and setting up auto-deposit (Mrs. Claus handled all the payroll system and issued all checks by hand). Jingle thinks there have been errors in her system and she refused to look at them or make corrections. He feels he represents the elves and is getting desperate to get her to

make the needed changes including raises for the elves and himself. He's also attempting to set up a elf union which Santa and wife are opposed to. Jingle discovers that Mrs. Claus has been sabotaging his efforts to create a union.

Costume: Classic elf costume for either man or woman. Must have a goofy elf hat and preferably elf shoes as well. Green/red works best as head elf.

Motive: Felt his campaign is falling on deaf ears with the Mrs. Getting the union together isn't working because he finds out Mrs. Claus has been sabotaging and he knows no other way to get her to listen except to eliminate her. (cont. next page)

Relationship to:

- Santa: Jingle and Santa are sharing similar feelings about Mrs. Claus but for different reasons. Are they in cahoots to get rid of her? Jingle has been Santa's head elf for a long time so they have become friends over the centuries.
- Blitzen: Jingle likes Rudolf 'cause he's kinda goofy with the big, red nose and all but Blitzen is too full of himself with his physical prowess. Jingle would prefer that Blitz go north and hang out with a big reindeer herd where he might get his clock cleaned by some big buck.
- Sugar Plum: Jingle thinks she's kinda cute but otherwise doesn't put up with her complaining. Between the two of them, there's enough complaining to go around.
- Jack Frost: Jingle thinks Jack is a really cool person and secretly wants to be like him. Jealousy is obvious from Jingle. He also thinks Jack is holding out for more money. Everyone knows Jack lives in the attic and no one really understands how that happened including Jingle.

M Blitzen, the Reindeer: Blitzen, the fastest reindeer, is in his prime as far as his fitness level. Other reindeer don't trust him as he will run away anytime he pleases. He's arrogant and full of himself and can't stand Rudolf with that stupid nose. Rudolf is slow and should never be in the lead. Blitzen was Mrs. Claus's favorite until the past few years but she has grown very tired of his verbose manner and arrogance. She has actually cut his pay through some very sneaky accounting tricks by charging additional taxes on his check for other reindeer who are doing a better job resulting in other reindeer getting more money. Blitz is dumb and knows something is wrong with his checks but isn't smart enough to figure it out. Blitz has it out for Mrs. Claus because Blitzen has been pushed to the limit with owing her at least \$10,000. Initially, Santa doesn't know that Blitzen owes Mrs. C. money (until the lines). If she talks to Santa about it, which she has threatened, Blitzen will lose his job. Where else can he go that pays as well? Blitzen is very popular with the female reindeer and often runs off to their field to carouse with the girls, specifically Vixen, the tramp. He's been totally fed up with Mrs. Claus and her shenanigans with his paycheck and she's been really snotty to him. **Costume:** Some kind of reindeer jump suit with antlers on his head. For a male, the front of the reindeer suit should be open to show he very buff physique. Often seen with Vixen, the tramp.

Motive: If the debt to Mrs. Claus goes away, Blitz is free and clear on the \$10,000. She's been messing with his paychecks and started threatening him that he better pay back the debt.

Relationship to:

- Santa: Blitz is pretty disrespectful of Santa. He thinks he's just an old, fat guy. Blitz is worried that Mrs. Claus has confided in Santa about the gambling money. He can't be sure but she's not been very nice to Blitz lately.
- Jingle: Blitz hates Jingle. He's arrogant and condescending just like Blitz. They hate each other for all the same reasons as they are both jerks.
- Sugar Plum: Blitz can't stand any of the fairies and especially not Sugar. What is she doing here anyway? Why does the North Pole need a fairy – it's a production environment.
- Jack Frost: Hates Jack as Blitz performs best when it's a blizzard. That's when he can really show his stuff. Jack taunts Blitz about not giving him a blizzard.

F Sugar Plum Fairy: The ethereal fairy was known for her jealousy of Mrs. Claus's warmth and popularity. Sugar appears sweet and lovely for the beginning of the mingle but as time goes on, she gets crabbiest and lacks warmth and isn't particularly popular with anyone: reindeer, other fairies or the elves. She never works, is down-right lazy and always complains that she's so very tired/fatigued. She really hates Mrs. Claus because Mrs. C. is so good at being sweet all the

time whereas Sugar is horribly depressed. Mrs. Claus constantly nags her about being more fairy-like and spreading good news to everyone around her. Sugar went to the local tech college and did some accounting classes and now thinks she should be a CFO. **Costume:** classic (pink or purple) fairy costume with a magic wand and wings.

Motive: Perhaps if she gets rid of Mrs. Claus, she can take over the payroll and other business activities and make Santa happy again. Ultimately, she really wants to get her hands on the money and start embezzling. (cont. next page)

Relationship to:

- Santa: She is lukewarm with Santa. She's just so very tired and no one likes her; including Santa. She is empathetic to Santa. He isn't mean to her but he thinks she's not a very good fairy.
- Jingle: She hates Jingle because he's so incredibly arrogant. There is no love lost between them although Jingle thinks she's kinda cute. She constantly rebuffs his advances.
- Blitzen: Blitzen keeps hitting on Sugar so she hates him too.
- Jack: Sug and Jack get each other, they're not best friends but they just get each other. Both hate their jobs: they both want to be rich. She wants to embezzle and Jack is the only one who knows her capability to do so. She doesn't like that he can't predict the weather to save his life (like most weathermen). Sugar always wants a nice, gentle snow that starts the morning of Christmas eve which Jack rarely delivers.

M/F Jack (or Jackie) Frost: He/she died violently in a blizzard in Victorian times and came back as Jack Frost (hence the Victorian costume). Hates being in charge of winter storms, thinks that s/he could have a way better job if s/he was in the movies. Instead of the fake snow, he could provide the real thing. He thinks he's a hot shot, definitely has a big ego, s/he is kind of cute though. Jack lives in Claus's attic but no one knows why or how that happened. He/she has a long-standing feud with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Jack refuses to seed the clouds because it's so expensive so it might be a dry Christmas. S/he often tries to sabotage all the Christmas cheer by making it rain all December and ultimately on Christmas. He hates the snow because he drives an old Vega and never learned how to drive in the white stuff. S/he currently lives in the attic of Santa's house and has considered it his permanent home since he's been there over 2 years. Mrs. Claus told him/her this morning that if it doesn't start snowing today/immediately, he will be evicted. S/he totally lost it. S/he can't believe that she would even think to throw him out. S/he can't move anywhere else (lousy credit rating). When she threatened to throw him out, he/she threw things at her and swore he/she'd knock her off in order to stay in the attic. She already told him/her s/he's out on Christmas night: not even wait for the new year. Jack also hates Mrs. Claus as she was so blasted sweet yet can turn nasty in a New York minute. **Costume:** Victorian suit with vest and top hat. Looks like a Victorian caroler. **Motive:** Mrs. Clause found out that Jack had a couple of auditions with the Hallmark Production Company, so s/he's been making the weather leading up to Christmas super yucky (rain most days, turning to ice overnight). She's fed up with him and has told him he's out of the attic as soon as Christmas is over. He threatened to knock her off in order to stay in the attic.

Relationship to:

- Santa: He/she likes Santa. Really admires him but was one of the people who heard the big fight last week. Relationship is not great especially since Santa never liked the idea that Jack was living in the attic.
- Jingle: They butt heads all the time because of their personality types. Jack Frost is a cool guy and Jingle thinks he's cool but is really a jerk.
- Blitzen: Jack hates Blitz because he's so puffed up about his physical prowess. Blitz is always begging for a blizzard on Christmas eve which drives Jack nuts. He does not like Blitzen. He can tell he's a fake, cool guy and he doesn't like the way he talks to the female reindeer.
- Sugar Plum: They get each other, they're not best friends but they just get each other. Both hate their jobs: he wants to be rich and so does she. She wants to embezzle. Thinks Sugar is kinda cute but she's so young and innocent (or so he thinks). He hits on her regularly but she pretty much ignores his passes. He is the only one who knows she took some accounting classes and has figured out how she can embezzle money.

Consider The Misfit Toys: All characters know that some of the toys are disgruntled as they were rejected by Santa. The toys recently staged a protest outside the workshop. This info can be shared during the mingle.

Sugar blames Jingle Jingle blames Blitz Blitz blames Santa Jack blames Sugar Jack blames Sugar

Scene #1 Santa & Jingle scenes are formatted with highlight being the lines.

Santa: So Jingle.... how's the morale among the elves – especially considering..." *(looks around uncomfortably..)* "the demise of Mrs. Claus?"

Jingle: *(Sighs looking up from clipboard).* "Well most of them loved how sentimental she was...so they are taking a break in the elf house – weeping into their berry wine." *(he sighs & looks up at Santa with a very serious look).* "We've lost a lot of production today – I just hope we can be ready for tonight."

Santa: *(Nods & takes off his hat rubbing his head or brushing his beard).* "Where are we, on meeting our production goals for this year? 85–90%?" *(Puts hat back waiting for Jingle's response).*

Jingle: "Considering the production loss this afternoon, maybe 85%. We had to redo some paintings on dolls & some wiring on iPads" *(Jingle lights up a cigarette or drinks from a flask.)*

Santa: "Jingle," *(tugs on his beard which moves as it's fake)* "I know, we aren't in great shape financially & Mrs. Claus wasn't any help. She just would not give up her role in the financial part of this whole thing. I'm convinced payroll was a mess as some of the reindeer have come to me saying their checks are not right."

Jingle: "I think you also forgot the underground gambling department, the failing black licorice department & peppermint bark department." *(Santa clears his throat, Jingle sighs & flips some pages on his clipboard)* "I know, I know. I've heard it all a million times, but Santa you were so upset with her last week when you threatened to kill her. Lots of us heard you in the workshop. What was that all about?" *(Jingle tries to look casual when he asks).*

Santa: *(clears throat & tugs at his beard).* "Well we both know we've been at our jobs for a long time. I'm tired, Jingle, it's time to promote someone else and let me and Mrs. Claus retire." *(Suddenly he looks sad).* "Oh ... wait I guess not with Mrs. Claus." *(he wipes his face/tears with a handkerchief).*

Jingle: *(nodding head & patting Santa on the back comfortingly).* "But between hearing you yelling & everyone knowing how much the Mrs. drove me nuts they're going to think we're

both involved somehow. I assume that she told you about Blitzen's gambling problem & that he owed her \$10 grand for spotting his debt."

Santa: (*shocked, shaking off the sadness. Now angry.*) "No, she never told me about that! It's like she forgot we were married. You know she used to hand out money without telling me & it drove me crazy! That \$10,000 would be handy in the budget at this point. Those blasted Barbie dolls are costing us four times as much as two years ago; all because of how well that movie did at the box office."

Jingle: "I remember when she used to give pennies to needy kids & they loved it. You know I heard that Mrs. Claus was moving money out of Blitzen's checks & he was very suspicious about it. Perhaps she was paying herself back. I think Blitz had some very strong motives to knock her off."

Santa: (*looking shocked*) "I knew I needed to pay more attention to Blitzen & where he goes. I thought maybe he was doing steroids because of all that crazy, muscle growth. I never would've guessed a gambler. I have noticed he often spends most of his afternoons with Vixen, the tramp, & not doing the team building I've scheduled for the reindeer squad. (*rethinking the conversation*). Listen, just lay low for a few days. Once we get through Christmas day, we can take off for Florida & not even be here for any investigation."

Scene #2 Jingle & Blitzen

(Blitz is standing by the sleigh with ear buds & hand weights.)

Jingle: (*walking over to the sleigh, clicks his pen a couple times in Blitzen's ears*). "Are the reindeer ready to take off?"

Blitzen: "I'm always ready to take off but having Rudolf in the lead really holds me back. He's only up there because he got a nose job. He needs to pay less attention to his face & get his body in shape." (*He flexes a little bit*). "I'd be a way better leader."

Jingle: "Yeah because with Mrs. Claus out of the picture, your gambling debt is pretty much free & clear now. Without her here, you don't have to pay her back. Isn't that so?"

Blitzen: (*Stands over Jingle – intimidating*). "Look little man. As far as I know that little witch didn't share my secret with Santa." (*Shrugs & goes back to lifting*). "Nobody knows besides you, me & Mrs. Claus, right? And besides, I heard from a snowman, that heard from a gingerbread man, who heard from an elf that Santa's pretty fed up with her insisting on running the finances. Honestly, I think he's the likely murderer: after all, they've been married umpteen years & he's got to be tired of the old hag." (*kisses his biceps*). "I would get tired of someone nagging me like that."

Jingle: *(rolls his eyes & writes something on his clip board)* “Of course you would, since all the ladies adore you.” *(sarcastically)*.

Blitz: *(smiles & flexes)* “You said it, man.”

Jingle: *(sighs)* “Whatever I think, there was far more going on with the finances & I don’t think she told Santa about it. But Santa knows we’re financially strapped & that’s why he kept trying to get her to give up accounting & payroll.”

Blitz: “Blah, Blah, Blah. Money stuff. We’re all a little down on our luck in the money department, but Santa must’ve really hated Mrs. Claus, because he’s the one that gave her take that position & with everything going downhill money-wise, he probably regrets it. And maybe Santa thinks the only way he can get out of his dead-end marriage is by…” *(Blitzen makes a motion of stabbing)*.

Jingle: *(looking at Blitzen in shock)* “That is the longest, most concise sentence you’ve ever said to me, Blitzen.”

Blitzen: *(Nodding, flexing even harder now.)* “So how do we point the finger back to Santa?”

Jingle: “Let me work on this & get back to you.”

Scene #3 Blitzen & Sugar

(Sugar slogs into the scene with her magic wand dragging behind her. She’s physically totally defeated – shoulders slumped, head down, totally depressed).

Blitzen: Sugar! Baby Girl, what’s wrong now? It’s Christmas eve, this is when you’re supposed to be dancing through dreams & here you are dragging your butt around like a post-partum fairy godmother. You know the reindeer love when you pep us up before we take off. You should be out with the reindeer getting them jazzed for the big ride; spreading your fairy dust on everyone.” *(dances around like a fairy with a wand)*.

Sugar: “Blitz, I just can’t do this anymore” *(pulls on her hair.)* “I want to quit & go back to prostitution in the New York ghetto. It was easier & I made more money. Is there any way to reverse being a fairy?” *(she starts to try to pull off her wings)*.

Blitzen: “I don’t think so. You’re pretty much stuck at this point. Why don’t you put in for a transfer? Maybe the tooth fairy needs a long sabbatical or extended vacation. *(He starts checking out of the conversation & flexing his muscles again)*.

Sugar: (*Stops trying to pull off her wings*). “And you know what’s a bummer on top of another bummer? Losing Mrs. Claus. I was really hoping that she would retire from the finances like Santa suggested & then the position would be open and I’d be able to apply for her job – not as Mrs. Claus but at least take over the accounting.” (*She starts to talk faster, getting more excited*). “and then if I took the job I’d supervise Jingle & get him to stop bossing me around. And then Mr. Claus would retire...” (*She stops & looks at Blitzen*) “you know with all the hubbub about the finances, I think Jingle really had a good reason to eliminate her. He’s been wanting increases for years, since minimum wage hasn’t gone up since before Mrs. Claus took the job - and let me tell you she’s been doing this job ... basically forever. I think he was at the end of his rope with her. He also felt she was so fake with the cutesy-sweetsy routine.”

Blitzen: “You might want to lower your voice, someone might misinterpret you & think you knocked her off.”

Sugar: “Yeah, yeah, yeah... but you’ll never believe what I overheard from the cops,”

Blitz: (*leans closer to her*) “Do tell.”

Sugar: “Apparently, Jingle’s alibi: he said that he was in the back room, quality checking some train sets, but you’ll never believe this. No one corroborates his story. He could have easily gone out the back door to the cottage and stabbed her.”

Blitz: (*nodding slowly*) “That is crazy, Sugar. Hey! I’ve got to get ready for take-off.”

Scene #4 Sugar & Jack/ie Frost

Jack Frost: “Well, well, well, Sugar Plum, you’re looking a little... glum.” He sits next to her.

Sugar: “Ha, ha, ha. Very funny Jack.” (*Glances over at him.*) “Did you hear?”

Jack: “I heard. So she’s really gone, huh?”

Sugar: “I saw Santa and he seems really sad and... no, I shouldn’t say that about someone who’s grieving.”

Jack: “Wait, you gotta tell me, Sugar. I’ve been flying over North America making sure there’s blizzards hitting the mid-west & Vail Pass screwing up traffic on I-70. I don’t know anything other than the old lady croaked.”

Sugar: *(Sitting up super excited)* “Okay, well Santa does look really sad, but I saw him whispering with Jingle earlier looking around very suspiciously.”

Jack: “He loved the old girl though, right?”

Sugar: *(shakes her head)* “You really don’t know anything, do you?” *(she laughs & starts talking kind of fast)*. “Santa wanted to retire & Mrs. Claus refused because... well, you know it’s a sore subject... she wanted to be in charge of all the finances. Jingle also was seen yelling at her about setting up a union. *(She slows down to emphasize this)* and according to Jingle, Blitzen was in debt to Mrs. Claus...\$10k in debt. And....”

Jack: *(putting his hands up)* “Whoa, whoa, whoa! Slow down, Sugar, you’re going to pass out if you don’t take a breath.” *(pauses)* “Really? Blitzen borrowing that much money, who would’ve known?”

Sugar: “Well apparently, Jingle *(Sugar rolls her eyes)* and Mrs. Claus knew.”

Jack: “Yeah, yeah, yeah. So the finances are the pits then because of the ten grand that she loaned to Blitz. But I thought you really wanted Mrs. Claus’ finance position, right?”

Sugar: “Well, yes, but...” *(looks confused about where this conversation is heading)*

Jack: *(Coming to a big realization)* “I remember a couple weeks ago, you were telling me that you were hurting for money? Yeah, I remember! You were telling me this before I left for my auditions with Hallmark Channel.” *(Jack points a finger at her)*.

Sugar: “Yeah, but....” *(Sugar puts her hands in a defensive position.)*

Jack: “and isn’t one of your favorite things to put into kids’ dreams - icicles... and wasn’t Mrs. Claus found with an icicle in her back? It was you... you killed her!”

MC steps in