

Reindeer Games

Written by

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ACT I

INT. CHRISTMAS DINNER - NIGHT

You sit near UNCLE ROB at Christmas dinner. He's not drunk; he's just had a few.

UNCLE ROB

So, no one owns up to putting the flashdrive in my stocking. We're all curious, so I pop it in. I don't know if it's a virus or what, but turns out... The thing's encrypted! I fiddle with it, Sheila loses interest, the kids lose interest, then Bundt cake isn't cool enough...

He takes a drink.

UNCLE ROB (CONT'D)

That damn Bundt cake. Irregardless, I figured it out. And the stuff on it was really **weird**. Not like that! Come on! It's Christmas. Your grandmother's sitting right there. But this flashdrive, it had all these notes and videos of elves and talking reindeer and -- I swear -- Santa. Like, The Real Santa. And it's all really jolly. But it's...

(beat)

It's kind of like... Well, have you ever heard of a "government conspiracy?" Well, it's kind of like that, only the institution is Christmas... You want to see?

He pulls out his phone.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Christmas Eve is a hellish time in the North Pole.

An exasperated MRS. CLAUS prepares gingerbread cookies with elves TINSEL and TREACLE. She's is distracted by a terrible secret and accidentally burns herself.

UNCLE ROB

Well, it's these two elves in this rustic kitchen with Mrs. Claus.

(MORE)

UNCLE ROB (CONT'D)

See here? They start recording when she burns herself.

MRS. CLAUS

AW, gingerbread!

TREACLE

Are you okay, Mrs. Claus?

MRS. CLAUS

Yes, Treacle, screaming in pain is a new Christmas carol!

TINSEL

Jeez, Mrs. Claus! What's wrong?

MRS. CLAUS

Why are we so far behind on gingerbread, Tinsel? I mean, Santa's flight is tonight! We've done everything to get this right! Where did all the sweets go?

TREACLE

I don't know! Tasteful said he finished a whole batch last night.

MRS. CLAUS

Tasteful? Where is that silly elf?

TINSEL

I don't know. I've been looking all day!

(smiles)

Ohhh. Does this have something to do with my new ice skates?

JINGLEBELLS from off screen.

MRS. CLAUS

That must be Santa! Girls, go find Tasteful and get these finished.

TINSEL

What's wrong, Mrs. Claus? You're all sweaty...

MRS. CLAUS

Oh, nothing, dear. I'm fine.

TREACLE

You look pale, too.

MRS. CLAUS

Just find Tasteful and get the work done!

Mrs. Claus leaves.

TREACLE

Well, that was weird. Everybody's acting weird today. Am I acting weird too, Tinsel?

TINSEL

I didn't think so, but now...
(judges her)
No, you're fine. But why didn't Santa come say Merry Christmas to us?

TREACLE

Must be the stress.

TINSEL

I don't know, but I'm going to get to the bottom of it.

TREACLE

Let's just find Tasteful...

They search the house, the workshop and the elf quarters.

TINSEL

Tasteful **Helloooo?**

TREACLE

Tasteful?

TINSEL

Tasty Cakes!

TREACLE

Tasteful! What are you doing?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Homosexual elf TASTEFUL looks out the window with a concerned look on his face.

TASTEFUL

Look at the reindeer.

TINSEL

They look like me on the day after Christmas: deflated and broken.

(MORE)

TINSEL (CONT'D)

Only they're not wearing those new ice-skates THAT I ASKED FOR.

TREACLE

Just trust Santa with that.

(re: reindeer)

You're right. Something is wrong.

TASTEFUL

(small smile)

Yeah, where's Rudolph?

TINSEL

I don't know, but something isn't right. Lets ask.

TREACLE

Tinsel, I don't want think we should distract the reindeer. They fly tonight, and we have gingerbread to make.

TASTEFUL

HEY! Do you remember when she created and wrote for The Tinsel Times? It was groundbreaking journalism!

TINSEL

It was, wasn't it?

TREACLE

But what ground are we breaking?

TASTEFUL

Does it matter? We could be free and get out of the North Pole! People love twisted takes on nostalgic things. If we expose it --

TINSEL

Oh, we can! I was MADE to be a network reporter!

TREACLE

But what are we even exposing? Besides ourselves to the icy tundra? It's cold outside! And what about the gingerbread?

TINSEL

Treacle, just get the camera. We've got a story to sniff out.

EXT. GRAZING FIELD - DAY

Tinsel, Treacle, and Tasteful approach the fence, where CUPID grazes. Cupid is a sweet and energetic reindeer.

TREACLE

I just don't think this is a good idea. Why are we asking questions? What are they about?

TASTEFUL

Come on, Treacle! Everyone's being nervous and secretive and CLANDESTINE! I mean, have you ever seen the Clauses act like that? Santa didn't even look at us! Something is UP.

TINSEL

And I'm going to figure out what.
(into camera)
Tinsel the Elf, here. This is my first ever encounter with a reindeer. A cuckoo-crucial first step to uncovering the truth behind the Christmas Eve Scandal...
(to Treacle)
Was that good?

TASTEFUL

Ooo! Look at this one!
(to Cupid)
Hello! Do you have time for an interview?

CUPID

Well, sure! I've never spoke to an elf before!

TINSEL

Oh, I'm not just an elf! I'm a reporter! Going for network.

CUPID

Gosh, that's ambitious! I'm Cupid.

TINSEL

I'm Tinsel.

TREACLE

I'm Treacle.

TASTEFUL

And I'm Tasteful. You'll never believe this, but I've been told I'm, like, the Cupid of elves!

CUPID

Wow!

TASTEFUL

So, what's going on? The reindeer fleet looks... down.

CUPID

Oh, you haven't heard? I don't really want to talk about it, so don't push me. It's actually a bit of a secret. And I can't tell you. Reindeer thing. But it is troubling me, and I shouldn't be afraid to talk about my feelings...

(deliberates)

Rudolph died this morning.

TREACLE

Oh my God, I'm so sorry!

TINSEL

Were you and Rudolph close?

CUPID

Sometimes.

TASTEFUL

(aroused)

... Go on.

CUPID

But his best friend was Blitzen. She knew him better than me.

TASTEFUL

But you two were still "close?"

TREACLE

Let it go.

VIXEN (O.S.)

Cupid, what are you doing?

TREACLE

Who's that?

CUPID

Oh, that's Vixen. Vixen is **not**
going to like you.

VIXEN is the more guarded, seasoned member of the fleet and high on the hierarchy.

VIXEN

Who the hell are they?

CUPID

They're elves; they're friendly --

VIXEN

Cupid, go graze!

(to the elves)

You three have a hell of a lot of nerve! You finally lower yourself enough to come out past the stables and you come with a camera and questions about Rudolph, and you find the most vapid, naïve reindeer in the fleet to interview!

CUPID

I am NOT naïve! It's not like I was going to tell them about Zephyr --

VIXEN

CUPID!

CUPID

What?!

TINSEL

(pointing to camera)

Tell us about Zephyr, Cupid! The World needs to know!

CUPID

Well, he's a wild reindeer. Never made the Nice Fleet because --

VIXEN

CUPID!

CUPID

-- What? It's not my fault he failed a drug test!

VIXEN

Cupid, go graze!

Cupid HUFFS and trots off.

VIXEN (CONT'D)
And I'm telling Prancer about this!

TINSEL
Hello, my name is Tinsel.

VIXEN
That's a stupid name.

TREACLE
I'm Treacle.

VIXEN
And I'm Vixen.

TASTEFUL
Well, I'm Tasteful. Any you'll never believe this, but I've been told that I am the Vixen of --

VIXEN
What do you want?

TREACLE
We were just asking --

VIXEN
Why are you filming? The elves aren't supposed to know about Rudolph yet.

TREACLE
Why is that?

VIXEN
So no one pesters us as we grieve.

Puts down the camera. Tinsel gets serious.

TINSEL
No, no! We are here to help, to uncover! To recover, to decipher and to enquire about what really transpired to bring down such a high flyer as --
(singing)
Rudolph the Red --

VIXEN
Spare me!

TINSEL
Spare you? What about Rudolph? He meant so much to so many of us;
(MORE)

TINSEL (CONT'D)
 we just want answers. And maybe an
 award for a groundbreaking expose!

VIXEN
 (bitter)
 I think his song was enough.

TREACLE
 But wasn't he so much more than a
 song? Ignore Tinsel. At least, the
 part of Tinsel that's only about
 Tinsel. We're just... What happened
 to Rudolph?

VIXEN
 I don't know.

Vixen is, subtly, moved.

VIXEN (CONT'D)
 Well, the Clauses aren't leaking
 anything to the public, so you'll
 have to talk to them about what you
 can even do with your little video.
 You just better not hurt anyone in
 my fleet.

TASTEFUL
 We won't. Tasteful is my name.

VIXEN
 Fine.
 (rolls eyes)
 I won't stop you, and I won't kick
 you out... Unless you stand behind
 me; it's kind of a reflex.

TREACLE
 We'll stay out of your way.

VIXEN
 You get it.

Vixen walks into the stables.

TINSEL
 Okay, I'm going to hop this fence.
 Don't record because I'm not going
 to look graceful.

Treacle stops recording, and they hop the fence.

EXT. GRAZING FIELD - DAY

Sheltered and impressionable reindeer BLITZEN grazes alone.

TINSEL

(into camera)

Tinsel the Elf here in the holly jolly grazing fields, and it looks like Mrs. Claus herself has come to check up on Blitzen. Sources say the young doe and Rudolph were close. Let's find out!

Mrs. Claus, sympathetic and concerned, approaches.

MRS. CLAUS

Good afternoon, Blitzen. I noticed you were grazing alone.

(to no response)

I brought you an oat biscuit... If you're hungry.

BLITZEN

Mrs. Claus, Rudolph said he didn't feel right after breakfast. He wouldn't have gone out flying alone! Especially without waiting an hour.

MRS. CLAUS

Oh, honey, you can't keep dwelling on Rudolph's "lasts."

BLITZEN

I don't even have the Christmas spirit anymore.

MRS. CLAUS

Well, you've gotta get it back, Blitzen! You're a part of this fleet. You bring Nice Children presents, and there's so much purpose in that. Rudolph's death may hurt you, it may even change you, but don't let it break you. Don't fall astray. Don't go asking questions.

TINSEL

(touched)

Ugh, she always knows just what to say...

BLITZEN
ELVES? Mrs. Claus, what are elves
doing out here?

MRS. CLAUS
Tinsel, is that you?! Oh, you three
better not be causing trouble! What
about those gingerbread?

EXT. GRAZING FIELD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

As Tinsel reports, DASHER charges toward her and Treacle.

TINSEL
(into camera)
Tinsel the Elf here in the grazing
fields. So far, the reindeer have
been pretty aloof, but -- WHOA!

Dasher, competitive and proud, sprints by.

DASHER
Hey, I didn't think that elves
could handle the snow. What are you
doing out here?

TASTEFUL
You're SO fast!

DASHER
I'm Dasher. Fastest in the fleet,
and fastest you'll ever meet. You
better believe it!

DONNER enters. Finally, the diplomat of the fleet.

DONNER
Don't mind him. We're not used to
sharing the fields with elves.

TREACLE
Yeah, we get that. Hi, I'm Treacle,
this is Tinsel and Tasteful.

DONNER
I'm Donner.

DASHER
What are you guys filming? Do you
want me to do some sprints? Or is
this something about Rudolph
kicking it?

DONNER

Dude, have some respect! And straighten up, Dancer's coming over.

Donner's sister DANCER, who's known for being a snitch, approaches the group.

DANCER

(to Donner)

What are you guys doing?

DONNER

Be nice, Dancer.

DANCER

I am nice, Donner. I just don't think you need to be talking to nosy elves recording us with those creepy gadgets they manufacture.

TREACLE

We're actually Sweet Elves. We bake sweets and treats.

TINSEL

I'm actually more of a Reporter Elf. Network quality.

DANCER

What did they say they're doing here? And when are they leaving?

DONNER

You can talk to them directly. They're just getting to know us.

TINSEL

Yes! Exactly! So innocent!

DANCER

Whatever. I don't care. Prancer's called a meeting. And now I know why... Don't be late.

DASHER

You know what? You act like you know me but you don't. I'm so fast, I've **never** been late. EVER.

Dancer flies back to the stables.