

Scene 1

*(To **intro music (CD track 9)** the whole cast enters for the opening song. The performance area is divided into two distinct sections. One section, a slightly smaller stage to the right of a larger main stage, is decorated to represent Santa's North Pole grotto. The centrepiece of this section is an ornate sleigh, currently empty and unoccupied – see **staging suggestions/ scenery & furniture**. Mrs Santa sits next to it in a rocking chair, knitting. The reindeer stand behind her and behind the sleigh in a 'penned-off' section and the elves gather around a workbench on the floor in front of this stage. The rest of the cast stand on and in front of the main stage which is decorated as a family living room at Christmas – again see **staging suggestions/scenery & furniture**. When all are in position, fade the intro music and begin the opening song.)*

Song Ready For Christmas Day *(CD track 1 & 10, lyrics p19)* *(Mrs Santa, Elves and Reindeer supported by whole cast)*

*(To **intro music (cd track 11)** Mrs Santa and all the elves exit behind the 'Grotto' stage. Only Rudolf and the other reindeer remain in position, looking impatient. The rest of the cast sits in the off-stage seating area. Fade the intro music when all are settled. Eric the elf enters the Grotto through the doorway, and paces around looking very anxious.)*

Eric Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear! It's a disaster. Six o'clock on Christmas Eve and this happens! Elsie! Elsie!

(Elsie the elf comes through the doorway holding a cup of tea.)

Elsie For goodness' sake Eric, what is it now? We're having our tea break. You should know that you never come between a girl and her tea break!

Eric Oh Elsie, it's a disaster.....

(Eric whispers into Elsie's ear. She reacts with a shocked gasp.)

Elsie What? No! Surely not! It's Christmas Eve! Edgar! Edgar!

(Edgar the elf comes through the doorway holding a copy of the Racing Post.)

Edgar What is it Elsie? Can't it wait? They've just started the Reindeer Grand National on the telly and you know I've got a bet on! 5-1 on Frosty Feet.

Elsie Oh Edgar, you'll never guess what's happened.....

(Elsie whispers into Edgar's ear. He reacts with a shocked gasp.)

Edgar He can't do that! It's Christmas Eve! Edna! Edna!

(Edna the elf comes through the doorway yawning.)

Edna Thanks a lot, Edgar! I was having forty winks. I was having a lovely dream about relaxing on a deserted iceberg, the freezing waters lapping at my toes, watching the seals gracefully swimming by.....

Edgar Edna! This is just terrible.....

(Edgar whispers into Edna's ear. She reacts with a shocked gasp.)

Edna No! Surely not! Not on Christmas Eve! Esmée! Esmée!

(Esmée the elf comes through the doorway eating a chocolate biscuit.)

Esmée What? I’m trying to eat a penguin back here! *(The elves gasp!)* No, not a real penguin! It’s a biscuit! And anyway, I’ve told you before, penguins live at the South Pole and we’re at the North Pole. If I wanted to eat a real penguin I’d have to travel a pretty long way to do it!

Edna Esmée, listen!

(Edna whispers into Esmée’s ear. Esmée reacts with a shocked gasp.)

Esmée Never! It’s Christmas Eve! Elmer! Elmer!

(Elmer the elf comes through the doorway reading a manual.)

Elmer Now look ’ere! It clearly states in the Elf Workers’ Charter that ‘elves shall be granted a ten minute break every three hours’ – it’s here in subsection 3.6. This better be important or I’ll be straight on the blower to the union!

Esmée Elmer, it **is** important.

(Esmée whispers into Elmer’s ear. Elmer looks confused.)

Elmer That can’t be right. He’s the boss. He’s management. Are you sure? I’ll have to consult the charter to make sure.

Eric Elmer, it’s true.....

All elves SANTA’S ON STRIKE!

(Mrs Santa enters through the doorway, carrying her knitting.)

Elsie Mrs Santa, you must know what’s going on? Why’s the boss gone on strike?

(Mrs Santa sighs and sits in her rocking chair. She starts knitting.)

Mrs Santa Oh, I don’t know my dear. He’s in one of his funny moods. He’s getting old you know. Men start acting strangely when they’re getting old! They’re all the same, always trying to be centre of attention!

(Santa enters with a placard reading “Santa’s On Strike!” He sits in his sleigh.)

Santa I heard that! It’s got nothing to do with getting old or trying to be centre of attention. It’s children, modern children! They’re horrible! Why should I work hard to deliver Christmas presents to them? They don’t deserve any.

Mrs Santa But you love all children, dear. You’re Santa Claus!

Edna That’s right, Boss. Santa Claus is every child’s best friend.

Santa Not anymore! I’ve been watching re-runs of ‘Supernanny’ and I couldn’t believe my eyes! Screaming, whining, bad-mannered little blighters, the lot of them. I tell you, no child is getting presents this year! I’M ON STRIKE!

(The whole cast stands to sing. If you have any extra elves and reindeer they can take a prominent position in front of the stage.)

Song Santa's On Strike *(CD track 2 & 12, lyrics p20)* *(Santa, supported by whole cast)*

(As intro music (cd track 13) plays the cast sits down. Santa sits in his sleigh, Mrs Santa sits in her rocking chair and knits, while the elves gather round their workbench.)

Scene 2

Elmer Well, I support your decision to strike, Comrade Santa. It says here in the charter that management also have the right, through peaceful protest, to demonstrate against.....

All Oh be quiet, Elmer!

Mrs Santa Look dear, everybody knows you can't believe everything you see on TV. Most children are a delight to have around the house.

Santa Not the houses Supernanny visits! It's like she's stepping into a war zone!

Edgar But Boss, we've had some lovely letters this year from mums and dads, telling us how good their children have been over the last twelve months.

Santa They're lying! I'm telling you, children are horrible, and I won't be visiting any of them this year!

(The elves huddle together.)

Edgar What are we going to do? We can't let all those children down.

Esmée We've got to try and make him see that children really are good.

Edna That they're kind and giving, caring and sharing.

Elsie Yes, then he might change his mind.

Eric And I know just what to do! Mrs Santa, have you got the remote control for the World-Wide-View Satellite Plasma Screen?

Mrs Santa Yes, I'm sitting on it, dear! I was hiding it from his lordship so he couldn't watch any more 'Supernanny'. Here it is.

(Eric fetches the remote control from her. He then takes a letter from inside his tunic.)

Eric This is a letter from a mum and dad telling us what wonderful children they have. Let's use the World-Wide-View Satellite to zoom in on them at home, and watch them on the big screen. Right, what address do I need to enter.....

(He reads the letter closely then begins tapping the keys on the remote control.)

Santa I don’t know why you’re bothering. It’ll just be all shouting and tantrums.

Mrs Santa Let’s just watch it, shall we? You might be pleasantly surprised.

*(Eric points the remote control at the main stage, the ‘screen’, tapping more keys. We hear the **Tuning-in** sound effect (cd track 14). Eric tuts in frustration until the sound stops.)*

Eric There! Everybody, may I introduce to you.....the Wiseman family!

(The action moves to the main central stage, set up as a family living room – see staging suggestions. Dad enters and lies on a settee reading a newspaper. Two children, Sally and Dan, enter and sit on beanbags. They start playing with handheld computer games. A grandmother and grandfather enter and sit in armchairs to watch TV.)

Grandma Ahhh, Heartbeat. I love this programme. It reminds me of being a young woman. Ahhh. *(She sings the theme tune.)*

Grandpa Look at that old Triumph motorcycle. You don’t see workmanship like that anymore. *(noticing the children)* Sally, Daniel, what’s that you’re doing down there?

Sally We’re playing ‘Zombie Doom’ Grandpa. I’m giving Dan a real thrashing! He’ll be pulp in less than ten seconds!

Santa *(from the other stage)* See! What did I tell you? Horrible little.....

Mrs Santa Shhhh! Just watch.

Grandma Zombie Doom? Eugh! It sounds a bit gruesome and scary!

Dan Well, it’s not quite Heartbeat, Grandma, but we enjoy it.

Grandpa I don’t like these new-fangled computer games at the best of times, let alone when you’re ripping each other to bits with them. Give me a good old-fashioned crossword any day.

Mum *(from off-stage)* Will you please come help me with the dishes, love? I’m up to my eyeballs in here!

Dad Yeah. I’m coming.

(Dad carries on reading the paper. Mum enters looking a little worn out, and a little annoyed. She throws a pair of yellow rubber gloves at him.)

Mum You promised you’d help me today. The sink’s piled high with dishes and I’ve got the Christmas cake to decorate and then all the vacuuming to do.

Dad Yes, yes. I heard you. Just give me five minutes. I’ve only just got in from a hard day myself. I can’t believe they made me work on Christmas Eve.

Grandma *(to mum)* A cup of cocoa would be nice, love. I always like a cup of cocoa when I’m watching Heartbeat.

Grandpa And for me, love, if it’s not too much trouble. Two sugars in mine.

Mum *(exasperated)* Ooooooh!

(Mum exits. The children look at each other, put down their games and go after her. They return, each holding one of her arms. Dan moves Dad’s legs off the settee and the children sit Mum down next to him. Sally puts a bean bag under her feet.)

Mum Children! This is very nice of you, but I’ve not got time to sit down.

Dan Right every one, listen to us. Dad, give me those rubber gloves. You’ve done lots of overtime this week just to pay for our lovely Christmas, so you just read your paper.

Sally Grandma and Grandpa, you relax and watch Heartbeat. We’ll bring you your cocoa. Do you want a biscuit too?

Grandma and Grandpa Ooh! Yes please.

Sally And Mum. You’re going to sit there and not move until bedtime. You’ve been at it non-stop and you look tired out. This is your Christmas too and you deserve some time off.

Dan So we’ll take care of the washing up and the vacuuming. We’ll even decorate the cake – it’ll be fun! And remember all of you, especially you Mum, don’t move!

Sally That’s an order!
(The children exit.)

Dad They’re a couple of crackers, aren’t they?

Mum Indeed they are – a couple of Christmas crackers!

(Grandpa picks up the game consoles, examining them with confusion, yet interest.)

Grandpa Fancy a game of Zombie Doom while we wait for our cocoa?

Grandma Go on then!

*(To **intro music (cd track 15)** the old couple play and the whole cast stands to sing the next song. The ‘domestic jobbers’ take a prominent position in front of the stage, armed with dusters, brooms, rubber gloves, aprons etc. Fade the intro music when all are ready.)*

Song Pitching In, Helping Out *(CD track 3 & 16, lyrics p21)* *(Whole cast)*

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