



**Sample Pages from
Santa's Zombie Apocalypse**

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SANTA'S ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

A HOLIDAY PLAY IN ONE ACT BY
Bradley Walton



Santa's Zombie Apocalypse
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Characters

24 roles any gender (pronouns in the script reflect original casting)

9 actors possible with doubling / tripling

1-6 extras possible

ARTI: a young reindeer, Tippet's sibling

TIPPETT: a young reindeer, Arti's sibling

COPPINGER: an elf who gives tours of Santa's toy shop

BARCLAY: an elf who works as Santa's secretary and receptionist

SANTA CLAUS: with a beard, wig, and Santa suit, SANTA can be played by anyone

EDMONDS: an elf who works in dolls

QUINN: an elf who works in action toys

HERRING: an elf who works in arts and crafts

EASON: an elf who works in the toy shop's cafeteria

SPRINGER: an elf on the toy shop's maintenance crew

KELLINGTON: a parcel delivery person

PHILPOTT: an elf from Arizona who works in Santa's loading dock

GREENAWAY: a lawyer elf

CHAPMAN: an elf who tests video games

WILLIAMSON: a lawyer elf

BAUERSFELD: a lawyer elf

ZOMBIES 1-8: braaaaaaiins

EXTRAS: One or two additional ZOMBIES may be added to Scene 6, and up to four additional ZOMBIES may be added to Scene 9. (Just ensure the numbers are accurately reflected in the dialogue.)

Doubling / Tripling

Any of BARCLAY, COPPINGER, KELLINGTON, PHILPOTT, EDMONDS, QUINN, CHAPMAN, SPRINGER, and EASON can double as any of GREENAWAY, WILLIAMSON, or BAUERSFELD.

PHILPOTT can double as any of EDMONDS, QUINN, EASON, HERRING, SPRINGER, or CHAPMAN.

CHAPMAN can double as any of BARCLAY, COPPINGER, SANTA, PHILPOTT, KELLINGTON, EDMONDS, QUINN, SPRINGER, HERRING, or EASON.

ZOMBIES 1-4 can double as ZOMBIES 5-8. In a pinch, the production can get by with a minimum of two ZOMBIES changing costumes to play three ZOMBIES each. (One actor plays the ZOMBIES in Scenes 3 and 5, the other plays the ZOMBIES in Scenes 4 and 6, and both actors play ZOMBIES in Scene 9.)

QUINN, EDMONDS, HERRING, SPRINGER, and EASON can be omitted from Scene 1 by skipping from BARCLAY's line "Will you now?" to SANTA's entrance. This frees up more possibilities for doubling or tripling parts.

Costumes

TIPPETT and ARTI are both reindeer fawns and their costuming should suggest this. In the original production, both actors wore light brown unitards with white fur sown on the chests, dark brown vests, plastic fawn antlers, and black socks. In addition, TIPPETT wore a black dance skirt and ARTI wore black shorts.

SANTA is dressed in a traditional Santa Claus costume.

KELLINGTON wears a heavy winter coat, gloves and hat, or a snow suit.

The ELVES are dressed to suggest workers and staff in Santa's toy shop. In the original production, this consisted of white long-sleeve dress shirts, green vests, red shorts, red-and-white striped stockings, costume elf shoes, costume elf hats, and elf ears. There was some variation in the color of the vests to give each elf a more individualized look. Glasses, different shoes, and other variations may be added to accent individualized appearances, especially if parts are doubled.

The lawyer elves, GREENAWAY, WILLIAMSON, and BAUERSFELD, wear black dress jackets and red neckties in addition to their elf costumes.

The following elves should have additional costume components:

QUINN – camo jacket and camo head band in Scene 4

EASON – kitchen apron in Scene 7

SPRINGER – safety glasses or goggles, work gloves, and shop apron in Scene 8

The ZOMBIES should look more cartoonish than scary. Bright or neon green makeup with red, white, and purple accents is recommended. The ZOMBIES are Christmas-themed and should be dressed in Christmas clothing, with gloves.

Opportunity For Multilingual Production

It stands to reason that Santa would employ elves from all over the world, that those elves would speak a variety of languages, and that everyone in the toy shop would be able to understand one another, because if Santa can make reindeer fly, universal translation doesn't seem like that much of a stretch. If any of your elves fluently speak a language other than English, it is encouraged that they deliver their dialogue in that language, with English translations projected above their heads.

Staging

This show can either be extremely simple or technically challenging. The technically challenging route requires additional rehearsal time and additional work, but the end result is really cool. So if you've got the time, equipment, and know-how, you're strongly encouraged to go the technically challenging route.

The actual set is minimal: The set pieces consist of an office desk and chair, two candy cane-striped pillars approximately 15 inches wide and 3½ feet tall, two more candy cane-striped pillars approximately 15 inches wide and 3 feet tall, two small Christmas trees about 3 feet high, some cardboard boxes, and an additional chair or cube. (If you want to create a more elaborate set, though, feel free!)

This is the challenging part: An optional multimedia display that includes

projected banners, video, video game elements, and—if you have multilingual cast members—captions of English translations for dialogue spoken in other languages. You can have any of these elements without having the others.

There are “video phone” segments which need to be pre-recorded if included in the multimedia. Alternatively, they could be performed live onstage. For example, you could have the “onscreen” actors perform behind a flat through a screen-shaped opening, or they could be in a spotlight on an otherwise dark part of the stage, or maybe something completely different—feel free to be creative. Performing the video segments live will affect your flexibility to double/triple parts and require a minimum cast of eleven (which includes two actors playing ZOMBIES). To accommodate a group of eleven or twelve actors for the live “video phone” option, you will need to remove SPRINGER and EASON from Scene 1 by skipping from BARCLAY’s line “Will you now?” to SANTA’s entrance, and double PHILPOTT and KELLINGTON with any of EDMONDS, QUINN, HERRING, or GREENAWAY.

A list of properties, sound effects, and further multimedia suggestions may be found at the end of the script.

Original Production

Santa's Zombie Apocalypse premiered December 15 and 16, 2017 at Harrisonburg High School in Harrisonburg, Virginia. It was produced by Stanley Swartz, directed by the author, stage managed by Marissa Plummer with Jenna Altai, Sheila Escalante-Lopez, Ehrlica Orbera-Ortiz, and Ava Fisher on crew, and featured the following cast:

Barclay: Kyle Showalter

Coppinger: Rachael Wilcox

Tippett: Elizabeth Healy

Arti: Malakai Johnson

Quinn: Abbie Menard

Edmonds: Jason Tejada-Molina

Herring: Jalyn Sneary

Eason: Gemima Matala

Springer: Jessica Lawson

Kellington: Chris Campbell

Philpott: Heather Whetzel

Santa Claus: Aerious Kubin

Greenaway: Chris Campbell

Chapman: Ray Walton

Williamson: Abbie Menard

Bauersfeld: Gemima Matala

Zombie: Cesar Diaz

Zombie: Isabel Samatar

SCENE I—THE LOBBY OF SANTA'S TOY SHOP

AT RISE: BARCLAY, an elf, is sitting behind an office desk at LC, typing on an antique typewriter. Also on the desk are an antique-looking telephone, a laptop computer, and a Christmas coffee mug.

UC are two small Christmas trees, each about 3 feet high, sitting atop two 3½-foot-tall candy cane-striped pillars. Above the trees is a projected BANNER reading “Welcome to Santa’s Toy Shop.” Inset on the right side of the BANNER is a VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

COPPINGER, another elf, enters from R with TIPPETT and ARTI, both reindeer fawns, who are looking around in wide-eyed amazement.

BARCLAY maintains a controlled and prickly vocal demeanor, but his facial expressions indicate confusion about TIPPETT and ARTI—he has no idea who they are or where they came from, and it’s driving him crazy.

COPPINGER: Here you go... welcome to Santa’s toy shop!

TIPPETT: Oh wow! I can’t believe we’re seeing this!

ARTI: I can’t believe we’re here!

COPPINGER: This is the lobby, where Santa’s front office staff (*looks expectantly at BARCLAY*) greets visitors.

BARCLAY: We don’t have visitors. This is the North Pole. Nobody comes here. That’s why Santa chose it for his home base—the rent was cheap.

COPPINGER: That’s Barclay. He’s the receptionist. You can ignore him. I usually do.

BARCLAY: (*stands and crosses to TIPPETT and ARTI*) Oh no, you can’t ignore me. I am the guardian of the gate. The defender of the door. The warrior of the welcome mat. Anyone who wants into the toy shop has to get past me. And what I want to know is, who are you two? I was sure I knew every single talking reindeer, but I don’t recognize either of you.

ARTI: We’re here from Alaska.

TIPPETT: We’re visiting our grandparents.

BARCLAY: There aren't any talking reindeer in Alaska—waaait a minute—are you Ralph and Trudy's kids?

TIPPETT: Yeah!

ARTI: Do you know our mom and dad?

BARCLAY: Sure. I remember when they lived here. I thought they were weirdos.

ARTI and TIPPETT laugh in total agreement.

COPPINGER: Barclay!

BARCLAY: What?

COPPINGER: That's no way to talk to these kids about their parents!

BARCLAY: Do you want me to lie to children?

COPPINGER: Yes!

TIPPETT: It's okay. We understand.

ARTI: Mom and Dad are really into the idea of simple living and getting back to nature.

TIPPETT: They're total hippies.

ARTI: But we know all about Santa and the toy shop.

TIPPETT: Our grandparents tell us stories every time they visit us.

ARTI: This is the first time we've come to visit them.

BARCLAY: So how do you like Santa's reindeer stables after growing up in the wild?

ARTI: Sooo much better.

TIPPETT: We played video games last night for the first time!

ARTI: We really want to move here.

TIPPETT: We're going to try to talk Mom and Dad into letting us live with our grandparents.

ARTI: Or we'll just move here ourselves when we grow up.

BARCLAY: Will you now?

EDMONDS and QUINN, both elves, enter from R, crossing L as they speak.

QUINN: It's eighteen inches tall and has 124 points of articulation. It's incredible.

EDMONDS: But does it burp?

QUINN: No, it doesn't burp! Action figures don't burp!

EDMONDS: (*shrugging*) Okay.

QUINN: Okay? What do you mean, "Okay?"

EDMONDS: I'll take a toy that burps over one that throws punches any day of the week.

QUINN: I'm not talking about a toy that throws punches. I'm talking about 124 points of articulation! Can you not appreciate how amazing that is?

EDMONDS: I can appreciate a toy that burps.

EDMONDS and QUINN exit L.

COPPINGER: Those were Edmonds and Quinn. Edmonds is in the doll department. Quinn works in action toys.

ARTI: Wow.

TIPPETT: Toy maker elves—in person!

EASON, SPRINGER and HERRING, all elves, enter from R, crossing L as they speak.

HERRING: The cherry cobbler yesterday was delicious. You really outdid yourself on that.

EASON: I'm glad you liked it. We're going to have German chocolate cake today.

SPRINGER: I hope I can pull myself away from the shop long enough to come eat.

BARCLAY: You're gonna make me fat, Eason!

EASON: Nobody forces you to eat three desserts every day.

BARCLAY: They're small servings!

EASON: No, they're not.

EASON, SPRINGER, and HERRING exit L.

COPPINGER: Those were Eason, Springer, and Herring. Eason works in the cafeteria. Springer does maintenance. Herring's in arts and crafts.

ARTI: Awesome!

TIPPETT: Amazing!

BARCLAY: It doesn't take much to impress you two, does it?

TIPPETT: We've wanted to visit this place all our lives. Being here is a dream come true.

BARCLAY: (*looking at his wristwatch*) Right. So do me a favor.

ARTI: What?

BARCLAY: Try not to have a cardiac arrest in the next ten seconds, because I don't know how to use an AED on a reindeer.

TIPPETT: What?

SANTA enters from UR and crosses to between TIPPETT and ARTI, who gasp and try not to freak out in star-struck excitement.

SANTA: Ho! Ho! Ho! Good morning, Barclay. Good morning, Coppinger.

BARCLAY: Hi, boss.

COPPINGER: Hi, boss.

SANTA: And you're Tippett, and you're Arti. Welcome to the North Pole!

TIPPETT: (*awestruck*) You know our names.

ARTI: (*awestruck*) He knows everybody's name. He's Santa Claus.

TIPPETT: (*still awestruck*) I know who he is.

SANTA: How was your trip here?

TIPPETT: It was good. Great.

ARTI: But you know that already... don't you?

SANTA: I know a lot. It goes with being me.

ARTI: How do you... deal with it all? Knowing everything, I mean.

TIPPETT: Yeah... doesn't it get overwhelming?

SANTA: You get used to it after a while.

ARTI: Why do you take the time to talk to people if you know what they're going to say?

SANTA: Ah, but I don't know what they're going to say. I can't read minds.

ARTI: But you know what they've been up to.

SANTA: True. But not what they think. And I enjoy chatting with folks. That's why I visit so many shopping malls.

BARCLAY: Ready for the big meeting, boss?

SANTA: Do you think we'll get through it all today?

BARCLAY: I blocked off your entire week... just to be safe.

SANTA: I know what you put on the calendar. I'm asking your opinion.

BARCLAY: I think you're going to be stuck in there until at least Thursday.

SANTA: I was afraid you'd say that.

BARCLAY: They're waiting for you in the conference room. Wait, why am I telling you? You already know.

SANTA: (*patting TIPPETT and then ARTI on the head*) Tippett, Arti... it was very nice to meet you. Have a great day, everyone!

SANTA exits L.

TIPPETT: We just met Santa!

ARTI: I think this is the best day of my life.

TIPPETT: I'm never going to wash my head again for as long as I live.

ARTI: Deliberately slacking on your personal hygiene might put you on the naughty list.

TIPPETT: Oh—I didn't think of that!

ARTI: It's okay—I'm kidding. Mostly.

COPPINGER: Is it all right if I take them on into the toy shop?

BARCLAY: What?

COPPINGER: I'm giving them a tour.

BARCLAY: Since when do you give tours?

COPPINGER: I'm the tour guide. It's my job.

BARCLAY: Oh yeah. I totally forgot.

COPPINGER: Did you want to give them visitor badges?

BARCLAY: Well, actually—

KELLINGTON, human and dressed for extreme cold, enters from R.

KELLINGTON: 'Scuse me! I got a delivery outside.

BARCLAY: For Santa?

KELLINGTON: No specific name on it. It's just addressed to the toy shop.

BARCLAY: So bring it in.

KELLINGTON: I can't. It's too big to fit through the door.

BARCLAY: Lemme get Philpott on the video phone. She handles receiving.

BARCLAY crosses to the desk and pushes or dials a number on the antique telephone. PHILPOTT appears on the VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

PHILPOTT: (on VIDEO PHONE) What?

BARCLAY: Philpott, can you come up here a minute?

PHILPOTT: (on VIDEO PHONE) Is it any warmer in there than it was yesterday?

BARCLAY: No. Deal with it and get up here.

PHILPOTT disappears from the SCREEN.

BARCLAY: Sorry. The whole reason Santa hires elves is because we can handle the cold better than humans, but Philpott's from Arizona. She doesn't like the cold. Why she took a job at the North Pole, I have no idea. I need to ask her one of these days.

PHILPOTT enters from L, grumpy and irritable.

PHILPOTT: What?

BARCLAY: Philpott, why'd you take a job at the North Pole if you hate the cold so much?

PHILPOTT: Did you call me in here just to ask that?

BARCLAY: No. But I'm curious.

PHILPOTT: Because the pay was good, the insurance was great, and I assumed there would be heat.

BARCLAY: There's heat. You go outside and then come back in and tell me there's not a difference.

PHILPOTT: More heat than the bare minimum needed to keep the pipes from freezing.

BARCLAY: It's not that bad.

PHILPOTT: It's sixty degrees through the whole toy shop. I can deal with short blasts of cold when we open the door in the loading dock, but no matter where I go or what I do, it's never warmer than sixty degrees. That gets old real quick.

BARCLAY: Santa tells everybody about that before he hires them.

KELLINGTON: Pardon me for interrupting, but... I got a delivery route I need to get back to, and the next stop is a couple thousand miles away.

BARCLAY: Right. Sorry. (to PHILPOTT) The delivery guy here, he's got a package addressed to the toy shop, but it won't fit through the front door.

KELLINGTON: Big wooden crate. Huge. The dimensions are something like eight by eight by twelve. You want to come outside and take a look?

PHILPOTT: No! Just bring it around the side to the loading dock.

KELLINGTON: Sure thing.

KELLINGTON exits R.

PHILPOTT: Why didn't you just send him around yourself?

BARCLAY: Figured you might know what's in the box.

PHILPOTT: No, I don't know. But I'll find out in a couple of minutes. I'll let you know— eventually.

BARCLAY: Take your time. Even if it's important, the boss ain't gonna get to it for a while.

PHILPOTT: That's right—today's Santa's quarterly meeting with the legal staff, isn't it?

BARCLAY: Today. Tomorrow. Maybe the day after that. Licensing. Flight clearances. Everything that involves signatures and paperwork.

PHILPOTT: (*singing*) It's the most wonderful time... (*abruptly stops singing*) of the quarter.

BARCLAY: See you later, Philpott.

PHILPOTT exits L.

TIPPETT: This is all so amazing.

BARCLAY: That was Philpott being her usual grumpy self. That was not amazing.

TIPPETT: Maybe to you. But to me... I just got to watch one of Santa's helpers at work! That was absolutely magical.

BARCLAY: I'm one of Santa's helpers and I'm here workin'. You think I'm magical, too?

TIPPETT: Of course you are.

BARCLAY: You tryin' to butter me up?

ARTI: I think she means it.

TIPPETT: I totally mean it.

BARCLAY: Santa's toy shop is definitely magical. All on account of the magic Santa brings to the place himself. Flying reindeer? Magic. Elves from all over the world talking in different languages and being able to understand each other? Magic. And me? I'm about as magic as you can get.

COPPINGER: How?

BARCLAY: I wasn't being literal, Coppinger. I was referring to my efficient work ethic and adorable disposition. I get it from my grandfather. (*with an Irish accent*) He was a leprechaun.

ARTI: (*to COPPINGER*) Is he being serious?

COPPINGER: (*to ARTI*) Not about his disposition.

BARCLAY: Now... Philpott being grumpy? Not magic. No sir. And Santa being locked up in a room with lawyers for days on end? Really not magic. As a matter of fact, being close to the legal staff for more than a few minutes temporarily drains Santa's magic. Which is why their offices are all the way at the back of the toy shop. Legal stuff sucks the magic out of everything. The

quarterly meetings are the reason Santa's tech staff created wireless universal translation technology that runs all through the toy shop. Which, I gotta admit, seems kind of far-fetched and science-fictiony, but anything's possible around here.

TIPPETT: Seems totally reasonable to me.

BARCLAY: And coming back to the subject of you... I don't think we can let you in the toy shop.

COPPINGER: Why not?

BARCLAY: They're reindeer.

COPPINGER: Santa's reindeer go in the toy shop all the time.

BARCLAY: Right. Santa's reindeer. These two were raised in the wild. They're not used to being indoors. What if they break something?

COPPINGER: They're small. I'm not worried about it.

BARCLAY: Look, I hate to be the bad guy here, but if I let these two into the toy shop and something happens, that's going to reflect poorly on me.

COPPINGER: I will assume full responsibility.

BARCLAY: It's not your choice. I'm the guardian of the gate, remember?

COPPINGER: Barclay, please... I'm the tour guide, and I'm bored. You said it yourself—nobody ever comes here to visit. We're not close to anything. The ice is constantly shifting. It's freezing cold. And people can take virtual tours online.

BARCLAY: You sound like Philpott.

COPPINGER: Am I wrong?

BARCLAY: I refuse to answer that question on the grounds that you'd use my response against me.

TIPPETT: It'll be okay.

ARTI: We'll be really careful.

TIPPETT: Once we move back here, we want to go to reindeer flight school.

ARTI: We wouldn't do anything to mess up our chances of flying for Santa.

BARCLAY: Flight school?

TIPPETT: Yeah!

BARCLAY: You two want to join the flight team? Pull Santa's sleigh?

ARTI: Sure!

BARCLAY: You tell your parents about the big plans?

TIPPETT: Yeah!

BARCLAY: And what'd they say?

TIPPETT: They said flight school was really difficult.

BARCLAY: (*shaking his head*) And you didn't believe them, did you?

ARTI: I don't think it's as hard as they made it sound.

BARCLAY: It's not.

COPPINGER: That's uncharacteristically encouraging of you, Barclay.

BARCLAY: It's harder.

COPPINGER: There's the Barclay I know.

BARCLAY: And not a little bit harder. Not a hundred times harder. Not a thousand times harder. More like a million. Maybe even a billion.

COPPINGER: Be reasonable.

BARCLAY: Okay, fine. Five hundred million. Whatever your parents told you, it's five hundred million times harder than that.

ARTI: Our parents made it sound pretty tough.

BARCLAY: How tough?

ARTI: Impossible.

BARCLAY: You got smart parents. Weird, but smart. So I'll revise my estimate down a little. It's only a hundred million times more difficult than what they said.

TIPPETT: Why's flight school so hard?

BARCLAY: The Christmas Eve flight consists of millions of individual launches and landings in potentially hazardous weather conditions at a speed of hundreds of miles per second. Even powered by Santa's magic, and even though Santa's magic slows down time

around his sleigh during that flight, the demands are intense. Reindeer have to prove they're up for the challenge.

TIPPETT: How does Santa give a test for that without the reindeer actually going out and doing it?

BARCLAY: Virtual reality. It's pretty much the world's hardest video game.

TIPPETT: Wow.

BARCLAY: It's not just about reflexes, though. The flyers have to be able to un-learn everything they know about the laws of physics. They have to accept the un-reality of what they're doing. The slightest bit of resistance or fear or hesitation wastes Christmas magic, and during that flight, there's no magic to waste. 90% of the challenge is mental. That's the really hard part. What those reindeer do is impossible, but they do it anyway. Do you get me?

TIPPETT: I think so.

BARCLAY: If you're not sure, then I can tell you right now, you're not flight program material.

COPPINGER: You're not qualified to tell them that!

BARCLAY: I'm the front office secretary.

COPPINGER: So?

BARCLAY: So I know everything!

COPPINGER: No, Santa's the one who knows everything.

BARCLAY: I'm a close second.

COPPINGER: If you're so smart, prove it.

BARCLAY: I don't have to prove anything to you. Or them.

COPPINGER: Then why should they believe anything you say?

TIPPETT: I don't believe you.

ARTI: I don't believe you, either.

Pause.

BARCLAY: Okay. Fine. Everything in this toy shop is connected to me. I can check in on anybody at any time. Let them know if there's a tour group coming. Which, admittedly, is never. Give them snowfall updates. Ask if they need a snack from the cafeteria, or if

they have a maintenance request. Or just find out if they're up to anything cool. (*dials a number on the antique phone*)

EDMONDS appears on the VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

BARCLAY: Hey, Edmonds—how's it going in dolls?

EDMONDS: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) Somebody knocked over a waste bin full of doll hair scraps and made a mess. (*looks at the floor around him*) I don't know who could've done this. Everybody on my staff knows better than to—(*looks offscreen*) who's that? Barclay, is there a tour group in the building?

BARCLAY: Of course there aren't any tour groups. I haven't let anybody in this morning.

EDMONDS: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) Well, there's somebody in here who's not supposed to be. And he's walking kind of funny. Hey—you feeling okay? Excuse me? Sir? Hey! Are you drooling? That's gross!

BARCLAY: What in the world...?

QUINN suddenly replaces EDMONDS on the VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

QUINN: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) Barclay! Is there a tour group in the building?

BARCLAY: No—is there somebody in action toys who shouldn't be?

QUINN: Yeah! What's going on?

BARCLAY: I don't know.

Image flickers out on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

ARTI: I thought you knew everything.

BARCLAY: This is not the time.

ARTI: Then when?

EDMONDS appears on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

EDMONDS: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) This guy's still drooling. It's starting to freak me out.

QUINN replaces EDMONDS on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

QUINN: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) Whoever this is, they look kind of disheveled. And—whoa—they don't smell too good. (*looks offscreen*) Hey, Buddy? Can I help you?

BARCLAY: Be careful, Quinn.

HERRING replaces QUINN on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

HERRING: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) Barclay, somebody strange just wandered into arts and crafts.

BARCLAY: Herring, they're not part of a tour group!

HERRING: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) Is something wrong?

BARCLAY: I don't know!

EDMONDS replaces HERRING on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

EDMONDS: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) He just tried to bite me!

QUINN replaces EDMONDS on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

QUINN: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) He just tried to bite me!

HERRING replaces QUINN on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

HERRING: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) She just tried to bite me!

HERRING flickers out on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

BARCLAY: I don't know what to do!

ARTI: Call security!

COPPINGER: This is Santa's toy shop—we don't have security. Why would anyone want to do something bad here?

EDMONDS appears on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

EDMONDS: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) If I didn't know any better, I'd think this guy was a zombie!

QUINN replaces EDMONDS on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

QUINN: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) This is gonna sound crazy, but I think we've got a zombie in here!

HERRING replaces QUINN on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

HERRING: *(on VIDEO PHONE)* I really think this is a zombie!

HERRING flickers out on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

COPPINGER: Barclay, you've got to notify Santa!

BARCLAY: But, his meeting—

COPPINGER: I think he'll understand.

BARCLAY dials a number on the telephone. SANTA appears on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

BARCLAY: Santa! There are zombies in the toy shop!

SANTA: *(on VIDEO PHONE)* Be nice, Barclay. Lawyers are people, too.

BARCLAY: No, I don't mean the lawyers. I mean actual, walking corpse zombies.

On VIDEO PHONE SCREEN, GREENAWAY passes behind SANTA.

GREENAWAY: *(on VIDEO PHONE)* Hey, has anybody seen my energy bar?

SANTA: *(on VIDEO PHONE)* How did zombies get in the toy shop?

BARCLAY: I have no idea. But you've got to get them out of here!

GREENAWAY: *(on VIDEO PHONE, passing behind SANTA again)* I know I had an energy bar. Did I drop it in the hall?

BARCLAY: You need to get out of that room and away from your lawyers!

GREENAWAY: *(from offscreen on VIDEO PHONE)* Hey um, Santa...

SANTA: *(on VIDEO PHONE)* What is it, Greenaway?

GREENAWAY: *(coming into frame on VIDEO PHONE)* There's zombies outside the door.

SANTA: *(on VIDEO PHONE)* Let me see. *(moves out of frame)* Oh. Oh dear. *(comes back into frame)* Barclay, I'm trapped in the conference room and my magic is completely gone! We've got to evacuate the toy shop! Sound the alarm!

TIPPETT: Santa, do you need help?

SANTA: (on VIDEO PHONE) I'll figure something out! Save yourselves!

SANTA flickers out on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.
 BARCLAY pushes or dials a number on the telephone and picks up the receiver. SFX: A warning alarm mixed with an amplification of BARCLAY announcing "Zombies have entered the toy shop! Zombies have entered the toy shop! Everybody out! Santa's orders! Back to your apartments and lock the doors!"

BARCLAY: (speaking into telephone in synch with the sound effect)
 Zombies have entered the toy shop! Zombies have entered the toy shop! Everybody out! Santa's orders! Back to your apartments and lock the doors! (Puts down phone. The alarm stops.) All right, you heard Santa! Let's get out of here!

BARCLAY exits R.

COPPINGER: C'mon, listen to what the boss man said.

COPPINGER exits R.

TIPPETT: But it sounded like he might need help.

EDMONDS appears on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

EDMONDS: (on VIDEO PHONE) The zombie got distracted and everyone else in dolls was able to get out. Unfortunately for me, I'm the thing distracting him.

QUINN replaces EDMONDS on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

QUINN: (on VIDEO PHONE) My team in action toys escaped, but I'm stuck here. This is it—it's the zombie apocalypse!

HERRING replaces QUINN on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

HERRING: (on VIDEO PHONE) I'm holding this thing off, but I could really use a hand!

HERRING flickers out on VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

TIPPETT: (shouting offstage R) Barclay! Coppinger! Come back!

ARTI: (shouting offstage R) There are elves who need help! Somebody! Anybody? Help?

TIPPETT: Oh no. There's nobody.

Beat.

ARTI: Well, there's not nobody. There's us.

TIPPETT: But what are we gonna do? We don't know the first thing about fighting zombies.

ARTI: Sure we do. Grandpa's told us tons of stories from all the movies he's watched. The important things are that you can't let them bite you and you have to shoot them in the head to stop them.

TIPPETT: I could never shoot anybody in the head, even if they were a zombie.

ARTI: I don't think I could, either.

TIPPETT: So what else can we do?

ARTI: Avoid them? Distract them? Maybe we could lure them somewhere and trap them.

TIPPETT: The giant crate that just got delivered!

ARTI: If we could do that... do you think we'd prove ourselves worthy of being flying reindeer?

TIPPETT: Without going through flight school? I don't know...

ARTI: I bet we could. (*goes behind desk*) How do we call the loading dock?

TIPPETT: (*following*) Try the number that says "loading dock!"

ARTI dials a number on the telephone and looks expectantly towards the VIDEO PHONE SCREEN, but no one appears.

ARTI: Philpott? Hello? Philpott?

TIPPETT: She must've evacuated.

ARTI: We need to go there.

TIPPETT: It's gotta be close since Philpott showed up so quick when Barclay called her.

ARTI: Everybody went into the toy shop through the same door.
(*begins to cross L*)

TIPPETT: (*stops ARTI*) Hang on. Think about this for a second. I mean, really think about it. It's scary.

ARTI: Yeah. It is. But maybe it'll be fun.

TIPPETT: Fun?

ARTI: Yeah. Like fighting monsters in a video game.

TIPPETT: I never played a video game before last night.

ARTI: But that was fun, right?

TIPPETT: Yeah.

ARTI: And a video game is how the flying reindeer take their final exam. *(omit the rest of this line and end the scene here if multimedia game elements are not being used for the production)* So pretend you're in a video game.

TIPPETT: Is that what you're going to do?

ARTI: Yeah.

TIPPETT: Are we a team, or are we playing against each other?

ARTI: We're a team.

TIPPETT: Okay.

Above the projected BANNER, a VIDEO GAME SCORE DISPLAY appears with an 8-bit-style picture of two reindeer on the right side. Immediately to the left of the picture is the word "SCORE" which is currently at 0. On the left side of the SCORE DISPLAY is the word "INVENTORY" with no items listed. Above the SCORE DISPLAY, a POP-UP BOX appears which reads, "REINDEER TEAM-UP!" SFX: Point-scoring tone. [Even though no points are being scored here.]

TIPPETT: What's the name of the game?

ARTI: Santa's Zombie Apocalypse!

The BANNER and SCORE DISPLAY are replaced by an 8-bit-style logo reading "SANTA'S ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE." Beneath the logo are the flashing words "PRESS START TO BEGIN GAME" in a white font. SFX: A few notes of triumphant music. TIPPETT and ARTI begin to exit L. The words "PRESS" and "TO BEGIN GAME" disappear, leaving just the word "START," now in a red font and no longer flashing. SFX: Video game start music. TIPPETT and ARTI exit L.

BLACKOUT. It is recommended that you play traditional Christmas music mixed with zombie noises during the scene changes.

SCENE 2 – THE LOADING DOCK

ARTI and TIPPETT enter from R. Scattered around the stage are sealed cardboard boxes of various sizes. UC above the actors, the projected BANNER reads “Loading Dock,” with an inset VIDEO PHONE SCREEN as in the previous scene. Above the BANNER is the VIDEO GAME SCORE DISPLAY. SCORE is still at 0. The two small Christmas trees on pillars remain UC and will stay there throughout the play.

TIPPETT: Hello? Anybody here?

ARTI: Shh! If there are zombies around, we don't want them to hear us coming.

TIPPETT: I knew this was a bad idea. We've barely started and I'm already messing up.

PHILPOTT enters from UL.

PHILPOTT: Hey! Who're you?

ARTI: Hi. I'm Arti. This is my sister, Tippett. We're the reindeer who were in the lobby earlier.

PHILPOTT: What're you doing in the loading dock?

ARTI: We're gonna save Santa.

PHILPOTT: You're what?

ARTI: Rescuing Santa.

TIPPETT: Are you all right?

PHILPOTT: I'm cold.

TIPPETT: Besides that.

PHILPOTT: I'm fine. Just... freaking out a little.

TIPPETT: Did you get attacked by zombies?

PHILPOTT: No. Well, almost. I was able to hide.

ARTI: Did they bite you?

PHILPOTT: No.

TIPPETT: That's really lucky.

PHILPOTT: Yeah. I guess so.

ARTI: Do you have any idea where the zombies came from?

PHILPOTT: Yeah. They were in that giant crate.

TIPPETT: Somebody sent Santa a crate full of zombies?

PHILPOTT: Yes!

TIPPETT: Why?

PHILPOTT: I don't know!

ARTI: How many were there?

PHILPOTT: Nine. Four went off towards the back offices, and five went into the toy shop. (*Update these numbers as necessary. The first number is your total number of ZOMBIES in the play, plus one. The second number is your number of ZOMBIES in SCENE 9. The third number is your total number of ZOMBIES in SCENES 3-6, plus one.*) And it's my fault. I opened that crate.

TIPPETT: Don't blame yourself. You didn't know.

PHILPOTT: I hope everybody else feels the same way.

TIPPETT: What do you think we should do?

ARTI: (*aside to TIPPETT*) Hey, we're the ones saving Santa, remember?

TIPPETT: (*aside to ARTI*) It would be stupid not to try and ask for help.

PHILPOTT: Well, the zombies are basically walking meat. They'll spoil and fall apart eventually, but it's so cold in here that the whole toy shop is like a giant refrigerator, and that's going to keep them fresh for a longer time.

TIPPETT: It's not that cold.

PHILPOTT: The point is—if we turn up the heat, they'll spoil and fall apart a lot faster.

TIPPETT: But that could still take... I don't know... a while. Santa and some of the elves need help now. We can't wait that long.

PHILPOTT: (*a little annoyed*) What did you have in mind?

TIPPETT: Do you think we could lure them back into the crate?

PHILPOTT: Too dangerous.

TIPPETT: Maybe we could get one of the flying reindeer to do it.

Behind TIPPETT, ARTI disapprovingly shakes his head “no.”

TIPPETT: He could go in the crate, and then when the zombies come in after him, he can fly out over their heads.

PHILPOTT: Wouldn't work. Even if there was enough headroom, the reindeer can't fly without Santa's magic, and Santa doesn't have any magic if he's stuck in a room full of lawyers.

Behind TIPPETT, ARTI sighs with relief.

TIPPETT: Maybe we could lead the zombies back here and then throw something in the crate to lure them back into it?

This strikes ARTI as a good idea. ARTI looks nervously at PHILPOTT to see how she will respond.

PHILPOTT: I don't know. Sounds risky. I still think turning up the heat's a better idea.

ARTI makes a small but triumphant fist-pumping gesture.

TIPPETT: I guess we can try that, too. As a backup. It can't hurt.

PHILPOTT: I'll go turn up the heat and you can do whatever.

ARTI: Which way is the cafeteria?

TIPPETT: The cafeteria?

ARTI: Zombies are always hungry, right? We can get some kind of food to lure them into the crate.

PHILPOTT: It's on the other side of the toy shop.

TIPPETT: Which is full of zombies?

PHILPOTT: Right.

TIPPETT: Is there another way?

PHILPOTT: You could go around through the back offices.

TIPPETT: But there are zombies there, too. That's where Santa is trapped.

PHILPOTT: Yeah. So you might as well just stay here.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 3 – THE DOLL FACTORY

TIPPETT and ARTI enter from R, moving slowly and cautiously through the toy shop. UC above the actors, the projected BANNER reads “Dolls,” with an inset VIDEO PHONE SCREEN as in the previous scenes. Above the BANNER is the VIDEO GAME SCORE DISPLAY, with the SCORE at 0. The two small Christmas trees on pillars remain UC. A 3-foot-tall candy cane-striped pillar stands at RC, and another stands at LC. Atop the RC pillar is a doll. Atop the LC pillar is a large spool of black rope, cord, or string.

TIPPETT: I can't believe Philpott thought turning up the heat would be a good way to get rid of the zombies.

ARTI: It's really not a bad idea.

TIPPETT: But it's slow.

ARTI: That's okay. It gives us time to rescue Santa ourselves. We just have to get to the cafeteria.

TIPPETT and ARTI stop.

TIPPETT: You didn't want her to help us, did you?

ARTI: Not really, no.

TIPPETT: Arti, this is important.

ARTI: I know. That's why I want us to be the ones to do it.

TIPPETT: And it's not just Santa who needs rescuing—don't forget about the elves.

ARTI: (*thinks for a moment*) Yeah. Sure. The elves. I didn't forget them. (*sniffs*) Do you smell something weird?

TIPPETT: Don't try to change the subject.

ARTI: I'm not. Seriously. Something in here smells like a baby. An actual, human baby.

EDMONDS enters from UL, out of breath and looking back over his shoulder. ARTI and TIPPETT don't see him.

TIPPETT: Barclay said there weren't any tour groups. There shouldn't be any humans in the toy shop.

ARTI: So what's that smell?

TIPPETT: I think it's this doll.

ARTI: You're right. That is so weird. It's plastic, but it smells totally real.

EDMONDS: That's Precious Patsy.

ARTI and TIPPETT jump and turn around, alarmed.

ARTI and TIPPETT: Aagh!

EDMONDS: She's new this year. We made her to smell just like a real baby.

TIPPETT: You're Edmonds, right?

EDMONDS: Yeah. You were in the lobby with Barclay and Coppinger this morning.

TIPPETT: You were in trouble the last time we saw you on the video screen. Are you okay?

EDMONDS: Yeah. The zombie slipped in the doll hair that he spilled, and I got away.

ZOMBIE I enters from UL.

EDMONDS: But he's following me.

ARTI: Oh, crud.

ZOMBIE I: 'Tis season... to eat... braaaaiins...

TIPPETT: That is so creepy. And he stinks! Arti, what do we do?

ARTI: I don't know!

TIPPETT: We have to do something! Can we distract him while we figure out a plan?

ARTI: With what?

TIPPETT: (*picking up the doll*) How about this doll?

EDMONDS: You can't give Patsy to the zombie!

TIPPETT: I'm not! But if we toss it around, maybe he'll focus on the doll instead of us!

ZOMBIE I approaches TIPPETT, who tosses the doll to ARTI. A POP-UP BOX reading “ZOMBIE DISTRACTED: +10 POINTS” appears above the VIDEO GAME SCORE DISPLAY. SFX: Point-scoring tone. The SCORE changes to 10 points. The POP-UP BOX disappears. ZOMBIE I moves towards ARTI.

ARTI tosses the doll to EDMONDS. A POP-UP BOX reading “ZOMBIE DISTRACTED: +10 POINTS” appears. SFX: Point-scoring tone. SCORE increases to 20 points. The POP-UP BOX disappears. ZOMBIE I moves towards EDMONDS.

EDMONDS panics and tosses the doll at ZOMBIE I, who catches the doll, bites it, sits down on the stage, and continues gnawing on it.

EDMONDS: On no! Patsy!

ARTI: Does he know that's a doll?

TIPPETT: I think he's fooled by the smell.

ARTI: Now what?

TIPPETT: (*crossing to the spool*) What's that spool?

EDMONDS: Uncut doll hair.

TIPPETT: Arti, help me!

TIPPETT and ARTI wrap the “doll hair” around ZOMBIE I, who continues to gnaw on the doll and pays them no mind.

ARTI: Good idea! How much do you think we need?

TIPPETT: Hopefully this is enough.

A POP-UP BOX reading “ZOMBIE RESTRAINED: +50 POINTS” appears. SFX: Point-scoring tone. SCORE increases to 70. The POP-UP BOX disappears.

EDMONDS: Poor, poor Patsy.

ARTI: It's just a doll.

EDMONDS: What are you doing in the toy shop?

ARTI: Saving Santa.

EDMONDS: What's happened to Santa?

TIPPETT: He's trapped in his meeting room.

EDMONDS: With the lawyers. Oh, that's bad. This couldn't have happened at a worse time. In a worse place. All the dolls. And I—I—oh, Patsy, what've I done?

TIPPETT: It's okay. It was just a doll.

EDMONDS: No! There is no such thing as just a doll. The workers here... they put so much of themselves into crafting these dolls. They want each one to be perfect, because every doll is going into a home to be played with by a child, to be loved and cared for. In a child's imagination, a doll is alive. And I just sacrificed one to save myself. What kind of a doll maker am I?

TIPPETT: Was that a doll you made?

EDMONDS: No, but I'm a supervisor. I watch over all of the work. I inspect all of the dolls to make sure each one is perfect. So there's a little bit of me in all of them. They're like my children.

ARTI: They're plastic.

EDMONDS: They're my plastic children! I'm such a horrible elf!

TIPPETT: I think it's great that you care about your work, but they're still not real.

EDMONDS: That doll I threw to the zombie will never get to experience an imaginary life in a child's mind.

ARTI: If it only exists in somebody's imagination, that means it's not real.

EDMONDS: But... the things we imagine are real. Thoughts are real. You've got all sorts of thoughts running through your heads right now.

TIPPETT: You're right about that.

EDMONDS: I can see it on your faces. And whatever you decide to do next, it's going to be based on those thoughts. So how can you say the things that exist in your mind aren't real?

ARTI: Okay. Fine. They're real.

EDMONDS: You're just saying that to make me stop talking.

ARTI: Well, yeah, but—okay, how's this—thoughts and imaginary things are real, but not in the same way as things that are really real.

EDMONDS: Oh, you really don't get it.

TIPPETT: This is a very bad time to be having this argument.

EDMONDS: No, this is exactly the right time. Now that we're under attack by zombies, in this moment of crisis, when I've sacrificed a doll to save myself—everything is suddenly so clear. If I'm going to fight—if I'm going to die—what am I going to fight and die for?

TIPPETT: I really hope nobody's going to die. But if it comes to that, then how about people—Santa and the elves in this toy shop?

EDMONDS: Dolls are people, too.

ARTI: Dolls are not people.

EDMONDS: But children imagine they're alive. Who am I to take that opportunity away from a doll?

TIPPETT: You just did.

EDMONDS: Yes, but that was to save myself. Saving somebody else is completely different.

TIPPETT: The children won't be getting any dolls for Christmas if we don't rescue Santa.

EDMONDS: We've been manufacturing dolls for the past eleven months. They're all in storage right under our feet. If the zombies find them and eat them, there's no way we'll have time to replace them all.

TIPPETT: How do you know the zombies will even do that?

EDMONDS: I don't. But that zombie is still going to town on Precious Patsy.

EDMONDS, TIPPETT, and ARTI look at ZOMBIE I, who continues to chew on the doll.

TIPPETT: Is he actually eating the doll, or did it just get stuck in his mouth?

EDMONDS: I'm not getting close enough to find out. It's the most disturbing thing I've ever seen in my life, and I'm going to make sure that it never happens again. You go save Santa. I'll guard over the dolls.

TIPPETT: What?

ARTI: Sounds like a great plan.

TIPPETT: No, it doesn't.

EDMONDS: I've made my choice.

TIPPETT: The dolls are that important to you?

EDMONDS: Yes.

TIPPETT: If Arti and I were getting attacked by a zombie right now... would you toss the zombie a Precious Patsy to save us?

EDMONDS: Are you kidding? Of course not.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 4 – ACTION TOYS

TIPPETT and ARTI enter from R and move slowly into the next section of the factory. UC above the actors, the projected BANNER reads "Action Toys," with an inset VIDEO PHONE SCREEN as in the previous scenes. Above the BANNER is the VIDEO GAME SCORE DISPLAY, with the SCORE at 70. The two small Christmas trees on pillars remain UC. Large action figures or action-oriented toys sit on top of the RC and LC pillars.

TIPPETT: Edmonds would seriously let us get eaten by a zombie instead of giving up a doll.

ARTI: Don't let it get to you.

TIPPETT: It already has.

QUINN, now wearing a camo jacket and camo headband, enters from UL, pointing a toy laser gun at TIPPETT and ARTI.

QUINN: Freeze! Don't move, or I'll blast you!

ARTI: We're not zombies!

QUINN: How do I know you're not lying?

TIPPETT: Because we're really obviously not zombies.

QUINN: But how can I be sure?

TIPPETT: We're talking in complete sentences—about something other than brains. And also, we're reindeer.

QUINN: Oh. I guess you are.

TIPPETT: You seem kind of... paranoid.

QUINN: Little reindeer, I just took out a big, ugly zombie that was trying to eat my neck, the toy shop is deserted, and I don't know how many more of those things are roaming the halls. This is it. This is the end. This is the zombie apocalypse.

TIPPETT: The toy shop is deserted because Santa ordered an evacuation. And there're only nine zombies.

QUINN: But where did they come from? How many more are out there?

TIPPETT: Well, they came from a big crate in the loading dock. Where that came from, I have no idea.

ARTI: We really should've looked to see if there was a return address. I just kind of assumed there wasn't one.

QUINN: And you don't know how many more zombies there are where those came from?

ARTI: Um... no.

QUINN: Then we have to assume the worst. It's the zombie apocalypse, and it's every elf for themselves.

TIPPETT: If this is the zombie apocalypse, then don't we all stand a better chance of surviving if we stick together?

QUINN: Look around. Normally, there are hundreds of elves working here. How many do you see now?

TIPPETT: None.

QUINN: Seriously? Can't you count?

TIPPETT: Am I missing something?

QUINN: Yeah! Me!

TIPPETT: I assumed we weren't counting you.

QUINN: I am not your assumption. Never forget that.

TIPPETT: What?

QUINN: You heard me.

TIPPETT: I have no idea what that means.

QUINN: There is nothing that connects you and me. Nothing! Not even your— (*contemptuously*) assumptions. All the ties that bind us are severed when the dead walk the earth.

TIPPETT: Why?

QUINN: Because it sounds cool.

ARTI: Did you see that on a t-shirt, or did you make it up yourself?

QUINN: It might've been a meme. I don't remember. But it doesn't matter. All that matters now is survival against the undead.

TIPPETT: For an elf in a toy shop, you have a really downbeat way of looking at things.

QUINN: I didn't used to be like this. In the days before the apocalypse, I was... happy.

ARTI: You mean yesterday? Because this whole thing started less than an hour ago.

QUINN: Yesterday was an eternity ago!

ARTI: It's not even lunch time. Yesterday was ten hours ago. Tops!

QUINN: Will you stop undermining my attempts to sound brooding and fatalistic?

TIPPETT: Why do you need to be brooding and fatalistic?

QUINN: Because it's the zombie apocalypse!

TIPPETT: Why are you trying to act like an over-the-top character in a zombie story?

QUINN: This part of the toy shop is where the action happened. Literally. We made the action toys here. Action figures. Toy laser guns. Anything where the play value was based on conflict. And most of what we made was licensed from movies and TV shows. Movies with evil villains and giant monsters and zombies. All day, every day.

ARTI: And you feel like that turned you into a darker version of yourself?

QUINN: No! I'm an elf in a toy shop. There's a stereotype of us being happy and jolly and singing and... it's just not a cool image.

TIPPETT: So you want to be cool?

QUINN: Of course I want to be cool. Who doesn't want to be cool?

TIPPETT: Does anybody around here care that you're not cool?

QUINN: No—because nobody here is cool.

TIPPETT: So what difference does it make?

QUINN: Because I care about the validation of strangers. I care about what people that I will never meet might think about me. I'd want them to respect me. I'd want them to think I'm awesome.

TIPPETT: You're an elf in Santa's toy shop—how is that not awesome? We think you're totally awesome!

QUINN: That's not the kind of awesome I want! I want to be tough awesome. I want to be posterior-kicking awesome!

TIPPETT: So this hardened loner act you're putting on... it isn't really you.

QUINN: Yes, it is. It's what I am now.

TIPPETT: No, it's what you're telling yourself this zombie thing has given you an excuse to be.

QUINN: Why can't I be what I want?

TIPPETT: If you can't be what you want without some kind of excuse, then deep down you probably know it's not really who you're supposed to be.

QUINN: I have waited for this moment too long to let some pathetic little reindeer talk me out of it!

ARTI: Look, we don't care what you are, or what you want to be, okay? We don't think you're making good choices for yourself, but it's your life.

TIPPETT: We just wanna rescue Santa. He's trapped in the meeting room with his lawyers and there's zombies outside the door. Will you help us?

ARTI shoots TIPPETT an alarmed look.

QUINN: I told you already—every elf for themselves. You're on your own.

ARTI appears relieved.

ARTI: That's fine.

TIPPETT: It is not fine.

ARTI: I do have one question before we go.

QUINN: What?

ARTI: What were you going to blast us with? That's a toy gun in your hand.

QUINN: I didn't say it would actually hurt you.

ARTI: So you don't have anything we could use against the zombies.

QUINN: I never said that.

ZOMBIE 2 wanders in from UL.

ZOMBIE 2: Deck halls with... braaaaains...

TIPPETT and ARTI: Aaah!

TIPPETT: *(To herself, speaking quickly. Omit this line if multimedia game elements are not being used.)* Pretend it's a game pretend it's a game pretend it's a game.

ZOMBIE 2 tries to grab TIPPETT, but she dodges out of ZOMBIE 2's way. A POP-UP BOX reading "ZOMBIE DODGED: +10 POINTS" appears above the VIDEO GAME SCORE DISPLAY. SFX: Point-scoring tone. SCORE changes to 80 points. The POP-UP BOX disappears.

ZOMBIE 2 next tries to grab ARTI, who also dodges out of ZOMBIE 2's way. A POP-UP BOX reading "ZOMBIE DODGED: +10 POINTS" appears above the VIDEO GAME SCORE DISPLAY. SFX: Point-scoring tone. SCORE changes to 90 points. The POP-UP BOX disappears.

ARTI and TIPPETT run to the LC pillar. ZOMBIE 2 crosses to the side of the LC pillar opposite them. The three of them move around the pillar in a circular motion, the pillar staying between ZOMBIE 2 and the REINDEER.

TIPPETT: Quinn, help us!

QUINN: I told you, reindeer, you're on your own.

Hearing QUINN's voice, ZOMBIE 2 begins moving towards her. QUINN shoots at ZOMBIE 2's head with the toy gun. ZOMBIE 2 stands still, looks confused, then falls over.

TIPPETT: But... you said—

ARTI: —that's a toy gun... how did you...

QUINN: Zombies are too stupid to know this isn't a real gun. So if I shoot them in the head, they think they've really been shot in the head. And they react accordingly.

ARTI: But... if he hears you saying that, he'll know he's not really dead.

QUINN: No, because he thinks he's dead. So he thinks he can't hear, and I can say whatever I want. He's not a threat anymore.

ARTI: How did you figure that out?

QUINN: It's just common sense.

ARTI: (*pointing to the toy gun*) Do you have more of those?

QUINN: Running out the wazoo.

ARTI: Can I have one?

QUINN: No.

ARTI: Why not?

QUINN: I'm hoarding them. Because this is the zombie apocalypse. That means you're on your own.

QUINN exits UR.

ARTI: Well, that was frustrating.

TIPPETT: Let's just go.

BARCLAY and COPPINGER appear on the VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

BARCLAY: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) There you are!

COPPINGER: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) We thought you were following us out! What are you doing?

ARTI: We're going to save Santa!

TIPPETT: Herring in crafts needs help, too!

COPPINGER: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) Santa and Herring can take care of themselves! Your grandparents are worried sick!

TIPPETT: We're sorry!

BARCLAY: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) We're in the lobby. You get back here right now!

COPPINGER: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) No—that's too dangerous. There might be zombies between there and here. Both of you—you need to find an emergency exit or a good place to hide.

ARTI: What about Santa?

BARCLAY: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) A call for help has already gone out—everything will be fine. Santa has friends all over the world. The United Nations will probably send soldiers.

ARTI: How long is that going to take?

BARCLAY: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) Possibly forever.

COPPINGER: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) Don't tell them that!

BARCLAY: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) Do you want me to lie to children?

COPPINGER: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) Yes! Kids, do you remember the first thing I told you when we came into the lobby?

TIPPETT: Ignore the receptionist?

COPPINGER: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) Correct!

BARCLAY: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) Hey!

COPPINGER: (*on VIDEO PHONE*) And that is exactly what I want you to do now! Get out! Or hide if you have to. But don't do anything reckless!

COPPINGER and BARCLAY flicker out on the VIDEO PHONE SCREEN.

TIPPETT: We are gonna be in so much trouble.

ARTI: Not if we save Santa.

TIPPETT: But Coppinger said—

ARTI: We can do this. We took care of two zombies already.

TIPPETT: No, we didn't. The first one was dumb luck because of how the doll smelled, and Quinn shot the second one.

ARTI: Well, yeah, but—but don't you see—two zombies are already out of the way! And Quinn said she took out another one before we met up with her. That makes three! We can't stop now! Do you want to be a flying reindeer or not?

TIPPETT: I do, but I don't want to get in trouble. And I don't want to upset grandpa and grandma.

ARTI: They're already upset. And I'm sorry I didn't think about them to begin with, but it's too late now. If we quit, then Santa's still in trouble and we're in trouble, too. But if we can rescue him, then everybody's problems are solved. The best thing we can do is get to the cafeteria. Okay?

TIPPETT: What are we going to do if we meet another zombie?

Beat. ARTI looks at ZOMBIE 2, lying on the stage.

ARTI: We'll figure something out.

TIPPETT: Do you actually believe that?

Beat.

ARTI: *(trying to sound confident)* Yes.

TIPPETT: You're gonna keep going no matter what I do, aren't you?

ARTI: I'm not quitting.

TIPPETT: Then I'm not letting you do it alone.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 5 – ARTS AND CRAFTS

HERRING, standing near RC and holding four small canisters of “beads,” is facing off against ZOMBIE 3, who is near LC. UC above the actors, the projected BANNER now reads “Arts & Crafts,” with an inset VIDEO PHONE SCREEN as in the previous scenes. Above the BANNER is the VIDEO GAME SCORE DISPLAY, with the SCORE at 90. The two small Christmas trees on pillars remain UC. Several bottles of craft glue sit atop the LC pillar, and some paints and brushes or other craft items sit atop the RC pillar.

ZOMBIE 3: All I want for Christmas is braaaaiins...

HERRING gestures with one of the canisters as if pouring its contents onto the stage towards ZOMBIE 3. SFX: Rolling beads. ZOMBIE 3 slips, falls, and gets back up.

TIPPETT and ARTI enter from R.

TIPPETT: Uh, hi—anything we can do to help?

HERRING: What're you two doing—? Never mind! Here!

HERRING thrusts canisters at TIPPETT and ARTI.

ARTI: What's this?

HERRING: Beads!

A POP-UP BOX reading “BEADS!” appears above the VIDEO GAME SCORE DISPLAY. SFX: Item pick-up chime. An image of colored circles or dots appears next to INVENTORY in the VIDEO GAME SCORE DISPLAY. The POP-UP BOX disappears.

HERRING: I've been using them to keep the zombie off-balance.

ZOMBIE 3: On the first day of Christmas... braaaaainssss...

TIPPETT, ARTI, and HERRING gesture as if pouring the contents of their canisters onto the floor in front of ZOMBIE 3. SFX: Rolling beads. ZOMBIE 3 slips, falls, and appears to whack its head hard against the stage. A POP-UP BOX reading “ZOMBIE DOWN: +100 POINTS” appears. SFX: Point-scoring tone. SCORE increases to 190 points. The image of beads disappears from INVENTORY. The POP-UP BOX disappears.

Since the left side of the stage is covered in imaginary beads, the actors should move carefully, as their characters are trying not to slip and fall.

TIPPETT: Ooh... that looked painful.

HERRING: She hit her head. Hard.

TIPPETT: Is she getting back up?

ARTI: I don't think so.

A POP-UP BOX reading “ZOMBIE DEFEATED! +500 POINTS” appears. SFX: Point-scoring tone. SCORE increases to 690 points. POP-UP BOX disappears.

TIPPETT: You're Herring, right?

HERRING: Yeah. Do I know you?

ARTI: I'm Arti and this is Tippett. We were in the front office when you came in this morning (or "when you were talking to Barclay this morning" if HERRING was removed from the beginning of Scene 1). Are you okay?

HERRING: I'm tired and freaking out, but other than that, yeah. I guess so. I've been stuck here playing "trip the zombie" for a while.

ARTI: Using the beads is a really good strategy.

HERRING: It took 59 falls for the zombie to finally crack her head.

ARTI: Okay... maybe not.

TIPPETT: Do you have anything else that would work? (*picks up a bottle of glue from the LC pillar and crosses to HERRING*) What about glue? Could we make glue traps?

HERRING: Children's craft glue isn't exactly strong.

TIPPETT: Oh. Never mind, then. (*disappointed, hands glue bottle to HERRING*)

HERRING: What are you doing here?

ARTI: We're going to rescue Santa. He's trapped in the meeting room—

HERRING: —with the lawyers. That's today isn't it?

ARTI: Yeah.

HERRING: Wow. Talk about bad timing.

TIPPETT: Is there anything you could do to help us?

ARTI's expression is concerned. He still does not want help.

HERRING: You're kidding.

TIPPETT: I'm being completely serious.

HERRING: I'm an arts and crafts elf. My job is about as far from zombie fighting as you can get. What you need is somebody from action toys. Maybe Quinn is still here.

ARTI appears relieved.

TIPPETT: Quinn's acting like she's the star of her own zombie movie. She thinks it's every elf for themselves. She won't help.

HERRING: What about electronics? They make all kinds of shoot-'em-up games there. And a lot of those games involve monsters and zombies. Those elves are probably experts on stuff like this. I bet the second this thing started, they all hunkered down to figure out a solution, and they've been working on it this whole time.

An expression of concern crosses ARTI's face. ARTI and TIPPETT cross L to exit.

TIPPETT: I guess we'll go find out. Thanks.

HERRING: Watch your step.

TIPPETT and ARTI exit. HERRING looks at the bottle of glue in her hand and stares at it intently.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 6 – ELECTRONICS

The projected BANNER now reads "Electronics," with an inset VIDEO PHONE SCREEN as in the previous scenes. Above the BANNER is the VIDEO GAME SCORE DISPLAY, with the SCORE at 690. The two small Christmas trees on pillars remain UC. A video game console sits atop the RC pillar and two or three video game controllers sit atop the LC pillar.

CHAPMAN is sitting on a chair or cube DC with a video game controller in his hand, deeply engrossed in a game. The audience is where his screen would be. TIPPETT and ARTI enter from R. They don't notice CHAPMAN right away.

ARTI: We have a perfectly good plan. Why do you keep asking for help?

TIPPETT: It's not a perfectly good plan. It's sort of a plan. "Go to the cafeteria and find something to bait the zombies back into the crate." I don't know what you think we're going to find that the zombies would eat. So it seems like common sense that we'd want all the help that—ugh! What's that smell?

ARTI: (*pointing at CHAPMAN*) There's an elf here.

TIPPETT: Is he a zombie?

ARTI: He looks like he's playing a video game. Zombies don't play video games.

ZOMBIE 4 enters from UL.

ARTI: But that—that's a zombie!

TIPPETT: What do we do?

ARTI: Hide!

ARTI and TIPPETT crouch down behind the RC pillar. ZOMBIE 4 approaches CHAPMAN, who is oblivious. ZOMBIE 4 sniffs at CHAPMAN.

ZOMBIE 4: Five... golden... braaaainsss...

TIPPETT: What about the elf?

ARTI: I don't know!

TIPPETT: We have to help him!

ARTI: There's nothing we can do!

TIPPETT: The zombie's going to eat him!

ARTI: Just—don't look!

TIPPETT: No, the zombie's—(*puzzled*) the zombie's ignoring him?

ZOMBIE 4 passes by CHAPMAN and crosses UR.

TIPPETT: Quick, move!

While ZOMBIE 4's back is turned to them, TIPPETT and ARTI cross L and crouch down to the L of CHAPMAN. ZOMBIE 4 turns and takes a few steps back towards CHAPMAN, sniffing the air, then turns and exits UR. A POP-UP BOX reading "ZOMBIE EVADED: +10 POINTS" appears. SFX: Point-scoring tone. SCORE increases to 700 points. POP-UP BOX disappears. TIPPETT and ARTI move away from CHAPMAN.

TIPPETT: That zombie thought this elf was another zombie, and oh, the way he smells, I don't blame the zombie for being confused.

ARTI: Whew.

TIPPETT: (*to CHAPMAN*) Hey! Hello!

CHAPMAN, engrossed in his game, ignores TIPPETT.

ARTI: He looks busy. We should leave him alone.

TIPPETT: (*loudly, waving a hoof in front of CHAPMAN'S face*) Hello!

CHAPMAN looks at TIPPETT.

CHAPMAN: Darn it—I was almost at the end of the level! What's going on? Who're... are you a reindeer?

TIPPETT: Yeah. I'm Tippett. This is Arti.

ARTI: Santa's trapped. We're going to save him.

TIPPETT: Herring thought that the electronics elves could help. But... it looks like you're the only one here.

CHAPMAN: (*looking around, confused*) Um... yeah. It kind of does. So... before we go any further, I gotta ask... are you real?

ARTI: What?

CHAPMAN: Are you actually here, or am I imagining you?

TIPPETT: Why would you think you're imagining us?

CHAPMAN: I'm a game tester. Yesterday, I got chased by a hamburger and helped a gorilla perform an appendectomy on a unicorn. I see and do a lot of weird stuff—all day, every day. It gets hard to tell where the games end and the real world begins. So if there's anything you could do to prove I'm not imagining you, that'd be real helpful.

ARTI: We're standing right here.

CHAPMAN: Doesn't mean anything. So let's try this... I'll ask you some questions.

ARTI: What's that gonna prove?

CHAPMAN: What's the square root of the number of pieces of pizza I ate for dinner last night?

TIPPETT: We don't know.

CHAPMAN: What did I find hidden at the back of my brother's underwear drawer when I was ten?

TIPPETT: We don't know that either. And what were you doing digging through your brother's underwear?

CHAPMAN: What color socks did I almost put on this morning?

ARTI: We don't know! How could you expect us to know?

CHAPMAN: If I was imagining you, you'd have known that the answers were nine, an 8-track cassette of *Kenny Rogers' Greatest Hits*, and

that I haven't changed socks for at least three months. Actually, I don't think I've moved from this chair for at least three months, except to go to the bathroom.

TIPPETT: Don't take this personally, but you need a shower.

CHAPMAN: No I don't. Three words: Santa's. Christmas. Magic.

ARTI: Santa uses Christmas magic for... personal hygiene assistance?

CHAPMAN: I just said I needed a little for game development. I didn't actually specify what it was for.

ARTI: Have you tried sniffing your armpits lately?

CHAPMAN: That smell isn't me. It's you.

ARTI: No. It's really not us.

TIPPETT: Santa's meeting with his lawyers today. Didn't anybody tell you?

CHAPMAN: I didn't think that conversation was real.

TIPPETT: And then zombies attacked and Santa evacuated the toy shop.

CHAPMAN: Oh, man. That was real, too?

TIPPETT: And now Santa's trapped in a room with his lawyers.

CHAPMAN: So there's no Christmas magic flowing from Santa right now?

TIPPETT: None.

CHAPMAN: So that makes me...

ARTI and TIPPETT: Gross.

TIPPETT: You smell a lot like a zombie. We're pretty sure that's why they haven't eaten you.

CHAPMAN: Lucky for me. I think.

TIPPETT: It's fantastic! If you're invisible to the zombies, you can help us save Santa! And I bet you fight them in video games all the time. That makes you an expert. This is great!

ARTI: It's not that great.

CHAPMAN: (to TIPPETT) Whoa. Hold up.

ARTI: (*hopeful*) Yeah—hold up.

TIPPETT: What?

CHAPMAN: There's a big difference between games and the real world.

ARTI: That's right. He's absolutely right!

CHAPMAN: Trust me. I learned the hard way the last time I tried to walk on the ceiling. The thing about games is, they're safe. If a zombie bites you in a game, it's no big deal—you start the level again. But if a zombie bites you in the real world, you don't have an infinite number of lives. Just one. That's it. Game over.

TIPPETT: But... you're still an expert.

CHAPMAN: I'm an expert at looking for glitches and mistakes in the programs. I do get really good at the games—and at fighting zombies in games—but only after I learn to expect what's coming next. That doesn't apply here.

*Omit the lines marked * if multimedia game elements are not being used for the production.*

*TIPPETT: But... the only way I've been able to make myself brave... is by pretending we're in a video game.

*CHAPMAN: Then you're crazy.

TIPPETT: So you're not going to help us?

CHAPMAN: Of course I'm gonna help you. Zombies are bad news.

ARTI: You don't have to. We can manage it.

CHAPMAN: No, I want to.

*TIPPETT: But you said I was crazy.

*CHAPMAN: This is a crazy situation. If pretending it's a game is what gets you through it, then do what you gotta do.

*TIPPETT: Are you going to pretend it's a game, too?

*CHAPMAN: I've been bitten by zombies in video games at least (*thinks for a moment*) twenty thousand times. So no, I don't think I'm gonna do that. But I've got zombie-proof B.O., so I should be okay.

TIPPETT: Thank you!

CHAPMAN: Help me up.

TIPPETT: Sure.

TIPPETT and ARTI each take a deep breath and help CHAPMAN to stand. When CHAPMAN is on his feet, both exhale and then wince as they take another breath.

TIPPETT: Oh, wow, you stink.

CHAPMAN: Sorry.

ARTI: Can we let go now?

CHAPMAN: I might need a little more help.

ARTI: There wouldn't happen to be some gas masks around here anywhere, would there?

CHAPMAN: Not that I know of.

TIPPETT and ARTI help CHAPMAN to take a few steps.

TIPPETT: Are you limbered up enough to walk on your own now?

CHAPMAN: I think so.

TIPPETT and ARTI let go of CHAPMAN. CHAPMAN nearly falls, but TIPPETT and ARTI catch him.

CHAPMAN: Muscle atrophy might be a whole other problem, though.

ARTI: (*hopeful*) You mean your legs are too weak to carry you around because you never use them?

CHAPMAN: Maybe.

TIPPETT: I thought you said that you got out of the chair to use the bathroom.

CHAPMAN: I usually have somebody to help me get there.

TIPPETT: Usually?

CHAPMAN: Okay. Always.

TIPPETT: You sit around playing video games so much that you can't walk on your own?

CHAPMAN: It happens.

TIPPETT: Are you saying we're gonna have to drag you around?

CHAPMAN: I'll keep the zombies away.

ARTI: I don't think we're strong enough for that.

TIPPETT: I don't think our noses can handle it, either.

CHAPMAN: Sorry.

TIPPETT and ARTI help CHAPMAN to sit back down, then step away, fanning the air and gagging.

CHAPMAN: The spirit is willing, but the legs are weak.

TIPPETT: Are you going to be okay here?

CHAPMAN: As long as I don't have to go to the bathroom. If any zombies come along, they'll just ignore me.

TIPPETT: Are you going to be able to ignore them?

CHAPMAN resumes the game.

CHAPMAN: That won't be a problem.

TIPPETT: Wish us luck. (*Pause. TIPPETT clears her throat.*) Wish us luck?

Engrossed in the game, CHAPMAN ignores TIPPETT.

TIPPETT: Never mind.

Frustrated, TIPPETT exits L. ARTI follows. BLACKOUT.

SCENE 7 – THE CAFETERIA

The projected BANNER now reads “Cafeteria,” with an inset VIDEO PHONE SCREEN as in the previous scenes. Above the BANNER is the VIDEO GAME SCORE DISPLAY, with the SCORE at 700. The two small Christmas trees on pillars remain UC. A stack of cafeteria trays sits atop the RC pillar and a bowl of fruit sits atop the LC pillar.

ARTI and TIPPETT enter from R.

ARTI: It's the cafeteria! We made it!

TIPPETT: Arti... how come you never told anybody we were coming here?

ARTI: What do you mean?

TIPPETT: Every time somebody asked what we were doing, you just said that we were saving Santa. You never mentioned we were going to the cafeteria.

ARTI: I didn't think it was important.

TIPPETT: Why not?

ARTI: (*sighs, a little exasperated*) "Saving Santa" sounds a whole lot better than "going to the cafeteria." I mean, would you want them to think we were just looking for a snack?

TIPPETT: You could've said we were looking for something to bait the zombies. Or were you afraid that if you did, they might've offered to help us and you wouldn't have gotten all the credit in the end?

ARTI: That's not fair.

TIPPETT: That's totally fair.

ARTI: Nobody was willing or able to help us, so what does it matter?

TIPPETT: Because this is really, really serious. It shouldn't just be about becoming a flying reindeer!

ARTI: Look, we're here, okay? We made it. We don't need to have an argument.

TIPPETT sighs in frustration.

ARTI: (*pointing off UR*) There's a walk-in freezer over there. I'm going to take a look inside.

ARTI exits UR. TIPPETT stands onstage for a moment, looking frustrated.

ARTI: (*offstage*) Hey! There's somebody in here!

ARTI enters from UR with EASON, who is now wearing a kitchen apron.

TIPPETT: What were you doing in the freezer?

EASON: Hiding. There were zombies in the cafeteria.

TIPPETT: Well, they're gone now. How long were you in there?

EASON: I don't know... maybe an hour.

ARTI: You're freezing.

EASON: It's a freezer. We've got ice cream, vegetables, and lots of other things that need to be kept frozen.

ARTI: I hate to ask you to go back in there, but I need for you to show me where the meat is.

TIPPETT: (*utterly bewildered*) What?

EASON: (*confused*) The meat?

ARTI: Yeah.

EASON: What meat?

ARTI: I don't know. Meat. Any meat.

TIPPETT: Arti, are you serious?

ARTI: Why would I not be serious?

EASON: Who are you?

ARTI: Arti and Tippett. Our parents used to be part of Santa's herd. We're visiting.

EASON: What do you want with meat?

ARTI: To bait the zombies and save Santa.

EASON: That's very noble of you, but... are you seriously hoping we keep pieces of dead animals here for Santa and the elves to... eat?

ARTI: Um... I was.

EASON: You're a reindeer. And you want us to have meat?

TIPPETT: Arti, do you have any idea how messed up this is?

ARTI: (*timidly*) I hadn't really thought about it.

EASON: (*angrily*) You're a talking, thinking, self-aware reindeer. A reindeer born with intelligence that was magically gifted to Santa's herd a long time ago and passed on naturally to the generations that came along later. Intelligence that doesn't sputter out when Santa's around his lawyers. But all the other reindeer in the world—the ones who might end up on someone's dinner table—they're still your brothers... your sisters. You're lucky because of who your parents are. But you didn't do anything to earn that. So show a little empathy. Some respect for those less fortunate than you. It's the least you could do.

TIPPETT: The only thing that's been on his mind is impressing Santa so that Santa makes him a flying reindeer.

ARTI: (*quietly*) I want for Santa to make both of us flying reindeer.

TIPPETT: (*shouting*) But that matters more to you than saving Santa! You're selfish! Like Edmonds with his dolls! Or Quinn, living out her zombie apocalypse fantasy! You don't care about Santa! You just care about you! (*Beat. Then, quietly:*) You don't deserve to be a flying reindeer.

Pause.

ARTI: I'm sorry. (*sits down on stage*) I'm sorry I dragged you into this. I'm sorry I put both of us in danger. That I've worried our grandparents. That I haven't been listening to you. That I never had a plan. That I was selfish. I'm sorry for thinking that I could ever do this. (*begins to cry*)

TIPPETT: (*utterly out of patience*) You do not get to sit there and wallow in self-pity. Feeling bad isn't going to accomplish anything, and I'm not going to waste time giving you sympathy that you don't deserve to make you feel better. I followed you this far to save Santa and Santa still needs to be saved. So get up, and let's go save Santa.

Beat. ARTI stands and wipes his eyes. Pause.

ARTI: Right. Let's go save Santa.

EASON: Okay. If you've got that all sorted out, I'm gonna go make myself some hot chocolate.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 8 – THE MAINTENANCE ROOM

The projected BANNER now reads “Whether it’s a hammer or antimatter, remember... SAFETY FIRST!” with an inset VIDEO PHONE SCREEN as in the previous scenes. Above the BANNER is the VIDEO GAME SCORE DISPLAY, with the SCORE at 700. The two small Christmas trees on pillars remain UC. A power tool, work light, or other tool shop item sits atop the RC pillar. SPRINGER, wearing safety glasses or goggles, work gloves, and a shop apron, works with a screwdriver on the “time-slowng rocket pack” at the LC pillar. SFX: A door buzzer.

SPRINGER: (*calling offstage R*) Who's there?

TIPPETT: (*from offstage R*) Our names are Tippet and Arti!

During the following speech, SPRINGER crosses R, exits momentarily, and re-enters followed first by TIPPET and then ARTI.

SPRINGER: The reindeer. Good! You made it! I've had the door locked for obvious reasons. Come on in.

ARTI: How did you know we were coming?

SPRINGER: I didn't. But I was hoping. Funny thing—the video phone in here is broken. It receives, but it doesn't send. I was patched into the network, trying to figure out the problem, when everything started this morning. I watched and heard all of the transmissions going around—but I couldn't chime in to any of them. I knew you were in the building and I thought—maybe—there was a chance that you'd wind up here.

ARTI: You're Springer. This is maintenance. (*omit "You're Springer" if the character was removed from Scene 1*)

SPRINGER: That's right. (*add "I'm Springer" if the character was removed from Scene 1*) We fix stuff and we build stuff here. It's one of the few rooms in the toy shop with a lock on the door—to keep anyone from coming in when we're doing really delicate work. I've got something for you. (*crosses to the LC pillar*)

TIPPETT: You do?

SPRINGER: A special project I've had in development for ages. I've been frantically making adjustments since all the craziness started.

TIPPETT: What is it?

SPRINGER: Every year, there're more laws and regulations and fine print on everything. Especially the internet. The terms of use agreements alone are staggering. They're on every website you visit, and all that stuff is just floating around on wireless signals in the air. It might get so bad that one day, Santa's Christmas magic goes out all together.

TIPPETT: (*horrified*) That would be terrible!

SPRINGER: Which is why I've been working on this. It's a time-slowing rocket pack with nutrient patches that boost the wearer's strength, endurance, and muscle density.

ARTI: Whoa.

SPRINGER: Yeah. Pretty awesome huh?

ARTI: That's exactly the kind of thing we need to rescue Santa! Does it work?

SPRINGER: I haven't actually incorporated the jet propulsion system or the nutrient patches yet, but I'm fairly confident the time-slowing components are functional.

TIPPETT: You haven't tested it?

SPRINGER: No, so it might hiccup a little.

TIPPETT: Why haven't you used it yourself to rescue Santa?

SPRINGER: It only works on reindeer.

TIPPETT: And that's why you've been waiting for us?

SPRINGER: Yup. You up for giving it a try?

TIPPETT: Yeah. We both are.

SPRINGER: Sorry—I've only got this one.

ARTI: We can't share it?

SPRINGER: That would kill the battery. You're going to have to decide which one of you is going to wear it.

ARTI takes the rocket pack, looks at it, and hands it to TIPPETT.

ARTI: Here.

TIPPETT: No, Arti. It's okay. I know how much you want to do this.

ARTI: No. You said it yourself—I don't deserve it. The only reason we made it this far is because of you. You do the honors.

TIPPETT: Are you sure?

ARTI: Positive.

ARTI helps TIPPETT put on the rocket pack.

A POP-UP BOX reading "TIME-SLOWING ROCKET PACK: +100 POINTS" appears above the VIDEO GAME SCORE DISPLAY. SFX: Item pick-up chime. SCORE increases to 800 points. A graphic of a rocket

pack appears next to INVENTORY. POP-UP BOX disappears.

SPRINGER: (*pointing to a red dot on one of the shoulder straps*) The “on” button is right here. It’ll use a ton of energy, so the battery won’t last long.

TIPPETT: How long?

SPRINGER: About two seconds.

ARTI: What good is two seconds going to do?

SPRINGER: Those two seconds will seem like two hours for you. It’ll be like you’re moving at normal speed while everyone else is frozen.

TIPPETT: So I can corral the zombies, and I’ll be going too fast for them to bite me.

SPRINGER: That’s the plan. But keep in mind—your body will be using a ton of energy, too. Without the nutrient patches, you’ll be too exhausted to move when the unit switches off. So work as quickly as you can, because if something should happen to go wrong with the rocket pack before you’re finished—

TIPPETT: I’ll be too tired to run away. Got it.

HERRING enters, carrying several “zombie glue traps”—square pieces of cardboard measuring about 2 ½ feet x 2 ½ feet. They are dull yellow on one side and powdery white on the other.

HERRING: Arti! Tippet! I’ve been looking for you!

SPRINGER: Herring! How did you get in here?

ARTI: I might not have locked the door. Sorry. Not used to having those in the woods.

TIPPETT: Guess what? Springer made a reindeer rocket pack that slows down time! I can use it to rescue Santa!

HERRING: Oh. That’s... impressive.

TIPPETT: What’re you doing here? What’ve you got?

HERRING: (*trying to hide the traps behind her back, as if embarrassed*) Oh... nothing... just a craft project I was working on. I’ll show it to you some other time.

SPRINGER: (to TIPPETT, pointing L) The back offices are in that direction. That's where you'll find Santa's conference room.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 9 – THE OFFICE HALLWAY

The projected BANNER now reads “Greenaway, Williamson & Bauersfeld Attorneys at Law,” with an inset VIDEO PHONE SCREEN as in the previous scenes. Above the BANNER is the VIDEO GAME SCORE DISPLAY, with the SCORE at 800. The two small Christmas trees on pillars remain UC. The RC and LC pillars have been removed.

ZOMBIES 5-8 shuffle around one another at L, moaning. TIPPETT and ARTI enter from R. TIPPETT is wearing the rocket pack. There is an oversized “energy bar” lying on the stage DC, propped up so the audience can see the words “ENERGY BAR” on it.

ARTI: This is it—the office hallway. Santa's in the conference room just on the other side of those zombies.

TIPPETT: (turns around, looking off R) It's weird that this door was closed. It would had to have been open for them to get in here. I wonder how it got shut?

ARTI: Yeah. The zombies might've wandered off otherwise, and Santa and his lawyers could've escaped.

ZOMBIE 5 notices ARTI and TIPPETT and begins moving towards them.

ZOMBIE 5: Heeere we come a-braaaaiin-aaaaating...

TIPPETT: Time to see if this thing works.

ARTI: Good luck.

TIPPETT pushes the button on the rocket pack strap. ARTI and the ZOMBIES freeze. A POP-UP BOX appears reading “ROCKET PACK POWERUP!” SFX: An electronic power up sound. POP-UP BOX disappears.

TIPPETT: It's working, Arti! I'm moving so fast that it's like they're standing still. Arti? (looks at ARTI, who is frozen) Oh. Right. Never mind.

TIPPETT walks over to ZOMBIE 5 and waves a hoof in front of his face. ZOMBIE 5 does not react.

TIPPETT: This is fantastic! I can drag all the zombies back to the crate and seal them up with no problem. (*moves a few steps R, away from ZOMBIE 5*) I wonder if there's a hand truck or something that I can load them onto?

SFX: An electronic power down sound. TIPPETT stumbles as if suddenly exhausted. ARTI and the ZOMBIES briefly move.

ARTI: Tippett?

SFX: An electronic power up sound. ARTI and the ZOMBIES freeze.

TIPPETT: Uh-oh. I think the rocket pack just had a hiccup or something. I hope that doesn't happen again. Springer wasn't kidding—my body is using a ton of energy. I felt exhausted there for a second.

SFX: An electronic power down sound. TIPPETT collapses. ARTI and the ZOMBIES unfreeze. ARTI rushes to TIPPETT and puts a hoof on the rocket pack.

ARTI: What's happening?

TIPPETT: I think the rocket pack is hiccupping!

SFX: An electronic power up sound. The ZOMBIES freeze. TIPPETT stands. ARTI's hoof is still on the rocket pack.

ARTI: Whoa—this is freaky.

TIPPETT: Arti, you're not frozen. Why aren't you frozen?

ARTI: Oh, shoot. I touched the rocket pack. I'm still touching the rocket pack. I'm in the time bubble thingy with you! That's going to kill the battery! What do I do?

TIPPETT: Stop touching the rocket pack!

SFX: An electronic power down sound.

ARTI: Too late.

TIPPETT and ARTI collapse. A POP-UP BOX reading "POWERUP DEPLETED!" appears. SFX: A short circuit or electric fizzle sound. POP-UP BOX

disappears. The rocket pack graphic disappears from INVENTORY. ZOMBIE 5 begins moving toward ARTI, and the other ZOMBIES begin crossing the stage towards the two REINDEER.

TIPPETT: No!

ARTI: I'm so tired...

ZOMBIE 6: Reindeer braaaainsss...

BLACKOUT on the main part of the stage, including the BANNER and VIDEO GAME SCORE DISPLAY. A spot comes up on SPRINGER and HERRING at far R. HERRING is holding the "zombie glue traps."

SPRINGER: What're the big square things?

HERRING: Nothing.

SPRINGER: You must've thought they were important if you brought them to the maintenance shop during a zombie attack.

HERRING: They're just something I thought we might be able to use against the zombies, but... they're nothing compared to your rocket-time-backpack thingy.

SPRINGER: I'm not sure how well the rocket-time-backpack thingy is actually gonna work, but it seemed like our best option. What've you got?

HERRING: Well, Tippet asked me about glue traps, and I told her that the children's glue we make here wouldn't be strong enough to hold zombies. But after I thought about it, I realized I could change the formula a little, and well... I made these—zombie glue traps. Like glue traps for flies or rats, only for zombies. There's a special coating on the back so they don't stick together.

SPRINGER: That's fantastic!

HERRING: Really? It's nothing remotely high-tech.

SPRINGER: You know the big difference between high tech and low tech?

HERRING: What?

SPRINGER: Less stuff to go wrong. And don't sell your chemistry short. If I'd known you had these, I would've told Tippet to take them along with the rocket pack.



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