



**Sample Pages from
The Robbed Reindeer**

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THE ROBBED REINDEER

A CHRISTMAS PLAY IN ONE ACT BY
Lindsay Price



The Robbed Reindeer

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Characters

2M+2W+6 Either

Joe Mufferaw, a lumberjack

*Dr. H.Q. Crankspea

*Elf/Newsboy

Jane the Paper Girl

Mr. Johnson

Ms. Gladstone

*Reporters (4)

* – can be played by a male or a female.

Music Note

The tune for Crankspea's song can be found at:
<http://tfolk.me/p20>

The set is made up of boxes and risers. There is a pole downstage right, which has a sign on it that says NORTH POLE.

DR. CRANKSPEA sneaks on-stage, strokes his moustache and hisses at the audience. He is holding a large sack and a large piece of paper that he places on the ground before he begins to sing. CRANKSPEA has back-up singers — they sing the lines in brackets.

CRANKSPEA:

My last name is Crankspea
 My first name's H.Q.
 I'm feeling dastardly
 Let me give you a clue
 I'm gonna do something mean (something mean)
 Gonna do something mean (it'll be a scream)
 Going do something quick
 An awe-inspiring trick
 The trouble (oh the trouble)
 It will be thick (will be thick)
 My last name is Crankspea
 My first name's H.Q.
 I'm feeling low and nasty
 And I'm here to tell all of you
 I'm gonna do something mean (something mean)
 Gonna do something mean (swimming against the stream)
 It's a fiendish master plan
 I'll have the world eating Spam
 Oops! I mean from my hand
 Let me tell you (let me tell you)
 Who I am (who I am)
 Dr. H.Q. Crankspea

CRANKSPEA: Allow me to properly introduce myself. My name is Dr. H.Q. Crankspea. Can you hear that snoring? Do you know who is sleeping back there? Santa's Reindeer. Can you name all of the Reindeer? I'll bet you can't. (*improv with the audience, seeing if they can recall the names of the reindeer*) Well poo poo to you. And do you know what I have here in this bag? Well, I'm not going to tell you. It's a secret. But I'm sure it will be in all the papers. It's the most fiendish master plan in the whole entire universe. But I'm not finished yet. (*pointing to someone in the audience*) You! Are you trust-worthy? Are you smart? Can you hold your arms in the air? Can you rub your tummy and pat your head at the same time? I want you to stand here and hold this ransom note. (*the person from the audience comes on stage and holds the ransom note*) When

you see an elf, you give this note to him OK? What do you have to do? Very good. Wait till you hear the ransom note, it says all sorts of nasty things. Especially at the very end because I signed it...

OFFSTAGE VOICE: Help! Stop Thief! Help! Help!

CRANKSPEA: Shhhhhhhhhhhhh. Now it's time for the fun to begin. I can't wait to read it in the paper.

CRANKSPEA exits stage left as an ELF runs on stage right.

ELF: Oh my goodness gracious. Oh my goodness gracious. Help! Help! Help! This is a disaster! While the Reindeer were all tucked up cozy in their beds, visions of sugarplums dancing in their heads, snoring away, somebody stole the Reindeer's antlers! Oh my goodness gracious! What are you doing here, Slappy Elf? Someone gave you this note? Let me see it. *(takes note)* It's a ransom note. For the Reindeer's antlers. *(reading)* "I took the antlers. And if Santa wants them back, he's going to have to give me lots and lots and lots of presents. Signed Joe Mufferaw." This is horrible! Oh Slappy Elf, you better go back to your room while I figure out what to do. I always thought that Joe Mufferaw was a good guy. What is Santa going to say? Tomorrow is Christmas Eve! He's already under a lot of stress. A mountain of stress. And what's going to happen to little ole me! I'm going to have to be the one to go tell Santa about this whole mess. Gulp!

JANE the paper girl enters stage left holding up the latest issue of the "North Pole News"

JANE: Extra! Extra! Read all about it. Antlers missing and secret insiders say that it was Gargantuan Giant Joe Mufferaw. He's holding the antlers for a enormously ridiculous ransom.

ELF: Boy, news sure travels fast around here. Can I have one of those papers?

JANE: Sure thing mister. Isn't this absolutely, positively, horriblistictly the worst thing to happen ever?

ELF: It sure is. But it's going to get worse. I'm the one who has to tell Santa Claus. Gulp!

JANE: *(pulls out a pad and pencil)* Do you think he'll get mad?

ELF: I don't know.

JANE: Do you think he'll pay the ransom?

ELF: I don't know. But I can tell you one thing. The Reindeer won't be able to fly straight without the antlers.

JANE: I didn't know that.

ELF: It gets worse. If the Reindeer can't fly straight, then they won't be able to pull the sleigh on Christmas Eve.

JANE: That would be a disaster. A double disaster.

ELF: The elves have been telling Santa for years that he should get a motorized sleigh just as a back up, or in the case of an emergency. What if Prancer got the flu at the wrong time? Or Blitzen sprained a hoof while he was skiing? But no, he always had a touch of nostalgia. It was Reindeers or nothing. Hey! Why are you writing that down? I thought you were just a lowly paper person.

JANE: A temporary set back. I'm really a reporter at heart.

ELF: Aren't we all.

JANE: I'm just looking for the right story. Do you have any more inside info for me?

ELF: No comment! Listen, Santa always holds his press conferences through a Mr. Johnson in (*your town here*). If you go down there, you'll get all the info you need.

JANE: Thanks.

ELF: I'm going to Santa now. Wish me luck.

ELF exits stage right.

JANE: Good luck. Can you imagine? What would happen if Santa couldn't get the antlers back and he couldn't drive the sleigh and there was no Christmas? This is a catastrophe! A monstrosity! A travesty! A mockery! Two mockeries and a double kaphuffle! In other words a really big MESS!! I'd really like to talk to that Joe Mufferaw guy. Make him explain why he did such an awful thing this close to Christmas.

In past productions JOE MUFFERAW has been played by a life-sized lumberjack puppet. As a human, JOE should retain the childlike glee of an oversized cartoon character.

JOE: (*singing to the tune of "Do Your Ears Hang Low?"*)
My name is Joe and don't you know,

I like to go walking in the waist deep snow.
But you better watch out when I give my nose a blow!
I'm right here standing and my name is Joe.

JANE: You wouldn't be Joe Mufferaw would you?

JOE: In the flesh.

JANE: You look a lot different than I thought.

JOE: Well, there's a lot of stories out there about me. There's even one that says that I like to leave my footprints on the ceilings of local libraries! But you can't believe everything you hear.

JANE: You got that right.

JOE: You sound pretty glum chum. What's up?

JANE: I was just telling these people, these nice people, that the thing that had to be done at this exact moment in time was find Joe Mufferaw and make him explain why he did such an awful thing this close to Christmas.

JOE: What do you mean find Joe Mufferaw and make him explain why he did such an awful thing?

JANE: This close to Christmas.

JOE: Is it Christmas time already? Maybe I'll go visit Santa Claus since I'm in the area.

JANE: You are a horrible, horrible, villianiskable...

JOE: Hey there, slow down there, what in the blazings are you talking about?

JANE: I can't believe you would show your face around here.

JOE: I'm still in the dark.

JANE: I'm going to find that elf and we're going to go get the police and they're going to put you in jail!! (*runs offstage right*)

JOE: What is going on? I wouldn't do anything to Santa. Especially so close to Christmas. I love Christmas.

JANE: (*offstage*) The guy who stole the Reindeer's antlers is this way!

JOE: Holy guacamole! Somebody stole the Reindeer's antlers? Who would do such a dastardly thing?

JANE: (*offstage*) Let's get that Joe Mufferaw!

JOE: Let's get that Joe Mufferaw?? They're talking about me? I never stole any antlers. Somebody's trying to frame me! But why? How? There is one person who could be so low. Dr. H.Q. Crankspea. I'm going to have to get to the bottom of this.

JANE: (*offstage*) He's over this way.

JOE: I'm going to make myself scarce until I have more information. I can't get to the bottom of this from jail, now can I? Don't you guys worry. No matter what anybody says Christmas will happen and that's all there is to it!!

JANE: (*Running on stage*) He's gone! Oh what a mess! The elves are upset. Santa is really upset. And the Reindeer are quadrupley hysterically upset. Well I'm not going to sit on my behind any longer. I've had enough of this paper girl stuff. This is the absolutely right story for me to cover. I'm going to search high and low for that Joe Mufferaw. And I'll bet when I find Joe Mufferaw, I'll find the antlers too. Then everybody will know the truth and Christmas will be saved.

JANE exits stage right taking with her the NORTH POLE sign. MR. JOHNSON enters surrounded by a throng of reporters – all asking questions. Once MR. JOHNSON sets himself up centre stage the REPORTERS fade to the sides.

MR. JOHNSON: My name is Mr. Johnson. I've called this press conference here in (*your town here*) to discuss the latest emergency concerning Christmas. Christmas Eve is hours away and we've got really big problems concerning the Reindeer and their missing antlers.

MS. GLADSTONE: (*offstage*) Mr. Johnson!

MR. JOHNSON: Out here Ms. Gladstone.

MS. GLADSTONE: (*offstage*) It's long distance Mr. Johnson! It's the North Pole.

MR. JOHNSON: Transfer me right away, Ms. Gladstone.

A phone on a long extension is lobbed over the top of the backdrop.

MR. JOHNSON: Santa, what can I do for you? Oh no. Oh no. Oh No! I'll let the people know right away. Friends, Christmas lovers and Countrymen. I'm afraid I have some more bad news. It seems that someone left the door open to the Reindeer's bedroom. A nasty northerly gust of wind flew through the room. The Reindeer

were flung to the left and to the right. They were flung up and down. They were carried out of room all off balance. They were taken up, up, up into the sky. But they can't fly straight and that means they can't steer. So the Reindeer are at the mercy of the wind. This is a terrible state of affairs my friends. The wind is heading south, down, down, down somewhere right around our area, here in (*your town here*). We must all be on the lookout!

MS. GLADSTONE: (*offstage*) Mr. Johnson!

MR. JOHNSON: Out here, Ms. Gladstone.

MS. GLADSTONE enters with the end of the telephone extension tied around her waist. She also had sheets and sheets of paper.

MS. GLADSTONE: Reports are coming in from all over the city: Blitzen sighted out by the fire station, Dasher sighted out by The Y. Comet sighted above the library. All these sightings but we haven't got one of them yet!

MR. JOHNSON: It's a terrible transgression, ladies and gentlemen. I see that some of the reporters have some questions. Maybe Ms. Gladstone you could answer some of them, since you've got all the reports.

MS. GLADSTONE: I'll do anything I can.

MR. JOHNSON: Would anyone like to ask a question?

REPORTER 1: What about the police cars?

MS. GLADSTONE: None of the police cars are fast enough to chase them.

REPORTER 2: What about the fire trucks?

MS. GLADSTONE: The fire trucks aren't any use because the Reindeer just won't stay still!!

REPORTER 3: What about the ladders on the fire trucks?

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, Ms. Gladstone, we've got some pretty tall ladders here in (*your town here*).

MS. GLADSTONE: Not high enough I'm afraid.

REPORTER 4: What about the Reindeer nets?

MS. GLADSTONE: Reindeer nets?

MR. JOHNSON: I believe I can handle that one Ms. Gladstone. They're still in storage. Santa has never had to handle this problem before and the nets were put into storage. The elves are looking for them as we speak.

MS. GLADSTONE: I've made copies of the ransom note for all the reporters. Of all the nerve of that Joe Mufferaw character. Trading poor defenceless reindeers and their antlers just to get some presents. It's enough to make you want to spit.

MR. JOHNSON: Keep up the good work Ms. Gladstone.

MS. GLADSTONE: If any other news comes in, I'll bring it right away.

MS. GLADSTONE leaves, taking the phone with her. In the previous scene, DR. CRANKSPEA has crept in to listen.

MR. JOHNSON: Well at least we know where the Reindeer are. And at least they're all together. Does anyone here have a favourite Reindeer? (*Improv with the audience – e.g. Why is he your favourite?, etc...*) I love the Reindeer, even though I hear that they snore a lot. What I don't understand is why Mr. Joe Mufferaw would want to steal the antlers. And why does he want a lot of presents all of a sudden? He's never wanted them before...oh dear, where's my handkerchief? (*wipes his eyes*)

CRANKSPEA: Do you see what's going on here? Everybody is all in a tizzy. And it's all because of me!!! I can't believe how much fun I'm having.

MR. JOHNSON: And it is my duty to tell all of you, that we will leave no stone unturned, no height un-scaled, no door unopened until we get back the antlers. And if any of you see the antlers lying around or whatnot Santa is prepared to give a reward.

CRANKSPEA: Yay! Yay!

MR. JOHNSON: And we won't sleep until we find that Joe Mufferaw.

CRANKSPEA: Boo Boo.

MR. JOHNSON: Well, I don't think you need to boo him. He probably had a perfectly good explanation for what he's done.

CRANKSPEA: Only a dastardly villain would do something like this.

MR. JOHNSON: Well...

CRANKSPEA: An Evil Steveill.

MR. JOHNSON: If he had a...

CRANKSPEA: A monsterozo.

MR. JOHNSON: I guess so.

CRANKSPEA: I know so. Don't you think that if he was innocent, he would have come out by now and tried to clear his name? But where is he? Where is he? Not here at the press conference pleading his case. He is hiding because he's guilty as the nose on his face.

MR. JOHNSON: Well, as we said, we'll find him.

CRANKSPEA: It's about time.

MR. JOHNSON: What did you say?

CRANKSPEA: Uh... It's about time somebody did something. You just can't let him roam around. Next thing you know he'll take over the whole country and then the world.

MR. JOHNSON: I guess we should do something. Time is running out. Thank you all for coming today. When we have some more information, we'll be sure to let you know. Thank you.

*MR. JOHNSON leaves. As soon as he is out of sight,
CRANKSPEA does a victory dance around the stage.*

CRANKSPEA: This is my dastardly dance of joy. Hee Hee Hee!! Everything is going according to plan. The most fiendish master plan of the whole entire universe. Hee Hee Hee! Dance, Dance, Dance!! I am such a genius that I could almost cry. Almost. Oh but my fiendish master plan is far from over. Wait until you see what comes next! I knew that they would give out a reward for the antlers. Ha! I'm going to go see if I can see a Reindeer or two. Ha! Ha Ha! Ha Ha Ha!

*CRANKSPEA exits right as JOE comes on stage left
reading the paper.*

JOE: Wow have you guys read the papers? This thing is getting way out of hand. I read one says that if I was innocent I would have come forward. Another one says that I'm trying to gain control over the world. And this one has a photo of the ransom note. That darn Crankspea. This whole kit and caboodle has his name written all over it. How come I know who did this horrible thing but I can't prove it? Look at that. It doesn't even look like my handwriting. It's not even close. Santa should have known that. I'm sure he's seen my handwriting. Hasn't he? The worst thing

is that my past record doesn't seem to mean diddlysquat. How come everyone is so quick to believe that I would do such a thing?

JANE: (*offstage*) Wait! I have a question! I have a question!

JOE: Oh Geez! Where can I hide?

JOE looks around and then puts paper in front of his face.

JANE: Wait! Hello? Anybody? I can't believe I missed the Press conference. It took me forever to get here from the North Pole.

JOE: (*sotto voce*) It's that paper girl who wanted to put me into jail.

JANE: How can I be Jane, the ace reporter when I can't get any information?

JOE: I have an idea.

JANE: Christmas Eve is getting closer and closer. What's going to happen to Christmas now?

JOE: (*still behind the paper*) Excuse me Jane, you young yet obviously very experienced reporter person, is this where the conference is on the missing Reindeer antlers?

JANE: You just missed it.

JOE: That's too bad.

JANE: Now the Reindeer are missing too.

JOE: That's horrible.

JANE: Drat that Joe Mufferaw.

JOE: You're not talking about Joe Mufferaw the famous yet somewhat rugged and cuddly all at the same time lumberjack?

JANE: That's not the Joe Mufferaw I know.

JOE: Are you sure?

JANE: The Joe I know took away the antlers from the Reindeer while they were snoring away. I don't want to think about what Christmas will be like if Santa can't get around. I mean there is nothing like waking up really early and rushing down stairs and the cookies and milk are gone and the stockings are full.

JOE: Don't forget the carrots for the Reindeer.

JANE: But what if there is no Reindeer?? What are we going to do?

JOE: There'll be Reindeer and Christmas. Don't you worry. Dr. H.Q. Crankspea won't stop me this easily.

JANE: What did you say?

JOE: Sorry I have a cold.

JANE: Hey why do you have a paper over your face?

JOE: I'm allergic to dust.

JANE: That's not a very good reason.

JOE: I like the smell of newsprint?

JANE: What are you hiding? *(takes away paper)* JOE MUFFERAW!!!

JOE: Shhhhhh.

JANE: HEY! EVERYONE COME BACK!!!

JOE: Would you be quiet!

JANE: Why should I?

JOE: I want to explain myself.

JANE: You can explain yourself to the police.

JOE: All I want is one minute. Think of the story you could write.

JANE: The story?

JOE: Jane gets the scoop on the true story of Joe Mufferaw.

JANE: That would be some story... all right, one minute.

JOE: I did not steal the antlers. I was framed by a dastardly villain called Dr. H.Q. Crankspea.

JANE: What about the ransom note?

JOE: It's not even my handwriting.

JANE: Prove it.

JOE: Here, look at the signature on my lumberjack license!

JANE: Well, it looks different from the ransom note, but how do I know you just didn't change your handwriting?

JOE: Good point, good point. What if we go to the scene of the crime? Scope it out. Find a clue. Get the right angle.

JANE: Back to the North Pole?

JOE: That's a great idea. I should have thought of it myself.

JANE: It took me forever to get here the first time. If we go back to the North Pole, Christmas will be over. Unless that's your plan all along.

JOE: I tell you I'm innocent! Listen, I have a secret special way of getting around. You have to promise not to tell anyone about it.

JANE: I never reveal my sources.

JOE: OK, because I'll need your help. (*turning to the audience*) And I'll need all of your help too. There is a special chant that gets me from place to place. (*improv with the audience*) Everyone on this side of the room, you're going to go like this. Bah-Na-Na-Na-Na-Nah Nah Nah...OK try it. Very good. OK everybody in the middle of the room you're going to go like this. Apples peaches pumpkin pie. Try it. Very good again. And everybody on this side of the room you're going to go like this. North Pole, North Pole, North North Pole. Good.

They go through each of the chants separately again and then all together. JOE leads the groups and makes them get louder, get softer and then go as loud as they can and then stop.

JANE: OK. The singing was great Joe but when do we get to the North Pole?

JOE: We're already here! You were too busy singing to notice.

JANE: Wow. That was the fastest trip I have ever taken.

JOE: Cheaper than airplanes but no frequent flyer points.

JANE: Do you know exactly where we are?

JOE: I think we're right inside the Reindeer's bedroom. Eight beds.

JANE: I didn't know Reindeer slept in beds.

JOE: It's in their contracts.

JANE: Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen and Rudolph.

JOE: Santa once told me that he has to wear earmuffs because the Reindeer snore so loudly.

JANE: It's kind of sad looking at those empty beds.

JOE: And no Reindeers cause they are all flying around (*your town here*).

JANE: And no antlers either. There's the wall where they are supposed to be. How come Reindeers don't sleep with their antlers on?

JOE: Would you be able to sleep with that much hardware on your head?

JANE: Probably not.

JOE: So why don't we split up and see if we can find any clues.

JANE: No way. I still want to keep my eye on you.

JOE: All right, what if you search that side of the room and I'll search this side of the room.

JANE: OK, but no funny stuff.

JOE: I wouldn't dream of it.

They search opposite sides of the room and step backwards toward the centre. They back into each other.

BOTH: AGHAGHAGHAG!!!!

BOTH: Shhhhhhhhhhhhh.

JOE: Have you found anything?

JANE: No have you?

JOE: No.

JANE: Why don't we switch sides?

JOE: OK Doaky.

They search opposite sides of the room and step backwards toward the centre. They back into each other.

BOTH: AGHAGHAGHAG!!!!

BOTH: Shhhhhh.

JANE: Have you found anything?

JOE: No. Have you?

JANE: Not one thing. I think that your one minute is long over Joe Mufferaw.

JOE: Come on, you have to believe me. There has got to be something here that Crankspea left behind.

JANE: There isn't anything in this room except eight Reindeer beds and that fingerprint.

JOE: Are you sure there's nothing but eight beds and a FINGERPRINT???

JANE: FINGERPRINT!!!!

JOE: Where?

JANE: Oh the floor beside the antler wall.

JOE: Lift it up!

JANE lifts up a fingerprint, which is almost as big as her. The fingerprint has "Property of H.Q. Crankspea" written on it.

JANE: What does it say?

JOE: Fingerprint Property of Dr. H.Q. Crankspea. We've got him!!

JANE: There aren't any of your fingerprints around here are there?

JOE: Not a one. Eight Reindeer beds and one fingerprint belonging to Dr. H.Q. Crankspea.

JANE: That proves it. If you supposedly took the antlers then how come his fingerprint is here and not any of yours? I'm sorry I've been giving you so much trouble Joe. It's just that I like Christmas an awful lot.

JOE: I'm glad that you believe so much in Christmas. You could teach good old Dr. H.Q. Crankspea a thing or two about the Christmas spirit.

JANE: Why would he do such a mean thing?

JOE: I don't know. I do know he's never had a Christmas present in his life.

JANE: Not even one?

JOE: Not even a lump of coal.

JANE: But Christmas is more than just presents. It's family and snow angels and helping others.

JOE: I don't think Dr. C. has ever had a Christmas like that.

JANE: And why would he try and pin the dastardly deed on you?

JOE: Let's just say Crankspea and I go back a long long way.

JANE: Hey wait a minute! If Crankspea signed your name to the ransom note, how is he going to get anything for the antlers? He won't get the presents that he asked for in the note.

JOE: He's got such a warped mind I wouldn't be surprised if he let everybody sweat for a bit and then turned them over to the police saying that he found them!

JANE: And everyone would still believe that you were the one who took them.

JOE: And then he would get the reward that Santa is giving out for the return of the antlers.

JANE: What a mess!

JOE: So I'm running out of time. I have to show this proof to Santa before Crankspea decides to turn the antlers over to the police.

JANE: I think we should go to Santa Claus right away. Time is running out. *(runs off)*

JOE: Everything will be all right. Santa and I will come up with a plan to catch that H.Q. Crankspea!

JOE exits. NEWSBOY comes on from another direction, holding a newspaper.

NEWSBOY: Extra! Extra! Read all about it. "The Antlers Have Been Found!" *(reading)* The finder is a Dr. H.Q. Crankspea. "I love Christmas!" he is quoted as saying. "I'm just glad that the they could be returned at the very last possible moment maybe even too late before Christmas." Dr. Crankspea is going to collect the huge reward for the antlers at a ceremony in *(your town here)*. And it looks like the same wind that blew the Reindeer away has picked them up and is blowing them back towards the North Pole. The elves are catching them in the Reindeer nets as we speak. *(exiting)* Extra! Extra!

JOE enters wearing a hood and a mask.

JOE: Everything is going to be alright. Santa Claus and I worked out everything. The Reindeer are sleeping in their beds taking a nap, snoring away before they have to go out on their famous flight. Too bad Jane couldn't be here when we reveal who really took the antlers. She's at home typing up her exclusive interview with me and Santa Claus. Besides this is Christmas Eve and she has to be at home. The press conference is about to start. I'm wearing a disguise so that Crankspea doesn't recognize me.

CRANKSPEA enters and moves centre stage surrounded by reporters. He has a suitcase full of antlers in his hand.

CRANKSPEA: Thank you, Thank you, Ladies and Gentleman, Thank you. Thank you all so very very much. Thank you all. I've called this press conference because I want to return the antlers to Santa Claus. This was a terrible horrible thing that was done by a guy who just doesn't have any Christmas spirit whatsoever. I mean who would take the most important antlers in the world so close to Christmas? Not a very nice guy let me tell you. I'm the nicest, mostest wonderfulness, greatest peachiest guy in the whole world because I found them and I deserve all the credit and all I have to say is: thank you, thank you! As soon as I get my reward I'll turn the antlers over.

REPORTERS all speak at once, trying to get CRANKSPEA's attention. JOE speaks over them all.

JOE: *(disguised voice)* Sure thing Mister Crankspea.

CRANKSPEA: Dr. Crankspea.

JOE: *(disguised voice)* Right, right. All you have to do is sign this form and all of the presents here will be yours. *(holds out form)*

CRANKSPEA: I didn't know about any form.

JOE: Is there a problem?

CRANKSPEA: Of course not, of course not. *(signs form)* There you are.

JOE: Thanks. You know your signature looks very familiar...

CRANKSPEA: Now, as I was saying, it was an awful thing that Joe Mufferaw did. That ransom note was just an awful awful thing. He said: "I took the antlers, and if Santa wants them back, he's going to have to give me a lot of presents. Signed Joe Mufferaw." Joe Mufferaw.

REPORTERS all speak at once, trying to get CRANKSPEA'S attention. JOE speaks over them all.

JOE: I don't think that Joe took those antlers.

CRANKSPEA: Who said that? Did anybody hear anything? You over there. Did you say something?

JOE: No sir, not at all sir. I'm just admiring your penmanship.

CRANKSPEA: Well as I was saying...

JOE: Crankspea really took the antlers...

The REPORTERS gasp.

CRANKSPEA: Who said that?

JOE: ...and wants everyone to believe it was Joe.

CRANKSPEA: It was Joe. It was his signature right there on the ransom note.

JOE: That signature didn't even come close to looking like his handwriting.

CRANKSPEA: I thought it was you speaking. Well, how would you know? Do you know Joe personally or something?

JOE: In fact, I know him pretty well! *(he throws away mask and reveals himself)*

The REPORTERS gasp again.

CRANKSPEA: *(they circle each other)* Joe Mufferaw.

JOE: Dr. Crankspea.

CRANKSPEA: It's been a long time.

JOE: Say it ain't so.

CRANKSPEA: *(to the audience)* Look who shows up now. Don't you think he's a little late?

JOE: I had some searching to do.

CRANKSPEA: Where's the police! Arrest this man! He, who has taken the good out of Christmas. Police!

JOE: You are the one who has taken the good out of Christmas.

CRANKSPEA: Why are you denying that you took the antlers? What about the ransom note? Is that not your signature?

JOE: As my lumberjack licence proves it looks nothing like my signature. In fact, it looks a lot like your signature.

CRANKSPEA: I knew I didn't have to sign a form. You tried to trick me! I wrote that signature under false pretences. It wouldn't stand up in a court of law. I still deserve all those presents.

JOE: Well, I don't even need your ransom note. I have something better.

CRANKSPEA: I don't think so.

JOE: You don't?

CRANKSPEA: I dare you to reveal any information you have.

JOE: You dare me?

CRANKSPEA: I dare you. We all dare you. I have more Christmas spirit that you! I found the antlers!

JOE: What about this fingerprint?

CRANKSPEA: This fingerprint belongs to one H.Q... But I wore gloves...I I mean didn't the person who stole the antlers wear gloves?

JOE: This fingerprint proves that you were in the cave sneaking by all the Reindeer.

CRANKSPEA: You can't prove that you found that fingerprint in the Reindeer cave. I've never been to the North Pole.

JOE: This fingerprint proves that you took the antlers and listened to the elves snore instead of me.

CRANKSPEA: The elves don't snore.

JOE: Yes they do.

CRANKSPEA: No they don't.

JOE: Oh yes they do.

CRANKSPEA: Oh no they don't. You don't know anything. It's the Reindeer who snore.

JOE: How do you know that the Reindeer snore if you've never been to the North Pole?



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