

SECRET SANTA

By Roberto Colusso

CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT #1 – THE HOOK

Secret agent Nicholas Clause, citizen to the Union of Polar North, employee of S3, The Secret Santa Service. He is the reason that children get presents on their birthdays. He ensures that Easter eggs are hidden where children can find them. He is responsible for procuring the maximum amount of Halloween costumes.



He works tirelessly around the clock, 364 days a year. His one day off is Christmas, which he spends making gifts and delivering them to children who have been nice. This is the story of the one Christmas when Clause's holidays were cut short, the one Christmas when duty called, when Christmas was almost ruined by an evildoer.

CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT #2 – THE SETTING

Early morning, December 24th, the Santa phone rang. On the other end was Director of Secret affairs, Mr. Cringle. Santa's Sled One was being serviced at the Santa Labs. It turns out that on this night, the sled had been stolen.

Clause had to rely on the Beta Sled, an older slower model which was adequate when Clause delivered only in Europe but which was too slow to service the entire planet.

Clause arrived at the Santa Labs to find Mr. Cringle waiting for him.

"It was your old nemesis, the mercenary Jack Frost!" claimed Cringle. "He overwhelmed me by using a dangerous potion that he blew onto my face, whereupon I became affected by toxic levels of Christmas cheer."

"Frost?" quizzed Clause, "Frost doesn't have the resources to pull off a stunt like this. There must be someone more sinister directing him, some dark fiend orchestrating this plot from behind the shadows."

"He left you this." Cringle presented Clause with a video console. "It's a live feed straight to Frost."

Clause pressed a button and Frost appeared on the screen. "You'll never get away with this, Frost!"

"But, I already have." snickered Frost.

"What are you up to?"

"Well Clause, prepare for my most sinister plot yet. By stealing your sled, I have effectively destroyed Christmas. If you want the sled back, then I challenge you to a battle at the South Pole, and... bring an army. I know I will."

With the press of a button, the screen went blank. At the South Pole, Frost pressed a second button and on his console appeared a mysterious figure.

"Dolph my lord, your plans are proceeding as planned!"

Dolph wore a hooded cloak that veiled his face in shadows. Nothing of Dolph's identity could be discerned. His entire face was concealed, save for the antlers and the glowing red nose. "Excellent!" sneered Dolph.

Back at the Santa Lab, Cringle turned off the console. "If his plan is to destroy Christmas, then why offer you the chance to steal back the sled?"

"He's probably after this!" Clause reached into his pocket and pulled out the list, the one that informs him of which children have been naughty and which have been nice. "Frost has only managed to hamper Christmas. He knows that Christmas isn't ruined until he's taken possession of the list."

Clause walked up to another console and pressed another button. On the screen appeared General Elf, leader of the elf army. “Deploy your troops to the South Pole, I’ll be there shortly.”

Cringle tuned in, “we’re working on an antidote for the toxic snow. While we’re waiting, let’s have the Beta Sled refit with turbos. This should make it fast enough to keep up with Sled One, at least for a while.”

“You mean until the stress of the turbos blow up the engine.”

“Yes, unfortunately.”

“Do you have anything else for me?”

“Funny you should ask.” Cringle opened a box to reveal a meter long candy cane. “It’s made from the hardest candy substance known to man. I had two made but Frost managed to steal the other. Fortunately, this one was hidden away.”

CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT #3 – THE CLIFFHANGER

An army of elves disembarked at the Antarctic upon giant sleds transports. Each was armed with a small Santa sack filled with gift grenades. In the distance, Frost was leaning on the sled which was piled up with top hats. He was looking unreasonably confident.

As the elves approached, Frost jumped onto the sled and began riding around in circles and randomly dropping top hats onto the snow. Where the top hats landed, there snowmen would emerge fully formed, complete with a corn cob pipe and a button nose and two eyes made out of coal.

The elves deployed the grenades by placing the ribbon between their teeth and with a pull would untie the bow and then throw the small cubical box at their target. But, nothing the elves did had any lasting effect. If the grenade blasted part of the snowman’s body, it merely reformed. If they managed to hit the hat, it survived the blast only to form a new snowman where it landed.

The snowmen on the other hand had no problems subduing the elves as their bodies were made from the same toxic snow that had subdued Cringle back at the Santa Labs. Every time that an elf got close, the snowman would merely blast the elf’s face with snow. Immediately, the elf would become intoxicated with Christmas cheer.

Upon being infected, some of the elves would dance around with the snowmen. Some would frolic through the snow, skipping and holding hands, while singing Let It Snow. Others still would gift each other with the gift grenades which, upon exchange, would explode in the other’s hands.

The general hung back and watched. “This is clearly a loss for the elves!”

General Elf walked over to the console and pressed a button. Clause appeared on the screen. Mr. Clause, the battle has been lost. Frost has deployed an army of snowmen made from the same toxic snow that incapacitated Mr. Cringle.”

Back at The Santa Labs, the maintenance crew was delivering the upgraded Beta Sled. Clause continued speaking with the general. “We’ve just finished making an antidote. Once I’ve been inoculated, I’ll be on my way.” Clause turned to Mr. Cringle, “There’s just one more thing I want you to do...”

All fighting at the South Pole had ceased. Instead, elf and snowman were dancing together and having a good old time. Frost was in no risk of losing Sled One, that is, not until Clause arrived. With cane in hand, Clause dismounted the Beta Sled and proceeded towards the snowmen.

One after the other, the snowmen approached Clause and blew toxic snow into his face only to have no effect. Each time a snowman made his attack, Clause would swing the cane and smash the top hat into a gazillion bits.

The snowmen tried to apprehend Clause, but Clause would overpower them. Soon, all the snowmen were defeated.

Clause returned to the Beta Sled. “Here,” Clause handed the antidote to the general. “Administer this to the elves. I’m going after Frost.”

Clause pulled up to where Frost was waiting and stepped off the sled with the cane in hand. Frost pulled out the cane that he had stolen. The two proceeded to skirmish. Clause swung at Frost’s legs but Frost managed to block it. Frost returns the favor and was blocked. Frost swung again. This time the impact shatters both candy canes.

Frost grabbed Clause and attempted to throw him to the ground, but Clause was too strong. Yet, with Frost’s tug at Clause’s lapel, the list went flying out of Clause’s pocket and onto the icy ground. Frost made a dive for the list but Clause stopped him. The two wrestled each other to the ground. Frost threw some snow in Clause’s eyes, thereby temporarily blinding him. Finally, frost managed to grab the list and leapt to his feet.

CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT #4 – THE RESOLUTION???

Frost jumped onto Sled One and sped off. Clause jumped onto the Beta Sled and pursued. “He’s headed for Penguin City!” gasped Clause.

Frost swerved onto the city streets, passing sleds on the left and on the right. Clause held down the turbo in order to keep up. “I don’t know how long I can push her like this!”

Frost sped through a yellow light forcing Clause to run a red. The intersecting sleds slammed on the brakes causing a five sled pile up. Frost pressed a lever which released gravel from behind. The Beta Sled rumbled roughly over the rocks as Clause maintained speed. With the press of a second lever, Frost blasted at the base of the Christmas tree street lamps which bordered the sidewalk. One by one they would fall in Clause’s way. One by one the Beta Sled would jump them. A third lever released Christmas present mines from the back of Sled One but Clause managed to dodge them too.

Frost detoured through an ice rink. The families of yetis and penguins who were skating scurried out of the way of Sled One as it bore through. The families immediately resumed

skating only to scurry out of Clause's way as he pursued. The two sleds in turn jumped the curb back onto the street. An ice cream truck started backing out of an alley only to wind up right in front of Clause. Fortunately, Frost got caught in traffic and could not get far ahead. Frost looked back at Clause. "I can't allow myself to be caught!" he said to himself as Sled One jumped the curb onto the sidewalk and sped along, smashing through a popsicle cart thereby littering the streets with frozen treats.

Clause had to do something. Frost was getting away. He took a chance on the back alley, all the while pressing on the turbo. His sled ran rougher and rougher. Clause reemerged on the street right beside Sled One. Frost slammed his sled into Clause's in an attempt to run him off the road. But Clause managed to jump onto Frost's sled just as the Beta Sled smashed into pieces on a water cooler.

Frost hurled Clause over the back of the sled. But Clause managed to grab onto the headrest as he flew over. The sled sputtered crazily along the road as it exited Penguin City. Frost turned to regain control of the sled giving Clause a chance to climb back on. Upon landing Clause attempted to wrest the controls away from Frost. The two continued fighting over the steering control causing the sled to run even more erratically.

The sled ran off the road and into an embankment sending both Frost and Claus flying into the soft snow. Frost struggled to his feet to escape but he had been injured from the fall and could only limp. Clause, on the other hand, leapt to his feet. Behind him one could hear the sound of sirens.

Clause finally caught up to Frost, threw him to the ground and forced the list from his hands. "It's over Frost!" expounded Clause.

"HA-HA-HA!" chortled Frost. "You may have retaken possession of the sled and the list, but to no avail. My master Dolph is at the North Pole stealing the Santatron even as we speak.

"The Santatron?" exclaimed Clause, the police arriving just behind him and were now getting out of their sled, "the device responsible for making presents, without that the nice boys and girls can never receive their gifts!" The police took Frost into custody. Clause pressed a button on his watch.

Mr. Cringle appeared on the screen. "It's just as you predicted, Nicholas, someone managed to break in and stole the Santatron!"

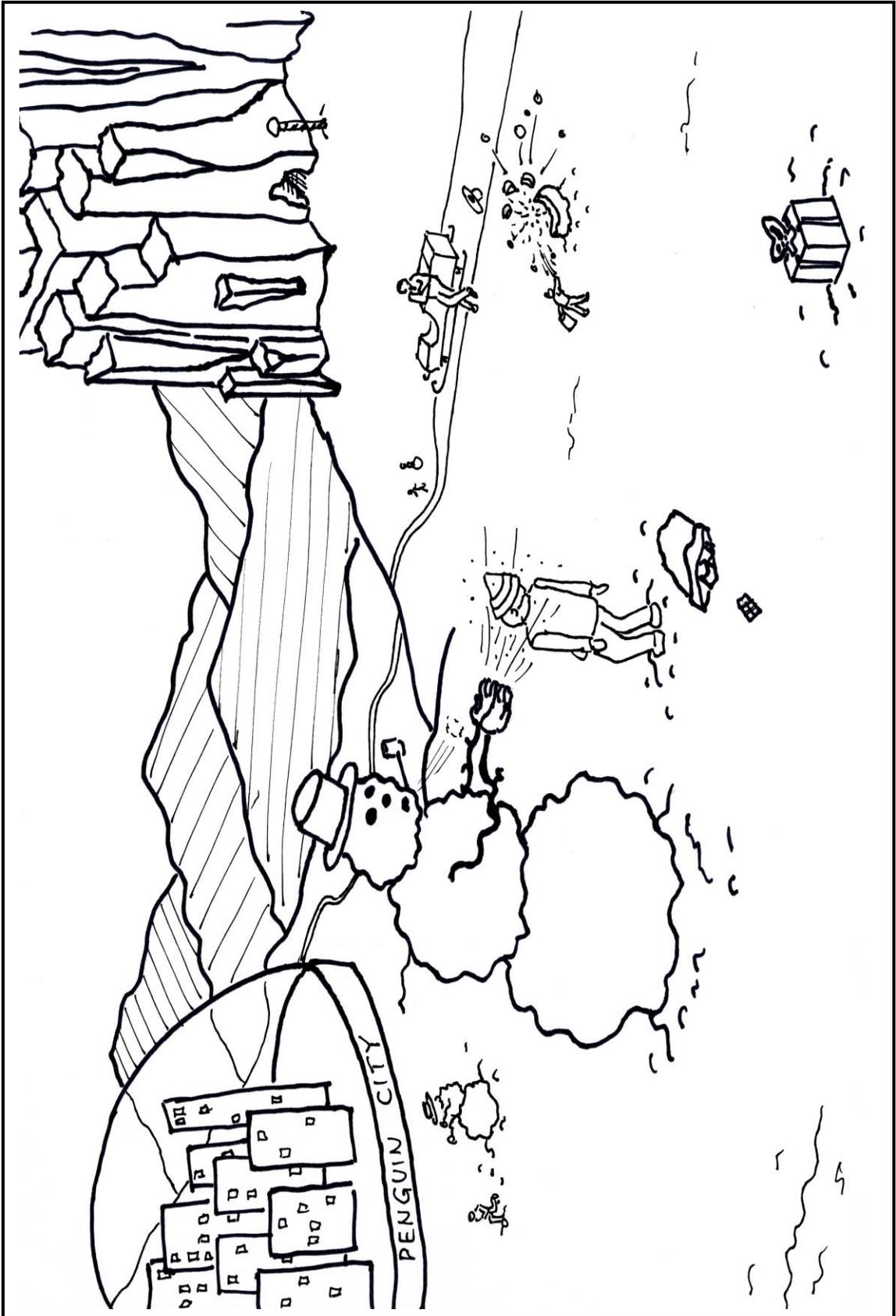
"Did you plant the tracking device as I had requested?"

"Yes, who ever took it is there at the South Pole."

Clause pressed another button to initiate the tracking device. "Yes, I have it here. But I wonder who could have had access to my workshop.

"We shall soon find out, sir."

Clause jumped onto the sled and sped off to the South Pole. He arrived to find a cavern bore into the side of a glacier just behind the candy stripe pole.



CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT #5 – THE RESOLUTION!!!

Clause walked into the cavern to find a cloaked figure laboring over the Santatron. A pile of gifts were mounting to his right. Clause quietly made his way, hoping to sneak up on the mysterious figure. But Clause triggered a motion sensor which sounded an alarm. The entire cavern suddenly sounded with red and green sirens. “Dolph, we meet at last.”

“Clause!” The hooded figure turned to face Nicholas. “I don’t know how you found me, but no matter, there’s no way you can stop me now!” Dolph took hold of the tube from which the gifts were emerging and pointed it at Clause. “Yo-yo! Frisbee! Top! Rocking horse!” every time Dolph yelled out a gift, it would fling fully wrapped from the tube and be propelled at Clause.

“That’s your fatal mistake, Dolph, presents cannot hurt me!” Clause reached into his sack and pulled out a string of Christmas lights which he now whirled like a lasso, all the while being struck by gift after gift. With a whip of the arm, the lasso encircled Dolph and with a tug, constricted thereby incapacitating Dolph. The Santatron stopped churning out presents and the sirens hushed. The entire cavern grew still. Clause made his way towards Dolph who was now slumped in defeat.

Clause reached down and pulled the hood off of Dolph’s head. Clause’s eyes widened, “Rudolph... it’s you!”

“That’s right!” Responded Rudolph, “All these years I’ve had to live with the guilt of never delivering even one present to the naughty children. The brighter my nose lit the clearer I could see their disappointment, well... no more!”

Clause retorted, “Never in my wildest dreams would I have imagined that YOU would turn to evil. You were my most trusted...”

“EVIL?” interrupted Rudolph, “you’re the evil one for denying those children. Year in and year out, I watched as the same children received the same punishment. Watched as their hearts grew colder, watched as...”

“THEY WERE NAUGHTY!!” exclaimed Clause, his eyes intense now with anger.

“Let the punishment fit the crime.” Rudolph’s voice now calm and deliberate, “Those children received NOTHING!”

There was a hush in the room. Clause looked down at the Santatron as he contemplated Rudolph’s words. “Fine, we’ll play it your way this year. The naughty children will receive gifts as well. But, you must still pay for what you’ve done.”

“No punishment is too great in exchange for this victory, today, Clause!”

“Then I sentence you to one year of reindeer games.” Santa loosened the Christmas lights from around Rudolph’s arms and the two shook hands.