
SLEIGH BELLS King

By **ERYK TILTON**

Slay Bells Ring

A Twisted Christmas Tale

By Eryk Tilton ©2009

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To my editors, I apologise for going back and making a few final adjustments without then sending this back out for you to review. Any new mistakes are because I'm a dolt. :)

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!

“Case 09-1-00042-3, the People vs. the Claus Estate, is back in session. The honorable Judge McEntyre residing” When Santa had begun his toy delivery service, or his toy deliver crusade, as Candice – one of Santa’s most trusted elves and his legal representation – had called it, she never figured she’d have to put her legal talents to such use. For the most part, Mr. Claus’ yearly toy deliveries had been uneventful. Sure, there had been the occasional hussy dressed in her best Slutty Mrs. Claus outfit while waiting for the jolly man to tumble down her flue and into her fire, several spiked milk and cookie treats, more than one mouse trap waiting at the bottom of a stocking hung by the chimney with care, and various other minor incidents. Oh and then there had been Chad. While it truly had been nothing more than a tragic accident, the incident with Chad Williams had been more than minor, but no one ever found out about it and no one ever would. Candice had made sure of that 142 years ago. So, as the elf had been thinking, Santa’s outings had been more successful than not and even the unsuccessful ones weren’t that bad - discounting Chad, of course.

Candice, proudly wearing her deep forest green tunic with its North Pole insignia lovingly stitched across the breast and matching green and red stripped stockings and toy-maker hat, shifted in her seat. She nervously tapped her wooden clogs against the floor - a habit she’d been trying to kick for longer than she cared to remember. No matter what she had read in the papers or heard here in court, Candice could not – would not – think bad thoughts about Mr. Claus. She was filled with nothing but love and admiration for the Christmas icon and would do her best to defend the man’s honor. Sure, all those deaths were horrendous and the various witness accounts throughout the long trial had been rather damaging to her case, but they were part of an even bigger tragedy - the end of Christmas itself.

Morning turned to afternoon and afternoon turned to early evening as the final day of the trial was winding down. The last witness, the Abominable Snowman, sat calmly before the prosecution.

“’Twas the night before Christmas when all through the shop, every creature was stirring with no sign to stop. There were gifts still to wrap, and bows to be tied, bags to be filled and reindeers to guide. The sleigh had been mended and polished brand new - Santa’s suit had been mended and dry-cleaned too. The old man himself was in such a good mood, no one expected what would ensue.”

“Mr. Snowman, while we could all use some good cheer, I do not believe this proceeding is the proper forum for you to practice your Christmas rhyming,” prosecuting attorney Martha Polinstout said, raising an eyebrow to emphasize her point.

“Abominable, my name is, ma’am, Snowman is what I am,” corrected Abominable.

“Your honor, Abominable can’t help speaking in rhyme. It’s how his kind communicates,” Candice Cane, attorney for the defense, countered.

“I’ll allow it,” Judge McEntyre replied.

Martha turned her attention back to the large, furry witness she had been questioning, “What else can you tell us of the events that had transpired this past Christmas Eve, Mr. Snowman?” Martha asked, ignoring Abominable’s correction of his name.

“Santa took flight as he did every year, while crowds of us let out with a cheer. That cheer was short lived however that day, as chaos and mayhem soon fell our way. The elves with their tools were first to get grim, they stabbed and they smashed and they murdered their kin. The snowmen and women were next to attack, there was biting and scratching and breaking of backs. Even the animals and I swear this is true, were not immune from the furious gloom. Rabbits and birds and beasts of all kinds, took to the fight, destroying their kind. They pecked and they bit and they clawed and they scratched, it did not matter who they attacked.”

“Mr. Snowman, you are saying that even the animals had become violent?” Attorney Polinstout asked.

“Yes ma’am I am, it’s sad but it’s true, a good friend of mine had himself ripped in two. A bear did bite him rather unkind; another joined in and swallowed his spine.”

As much as to gather her thoughts as to let the gruesome words sink in, Attorney Polinstout paused a moment. She slowly looked around the courtroom at all the people and elves in attendance. Never in a million years would she have thought she’d be trying a case against Santa Claus, or rather, against his estate. As much as it saddened her, she had a job to do. With a quick spin, she faced the witness, “You say you were there, Mr. Snowman? And yet here you are, alive and well. Can you explain that?”

“A gift from my wife had left me unharmed; it kept with me my wit and my charm. A wondrous pair of headphones you see, were placed on my ears as tight as could be. The twang and the strum and full melody, had kept out the evil that came straight for me. My beautiful iPod, all shiny and new, was all that kept me from coming unglued.”

“Your iPod? You’re saying that your iPod magically protected you while every other living being went on a murderous rampage? No matter how good your musical taste is, Mr. Snowman, that’s a bit hard to accept,” Attorney Polinstout accused as she looked around the court room again, this time focusing her attention on the jurors.

“The bells which jingled from Santa’s sleigh could not be heard by me that day. Some may like their country real low, but crank it up I do, you know?”

“So what you are saying is that all of the murder, all of the chaos, was caused by the bells on Santa’s sleigh, bells which you could not hear through your music, is that correct Mr. Snowman?”

Candice Cane did not like where the questioning was leading. The prosecution was looking to pin blame on Santa himself and this last question was a big step in that direction. She cringed as the witness replied, “Not all the bells upon the sleigh, caused the violence of that day. ‘Twas just the new set I must say, bought for Santa on the eBay. Francis, Jacob, Paul and Joel, the finest elves up at the Pole, found the bells as they did shop, wanting something for their Pop. No one knew those bells were cursed and that their sound would fill a hearse. Upon the sleigh they were attached, wrapped around the large toy rack. Beautiful oh yes they were, designed with silver, gold and fur,” Abominable said, his eyes glossing over with the memory of the beautiful bells.

Martha gave the witness a moment or two before continuing, “How did all the killing, all the murdering, finally stop?”

“As the jingling bells did fade, slowly bloodshed went away. When silent night was what was left, there was few standing through the death. Myself, three elves, a caribou. A fox, four rabbits, Jack Frost too. All alive and well we were, except some cuts across my fur.”

“Thank you Mr. Snowman, no more questions,” Martha said as she walked over to the jurors, where she placed both hands firmly on the jury box rail.

“The events Mr. Snowman described at the North Pole were identical to what we’ve heard from various witnesses from around the world during this trial. They all remember hearing the distinctive jingle of sleigh bells, followed by the unmistakable ‘Ho Ho Ho’ of the late Mr. Claus just before pandemonium broke loose. Wives killed their husbands, husbands killed their wives. Friends and strangers alike, shot, stabbed and beat each other to death. And then just like that,” Attorney Polinstout snapped her fingers, “it was over. Town to town, city to city, country to country, the same gruesome scene played out over and over and over again...until it finally caught up to jolly old Saint Nick himself.” Martha paused here to build a little drama before continuing.

“According to witness testimony, at around 4:18 am Christmas morning, as violence was erupting all around his neighborhood, Matthew Randleson, deaf without his hearing aid, noticed soot falling down his chimney. Afraid for his life as he watched his neighbors tear each other apart outside his window, Mr. Randleson, his double-barrel shotgun already in hand, sat in his recliner and aimed at the opening to his fireplace. As soon a man he described as ‘a cheap, knock-off, store-front Santa’ landed in his fireplace, Mr. Randleson pulled both triggers.” The entire courtroom let out a gasp as they recalled the events as told to them earlier by Mr. Randleson himself. None of the jurors could blame the man for what he had done, but it did not diminish the horror of knowing that he had shot Santa, the real Santa, in two.

Attorney Martha Polinstout walked to a small table upon which lay several items of evidence used throughout the hearing. She picked up a plastic bagged marked “Sleigh Bells”, through

which could clearly be seen a large belt of fur folded over several times, covered in gold and silver bells.

“If we are to believe what various witnesses have said, that thousands of otherwise normal people and animals were driven to commit the most violent of crimes after hearing these bells, then mustn't we hold Santa Claus culpable? After all, they were attached to his sleigh. And as Mr. Claus is no longer with us, and neither is his wife - having perished from several hammer blows to the head - we must still have justice for those left behind after this Christmas slaughter. To that end I ask that you, the jurors, consider all the evidence before you and all the testimonials you've heard, and find the Claus', and thus their estate, liable for this terrible tragedy.”

With her closing statement made, Attorney Martha Polinstout shook her hand twice to emphasis her point. This, like Candice Cane's foot tapping, was a habit Martha had been trying to shake for years. She often punctuated her statements in such a manner and as such the motion lost most of its impact. Today, however, the two shakes of her fist held more impact than all times previously combined. This time, to the detriment of the people inside the courtroom, she shook the most evil of bells.

The End