

[7.11]The Fight Before Christmas [2]

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Written by Jon Sherman

Directed by Pamela Fryman

Production Code: 7.11

Episode Number In Production Order: 155

Original Airdate on NBC: 16th December 1999

Episode filmed on 23rd November 1999

Synopsis written on 16th December 1999

Transcript written on 13th May 2000

Transcript revised on 24th April 2001.

Donny Douglas Episodes

- [\[6.15\]](#) To Tell The Truth.
 - [\[6.16\]](#) Decoys.
 - [\[6.22\]](#) Visions Of Daphne.
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AWARDS & NOMINATIONS

Nominated

DIRECTORS GUILD OF AMERICA

- **Outstanding Directorial Achievement in a Comedy Series:** Pamela Fryman
-

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Transcript {nicholas hartley}

Act One.

PROLOGUE

[Kelsey Grammer introduces a few clips from "Back Talk," the first part of this special two-parter.]

Scene One - Frasier's Apartment.

It's Christmas Week in Seattle. Not only is the Space Needle supporting fairy lights, but the apartment is also adorned with stylish Christmas decorations. Martin is at work on a little toy Santa when Frasier enters.

Frasier: Oh, Good Lord, Dad. You've been tinkering with that thing for hours. Don't you think that maybe "Dancing Santa" could sit this Christmas out?

Martin: Oh, I've got to get it ready for your big party tomorrow night.

The doorbell sounds. Frasier crosses to the door.

Frasier: Oh, no need, Dad. There will be plenty of things to delight my guests. We'll be caroling and playing games. Oh, and I'll be reading "A Child's Christmas in Wales" to bring the evening to a close.

Martin: [to himself] That should do it!

Frasier opens the door to Roz, wrapped up for winter. She is carrying an extravagant silver punch bowl.

Roz: Hey, Frasier.

Frasier: Oh, hello, Roz.

Roz: Hey, Martin.

Martin: Hello, Roz.

Roz: I can't stay, I just stopped by to drop off your punch bowl.

Frasier: Well, thank you, Roz. Say, what kind of punch did you serve?

Roz: Well, first I filled it with ice. Then I just poured orange juice and vodka over it.

Frasier: Well, Roz, that's just a giant screwdriver!

Roz: Yeah, so? What am I, Martha Stewart?

Frasier: Fine! Thanks anyway, I'm really going to be needing this bowl tomorrow evening. There's going to be a crowd of guests. I've invited the entire building - including Cam Winston.

Martin: Oh!

Frasier: In the spirit of Christmas I've decided to put an end to our feud.

Roz: What are you feuding about?

Martin: Oh, he parks his SUV right next to Frasier's Beemer!

Frasier: Yes well, that car is grotesquely oversized. I've often been forced to exit from the passenger's side. Many a time, I've been brought to grief on my gear shift! [exits to kitchen]

Roz: Why doesn't he just back in?

Martin: Are you kidding? He can barely hit that space even when the guy's car isn't there!

Roz smiles and heads to the door. Daphne appears from her room.

Daphne: Hi, Roz.

Roz: Hey, Daphne. [calls] Bye, guys! [they ad-lib goodbyes]

Daphne: You leaving?

Roz: Yeah.

Daphne: Actually, there's something I'd like to talk to you about.

Daphne takes Roz out into the hall and closes the door behind her.

Roz: What is it?

Daphne: The other day I found out something about Dr. Crane I wasn't supposed to know.

Roz: [excited] Frasier?

Daphne: No, his brother. Apparently, he's had a crush on me for years.

Roz: [exhales] Thank God!

Daphne: What do you mean, "Thank God?"

Roz: I've been afraid for months I'd be the one to blow the secret.

Daphne: You mean you knew?

Roz: Well, everybody kinda did.

Daphne: And nobody said anything?

Roz: Well, if Niles wasn't ready to say anything, it wasn't our place to do it. Well, who spilt the beans? It was Frasier, wasn't it?

Daphne: Yeah, but he doesn't know he told me.

Roz: He doesn't?

Daphne: Well, he was on those painkillers for his back and, well, I can't very well discuss it with Dr. Crane, he's so close to Dr. Crane, if I told him he might tell Dr. Crane and then Dr. Crane might feel embarrassed.

Roz: Yeah, why confuse things?

Daphne: The whole thing's just a bit awkward.

Roz: I don't see why. Niles has a girlfriend now, so obviously he's gotten over you, and you're engaged to Donny.

Daphne: I suppose when you look at it like that there's really no reason to feel awkward.

The elevator doors then open to reveal Niles who steps into the corridor with some books. Daphne becomes very nervous and looks away from him.

Niles: Well, there's a Christmas tableau: "Naughty & Nice."

Roz fakes a smile and steps onto the elevator.

Daphne: Hello, Dr. Crane.

Niles: Hello, Daphne.

Daphne: I'd see you inside but... I just have to... [excuses] Take out the garbage! [Niles looks confused] It's in my pocket.

Daphne rushes onto the elevator with Roz as Niles enters the apartment and greets his brother and father.

Niles: Frasier, I brought those caroling books you asked for.

Frasier: [takes them] Thank you so much. Yes, here we are. "The First Songs From A Victorian Christmas" and "Elizabethan Tidings of Joy." Now we're ready to party! Niles, what do you think? Should we start with the caroling or should we hold off until we've played a spirited game of "The Minister's Cat?"

Niles: Start with the game, then the caroling, then perhaps the guests will be ready for another game.

Martin: Yeah, Russian Roulette!

Niles: [looks at watch] So, I'm off.

Frasier: Oh, Niles, if you're not busy this evening, perhaps you could help me string popcorn garlands.

Niles: Ah, unfortunately, I have to see Maris tonight.

Martin: Maris?! What the hell do you have to see her for?

Niles: Sadly, to pay my condolences. It seems our old gardener has passed away unexpectedly.

Frasier: Oh, not Yoshi. Gosh, that's too bad.

Niles: He had a heart attack when he was out trimming Maris's elaborate hedge maze. The paramedics never had a chance.

Martin: Well, I feel bad about Yoshi, but are you sure it's a good idea spending the evening with Maris?

Niles: Well, she's terribly upset. Maris and Yoshi were very close. In fact I remember he once made a topiary likeness of her and wept without shame when it developed root rot. Well, the

problem is, I had to cancel on Mel tonight.

Frasier: Oh, really? Well, Niles, if you want my advice, I wouldn't mention Maris to Mel.

Niles: What?

Frasier: The last thing a new girlfriend wants to hear is that you're consoling your ex-wife.

Niles: Well, I hate to lie to Mel. Though I do see your point, Frasier.

Martin: Ha-hey! There he goes!

The "Dancing Santa" springs to life, to Martin's joy. It begins wiggling its hips from side to side, dancing to music. Niles and Frasier are horrified.

Niles: [putting on a joyful facade] Dad! Santa's back!

Martin: Yeah! It's the darndest thing, every year when I take him out of the box, something's wrong with it. But I always manage to fix him again.

Niles: Good for you, Dad. [to Frasier, sotto voce] I told you to dunk it underwater.

Frasier: I did!

Niles exits as Frasier looks concerned at the grotesque figurine.

FADE OUT

ANYONE FOR A HOT BUTTERED MARGARITA?

Scene Two - KACL Foyer

It is the office Christmas party. The foyer is decorated for Christmas, Mexican style. Even the food has the taste of Mexico. Frasier is nibbling as Kenny approaches.

Kenny: Hey Doc. Merry Christmas.

Frasier: Hi, Kenny. My, the station has certainly outdone itself this year with the Christmas in Mexico theme.

Kenny: It was my idea. It hit me when I realized their sauces are red and green.

Frasier: [laughs] Well, that's why you're the boss.

Kenny drifts off as Roz approaches him.

Roz: Hey, Frasier, what time's your party tonight?

Frasier: [quiets her] Please keep your voice down, you're the only one from the station I've invited.

Roz: The only one?!

Frasier: Yes, but don't worry, there'll be scads of people, because I invited everyone in my building. Seven o'clock!

Roz goes off to mingle as Gil arrives with some macho gingerbread men.

Frasier: Oh, Gil, Merry Christmas.

Gil: And to you, Frasier.

Frasier: Oh, thank you.

Gil: I hope you've saved room for dessert.

Frasier: Have you been baking?

Gil: I have! Gingerbread men.

Frasier: Oh my, [looks] don't they look... muscular!

Gil: Yes well, my wife and I made a New Year's Resolution; Deb and I have joined a gym to slim down and buff up. We needed these to inspire us.

Frasier: Ah yes, there's nothing to strengthen a dieter's resolve like

a good motivational pastry.

Gil: Precisely. The problem is they're so delicious, I've already had three. [*picks one up*] This is my last little man, I promise. [*starts to eat him*] Oh, Gil, who are you kidding? [*wanders off*]

Frasier: [*aside*] No one, Gil.

Then Mel, Niles's girlfriend, approaches him.

Mel: Frasier.

Frasier: Mel.

Mel: Hello.

Frasier: Well, gosh, I never expected to see you here.

Mel: Oh, well, I was one of the doctors on "Health Chat" during cosmetic surgery week. I did a segment on breast augmentation.

Frasier: Ah, how uplifting! [*laughs but Mel doesn't find it funny*]

Mel: Yes well, Niles is hanging up our coats. So did you two have a good dinner last night?

Frasier: Oh, no, no, actually we didn't have dinner last night, I was too busy planning my party. But please don't mention it to any of my colleagues, they're not invited...

However, when Frasier turns around Mel has disappeared to find Niles.

Frasier: Mel?

Niles: [*arrives*] Frasier, Frasier, glad I saw you. About last night, if Mel should ask...

Frasier: Oh, dear.

Niles: Oh, no.

Frasier: Oh, yes.

Niles: And you...?

Frasier: I'm afraid so.

Niles: Damn you! Well, you're the one who told me to lie to her and now you fail to back me up!

Niles hits him on the shoulder - well, "hit" being used loosely - and then goes to find Mel.

Frasier: [*shouts after him*] Well, I'm a little preoccupied, I'm having a party tonight for two hundred people!

Kenny is walking past and hears this. He looks upset and Frasier looks guilty.

Kenny: Well, I won't lie to you, Doc. This hurts!

Meanwhile, Niles tries to reason with Mel, who has already put on her coat to leave.

Niles: Mel, Mel, darling, please, quick, quick come here, sweetheart.

Mel: Niles-

Niles: I know you're upset, darling, but...

Mel: Please, we're at a party.

Niles: All right, you're right, we'll talk about it later.

Mel: No, we'll talk about it now. Just put on your party face.

They both put on permanent grins.

Mel: Don't embarrass me - as if I could be further embarrassed after you lied to me.

Niles: I can explain.

Mel: No, no, no, you don't need to. When a man lies about where he's been, it's not hard to guess the reason. So what's the

little whore's name?

Niles: *[laughs to cover]* No, no, darling. The reason I told you that I was dining with Frasier was actually, I was out...

Mel: Yes?

Niles: Getting your Christmas present.

Mel: *[covers her mouth with embarrassment and happiness]* My present! Oh, darling, I'm so sorry. I should have known.

Niles: I'm so glad you're forgiving me. Or is that your party face?

Mel: No, of course not. *[kisses him]* Why don't you hang my coat back up and I'll get us something to drink?

Niles: Of course.

Niles does as Mel wanders over to Frasier at the punch bowl and pours a drink.

Frasier: Oh, Mel, this is awkward.

Mel: Oh, no, no, no, Frasier. Niles explained everything and while I don't like being lied to, I do appreciate why he did it.

Niles: *[runs over, worried]* Ooh, hello! Hello, chatting, are we?

Frasier: Well, actually I was just apologizing for my part in your little misunderstanding.

Niles: Well, then of course you were discussing the present.

Frasier: Oh, yes, the present. *[lifts glass]* And the future, Maris is all in the past!

Mel: *[sharply]* Maris?

Frasier: Oh, dear.

Mel: You were with Maris last night?

Niles: Well...

Mel: How dare you?! *[leaves to coat stand]*

Niles: *[to Frasier]* Anything else in the box, Pandora?

Niles tries to again to win back Mel. Roz is standing just behind them.

Niles: Mel, please.

Mel: Don't touch me, no.

Niles: Party face, party face.

Mel: Forget the party face. You're obviously still in love with you and I'm not about to share you. Goodbye. *[exits]*

Frasier: Niles, Niles, I'm so sorry.

Niles: Frasier, don't pretend to be sorry. All you care about is your precious party that you're hosting tonight!

Niles exits as the room falls silent and everyone else looks at Frasier, upset that they're not invited. Frasier slowly inches out of the foyer.

End of Act One.

Act Two.

Come 'A Wassailing
To
Frasier Crane's Holiday Fest
Elliot Bay Towers #1901
Regrets Only

Scene One - Frasier's Apartment.

Frasier is pouring out some punch as Daphne and Donny fool around on the piano. Donny is playing a simple, one fingered version of "Jingle Bells."

Donny: Don't be nervous, honey.

They are building up to Daphne's bit...

Donny: Bring it home, Daphne!

Which is a chord as a finale.

Donny: Daphne Moon, everybody! We'll take your requests.

Martin: [*entering from kitchen*] How about a little "Silent Night"?

Martin begins to start on the appetizers.

Frasier: Oh, stop that!

Martin: What?

Frasier: Those are for the party.

Martin: [*looks around*] In case you haven't noticed: I am the party.

Donny: Didn't the invitation say it was for seven o'clock?

Daphne: I hope people knew it was for tonight.

Frasier: Stop worrying, they'll be here. They're probably just fashionably late. People do love to make an entrance, you know.

The doorbell sounds.

Frasier: A-ha! Daphne, open the floodgates!

However, when Daphne opens the door, there stands just one very miserable Niles with a bag of Christmas presents.

Niles: Hello.

Daphne: Evening, Dr. Crane. Isn't Mel with you?

Niles: No, she won't be coming. We broke up.

Daphne: [*anxious*] What?

Niles: Yup, this afternoon.

Daphne: Goodness, I'm so sorry.

Frasier: Did you try to call her, Niles?

Niles: I left a dozen messages.

Donny: Oh, no, I'm so sorry. How long were you guys together?

Niles: Oh, no that long. Still, I was optimistic.

Donny: Did you talk about moving in together? Make any long term plans?

Niles: This is really bringing out the lawyer in you, isn't it?
[*laughs*]

Donny: The bartender, actually. I was just wondering how big a drink to make you.

Niles: Ah, big! Scotch.

Donny, Niles and Daphne go to the drinks table. Donny pours him a nice glassful as Frasier exits.

Donny: Don't worry, Niles. We'll fix you up with somebody.

Niles: Oh, thanks Donny, I don't think this is a time for me to be meeting someone new.

Donny: Someone old, then. You know, an old flame, an ex-girlfriend, someone who got away. Huh? [*Daphne looks nervous*] Come on Niles, there must be somebody you had your eye on before Mel.

Daphne: Donny, please! Can't you see you're making him uncomfortable!

She storms off to her room.

Donny: What? I was just trying to help, honey! You see, Niles, it's not us, it's the holidays. It makes women crazy!

Meanwhile, in the hallway, Frasier has his ear to the elevator door. He hears a group arriving and stands back with a gleeful expression to greet them. The doors open to reveal a packed elevator.

Frasier: A-ha, hello everyone! Come in, come in!

Roz squeezes from the back and meets Frasier.

Frasier: That's very nice, ladies first. Now, no crowding, no pushing.
[laughs]

However, they stay inside and the doors shut.

Frasier: Where are they going?

Roz: I've got bad news for you. That feud you were having with the guy upstairs? It isn't over. He's having his own party.

Frasier: Damn him! He's siphoning off my guests.

They enter the apartment.

Frasier: You know, you won't believe this. That dreadful Cam Winston is having a competing party!

Donny: Oh, that's what that was. Some big sign in the lobby, it said "Winston Party 2000."

Frasier: Yes, that's his apartment number. Well, two can play at that game! Donny!

Donny: Yeah?

Frasier: [gives him paper, a pen and some scissors] Do me a favor, will you? Make me one of those signs, see what you can fashion out of these crude implements.

Donny: Okay, I'll try.

Martin: I don't know whether that's a good idea, Frasier.

Frasier: What?

Martin: Well, "Winston Party 2000" sounds like the party of the future. "Crane Party 1901" sounds like... well, this.

Roz: Don't worry about it, Frasier. You always throw a good party. This place'll be hopping in no time.

Frasier: Thanks, Roz.

Roz enters the kitchen and flicks open her mobile.

Roz: [into phone] Hey, Connie, it's a morgue here. Is the party at the station still happening? Great, I'll be there as soon as I can.

Daphne enters the kitchen as Roz hangs up.

Roz: Oh, hey Daphne.

Daphne: You're not going to believe this. Dr. Crane broke up with Mel.

Roz: Oh, yeah, I know, I heard.

Daphne: Is there anything you don't know before I do?

Roz: I overheard them at the office Christmas party.

Daphne: Really, what happened?

Roz: Well, okay, don't freak out. Mel accused Niles of still being in love with someone else.

Daphne: My God, that's me! I'm someone.

Roz: I said not to freak out.

Daphne: But what if he says something to me?

Roz: Just let him down gently.

Daphne: Oh, it never works out that easily. You know how it is when you say no to a guy.

Roz: [uncertain] Yeah... sure.

Daphne: It just gets messy after that. You say you'll be friends, but you never are. It ruins everything.

Roz: He's not going to say anything tonight. As long as Donny's here you're totally safe.

Meanwhile, Frasier is pushing Donny out the door with the sign.

Frasier: Let's find a prominent place to put this. Preferably right on top of Winston's sign!

Donny exits. Frasier turns back and sees Niles taking a long pull of his glass.

Frasier: Oh, go easy there, Niles.

Niles: Oh, haven't you given me enough advice for one day?

The oven timer dings.

Frasier: My canapés! [goes to kitchen]

Martin: You know, Niles, you look like you need cheering up.

Martin starts the "Dancing Santa" which knocks over all of the presents, including one with makes a shattering noise.

Niles: Daphne's present!

Martin: Did it break?

Niles holds it and the sound of broken glass is obvious.

Niles: Well, we won't know until she opens it!

Martin: I'm sorry, but, hey look. [gives him Mel's present] You don't need this one for Mel, do you?

Niles: Well, I guess not.

Martin: Okay, well here. [swaps gift tags] Put that in there, and this right in here, problem solved.

Meanwhile, Frasier pushes Roz and Daphne out of the kitchen.

Frasier: All right, now, you two, I don't want everyone congregating in the kitchen. Now go out and mingle!

Roz: [acting] Niles! Martin! I didn't see you come in!

Niles: [echoing] Roz! Daphne! I didn't want to give these out in front of all the guests, but since there aren't any. [hands over presents] Roz, this is for you, and Daphne, Merry Christmas.

Daphne: Oh, Merry Christmas, thank you, Dr. Crane.

Niles's mobile rings and takes it into the kitchen. Meanwhile, the ladies look at their gifts.

Daphne: [scared] Oh no, it's jewelry.

Roz: [bored] Oh no, it's a book.

DISSOLVE TO:

Scene Two - Frasier's Apartment - Later

Frasier and Martin are looking up to the next floor. Frasier is holding a dish with some hors d'oeuvres on it.

Frasier: My God, there must be a hundred people up there! Well, I'll just show you what you're missing! [*wafts the smell up*] Savory lamb tenders! Pesto-filled mushroom caps! Smell 'em and weep!

Martin: [*patronizing*] Come on, Frasier. Maybe we ought to walk you back inside, there you are...

Frasier: [*forlorn*] Oh, Dad...

Meanwhile, Niles is talking to Mel on the phone in the kitchen.

Niles: [*into phone*] Yes, yes darling, that's wonderful. I'll see you soon. [*hangs up*]

Frasier enters.

Niles: That was Mel!

Frasier: And?

Niles: I managed to explain about Yoshi, she's on her way over.

Frasier: Thank God!

Niles: I know.

Frasier: Another guest! [*off Niles's glare*] Oh, it's also wonderful for you, Niles. Congratulations.

Niles: There is one minor detail I need to iron out. I also got a message from Maris saying she wants to see me again. [*gets a bottle of water*] I think she may have mistaken last night's sympathy for affection.

Frasier: Oh, my. Well, Niles, if you want my advice-

Niles: Ooh, you know, you really need to stop saying that.

Daphne enters, unseen by the brothers.

Frasier: You've got to make your feelings clear to her, and the sooner the better. There's very little point letting it drag on like this.

Niles: You're right. I'll speak to her tonight.

Daphne, getting the wrong end of the stick, gasps and exits the kitchen.

Niles: At the moment, I just want to patch things up with Mel.

Frasier: A-ha. Well, you know, those antique earrings you bought her should go a long way towards that.

Niles: [*realizing*] Oh... I gave them to Daphne!

Frasier: You did what?

Niles: Well, Daphne's gift broke and I didn't think Mel was coming. Dad suggested I switch the gift cards.

Frasier: Oh, for God's sake. Dad and his meddling! Well, if you want my advice... [*off Niles's glare*] You know where to find me.

Meanwhile, out in room, Roz is getting her coat to leave as Daphne catches her.

Daphne: Roz!

Roz: What?

Daphne: You can't go.

Roz: Why not?

Niles enters and catches Daphne.

Niles: Daphne, I'm sorry to interrupt. I need to speak with you. It's a private matter, would you join me out on the balcony

for a moment?

Daphne: All right.

Niles: Thank you.

Niles exits to the balcony.

Roz: Whoa! He's gonna tell you.

Daphne: [*imitating her*] Oh no, not tonight, not while Donny's here!
[*then*] Roz!

Roz: Okay, so I was wrong. Boy, this is rough. What are you going to do?

Daphne: I don't know. I guess I won't give him the chance. I'll speak first, I'll just be direct. I'll tell him I know how he feels about me, but I don't feel that way about him. I love Donny, and nothing's going to happen between us.

Roz: Good. [*re-thinks*] Luck!

Daphne exits to the balcony where Niles is waiting for her.

Daphne: Hi.

Niles: Daphne, er, I wish there were an easier way to say this, I...

Daphne: Wait! I have something I'd like to say first. Dr. Crane, I have to tell you that...

Daphne looks at him and just cannot bring herself to say it.

Niles: Oh Daphne, I am so sorry, what am I thinking? Here.

Niles, in his usual act of chivalry, takes his coat off and puts it around Daphne.

Daphne: Oh, thank you. Anyway, Dr. Crane, I know that... [*once again she can't say it*]

Niles: Yes?

Daphne: I'm sorry, I...

Niles: Why don't I start?

Daphne: No, Dr. Crane...

Niles: No, no, I really need to say this, I can't wait any longer. Daphne...

Daphne: Yes?

Niles: This is so difficult for me.

Daphne: [*almost hoping*] Yes.

Pause.

Niles: I need my Christmas present back.

Daphne: ...You what?!

Meanwhile, in the main room, Frasier, Martin, Donny and Roz are slumped, bored out of their minds.

Frasier: People will go almost anywhere for free food and booze. Am I really so insufferable?

Roz: I could call up the station and see if people want to come over.

Frasier: [*sarcastic*] Oh yes, Roz, let's call in the second string guests. Let's fill my home with a bunch of angry, snubbed co-workers. [*then*] Do you think they'd come?

Then a bunch of people begin entering and all is better.

Frasier: Fashionably late! Hello, everyone. Come in, Merry Christmas. Help yourself to the drinks.

Meanwhile, Donny smells a fish.

Donny: Okay, Marty, how did you get these people down here?

Martin: Oh, I just called an old buddy in the fire department and told him that that many people in one place had to be a code violation.

Donny: Oh, that is smart. But aren't there going to be the same number of people down here?

Frasier: All right, everyone, we'll start by singing some carols and then we will choose our teams for "The Minister's Cat."

Martin: [to Donny] I don't think that's going to be a problem.

Meanwhile, Niles and Daphne are still chatting out on the balcony.

Niles: I feel terrible about this, and of course, I'll replace the gift.

Daphne: That's all right. [takes coat off] Well, I won't be needing this anymore. [hands it back to him]

Niles: Daphne, Daphne, Daphne, you never finished what you were going to say.

Daphne: Oh, well, it was about the gift. Well, I could see from the box that you got me jewelry from "Beady & Sons" and I didn't get you anything nearly as grand. Well, doesn't matter now.

Daphne looks into the apartment and notices Mel has arrived.

Daphne: Oh, Mel. She's here.

Niles: Yes, excuse me.

Niles enters and approaches her as Daphne goes to Roz. Niles picks up the Christmas present on the way and changes tags.

Niles: I'm so glad you came. [gives her the present] Merry Christmas.

Mel: Merry Christmas.

Meanwhile, Roz and Daphne have a little chat.

Roz: So, how did it go? Did you tell him?

Daphne: Never got the chance, he went first. It turned out he'd just given me the wrong gift and wanted it back.

Roz: You're kidding! You must be so relieved.

Daphne: I'll say! I've never been so relieved in my life.

Frasier gathers everyone for the carols.

Frasier: All right, everyone, we'll start with an easy one.

He strikes up the piano as everyone begins singing "Deck The Halls".

Chorus: Deck the halls with bows of holly,
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la,
Tis' the season to be jolly,
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la,
Don we now our gay apparel,
Fa-la-la-la-la-la, la-la-la.

As they are singing Daphne keeps glancing behind her at Niles and Mel, who are kissing tenderly. Daphne keeps looking at him with sorrow. Does she love him?

End of Act Two.

Credits:

Martin is standing on the balcony after the party. He notices a little black cowboy hat on the floor and realizes it's from his "Dancing Santa." It looks like he tried to use his magic sleigh, as Martin looks down from the balcony trying to spot the fallen fat man.

When Frasier arrives, he connects the two, and chases after him.

Guest Appearances**Special Guest Stars**

JANE ADAMS as Mel
SAUL RUBINEK as Donny

Guest Starring

EDWARD HIBBERT as Gil Chesterton
TOM MCGOWAN as Kenny

Synopsis {kathy churay}**THE FIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS****ACT ONE****SCENE ONE - FRASIER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY**

As Frasier enters from the hallway, Martin is seated at the table fixing his "Dancin' Santa" tabletop decoration for Frasier's party the following evening. Frasier tries to discourage him as he goes to answer the door. It's Roz, bearing Frasier's large punch bowl she borrowed for a party of her own. Frasier has invited nearly his entire building, including Cam Winston, a neighbor with whom he's been feuding for some time. Daphne comes into the room and as Roz leaves, follows her out into the hallway.

HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE APARTMENT

Daphne tells Roz that she overheard something -- that Niles is in love with her. Roz is relieved that she wasn't the one to blow the secret. Daphne can't believe Roz never told her, but Roz explains that if Niles wasn't ready to do it, it was no one else's place to tell her. Daphne says she feels uncomfortable discussing it with Frasier -- he was taking painkillers and doesn't remember, and anyway he tells Niles everything. Then they'd all just feel awkward. Roz

doesn't see why, since Niles has a girlfriend and Daphne is engaged to Donny.

Just then Niles gets off the elevator and greets them. Roz boards the elevator, leaving Daphne to make an awkward excuse and run into the elevator after her. Niles is puzzled but heads into the apartment

FRASIER'S LIVING ROOM

Niles hands Frasier the books he's brought, Victorian and Elizabethan Christmas carols for the party. Frasier invites him to the party, but Niles declines. He has to go and see Maris, to console her over the death of Yoshi, her gardener. Frasier advises him not to tell Mel, since "new girlfriends don't want to hear that you're consoling your ex-wife." Niles says that he hates to lie to Mel, but in the end he agrees and takes his leave.

SCENE TITLE: Anyone For A Hot Buttered Margarita?

SCENE TWO - THE RADIO STATION - NEXT DAY

A Mexican-themed Christmas party is in full swing as Kenny the station manager greets Frasier and drifts off. Roz comes over to ask what time the party is, and Frasier cautions her to keep her voice down. No one else at the office has been invited because he's invited everyone in his building. Roz leaves and is replaced by Gil, who tempts Frasier with a plate of rather muscular-looking gingerbread men. Frasier declines, and Gil goes in search of other goodies.

Frasier lingers at the buffet table and turns around to see Mel, who has been invited because she was a radio show guest during the past year. Niles is hanging up their coats. Mel asks Frasier whether he and Niles had had a good dinner the night before, to which Frasier absently replies that he was too busy planning his party to have dinner with Niles. Mel looks incensed and goes off to confront Niles. Frasier abruptly realizes he's put his foot in it.

Niles comes over and tries to warn Frasier to cooperate with his cover story, but it's too late. Frasier tells him apologetically that he's already spilled the story to Mel. Niles rushes off after Mel as Frasier tries to explain that he's preoccupied because he's planning his party that evening for 200 people. Kenny walks by just in time to hear this, and is insulted that he wasn't invited.

ELSEWHERE AT THE PARTY

Niles tries to explain to Mel, who doesn't want to make a scene and insists they discuss things while wearing their "party faces." Smilingly she accuses him of being with another woman, and Niles fumbles that he wasn't out with Frasier because he was buying Mel's Christmas present. Mel relaxes in delight, and all is forgiven. Niles departs to hang up her coat, and Mel moves over to the punchbowl to get them some drinks.

At the punchbowl she meets Frasier, who apologizes for lying. Mel forgives him sweetly as Niles comes rushing over to prevent a further disaster. But it's too late as Frasier manages to let on that Niles was with Maris the night before. That does it for Mel, and she's off to get her coat once again, Niles running after her. He tries to apologize, but she doesn't want to hear it. She tells him the relationship is finished and storms out.

Frasier tries to apologize to Niles, but Niles tells him loudly that all Frasier cares about is the party he's hosting that evening. Niles storms out too, leaving Frasier to face a roomful of accusatory coworkers.

ACT TWO

SCENE TITLE: "Come A-Wassailin' to Frasier Crane's Holiday Fest. Elliott Bay Towers #1901. Regrets Only."

SCENE ONE - FRASIER'S APARTMENT - THAT NIGHT

Donny and Daphne are all dressed up and seated at the piano, plunking out "Jingle Bells" while waiting for the other guests. The doorbell rings and Frasier asks Daphne to answer it, but it's only Niles bearing Christmas presents. Daphne inquires where Mel is and Niles replies that they broke up that afternoon. Donny asks how long they had been going out, whether they had discussed moving in together, etc. Niles smilingly accuses him of acting like a lawyer, but Donny replies that he was only trying to find out how big a drink to make for Niles. Big, replies Niles, and as Donny pours he asks whether there isn't some old flame who got away that he can call for consolation. Daphne snaps at Donny to leave Dr. Crane alone, and heads off to her room. Donny whispers to Niles that it isn't their fault -- the holidays make women crazy.

HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE APARTMENT

Frasier is skulking in the hall, waiting impatiently for some guests to arrive. Finally the elevator door opens to reveal a full carload of people, and Frasier warmly invites them all inside. But only Roz gets off at Frasier's floor. She tells him that his feuding neighbor, Cam Winston, is having his own competing party, and all the people are going there instead. Frasier is incensed and goes back into the apartment.

FRASIER'S LIVING ROOM

Donny tells Frasier that he noticed a big sign for the Winston party in the lobby. Frasier hastily makes a sign of his own and dispatches Donny to the lobby to post it. Roz departs for the kitchen, followed by Daphne.

THE KITCHEN

Roz makes a call on her cell phone as Daphne comes in to tell her that Niles broke up with Mel. Roz says she overheard them at the office Christmas party. Daphne wants to know what they said, and Roz tells her Mel accused Niles of still being in love with someone else. Daphne is appalled and is sure it's her. How will she ever let him down gently? It's always messy and you're never friends afterward -- it ruins everything. Roz reassures her that Niles won't say anything that evening because Donny is there.

THE LIVING ROOM

Frasier pushes Donny out the door with the party sign, then goes to the kitchen to check on his canapes. Martin and Niles arrange gifts on the console table as Martin notices that Niles needs cheering up. Reaching for the "Dancin' Santa" to give Niles a laugh, Martin knocks a gift off the table. Niles picks it up and shakes it ruefully -- it's Daphne's present, now broken into pieces. Martin tells him to just switch the gift cards with Mel's gift, since Mel won't be coming that evening. Niles reluctantly agrees.

Frasier pushes Daphne and Roz out of the kitchen, and they come over to greet Martin and Niles. Niles hands them their gifts and moves away to take a call on his cell phone. Daphne notices with alarm that judging by the size of the box, Niles has given her jewelry. Roz notes with equal discomfort that she's gotten a book.

SCENE TWO - THE BALCONY - LATER

Frasier and Martin stare up at the balcony above their apartment, as Frasier remarks in despair that there must be a hundred people up at Winston's party. Martin guides him back into the apartment.

THE KITCHEN

Frasier dumps his party tray in the kitchen as Niles wraps up a call on his cell phone. He explains in relief that Mel has forgiven him and is coming over to the party after all. The only problem is that Maris also wants to see him, having mistaken his sympathy for affection. Behind the two of them, Daphne comes into the kitchen just in time to overhear Frasier advise that Niles needs to make his feelings clear to her instead of letting the situation drag on. Daphne assumes the comment is about her and backs out in alarm. Niles is unaware of her eavesdropping and continues that he now has a different problem -- how to get Mel's gift back from Daphne.

THE LIVING ROOM

Niles exits the kitchen in time to see Roz heading out the door with Daphne on her heels. He interrupts them to tell Daphne he needs to speak to her privately on the balcony. Daphne agrees, and he goes out the glass doors to wait for her. Daphne's in a panic trying to decide what to tell him. Finally she declares that she will simply speak first -- she'll tell Niles that she doesn't feel the same way about him, that she loves Donny and nothing is going to happen between them. Roz wishes her luck as Daphne heads for the balcony.

THE BALCONY

Daphne comes out onto the balcony in her flimsy evening dress and begins to launch into her speech. Niles notices her folded arms and realizes she's cold. Apologetically he takes off his suit jacket and gently slips it over her shoulders. Daphne is totally disarmed by his chivalrous gesture. She starts into her speech several times, but each time as she looks at him she trails off in confusion. She's gazing into his eyes as if really seeing him for the very first time. Niles is preoccupied and doesn't notice.

Finally Niles goes into his own speech saying he simply can't wait any longer.

"Yes?" Daphne sighs, looking at him with something that might almost be hope.

"This is so difficult for me..." he stammers in polite

embarrassment.

"Yes?" she asks breathlessly.

"I need my Christmas present back," he finishes with relief.

"You what?" she replies in disbelief.

THE LIVING ROOM

Frasier, Martin, Roz and Donny are sitting around disconsolately as Frasier bemoans the lack of guests at the party. Just then the front door opens and people begin streaming in. Frasier bounces up off the couch and greets them ecstatically.

Donny takes Martin aside and asks him how he got the guests to the party. Martin replies that he called an old friend from the Fire Department to report the overcrowding at the other party, in violation of fire safety laws.

THE BALCONY

Niles finishes his explanation about the gift. Daphne has recovered herself and explains that she had just wanted to tell him she hadn't gotten him anything nearly as grand as the jewelry he got her. She hands him his jacket and turns back to the party, spotting Mel through the glass doors. Niles goes in to greet Mel.

THE PARTY

Niles picks up Mel's gift, removes Daphne's gift tag, and hands it to Mel. They kiss tenderly.

Roz sidles over to Daphne to ask what happened. Daphne laughs that Niles just wanted his gift back for Mel. Roz observes that Daphne must be so relieved. Yes, agrees Daphne cheerfully, she's never been so relieved in her life.

Frasier calls the guests together to start Christmas carols, and Daphne moves to join them, looking over her shoulder at Mel and Niles.

Niles is smiling at her as she puts on the lovely earrings he got her.

Daphne turns back to the carolers, then after a moment turns back to Mel and Niles, gazing at the pair a bit sadly from far across the room.

FADE OUT.

(MISSING CREDIT TAG - SORRY!)

Legal Stuff

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