

HelperMonkey.com/Santa

A Holiday Adventure for 2 – 6 Primates

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A message has come in over the HelperMonkey.com network:

Help, this is S. Clause. I need to deliver Christmas presents. Too many good children this year. I will wait for you at the North Pole.

Could it really be that Santa has gotten overwhelmed with presents and needs to call upon the help of highly-trained monkeys? What happened to his helper elves? Can you possibly help deliver all of the world's presents on time? Most importantly, will you receive holiday pay for this?

HelperMonkey.com/Santa is an adventure for 2 – 6 primates, ideally suited for 3 or more. The monkeys will be tasked with a mission of the utmost importance: bringing presents and spreading Christmas joy to children the world over – without being seen by any of the little tykes (a monkey's job is a thankless one).

Background

This section is for Dispatcher reference and is not necessarily designed to be given to players.

Santa recently updated his database of naughty and nice children, but during the upgrade the database was corrupted and all of his information has been lost! Now he must deliver presents to *every child in the world* to make sure that he doesn't miss any nice children, and he just doesn't have enough time in a single night to do so.

Santa sent a distress call to HelperMonkey.com requesting assistance. It will be the team's job to deliver presents to a number of children so that Santa can concentrate on his own work load. The catch is that the monkeys must operate under supreme secrecy, for if any children were to spot them delivering presents it could sully Santa's good name.

Getting Ready

During phase one of the mission, the monkeys must decide what is necessary to take with them. Read players the following text message sent to them by the client:

Help, this is S. Clause. I need to deliver Christmas presents. Too many good children this year. I will wait for you at the North Pole.

Players should recognize that Santa is in trouble and they need to get to the North Pole for more details. Along with any other hat or item presented in the HelperMonkey.com sourcebook, players may choose from one of four new hats specifically designed for this mission. These hats are available in the Appendix.

Getting There

It shouldn't be too difficult to get to the North Pole; most people know where it's at, so the monkeys don't even need to stop and ask for directions. On the other hand, it is at the center of a giant glacier and it may be quite cold up there.

When racing to the North Pole to meet up with Santa, allow the players to travel by whatever means they wish. Take note of their creativity and reward them for choosing faster (if not more bizarre) methods – if they are fast, they may receive some extra time to deliver gifts in the future.

Regardless of how long it took the players to reach the North Pole, Santa has already left. His elves are hard at work in the factories and will provide basic information about the database error to the players if they ask, but otherwise all the explanation that is left is the following note (read this to the players):

Dear HelperMonkeys, I am sorry that I had to run but time is of the essence! There are so many children to deliver presents to, so we must hurry. I have left two of my reindeer and a sled full of presents in Hanger B. Please deliver them to all of the children in Ook-Town before the sun rises at 6 a.m. Thanks!

It is currently 8 p.m. if the players reached the North Pole very quickly. If they took a slower method of transportation (they decided sled dogs would be better than snowmobiles, for example) then you can penalize them by making it later in the evening. Use your best discretion when judging

how much later to set the time, but consider the difficulty increase and try not to make it any later than 10 p.m.

In any event, the players must hurry to Ook-Town and start delivering presents. It takes only half an hour as the reindeer flies to get from the North Pole to Ook-Town, so it may be as early as 8:30 p.m. by the time the team arrives.

Naturally, it would take a very long time to play through every single gift-delivery scenario, so we will use the following abstractions:

1. Monkeys must deliver presents to 6 different types of houses, each representing different problems they may face.
2. Each house should take about one hour, regardless of real-time or game-turns spent in the process. Assume that the extra time spent includes travel time between homes or other complications.
3. Each major mistake (a child spotting a monkey, a monkey getting stuck in a chimney, or the sled breaking down on a roof, for example) will add 30 minutes to the time spent. This could represent time to un-stick a monkey, repair the sleigh, or somehow convince the child that he's dreaming.
4. Each house requires a random number of presents be delivered to be considered a successful mission. These numbers are weighted and designed to make it challenging for a single monkey to do all of the work.

After presents have been delivered to a house, the monkeys are welcome (and, indeed, *required*) to take the cookies left for Santa; if the cookies don't go missing, the children will suspect that Santa didn't really come, or worse, that he rejected their cookies (and that hurts their feelings). Be sure to tell the players that cookies were left for them, but don't push them to take them – this should be their own decision.

The cookies themselves do not do any good unless one of the players wears an Elf Hat and turns them into banana cookies. Banana cookies act just like bananas for purposes of removing morale damage.

Finally, many parents do not believe in Santa. If a parent catches a monkey (or anyone else) in their house, they will assume it is a burglar and try to whack it (What? Why would they call the police?) Monkeys should try to escape rather than fight back – after all, it wouldn't be very Santa-like to beat someone up on Christmas Eve.

Getting Past

Players must deliver presents to each of the following types of houses. Each house progresses in difficulty. Use the **Difficulty** rating for each house when determining *all difficulties* associated with that house, including those needed for skill checks, the attack bonuses of humans or animals, etc.

Difficulty	House
-1	Small house with a chimney (no fire)
0	Small house with a chimney (lit fire)
0	Small house with no chimney
1	Small house with an alarm system
2	Large house with a guard dog
3	Orphanage

It is usually best to start with the easiest house first and then progress to more difficult houses so that the players (and you, the Dispatcher) can get their fur wet and learn how to solve major problems.

Once you've determined which house the monkeys will be visiting first, start improvising. You probably already have an idea in your mind about what a house looks like, and so do the players. Briefly describe what the exterior of the house is like and let the players decide the best way to go about breaking and entering.

Delivering the Goods

To be successful, the players need to deliver a certain number of presents to each house by whatever means possible. Delivery means getting the presents into the house and placing them in stockings or under a tree. Players should feel free to describe the presents as anything they'd like, but regardless of the description each present takes up one Item space in the monkey's inventory.

To determine the number of presents that must be delivered to each house, use the following formula:

$$\text{Difficulty} + 4 + 1dF = \text{Number of Presents}$$

For example, if the players are at the first house (Difficulty -1) they would need to deliver 3+1dF presents. You, the Dispatcher, will roll 1dF and add (or subtract) the result from the total. So if you were to roll 1dF and get a result of +, the players would need to deliver 4 total presents to that house.

Getting Over

What would be the fun in breaking into peoples' houses if there wasn't a bit of a challenge? Each house should have a complication or two that makes the game more exciting, and don't forget to use "the Rule of Cool" to help inspire you. Remember that the Difficulty for any given complication should be equal to the Difficulty of the House.

Following are a few examples to get you started:

- A child woke his parents because he has to go to the bathroom, which is located near the room with the Christmas tree. The monkeys need to hide to avoid being spotted!
- The family has a curious cat who wants to see what's going on.
- Dad is placing his own presents around the tree when the monkeys arrive on the scene.
- Guard dogs are noisy and bothersome, and they hurt when they bite!
- One of the reindeer refuses to budge until he's fed.
- A burglar is trying to break in when the monkeys are in the house. The monkeys need to deal with him without making too much noise.
- The family is clearly Jewish (or otherwise clearly does not celebrate Christmas), but this is only apparent once the monkeys have already entered the house. They still need to sneak out of the house, but this doesn't count as a successful delivery. (Use of this scenario can help stall for time or make the countdown to 6 a.m. more exhilarating.)

Don't forget to include other logical complications, such as the fireplace being lit, an alarm system protecting the house, or an orphanage that is filled with children. The above complications are to help make the deliveries even more exciting, but the houses themselves have some innate challenges that can add to the drama and tension of a given scene.

Getting Out

The scene isn't over just because the primates have put the presents in their proper places. After the delivery, the monkeys still need to gather up all of the cookies left for them (err, left for Santa) and sneak out of the house without getting caught. If the players haven't had many troubles getting to this point, feel free to introduce a complication that they must deal with on their way out.

It is important that the monkeys take the cookies with them, but remember not to stress this to them. Point out that there are cookies left on the fireplace, a table, on the windowsill, or at some other place in the house, but remember not to insist that the players take them. Keep track of whether or not they take the cookies and use the result to help make the session wrap-up more interesting.

There are a number of cookies waiting at each house equal to the house's Difficulty + 2. If one of the monkeys has an Elf Hat, he may spend actions (or time between houses) turning them into banana cookies. These cookies act just like regular bananas for the purpose of removing morale damage.

If the monkeys have successfully entered a house, left presents, gathered the cookies, and escaped, they may continue on with the mission and move to the next house. Repeat the above steps for each of the six different houses to complete the adventure.

Wrapping it Up

Once all of the presents have been delivered, you can talk about the heroic success (or abysmal failure) of the mission. At some point, the monkeys need to return the sleigh to Santa at the North Pole. When they do so, they get a chance to meet the big guy himself, and depending on the outcome of the mission he may or may not be in a jolly mood.

Santa's attitude toward the monkeys starts at a level of **Jolly And...** (+4) and is reduced by one level for each of the following mistakes:

- 1 Monkeys failed to take all of the cookies
- 1 Monkeys were seen by children (and not convinced they're Santa)
- 1 Monkeys injured an animal
- 2 Monkeys were seen by an adult (other than a burglar)
- 2 Monkeys damaged private property
- 3 Monkeys injured an adult (other than a burglar; not cumulative with being seen by an adult)
- 3 Monkeys did not finish their mission by 6 a.m.

If the players took other actions that you deem to be a mistake, feel free to dock them for those as well. Try to keep the penalties in line with those outlined above.

However, if the monkeys performed any particularly good deeds (such as stopping a burglar from making off with the children's presents and/or the family's TV) he may be willing to overlook certain mistakes. For each deed you deem worthy of gratitude, increase Santa's Jolly level by +1.

Once all of the deeds have been tallied, determine Santa's ending Jolly level, as outlined below.

- +4 Jolly And
- +3 Jolly
- +2 Jolly
- +1 Jolly But
- 0 Jolly But
- 1 Not Jolly But
- 2 Not Jolly
- 3 Not Jolly
- 4 Not Jolly And

Depending on his ending Jolly level, Santa may be pleased or pissed with the monkeys. Feel free to praise the monkeys for good deeds or deride them for heinous failures. If the monkeys manage to make Santa Not Jolly or worse, he punishes them by adding them to his naughty list for next year!

Conversely, if the monkeys do a particularly good job, he may put in a good word for them with management (Jolly) and they may get a nice Christmas Bonus at the end of the year (Jolly And).

If you are running this scenario as part of a longer HelperMonkey.com campaign, feel free to devise your own in-game benefits to give to the players for a job well-done. Perhaps they're given free bananas for their next mission, or perhaps they gain a boon that allows them to carry an extra hat on their next job.

Appendix

No winter holiday would be complete without hats, and no HelperMonkey.com adventure would be complete without them either. We've included a variety of new hats for use with this adventure.

Elf Hat



This pointy green hat with pointy ears is not affiliated with any major snack food company. Turns cookies into banana cookies. Makes one cookie per action. Only usable by gibbons and lemurs.

Reindeer Hat



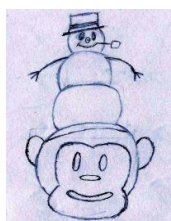
This is a set of plastic antlers attached to a hair band. When worn atop your head you look silly, but you also become as fast as Blitzen. +3 to your speed if another monkey spends an action to direct you.

Santa Hat



This stylish red hat has a fuzzy white trim and a ball at the end of its long point. Fake beard and matching uniform sold separately. The wearer can carry two extra non-hat items. +2 Escape Artist, +1 Drive. Drawback: Must eat two bananas to recover one point of morale. Not usable by gibbons or lemurs.


Snowman's Hat



Some say this old silk hat is magical, but you know it's just a sophisticated piece of technology. Either way, it seems to improve your dance moves. +2 Dance, +1 Disguise; do not get fatigued in the cold.

Santa's List

Use this checklist throughout the game to keep track of the party's naughty and nice behaviors. Be sure to check it twice!

	Modifier	Action
	-1	Monkeys failed to take all of the cookies
	-1	Monkeys were seen by children
	-1	Monkeys injured an animal
	-2	Monkeys were seen by an adult (other than a burglar)
	-2	Monkeys damaged private property
	-3	Monkeys injured an adult (other than a burglar; not cumulative with being seen by an adult)
	-3	Monkeys did not finish their mission by 6 a.m.

Santa's Jolly Level


Is Santa happy with a job well-done, or have the monkeys managed to wind up on his naughty list?

Check one:

+4	Jolly And
+3	Jolly
+2	Jolly
+1	Jolly But
0	Jolly But
-1	Not Jolly But
-2	Not Jolly
-3	Not Jolly
-4	Not Jolly And

Delivery Checklist

Check off each house as the party completes their deliveries.

	Difficulty	House
	-1	Small house with a chimney (no fire)
	0	Small house with a chimney (lit fire)
	0	Small house with no chimney
	1	Small house with an alarm system
	2	Large house with a guard dog
	3	Orphanage