

## The Santa Files

Not too long before the Christmas holidays, Max Marillo, a private detective specializing in paranormal phenomena, receives a mysterious letter from an organization he has never heard of before called CHIPPO. In his attempt to discover more clues about the organization, he realizes that the initials stand for Christmas Holiday International Propaganda Promotion Organization, that all the members are involved in activities concerning the Christmas holidays and they have the names of Santa's eight reindeer: Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen. Yet he is not able to find out anything more about the organization.

One day, however, he receives an invitation to Sao Paolo and upon his arrival he discovers that CHIPPO is an international cartel with connections to very high-ranking officials. Taking advantage of the Santa Claus legend, the organization's aim is to promote the profits of traders and industrialists during the Christmas holidays. While reading the dossier about the organization in his luxury hotel in Sao Paolo, he catches glimpses of holiday preparations on television and he starts putting two and two together. The next day, The Vice-President of the organization, Cecilia Dancer, picks Max up from his hotel and takes him to CHIPPO's central offices, where she guides him on a tour of the Santa Claus museum. There, Max finds out about the origins of the Santa Claus legend, about the influences from Scandinavian mythology and German tradition, about the reactions of Christians to the celebration of Santa Claus over the ages, about the commercial turn the celebration took in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the complete commercialization of Christmas in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Max then meets the remaining members of the CHIPPO's Board of Directors, who inform him, via videoconference, of the progress on the Christmas holiday preparations around the world. He is finally informed of the reason the Organization requires his services: due to the huge difference between the projected and real profit each year, they suspect there is someone handing out gifts for free and they wonder if this someone might not be Santa Claus himself! In brief, the CHIPPO's Board of Directors is asking Max Marillo to find Santa Claus and bring him to them or prove that he doesn't exist.

Max Marillo is stunned by their absurd request, but sets to work immediately, studying the video they had shown him early about Christmas preparation around the world. He quickly ascertains that the difference in projected and real profit is due to widespread volunteerism and the exchange of gifts of non-commercial value, to the need that people have, that is, to feel, just for a moment, like Santa Claus. After verifying this information by exchanging emails with various heads of operations dependent on CHIPPO, Max decides to take a walk through the city at night and report his findings to the CHIPPO board the next day.

His walk leads him to a teenage hangout, a fast food joint, where by chance he meets a very popular (as he later finds out) hip-hop singer/activist, Flavio, who at the time was dressing up like Santa to collect money to finance his group's concerts. Flavio is from Sao Paolo's *favelas* or shanty towns that Max had noticed on his walk and when Flavio finds out the reason for Max's visit, he bursts out laughing and declares that Santa Claus is anyone who has a heart that can love. During their conversation, two children enter the fast food restaurant to ask for Flavio's autograph. Following them is their mother who is none other than Cecelia Dancer, CHIPPO's VP. Max gets the chance to get to know her a little better and they all end up at an all-night coffee shop, where the detective announces his thoughts on his investigation and

learns Cecilia's thoughts and ideas about the organization, which she is a part of against her will. Finally, Max Marillo flies home, Cecelia Dancer reads Marillo's report to CHIPPO's Board of Directors, in which he explains their misguided ideas and supports that there is a Santa in every one of us, as long as we have the heart to love our fellow human beings..