

For years, Professor Peter Shandy has been badgered by Jemima Ames, Assistant Librarian and Annual Chairperson, to decorate his campus home for the Grand Illumination which is Balaclava Agricultural College's main fund-raising event. Now he can hold out no longer.

Goaded to madness, he buries his small brick house under an avalanche of plastic reindeer, flashing lights, and fake Santa Clauses. Hooks up an amplifier blaring "All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth," locks the switches at "on," and escapes to sea on a tramp steamer.

Shipwrecked and conscience-stricken, he crawls back to face his irate colleagues, and finds Jemima Ames dead on his living room floor. Police and security guards say it's an accident; Shandy says it's murder. President Thorkjeld Svenson says he'd better find out the truth without wrecking the Illumination...or the next corpse will be Shandy's.