

SANTA CLAUS: THE MUSICAL!

based on the book
"The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus"
by
L. Frank Baum

Music
by
MICHAEL MALTHANER

Book & Lyrics
by
CHARLES CORRITORE

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Cast of Characters (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

(H) = Human; (I) = Immortal

MAIN CHARACTERS

MRS. SANTA (H)- The quintessential Mrs. Santa, elderly, grand-motherly, sweet, sincere

AK (I) - The Master of the Immortal Realm, older, just & authoritative but kind and fatherly

NECILE (I)- Ak's daughter, a wood-nymph in the Immortal Realm, lovely, sweet, a bit spunky

SCOURGE (I) - the King of the Awgwas, Ak's nemesis, comically conniving & crafty

SLUDGE (WHO IS ALSO SEAMUS) (I) - an assistant to Scourge, not the brightest bulb in the chandelier, but earnest and likeable

CLAUS (8 years) (H) - typical 8 year old boy, charming, inquisitive

CLAUS (fully grown) (H) - warm, kindhearted, caring, everything that the man who becomes Santa Claus should be

FREDERICK (H) - approx. 8 years old - good little boy, well-behaved - adores Claus

FREDERICK'S MOTHER (H) - caring parent

FREDERICK'S FATHER (H) - caring parent

OLD MAN - (H) - very elderly, a bit bedraggled

MINOR SPEAKING ROLES

CLAUS (16 years) (H) - an anxious learner

AWGWAS (I)- the henchman of Scourge, bumbling, not very bright, they act like 8-year-olds in adult bodies

FEMALE IMMORTAL #1, #2, #3 (I)- wood nymphs or fairies, gossipy, inquisitive

HELEN, THE GOVERNESS (H) - proper chaperone of Dolly Dibble

DOLLY DIBBLE (H) - the daughter of the Lord of the Lerd, a beautiful girl of about 10, blonde ringlets, etc., should look like a porcelain doll, sweet, mannerly, smart, well-spoken

KNOOK #1, #2 (I) - no nonsense sentries at the gate to the Immortal Realm

Cast of Characters (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

CHORUS

WOOD NYMPHS (I) - Female, caretakers of the forests

FAIRIES (I) - Female, caretakers of the humans

KNOOKS (I) - Male, creators & upholders of the laws of the universe

ELDER IMMORTALS (I) – members of Ak's council

TOWNSPEOPLE (H) - male & female

CHILDREN (H) - all ages

Scene/Musical Number Breakdown

ACT ONE

Overture - The Orchestra

Prologue - The North Pole

Scene 1 - The Immortal Forest of Burzee - May

THE BUDDING MONTH OF MAY - Ak, Immortals

SOMETHING MORE - Necile

Scene 2 - The Awgwa Lair - about the same time

WHO, BUT THE AWGWAS? - Scourge & Awgwas

Scene 3 - Outside Necile's Cottage - the next day

Scene 4 - Inside Necile's Cottage - immediately following

NECILE'S LULLABY - Necile, Ak, Fairies & Wood Nymphs

**Scene 5 - Inside Ak's Chamber - about 8 immortal years later
then Various Locations in the Human Realm**

THE FLIGHT - Ak, Claus (8 years), Claus (16 years), Claus (Fully Grown),
Children, Townspeople

Scene 6 - Necile's Cottage - a week later

MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE - Necile, Claus

Scene 7 - Claus' Cottage - two months later

NOBODY LIKES TO SEE A LITTLE ONE SAD - Claus, Frederick

Scene 8 - The Town Square - the next day

HIS NAME IS CLAUS - Frederick's Parents, Townspeople, Children, Awgwas

Scene 9 - Claus's Cottage - a few weeks later

Scene 10 - A Cave in the Dark Forest - later that day

AT LAST! - Scourge & Claus

Scene/Musical Number Breakdown

ACT TWO

Entr'acte - The Orchestra

**Scene 1 - Claus' Cottage - a few months later
then a Toy Factory in the Immortal Realm**
MAKING TOYS - Necile, Ak & Immortals

Scene 2 - Claus' Cottage - a few days later
CLOTHES FOR CLAUS - Frederick's Parents, Frederick, Claus

Scene 3 - At the Door to the Immortal Realm - a few hours later
JUST LIKE THE OLD DAYS - Scourge & Awgwas

Scene 4 - The Awgwa Lair - later that day
THE MAN YOU'VE BECOME - Necile

Scene 5 - At the Door to the Immortal Realm - two days later
THE BATTLE - Orchestra
ONE MAN - Ak, Necile, Claus

Scene 6 - Various Locations in the Mortal Realm - a few years later
THE WAY IT ALL BEGAN - Mrs. Santa & Company

Scene 7 - Ak's Chambers - many years later

Scene 8 - Claus's Cottage - later that day
MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE (Reprise) - Ak, Necile, Humans,
& Immortals

Bows
HIS NAME IS CLAUS! (Reprise)

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Act One

(AS THE AUDIENCE ENTERS, THE STAGE IS BARE WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A LARGE PORTRAIT LIKENESS OF SANTA CLAUS HANGING AND LIT WITH A SPECIAL.)

MUSIC CUE #1 - OVERTURE

PROLOGUE

LIGHTLY, A PIANO PLAYS

MUSIC CUE #1A -“SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN.”

AS MUSIC PLAYS, MRS. CLAUS ENTERS .

SHE LOOKS UP AT SANTA’S PORTRAIT, THEN SPEAKS TO THE AUDIENCE.

MUSIC CONTINUES TO UNDERSCORE HER SPEECH.)

MRS. CLAUS

He’s a handsome man, isn’t he? Of course, I have to admit I’m rather partial. I’ve been married to him now for.....well, (*LAUGHING*) let’s just say that we’ve been together a long, long time. You can probably guess where he is now.....down at the toy factory, overseeing the last minute preparations for the big night that’s coming up. Later on he’ll be checking his list....(*CHUCKLING*) and probably checking it twice.....to make sure he doesn’t miss anyone. The annual trip brings him such joy. It’s what he’s known best for, of course, but I’ll bet you didn’t realize there’s more to Santa’s story than the toys he delivers on Christmas eve. It goes back a long time before that, way before we ever met. It’s quite a fascinating tale, actually. Santa’s always so modest about it.....he doesn’t like it when I bring it up in front of company. But.....(*SHE LOOKS OFFSTAGE IN BOTH DIRECTIONS TO MAKE SURE THE COAST IS CLEAR*)since he’s not around at the moment.....I’d like to share it with all of you. (*SHE BEGINS TO CROSS TOWARD THE WINGS*) Now, all you need to know at the start is that the story begins before Santa was even born.....in the immortal forest of Burzee.....on the happiest day of the year.....*Budding Day!*

(SHE EXITS)

MUSIC CUE #2 - “THE BUDDING MONTH OF MAY”

SANTA’S PORTRAIT FLIES OUT AND THE STAGE IS MAGICALLY TRANSFORMED INTO A LUSH FOREST WITH GREENERY AND FLOWERS BLOSSOMING. THE IMMORTAL CREATURES FILL THE STAGE IN JOYOUS REVELING.

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Scene 1 – The Forest of Burzee - May

ONE OR MORE IMMORTALS

**There is a place somewhat hidden on a map,
and yet it's always been there.
Turn left at Laughing Valley,
go straight through Ho Ha Ho
until you feel the magic in the air.**

ONE OR MORE IMMORTALS

**That's when you've found the Forest of Burzee,
that's when you know you're there,
for deep inside its portal
immortal creatures dwell
and tend to earthly matters in their care.**

TWO MORE IMMORTALS

**But once each year
when winter colors fade
and white gives way to green,
the Master Woodsman beckons us
come join his royal scene.**

ALL (EXCEPT NECILE)

**The day has come, another year has passed.
It's time again to welcome Spring at last.
We celebrate this blessed holiday
once each year in the budding month of May.**

**Immortals come from forests far and wide--
they gather here where royalty resides--
and revel in the fanciful display
once each year in the budding month of May.**

(NECILE ENTERS AND GREETES THE IMMORTALS WHILE THEY SING)

**All of nature's promise is renewed
when the earth is suddenly imbued
with the glow of opportunity
bursting from each blossom and each tiny little tree.**

ALL (INCLUDING NECILE)

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**This is the time when living things revive,
when sleeping woods come suddenly alive,
when ev'ry beast gives up his hideaway,
once each year in the budding month of May.**

NECILE

**Perhaps you know the Forest of Burzee.
Perhaps you've read the tales.
But how can writers capture our joyful reveling?
They can't describe a sight they've never seen.**

NECILE & 2 IMMORTALS

**For mortal men
don't know that we exist.
They don't possess the pow'r
to see us as we roam the earth
and tend each budding flow'r.**

ALL

**All of nature's promise is renewed
when the earth is suddenly imbued
with the glow of opportunity
bursting from each blossom and each tiny little tree.**

**This is the time when living things revive
when sleeping woods come suddenly alive,
when ev'ry beast gives up his hideaway,
once each year in the budding month of May.**

(Trumpet Fanfare begins)

(TRUMPETERS APPEAR, FOLLOWED BY A PROCESSION OF ELDER IMMORTALS, ONE OF THEM SOLEMNLY CARRYING THE SACRED CHALICE.)

ELDER IMMORTAL

(ANNOUNCING) Give solemn welcome to Ak, noble leader of the immortal kingdom, who now renews the immortality of all creatures of the glade by drinking from the Sacred Chalice containing the nectar of life.

(AS THE ELDER SPEAKS, AK PROCESSES IN. ALL BOW IN GREAT HOMAGE TO AK AS HE TAKES HIS PLACE IN FRONT OF A GREAT THRONE. THOUGH HE IS A STRONG AND NOBLE LEADER, HE RADIATES WARMTH AND KINDNESS.)

AK

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**Dear friends, we gather here together
to hail the virgin Spring,
to celebrate and rejoice in
each brand new awakening.**

**Nature reveals its wonder
within ev'ry bud reborn,
in ev'ry branch and each seedling that reaches
up to embrace the morn.**

**And we renew now the promise
to tend to the forests of earth
by lifting the golden nectar of Life
and drinking to our rebirth.**

*(THE MUSIC ROLLS DRAMATICALLY AS HE HOLDS HIGH FOR ALL TO SEE THE
CHALICE . HE THEN SIPs FROM IT. ALL CHEER. HE SITS ON THE THRONE AS THE
CELEBRATION CONTINUES)*

ALL

**The day has come, another year has passed.
It's time again to welcome Spring at last
We celebrate this blessed holiday
once each year in the budding month of May.**

**All of nature's promise is renewed
when the earth is suddenly imbued
with the glow of opportunity
bursting from each blossom and each tiny little tree.**

**This is the time when living things revive
when sleeping woods come suddenly alive,
when ev'ry beast gives up his hideaway,
once each year in the budding month of May...
once each year in the budding month of May.**

*(ONCE THE SONG ENDS, ALL DISPERSE, SOME MILLING AROUND, OTHERS
EXIT. AS AK MAKES HIS WAY THROUGH THE CROWD CHATTING AMIABLY,
NECILE RUNS UP TO HIM. SHE IS A LOVELY YOUNG WOMAN, VERY SWEET
BUT YET POSSESSING A BIT OF SPUNK.)*

NECILE

(HUGGING HIM) Welcome back, father!

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AK

Necile, I've missed your hugs.

NECILE

How was your journey?

AK

My annual journey through the mortal world always help me appreciate the happiness we share here in the glade. We live so contentedly that we often forget the misery that is sometimes the lot of the humans.

NECILE

We *could* help them, you know.

AK

(HAVING BEEN THROUGH THIS BEFORE WITH HER)

Necile....your compassion is honorable, but it's not in our place to interfere with the laws of Nature. Somehow they do manage to survive.

NECILE

But, if you'd just give me a chance. I know I could do some good, especially for the children.

AK

Necile, we've been through this before. Besides, you know the law.....an immortal must never be visible in the mortal world.

NECILE

But I would be careful to remain *invisible*, just as you do during your journey.

AK

It's out of the question. As a *Wood Nymph*, your work here inside the glade is too important and, as my *daughter*, you must set an example for the rest.

NECILE

But father, as the years have passed, my life has become uneventful and boring.

AK

Nevertheless, it is your duty.

NECILE

Couldn't I just....

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AK
Necile.....

NECILE
Maybe if I.....

AK
I don't think so.

NECILE
But...

AK
No.

NECILE
All right. You win.

AK
(HE KISSES HER ON HER FOREHEAD) That's a good daughter. Now I'm off to select the color for the new grove of fir trees that's about to bud near the pond. I'll see you at dinner.

NECILE
Yes, father.
(AK BEGINS TO LEAVE. SHE RUNS AFTER HIM.)
Father, how would it be if I just.....

AK
(WITHOUT STOPPING, INTERRUPTING HER) No.

(SHE SIGHS DEEPLY)

NECILE
(CROSSING TO A TREE AND KNEELING, HALF-HEARTEDLY PICKING AT THE WEEDS)
It's not fair that this is all I have to look forward to.

MUSIC CUE #3 - SOMETHING MORE

There's got to be something more that I can do with my life.....anything that will give some measure to my existence.

There's a world

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far beyond
perfect trees,
crystal ponds;
so much more
waiting there;
something more I'm meant to see.

In that world
out of view
there's so much
I can do.
Will I find
anywhere
something more I'm meant to be?

Inside my heart I know I can change things
if, just for once, I tried.
Given the chance I could help rearrange things
out on the mortal side.

Though I've been,
up 'til now
quite content....
still, somehow,
everything
deep within
tells me that there's something more
and
in the grand
scheme of things
destiny
guides my wings
to a fate
yet unknown.
Still, I know it's out there.

Why is it wrong if we venture outside of the glade?
I don't believe there's a reason we should ever be afraid.

So I vow
I will find
out in life's
grand design

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**what the world
has in store
where there's something more for me.**

BLACKOUT

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Scene 2 – The Awgwa Lair

(SCOURGE, KING OF THE AWGWAS, SITS ON HIS THRONE OBVIOUSLY BORED WITH THE PROCEEDINGS. AROUND HIS NECK HANGS A SMALL VIAL ON A CHAIN.)

MUSIC CUE - BUDDING MONTH OF MAY *Measures 258 -266*

AWGWAS

(SINGING AND DOING THEIR BEST TO EXECUTE THE TRADITIONAL CELEBRATORY STEPS, ALTHOUGH THEY'RE NOT EXACTLY THE JUNE TAYLOR DANCERS. SCOURGE PUTS HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS, BORED AND EMBARRASSED BY THOSE WHO SURROUND HIM.)

**The day has come
another year has passed
we gather here
to welcome spring at last
and revel in
this sacred holiday
once each year
in the budding month of.....**

SCOURGE

(INTERRUPTING) All right, already.....that's enough.

(ONE OF THE AWGWAS, "SLUDGE" COMES FORWARD)

SLUDGE *(READING LOUDLY AND SOLEMNLY FROM A LARGE BOOK)*

All Awgwas now bow and give praise, give cheer and loud acclamation, pay homage and bestow blessings upon he who reigns supreme over.....

SCOURGE

Yes, yes, get on with it, will you, Sludge?

SLUDGE

But, my name's not Sludge. My name is...

SCOURGE

(INTERRUPTING, SARCASTICALLY)

Does it really matter?

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SLUDGE

But...

SCOURGE

Just get on with it!

SLUDGE

Give glory to Scourge the good, the just, the kind-hearted.....

SCOURGE

What?????!!!!!!

SLUDGE

Oops, sorry, wrong page. (*HE TURNS TO THE CORRECT PAGE*) Give glory to Scourge, the sly, the devious, (*SCOURGE IS PLEASED*) the scheming, the sneaky, the stinky....(*SCOURGE REACTS*) umm, sorry, the stinker!.....

SCOURGE

That's more like it.

SLUDGE

.....who, on this most solemn of days, renews his immortality and the survival of all Awgwas for another year by drinking from the sacred vessel containing the nectar of Life!

(SLUDGE LOOKS TO SCOURGE WHO IMPATIENTLY STANDS. SLUDGE TAKES THE VIAL WHICH HAS BEEN HANGING AROUND SCOURGE'S NECK AND HOLDS IT UP.

ALL CHEER.

SCOURGE ROLLS HIS EYES AND SHAKES HIS HEAD, AGAIN BORED BY THE WHOLE THING.

SLUDGE THEN REACHES INTO HIS POCKET AND PULLS OUT A EYE DROPPER, AGAIN HOLDING IT UP CEREMONIOUSLY FOR ALL TO SEE.

ALL CHEER AGAIN. THIS IS REALLY GIVING SCOURGE A HEADACHE.

SLUDGE, MAKING GRAND GESTURES, UNCORKS THE VIAL.

SCOURGE

Will you just get on with it!

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(SLUDGE THEN FILLS THE EYE DROPPER EVER SO SLIGHTLY WITH A SMALL AMOUNT OF THE LIQUID FROM THE VIAL. THE MUSIC IS DRAMATIC. THE EYE DROPPER IS BROUGHT TOWARD THE MOUTH OF THE KING.

SLUDGE

And now, O noble one, I am about to fulfill the solemn honor that has been bestowed upon me to.....

SCOURGE

(INTERRUPTING) Oh, just give it to me! (HE GRABS THE EYE DROPPER AND IN ONE SWIFT MOVE DOWNS THE LIQUID AND PASSES THE DROPPER BACK AND CORKS UP THE VIAL.)

(ALL CHEER AGAIN)

Would you all just can it?!

SLUDGE

But, oh mighty and cherished one....

SCOURGE

And could you stop with the adoration?!? It's really giving me a headache. Save it for a day when there's really something to celebrate. I mean, here we are, another year down the dung heap and we're still stuck where we've been for more spins of the sundial than I care to think about. Another year gone and we're still locked outside the immortal kingdom ruled by that sickeningly righteous Ak.

ALL

(AS IF SPITTING) Ptui!

SCOURGE

Another year closer to using up our last drop of the nectar of immortality. Sludge, how much is left?

SLUDGE

About nine squirts, sir.

SCOURGE

Nine tiny squirts away from the end of me and the entire Awgwa race.

ALL

Ugh!!

SCOURGE

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If only we had been able to steal the entire contents of the golden chalice before we were cast out of the immortal forest, we wouldn't be in this mess. If only our attempt to overthrow Ak....

AWGWAS

Ptui!

SCOURGE

.....had been successful, that could be me now, sitting high on that hoity-toity throne, having more power than is even imaginable. But noooooo.....instead, we've been relegated to this subservient state, rationing what's left of the nectar, and with little more to do than create mischief and mayhem among those wretched mortals. (*HIS MOOD LIGHTENS*) Although.....I must admit it does give me goose bumps whenever we can bring some sadness or misfortune into the lives of the vulgar humans.

MUSIC CUE #4 - WHO BUT THE AWGWAS?

I still get a kick out of kickin' 'em when they're down and out.

(*ALL VERBALLY AGREE*)

**Who takes pride in all of the misery
that the world has known;
revels in the booing and "hiss"ery
that the wretched masses intone?
Who would much prefer to see pitiful
lives with snags and bumps;
fancies ev'ry town and each city full
of kiddies who are down in the dumps?**

AWGWAS

**Who, but the awgwas?
We're a savvy bunch.
Who but the awgwas
could ruin any lunch?
Don't cross the awgwas
if you get the urge,
unless you're ready
to endure the awgwa, Scourge.**

SCOURGE

**We'll concoct a scheme rather devious
when we need a boost.
If a plan needs something mis-chee-vious,**

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**that's when all our talent's unloosed.
Who'll crush someone's childhood fantasy
when they're in the mood?
Who will do whatever they can to see
a kid who grows up naughty and rude.**

AWGWAS

**Who but the awgwas
'cause we're a crafty group?
Who but the awgwas
could make your knickers droop?
Don't temp the awgwas
or you'll pay the price.
You'll find the awgwas
always will be leaning
toward some misdemeaning
when we're intervening,
'cause we never learned the meaning of "nice."**

SCOURGE

We must get our hands on that nectar before it's too late. This much I pledge to all of you: one day soon we will find a way to get back inside the door to the immortal forest.

ALL

(LOUDLY AND MAKING SCOURGE JUMP)

Hooray!

SCOURGE

Then I will challenge the great Ak.....

ALL

Ptui!

SCOURGE

.....to an all out battle, a battle from which we will emerge victorious!

ALL

Hooray

SCOURGE

I will finally control the nectar of Immortality and then, once and for all, we will be able to banish goodness and kindness from the world forever.

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ALL
Hooray!

SCOURGE
There will come a day when unhappiness
fills the human race.
We will rid the world of its sappiness
by wiping ev'ry smile from its face.
Once we steal each drop of that nectar we'll
do just what we please.
There will come a day this defector will
finally bring Ak to his knees.

AWGWAS
We are the awgwas,
SCOURGE
though we don't like to gush.
AWGWAS
Don't hate the awgwas
SCOURGE
or you'll just make us blush.
ALL
Who, but the awgwas
can make you boil and curse?
But with the awgwas,
it could be much, much worse!

(DRAG TEMPO VERSE)
If you think we're out for the count, well then
you ain't seen nothin' yet.
Never, ever doubt what amount we will
fill you with regret.

AWGWAS
Don't cross the awgwas.
You best heed our advice.
You'll find the awgwas
ALL
always will be leaning
toward some misdemeaning
when we're intervening
SCOURGE
'cause we never learned

KING
Don't do it!
We're smarter than you!
You'll love us!

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ALL
the meaning of nice!

(BLACKOUT)

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Scene 3 – Outside Necile’s cottage

(AS SCENE OPENS, WE SEE THREE FEMALE IMMORTALS AT THE DOORWAY TO NECILE’S COTTAGE, ALL MURMURING AT ONCE AND ALL STRAINING TO GET A GLIMPSE INSIDE. AK ENTERS BEHIND THEM.)

AK

What has happened?

FEMALE IMMORTAL #1 *(LOOKING BACK OVER HER SHOULDER BUT NOT REALIZING WHO ASKED THE QUESTION)* We’re trying to get a look at Necile’s child.

AK

What?????!!

FEMALE IMMORTAL #2 *(STILL NOT REALIZING THAT AK IS PRESENT)*

Shhhh.....*(IN A LOUD WHISPER)* Necile snuck out beyond the immortal gate last evening and discovered a human baby in the woods. She’s brought it back into the garden and is going to try to convince Ak to let her keep it.

AK

That will never happen!

FEMALE IMMORTAL #3

That’s what I said! I certainly don’t want to be around when Ak finds out what she’s.....*(SHE HAS COME FACE TO FACE WITH AK AND STOPS DEAD IN HER TRACKS. WITHOUT TAKING HER EYES OFF OF AK, HER ARM REACHES BEHIND HER TO GET THE NEXT FEMALE’S ATTENTION.)*

IMMORTAL #2

What? What do you wa...ohhh!!! *(SHE TOO HAS SEEN AK AND FREEZES. REACHES BEHIND TO GET THE NEXT PERSON’S ATTENTION)*

FEMALE IMMORTAL #1

Stop hitting me. Why did you hi.....ITTTTTT!!!..*(SHE SEES AK. ALL THREE ARE NOW FROZEN IN FEAR AND THEN SUDDENLY, AS A CLUMP, COMICALLY PUSSYFOOT TOWARD THE WINGS, NEVER TAKING THEIR EYES OFF AK. ONCE THEY GET CLOSE ENOUGH, THEY TURN AND RUN.)*

(AK GOES THROUGH DOORWAY AND SCENE SHIFTS TO INSIDE THE COTTAGE.)

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SCENE 4 – Inside Necile’s Cottage

AK

Necile, what have you done?

NECILE (*GETTING IT OUT QUICKLY*)

Please father, before you say anything, let me explain. I went walking outside the gate last night, and I know how strictly forbidden it is, but I did it anyway. Just for a few moments. I meant to turn around and come right back in but then I heard a baby crying. Not far down the road, I found this basket and, inside, wrapped in a blanket was a precious baby boy..... (*SHE SHOWS HIM THE BABY IN THE BASKET*) and this note.

(*SHE HANDS HIM THE NOTE*)

AK

(*READING*) Please take care of our son. We are too poor to give him the nourishment he needs. Bless you.”

NECILE

I searched the area to see who may have left him but found no one. I couldn’t just leave him there could I? So I brought him back here and.....and.....and I’m sorry.

AK (*TRYING HIS BEST TO NOT LOSE HIS TEMPER*)

Do you realize what a dangerous thing that was.....a Wood Nymph venturing beyond the glade?

NECILE

I know. But I stayed invisible the whole time.....that is until I found the baby. In order to carry it back here, I had to become visible, of course.

AK

Necile!

NECILE

It was only for a very short time, just long enough to get back to the gate. And I know no one saw me.

AK

That is not the point. What would have happened if the Awgwas had caught sight of you? Must I constantly remind you that our immortal powers are useless when we make ourselves visible in the human world? You could have been captured and could have done nothing to stop it.

NECILE

I know. But that didn’t happen.

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AK

But it could have!

NECILE

But it didn't!

AK

But it could have!!

NECILE

I know.....and I'm sorry.

AK

The child must go back.

NECILE

But he's been abandoned.

AK

Nevertheless, it must be returned to its own world.

NECILE

How can you turn him away?

AK

We must not alter the fate of a mortal. The child *must* go back. (*HE REACHES FOR IT, NECILE PULLS AWAY*)

NECILE

But if there's no one to help him.....

AK

Then, as difficult as it will be for you to understand, that is the unfortunate destiny to which it was born.

NECILE

But that's so cruel.

AK

It is what must *be*. (*HE REACHES FOR THE BABY*)

NECILE

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(PULLING AWAY) Couldn't he just stay for one more night?

AK

No. *(HE HOLDS HIS ARMS OUT ONCE MORE)* Please, Necile.

NECILE

(AFTER A PAUSE) All right. But, could I have a few last moments with him.....to say goodbye?

AK

(SOFTENING A BIT) I will allow it. I'll wait by the door.

(HE CROSSES AND GOES OUTSIDE DOORWAY. MUSIC IN.)

MUSIC CUE #5 - NECILE'S LULLABY

NECILE

(TO THE CHILD) I'm sorry. I wish that things could have been different. I wish you were old enough to understand.

(AS SHE SINGS, SHE READIES THE CHILD FOR HIS JOURNEY BACK, EVENTUALLY PLACING HIM BACK IN BASKET AND GENTLY TUCKING HIM IN. AK IS CLOSE ENOUGH TO HEAR AND SEE ALL OF THIS.)

**Close your eyes, go to sleep my little one.
Rest for now, for your life has just begun.
Though the world may at times be frightening,
there's so much that is waiting for you.**

**Why should something so pure and blameless
give us reason to fear?
Without someone to guide or comfort you,
how can I just turn my back as you disappear?**

**And, though somehow in my heart I know it's wrong,
still, I must send you back where you belong,
never knowing the gift a child can be,
never to know the joy of loving you.**

AK *(COMING BACK TO HER)*
It's time, Necile.

NECILE

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I know. (*SHE HANDS THE BASKET TO HIM. AK BEGINS TO WALK AWAY.*) Wait, please father! (*SHE RUNS TO HIM.*) Just one last look. (*SHE LOOKS AT THE BABY*) Don't worry. You'll grow strong and the mortal world will be a better place because of you.....Claus.

AK
Claus?

NECILE
It means...

AK
I know..... "my little one."

NECILE
A creature is nothing without a name.....and no matter what happens to him, he will always be my little one. (*TO THE BABY*) Goodbye, Claus.

(*SHE KISSES HIM AND TURNS AWAY. AK TAKES A STEP OR TWO, STOPS, TURNS BACK*)

AK
Necile?
(*SHE TURNS TO HIM*)
It seems I've never been able to deny you anything you've asked.

**One so tiny and one so helpless
needs the love you can give.
Hold him, nurture him, guide him, teach him
and fill his world with everything a child needs to live.**

(*HE HOLDS THE BASKET OUT TO HER*)

NECILE
(*RUNNING TO HUG HIM*) Oh, thank you, father! Thank you!

(*SHE LIFTS THE CHILD BACK INTO HER ARMS.*)

**Close your eyes, sleep away my dearest one.
From this day you are now my little son.
Soon your life will be filled with wonderful things I will give you
to make your dreams come true.**

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(MUSIC CONTINUES . A DANCE BEGINS DURING WHICH CLAUS WILL AGE. STARTS WITH NECILE DANCING WITH BABY CLAUS IN HER ARMS. FAIRIES/NYMPHS CIRCLE AROUND THEM AND WHEN THEY CLEAR WE THEN SEE NECILE DANCING WITH A SMALL CHILD OF ABOUT 4 YEARS OLD. FAIRIES DANCE AROUND THEM AGAIN AND, FINALLY, WE SEE NECILE DANCING WITH AN 8 YEAR OLD CLAUS.

**Soon your life will be filled with wonderful things I will give you
to make your dreams come true.**

(DANCE SEQUENCE ENDS WITH NECILE HUGGING HIM.)

(BLACKOUT)

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Scene 5 – Inside Ak’s Chamber - a few weeks later

(AS LIGHTS COME UP AK IS SEATED ON HIS THRONE, READING)

(NECILE ENTERS.)

NECILE
Hello, father

AK
Necile! Come in!
(SHE HUGS HIM)
Is anything wrong?

NECILE
It’s Claus.

AK
Is he ill?

NECILE
No, he is well. Actually, he’s waiting outside. I think it’s time you have that talk with him.

AK
(A BIT UNCOMFORTABLY) You mean.....about the birds and the bees?

NECILE
No, no, not that.

AK
(GREATLY RELIEVED) Oh thank goodness.

NECILE
I’m concerned about the many questions he’s been asking. He’s beginning to realize that he’s different than the other creatures here in the glade. I’ve done my best to avoid answering him but I don’t think it can be put off much longer.

AK
(THINKING IT OVER) I agree. It’s time that we told him who he really is and where he came from. Have him come in.

(NECILE CROSSES TOWARD THE ENTRANCE)

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NECILE

Claus, your grandfather would like to speak with you.

(CLAUS ENTERS, RUNS TO AK AND HUGS HIM)

CLAUS

Grandfather!!

AK

Hello, Claus! How was the fishing today?

CLAUS

Wonderful. I caught eight.....twice as many as the rest of my friends.

AK

Well, well. That's quite a feat. And how are the fish doing?

CLAUS

They're fine. They didn't have time to play today. I had to put them right back in the pond because they were going to be late for school.

AK

I see.

CLAUS

Do you have anything for me today?

NECILE

(SMILING, LIGHTLY SCOLDING) Claus!

AK

(LAUGHS) Nothing today, I'm afraid. However, I think we need to have a little man to man talk.

CLAUS

About the birds and the bees?

AK

(TAKEN ABACK) What do you know about the birds and the bees?

CLAUS

Nothing special. I just hear my friends mention them sometimes. They must be pretty important for all the whispering that goes on about them.

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AK

(*CLEARING HIS THROAT*) Yes, you're probably right. But that's not what we need to talk about. Why don't we sit down. (*THEY DO*)

NECILE

Well, I just leave you two to have your "man to man" talk.

CLAUS

Goodbye, mother!

NECILE

Goodbye, Claus!

(*SHE EXITS*)

AK

Claus, your mother has said you've been noticing that you're a bit different from your friends.

CLAUS

Sort of.

AK

There's a reason for that. Do you know how we've always asked that you never go beyond the gate?

MUSIC CUE #6 - *THE FLIGHT*

CLAUS

Yes.

AK

That's because.....there's another world on the other sidea world that's very different from ours....a world where there are creatures called human beings.

And that's the world where you were born.

You were meant for human existence,

to live your life as the mortals do

and without immortal assistance.

And though we've hid the truth from you

in spite of your persistence,

we must no longer conceal what's there.

It's time to see the world that you share

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with children everywhere.

(SPOKEN) Do you understand, Claus?

CLAUS

So I'm not an immortal creature? I'm a.....human being?

AK

That's correct.

CLAUS

Hmmm....

**I've always felt I'm different from
all the friends I know.**

**I wondered why they never changed
while I was starting to grow.**

And when I questioned why

I'm twice the size of all the rest,

my mother only smiled and said:

"it's because I'm twice as blessed."

(MUSIC UNDERSCORING CONTINUES)

AK

Claus, Necile raised you and loved you as if you were her own. But the truth is....you were left in the mortal woods by your real mother and father when you were born.

CLAUS

Oh.

AK

I know this is confusing for you. But I'm going to help you learn more about your world. You're going to accompany me on a journey through the human kingdom.

**And there you'll understand why you're not
quite the same as all you've befriended.**

**You'll soon discover the mysteries of
the life for which you're intended.**

(AK HOLDS OUT HIS HAND. THEY WALK FORWARD)

**So take my hand we'll journey toward
the place where you've descended.**

**Beyond the edge of our woodland gates
the human world awaits,**

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the human world awaits.

Now, in order to remain invisible, Claus, you must hold on to me throughout our entire journey.

CLAUS

I understand!

AK

One final thing. Time passes much slower here in the glade. The 8 years that you have lived here are but a fraction of the time that has passed on the human side. Once outside our gates, you will quickly grow and, upon our return, you will be a fully grown man.

(CLAUS REACTS) Are you ready, Claus?

CLAUS

I think so.

AK

Then let us begin!

(FLYING MUSIC BEGINS. THE STAGE IS FILLED STARS AND SWIRLING LIGHTS. AK AND THE STILL 8 YEAR OLD CLAUS SOON FIND THEMSELVES IN THE VILLAGE SURROUNDED BY CHILDREN, RICH AND POOR ALIKE, PLAYING HAPPILY. THEY RECITE, IN ROUND, THE FOLLOWING RHYMES).

POOR CHILDREN

**To the baker we go
to the baker we go
when we're hungry and want to be fed.
We'll sing and we'll dance
and maybe by chance
he'll give us a morsel of bread.**

RICH CHILDREN

**Sugar plum, sugar plum
oh so sweet.
sugar plum, sugar plum
good to eat.
Sugar plum, sugar plum
oh so yummy
makes us smile when it's
in our tummy.**

POOR CHILDREN

**To the baker we go, to the baker we go
when we're hungry and want to be fed
we'll sing and we'll dance and maybe by chance
he'll give us a morsel of bread.**

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(THE CHILDREN FREEZE)

AK

These are human children, Claus. They are like *you* in every way.

CLAUS

Why are they all dressed so differently?

AK

Some were born in cottages and some in palaces.

CLAUS

But they all seem happy.

AK

Their joy is simply in being alive.

(THE CHILDREN BEGIN TO MOVE IN SLOW MOTION)

**Mortal children fill each passing day
happily content to laugh and play.
Their purity and innocence precedes a darker haze
that descends when youth has gone away.
Regardless of their breeding, be it poor or well to do,
see the joy of life that they convey.
Mortal children fill each passing day
happily content to laugh and play.**

(SPOKEN)

The younger they are, the less they worry about the wealth that seems to be so dear to the hearts of the humans.

CLAUS

Why is wealth so important?

AK

The more wealth they have, the more power they think it gives them. But in pursuing that wealth, they allow the simplicity of youth to fade until their lives are changed forever.

CLAUS

I think that I would prefer to remain the way I am.

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AK

Alas, that is something that you cannot decide for yourself. But, come. We have much more to see.

(FLYING MUSIC. THE STAGE ONCE AGAIN IS AWASH IN STARS AND SWIRLING LIGHTS DURING WHICH THE CHILDREN ARE REPLACED BY OLDER MEN AND WOMEN TOILING IN THE FIELDS UNDER THE HOT SUN. ALSO DURING THIS TRANSITION, AK & CLAUS EITHER LEAVE THE STAGE OR ARE LOST IN THE CROWD. WHEN THEY BECOME VISIBLE AGAIN, CLAUS HAS AGED TO 16 YEARS. NOTE: HIS OUTFIT SHOULD LOOK EXACTLY THE SAME AS THE YOUNGER CLAUS')

CLAUS

Where are we now?

AK

In the fields where most of the young children eventually end up. As they grow older, they face a difficult existence, Claus

**Years go by, and mortals grow up.
They leave the joys of childhood behind.
Mem'ries of their innocent youth
forever are gone from their mind.
Toiling and tending over the field
struggling and straining into the night
gardens to plant and houses to build.
Such is their worldly plight.**

16 YEAR OLD CLAUS

**Why do mortals have to grow up
if all they face is struggle and strain?
If immortals never grow old
then why can't they do the same?**

AK

**That is the law where humans exist
Mortals grow up, grow old and then die.
And even though they try to resist
it's something they cannot deny.**

CLAUS

But, grandfather, don't you have the power to help them?

AK

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My powers are not to be used to change the course of a human life.

CLAUS

But isn't that what you've done for me?

AK

In a way, yes. But we have been careful to allow you to discover things for yourself; to grow and learn without being forced to follow one path over another. Do you understand the difference?

CLAUS

I think so.

AK

Good. Let's continue!

(THIRD SECTION OF FLYING MUSIC, STARS AND SWIRLING LIGHTS. CLAUS AGES TO 30 YEARS OLD. AGAIN, HIS CLOTHES SHOULD MIRROR THOSE OF THE YOUNGER TWO. THE WORKERS TOILING IN FIELDS BEGIN ARGUING LOUDLY AND THREATENING EACH OTHER. THEY CONTINUE TO FIGHT SILENTLY AND IN SLOW MOTION ONCE THE DIALOGUE BEGINS)

30 YEAR OLD CLAUS

What is happening?

AK

The humans are fighting, Claus.

CLAUS

But why?

AK

Mortals often grow weary of the things they have and they soon hunger for more. That sometimes makes them turn against one another which can lead to a bitter conflict, one which they call war.

CLAUS

War?

AK

A cruel contest which causes much bloodshed and mourning.

(THE HUMANS FREEZE)

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**Sometimes their world fills with darkness,
sometimes it's hard to say why,
sometimes it seems
that their sun no longer beams,
they abandon all their dreams
and cry.**

CLAUS

**But why do the mortals allow it--
these conflicts that cause them to mourn?
And, if a man must perish,
then what is the reason he's born?**

AK

**Everything here in their world has a reason.
It's what nature's laws prearrange.
Each mortal is set from his first day of life
on a journey no one can ever change.**

CLAUS

Is this where my journey is destined to take me?

AK

No one knows. Every mortal has been put on earth for a purpose. It's up to you to find out what that purpose is.

CLAUS

How will I find it?

AK

The day will come when you will see it clearly. But, come, it's time to return to the glade.

*(LAST SECTION OF FLYING MUSIC BRINGS THEM BACK TO THE IMMORTAL FOREST
WHERE THEY ARE SURROUNDED ONCE MORE BY FAIRIES AND WOOD NYMPHS AT
WORK.)*

AK

**And now you've traveled beyond the glen;
you have seen the world you were born to.
You've learned what separates mortal life
from the life immortals conform to.
Now take the things that you've been taught**

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**and, like the well-informed do,
be wise in charting each path you take,
each journey you will make.**

CLAUS

**I'll take the things that I've been taught
and, like the well-informed do,
I'll wisely choose ev'ry path I take
each journey I will make.....
each journey I will make.**

AK

**You'll wisely choose ev'ry path you take
each journey you will make....
each journey you will make.**

(BLACKOUT)

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Scene 6 – Necile’s Cottage

(CLAUS IS IN THE FINAL STAGES OF PUTTING CLOTHING INTO A BUNDLE AND TYING IT UP READY FOR TRAVEL.)

(NECILE ENTERS CARRYING A SMALL BASKET OF FOOD)

NECILE
Here is food for your journey, Claus

CLAUS
(TAKING IT FROM HER)
Thank you, mother.

NECILE
(AT A LOSS FOR WHAT MORE SHE CAN DO)
Is there anything more I can get for you?

CLAUS
I think I’ve got everything that I’ll need.

NECILE
You’ve packed your slippers?

CLAUS
Yes.

NECILE
And the new shirt the fairies made for you.

CLAUS
It’s in there.

NECILE
And how about....

CLAUS
(SMILING, INTERRUPTING)
Got that too.

NECILE
(AT A LOSS FOR ANYTHING MORE TO SAY) Well, then.....

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CLAUS

Mother, I thought you told me that you had finally accepted all of this.

NECILE

I have....I have.....But I lied. It's just that I don't want to see you go.

CLAUS

(TAKES HER HANDS) Mother, this is something I need to do. Everything I've learned has led me to this day. I must become a part of the human world I was born to. I've got to discover what it is I'm meant to do with my life.....whatever it is that will give some measure to my existence.

NECILE

(SMILES) I remember someone else who said that very same thing many years ago. I know it's what you have to do, but I always hoped that this moment would never come.

MUSIC CUE #7 - MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

CLAUS

I'll be fine.

NECILE

Of course you will. I just don't know how *I'll* be.

**I look at you and wonder
just what my life would not have been
had I never known the joy I found that day,
that fateful day I took you in.
And though you must move on now
to the life that you were meant to live,
I will hold on forever to the mem'ry of
the love that you were sent to give.**

**Too soon,
you grew up before my eyes.
Too soon,
how your thirst for life began.
Too soon,
I looked up and missed the day
when my son became a man.**

**Go and make a diff'rence;
make the world a better place**

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**and let all the goodness that's inside your heart
bring joy to all the human race.**

CLAUS

**All the goodness that I've known
has come from you alone
for you have taught me right from wrong.
Ev'ry lesson that you gave
has taught me to be brave
and helped to make me strong.
Though I must leave and go off to another life,
off to the work I must do,
time will not take from my heart what you've shown me
and this, above all, now I pledge to you....
to you.**

**I'll go and make a difference.
I'll make the world a better place.**

NECILE

And with all the goodness that's inside your heart

CLAUS

that time will not erase

BOTH

**You'll (I'll) make a better world
for the human race.**

(THEY HUG)

(BLACKOUT)

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Scene 7 – Claus’ cottage – a few months later

(IT IS NIGHTTIME. CLAUS IS SITTING BY THE FIRE, WHITTLING BITS OF WOOD INTO A SMALL BARREL, PERHAPS WHISTLING A LITTLE TUNE. A GAS LAMP IS LIT ON HIS WORKTABLE. HE STOPS SUDDENLY, THINKING HE MAY HAVE HEARD THE FAINT SOUND OF SOMETHING. SILENCE. HE BEGINS WHITTLING AGAIN WHEN THE SOUND OF A CHILD CRYING IS HEARD. CLAUS STOPS, LISTENS CLOSELY AND THEN HE HEARS IT AGAIN.)

CLAUS

(AS HE DISAPPEARS OUTSIDE) That sounds like a child crying.

(IN A FEW MOMENTS, HE RETURNS CARRYING A YOUNG BOY OF ABOUT 8 YEARS OLD WHO IS CRYING. HE SETS HIM DOWN ON HIS BED.)

(GENTLY COAXING) There, there.....it’s all right. Shhh. There’s no need to be frightened, no need to cry. No one is going to hurt you. Shhh.....everything is going to be fine. Come on.....no reason to keep crying. Come on..... *(THE BOY PULLS BACK THE CRYING A BIT)* Come on..... *(BOY’S CRYING TURNS INTO A SLIGHT WHIMPER)* Come on, a little bit more....*(BOY STOPS FOR A SECOND)* That’s better. *(BOY IS ABOUT TO START CRYING AGAIN BUT CLAUS QUICKLY NIPS THE POTENTIAL NEW OUTBREAK IN THE BUD)* Ah, ah!! *(THE BOY IS FINALLY CALMED.)* There, I knew you could do it. Now then, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Claus. What’s your name? *(BOY IS SILENT)* Oh now, you’ve got to have a name. *(HE IS STILL SILENT)* You know, it’s going to be difficult carrying on a conversation with you if I don’t know what to call you.

FREDERICK

(STILL A BIT EMOTIONAL) My name is Frederick.

CLAUS

Frederick! Well now, it’s very nice to know you, Frederick. Would you like to tell me why you were out wandering in the woods so late at night?

FREDERICK

I got lost.

CLAUS

I see.

FREDERICK

I was out picking berries on the footpath with my mother and father. And I saw a squirrel.....and then I ran after it. But it went up into a tree and I couldn’t catch it. When I tried to go back, I couldn’t find the path again. And I got scared.

CLAUS

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And no wonder. It's awfully dark out there.

FREDERICK

I know.

CLAUS

Well, you're safe now. And I think what you should do is stay here tonight. Then, in the morning, we'll go looking for your parents. I'm sure we'll be able to find them. Why.....no doubt, they'll probably be out looking for you. How does that sound?

FREDERICK

All right, I guess.

CLAUS

Good. In the meantime, why don't you try to get some sleep.

FREDERICK

I can't.

CLAUS

There's nothing to be afraid of. I'll be sitting over there by the fire keeping watch all night.

FREDERICK

It's not that. I never go to sleep without Toyan.

CLAUS

Toyan?

FREDERICK

He's my cat.....and my best friend. He always sleeps with me.

CLAUS

Your cat, huh? Well, I'm afraid Toyan isn't around.

FREDERICK

I know.....(*STARTS TO CRY AGAIN*) And I miss him.

CLAUS

Now, now, no reason to start up again. There must be something I can do to help you sleep. How about a little song?

FREDERICK

No.

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CLAUS
A little dance?

FREDERICK
No.

CLAUS
Would you like me to tell you a story?

FREDERICK
No.

CLAUS
Is there anything I can do for you?

FREDERICK
Yes. Find Toyan..... (*HE BEGINS CRYING AGAIN*)

CLAUS (*SAYING IT IN UNISON WITH FREDERICK*)
Find Toyan, I know.
(*HE LOOKS AROUND*)
Wait a minute. I've got an idea.

MUSIC CUE #8 - NOBODY LIKES TO SEE A LITTLE ONE SAD
(*HE HUMS A BIT TO THE MUSIC WHILE HE GETS BARREL AND KNIFE AND A PIECE OF WOOD AND MOVES A CHAIR NEXT TO THE BED.*)
Now, then.....
(*HE HOLDS UP A PIECE OF WOOD*)

**Take a look at this
what do you think it is?**

FREDERICK (*SPOKEN, SADLY*)
It's a piece of wood.

CLAUS
**That's true.
But this piece of wood
can be so much more
we can turn it into something,
into something brand new.
With a chip, chip, chip**

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**and a scrape, scrape, scrape
and a split and a whittle and a whack,
we'll combine imagination
with a bit of inspiration
and we'll do our best
to get your happy face back.**

**Because
nobody likes to see a little one sad
or hear the sound he makes when he cries.
If I had my way, there would never ever be
a child with a tear in his eyes.
No sir,
he would never have a reason to be gloomy or frown;
he would always have a smile on his face.
And then everybody else would want to give it a try
and turn the world into a happier place.**

(NOTE: TO FACILITATE THE PROGRESS OF THE WOODCARVING, CLAUS WILL USE THE BARREL TO HIDE THE WORK HE'S DOING FROM THE AUDIENCE (AND FROM FREDERICK). EACH OF THE SEPARATE PIECES CAN BE PRESET INSIDE AND BROUGHT OUT AT THE APPROPRIATE TIMES)

(HOLDING UP BLOCK OF WOOD FROM WHICH HE'S NOW CARVED OUT TWO "EARS")

Will you look at that!

FREDERICK *(STILL SAD)*
It looks like ears.

CLAUS
Do you think? *(LOOKING CLOSELY AT IT)* You know, you may be right.
But.....what good are ears all by themselves? I think we might need something to go with them? What do *you* think?

FREDERICK
I guess so.

CLAUS
Any idea what it would be?

FREDERICK
No.

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CLAUS
No, huh? Hm.....

**Well, we've got two ears,
where do you think they go?**

FREDERICK
On a face.

CLAUS
**On a face? Why not?
So we'll take this wood
change it just a little more
and when we're done we'll see.....
we'll see what we've got!
If we chip, chip, chip
and we scrape, scrape, scrape
and we split and we whittle all the while,
I have a funny feeling
we can make it more appealing
and then if we do
you'll have to promise me a smile.**

**Because
nobody likes to see a little one sad
or hear the sound he makes when he cries.
If I had my way, there would never, ever be
a child with a tear in his eyes.
No sir,
he would never have a reason to be gloomy or frown;
he would always have a smile on his face.
And then everybody else would want to give it a try
and turn the world into a happier place.**

(PROUDLY HOLDING UP BLOCK OF WOOD WITH TWO EARS AND A ROUND FACE)
So, what do you think of it now?

FREDERICK
It's all right, I guess.

CLAUS

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Just all right? You mean, it still doesn't make you feel like smiling?

FREDERICK
No.

CLAUS
This job is going to be tougher than I imagined. All right, I guess I'll have to really put some thought into it. I'm determined to cheer you up.....and I warn you, I don't give up easily.

(SINGING)
**If a block of wood's not enough to delight you
and two ears and a face don't begin to excite you
Then we'll keep on working on the chance that it *might* do
just the trick
double quick!**

(MUSIC UNDERSCORES THE NEXT BIT OF BUSINESS DURING WHICH CLAUS CONTINUES TO WORK ON THE BLOCK OF WOOD INSIDE THE BARREL WHILE SAYING THE FOLLOWING. AS THE DIALOGUE CONTINUES FREDERICK IS DRAWN INTO IT MORE AND MORE, IF ONLY OUT OF CURIOSITY.)

Well, maybe if I did this.....oh, yes, that seems to work very well. And then maybe a little bit off this side.....yes, yes, that's looking very nice. Very nice indeed. No peeking Frederick. Now if I did that.....and then that.....you know, sometimes I surprise myself!Yes, that's exactly what it needed. I think you're going to like this, Frederick.

(HE IS ABOUT TO REVEAL THE FINISHED PRODUCT)

**Now our block of wood is much more expressive
If I say so myself, it's become quite impressive
and I bet once you see it you'll become quite possessive
of your surprise.
Close your eyes!**

(MUSIC ROLLS.....FREDERICK CLOSSES HIS EYES. CLAUS REVEALS THE BLOCK OF WOOD WHICH IS NOW IN THE SHAPE OF A CAT)

All right, Frederick, you can open them!

FREDERICK
It's a cat! *(MUSIC CONTINUES, CLAUS HANDS HIM THE CARVING)* I love him. It reminds me of Toyon.

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CLAUS

That's what I was hoping! And look, there's that smile I was waiting for!

FREDERICK

Oh, thank you, Claus.

CLAUS

I'm so glad you like him.

FREDERICK

I do. I do!

CLAUS

Good. Do you think you might be able to get some sleep now?

FREDERICK

I think so. Will you tuck Toyan in with me?

CLAUS

Of course. *(HE COVERS FREDERICK AND TOYAN UP)* How's that?

FREDERICK

Perfect. Goodnight Claus.

CLAUS

Goodnight Frederick. I hope you and Toyan have nothing but warm and wonderful dreams.

(MUSIC IS SLOWER; CLAUS SINGS AS IF LULLABYING FREDERICK)

because

**nobody likes to see a little one sad
or hear the sound he makes when he cries.**

**If I had my way, there never ever would be
a child with a tear in his eyes.**

No sir,

**he would never have a reason to be gloomy or frown;
there would always be a smile on his face.**

**And then everybody else would want to give it a try
and turn the world into a happier place....**

the world into a happier place.

(ON BUTTON OF THE SONG, CLAUS BLOWS OUT THE FLAME ON THE GAS LAMP.)

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(BLACKOUT)

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Scene 8 – The Town Square, the next day

(BEFORE LIGHTS COME UP WE HEAR THE SOUNDS OF CHILDREN CRYING AND IN DISTRESS. AT LIGHTS UP, THE AWGWA HENCHMEN RUN ON LAUGHING AND CONGRATULATING THEMSELVES. SLUDGE, TOO, RUNS ON BUT, THOUGH HE TRIES TO BE A PART OF THE FRIVOLITY, THE AUDIENCE SHOULD GET THE IMPRESSION THAT HE IS BEING IGNORED BY THE OTHER AWGWAS. THE SOUNDS OF THE DISTRESSED CHILDREN WILL CONTINUE OFFSTAGE DURING THE AWGWA DIALOGUE)

AWGWA #1
(LAUGHING) Another job well done!

AWGWA #2
It just gets easier and easier!

AWGWA #1
Those children will be bawling and fighting the rest of the afternoon.

AWGWA #2
I think we can count this as another productive day!

AWGWA #1
One we can be most proud of!

(THEY CONTINUE TO LAUGH AND CAROUSE)

AWGWA #4
It's great to be invisible!

(ALL AGREE)

(THEIR ATTENTION TURNS TO SLUDGE)

AWGWA #3
And what do you have to show for yourself, Sludge?

SLUDGE
I keep telling you, my name isn't Sludge, it's....

AWGWA #3
Aah, who cares? What great feat did you manage to accomplish this afternoon, as if we couldn't guess.

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SLUDGE

Well, I.....I almost pushed Katie into the pond....

AWGWA #3

(FINISHING THE LINE FOR HIM)...and ended up falling in yourself.

(THEY ALL LAUGH AT HIM)

SLUDGE

(TRYING TO SAVE FACE)

I jumped right in the way when Bobby was chasing Scottie.

AWGWA #3

And you got knocked unconscious.

(ALL LAUGH AGAIN)

AWGWA #1

Face it, Sludge, you're a loser. I don't know why Scourge even keeps you around.

(ALL AGREE. SLUDGE STANDS MEEKLY BY)

Well, who's hungry?

AWGWA #2

Yea, let's get a bite to eat....*(INDICATING OFFSTAGE)* somewhere away from all of that noise.

(ALL AGREE)

(THEY RUN OFF LEAVING SLUDGE BY HIMSELF)

SLUDGE

(TRYING TO SUMMON UP SOME COURAGE, YELLING OFF TO THEM) And my name isn't Sludge!

(HE FOLLOWS AFTER THEM.)

AS SLUDGE DISAPPEARS, THE CHILDREN ENTER, STILL CRYING AND SQUABBLING. AT THE SAME TIME FREDERICK'S PARENTS ENTER.

FREDERICK'S MOTHER & FATHER

(CALLING OUT) Frederick!! Where are you Frederick!!!! Frederick!!!, etc

FREDERICK

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(RUNNING IN)

Mother, father!! It's me!

(BOTH RUSH TO HIM AND HUG HIM. DURING THE NEXT FEW LINES, THE CHILDREN'S TEARS STOP. CLAUS ENTERS BUT STAYS BACK, OUT OF THE WAY, DURING THE HAPPY REUNION)

MOTHER

Frederick, thank goodness your safe. We've been worried sick all night.

FATHER

You gave us quite a scare, son.

MOTHER

What happened to you?

FREDERICK

I wandered off the path but my friend, Claus, found me and helped me find my way back.

FATHER

Who?

FREDERICK

Claus. *(LOOKS AROUND FOR HIM. BRINGS HIM FORWARD)* Here he is! This is my mother and father, Claus.

CLAUS

Hello.

FATHER

Mr. Claus, we don't know how to thank you for what you've done.

MOTHER

Bless you, sir for your kindness toward our son.

CLAUS

You have a wonderful little boy. We've been enjoying each other's company.

FREDERICK *(RUNNING TO THE OTHER CHILDREN)*

Look everyone.....look at what Claus made for me. It looks just like Toyan!

(ALL THE CHILDREN NOISILY GATHER AROUND FREDERICK TO GET A GLIMPSE OF THE CARVED TOYAN)

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FATHER

(TO CLAUS) Again, sir, how can we ever repay you?

CLAUS

I've done nothing except brighten up the face of a child with a small piece of wood.

(SUDDENLY ALL THE CHILDREN RUSH AROUND CLAUS)

ONE CHILD

Mr. Claus sir, would you make me one of those toys too?

CLAUS

You mean a "Toyan."

ANOTHER CHILD

Yes, a toy!

ALL CHILDREN

(AD LIBBING)

Me too! I want a toy too! When can I have one?, Oh, please make me a toy! etc.

(NOTE: WE NEED TO CLEARLY HEAR THE WORD "TOY" A FEW TIMES. THEY ARE OVERJOYED WITH THE PROSPECT OF HAVING ONE OF THESE TOYS. CLAUS IS PLAYFUL WITH THEM AND THEY BEGIN TO LAUGH AND ENJOY HIS COMPANY)

(AS THE CHILDREN MAKE MORE AND MORE HAPPY NOISE, PARENTS ENTER AND SEE THIS UNUSUAL SIGHT.)

CLAUS

(SHOUTING OVER THE LAUGHTER) All right, how many would like one of the..... "toys?"
(OF COURSE, ALL THE CHILDREN RAISE THEIR HANDS AND YELL OUT) Well, it looks like I've got some work to do. All right.....if you promise to be good boys and girls and mind your parents tonight, I'll be back tomorrow with a bag full of toys, one for each of you. How does that sound?

CHILDREN

Hooray!!

CLAUS

Then I must be off so I can get right to work. But I'll see you all tomorrow!!!

CHILDREN

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(FOLLOWING HIM UPSTAGE AND WAVING AS HE EXITS)

Goodbye, Claus!

MUSIC CUE #9 - HIS NAME IS CLAUS!

FREDERICK'S PARENTS

(WAVING AND SHOUTING AFTER HIM BUT NOT MOVING FROM WHERE THEY ARE)

Thank you, Mr. Claus!

(THE OTHER PARENTS GATHER AROUND FREDERICK'S MOTHER AND FATHER.)

PARENT #1

Who was that wonderful man?

FREDERICK'S PARENTS

His name is Claus!

His name is Claus!

We don't know where he came from

but he seems a most extr'ordinary man.

He's brought them laughter like no other can

and filled their tiny world with oohs and aahs,

this man named Claus!

ADD TOWNSPEOPLE

His name is Claus!

His name is Claus!

You could feel a special something in the air when he was near.

In just a wink their sad eyes disappeared.

There's happiness at last and all because

of this man Claus!

(AS THE SINGING CONTINUES, TIME HAS PASSED. IT IS THE NEXT DAY AND, AS PROMISED, CLAUS IS BACK WITH A SMALL BAG. AS TOWNSPEOPLE CONTINUE SINGING, CLAUS PASSES OUT CARVED "TOYS" TO EACH OF THE CHILDREN)

TOWNSPEOPLE

The little things he brings them

every time that he arrives--

the animals he carves from bits of wood.....

"toys," the children call them--

how they brighten up their lives

in ways no other trinkets ever would.

It's wonderful the pleasure

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**that each little one derives
from this man who does what no one ever could.**

**Who is this Claus,
this man named Claus?
How can it be a stranger found the way
into the heart of ev'ry child.
It all began the moment that he smiled.
Their life will never be the way it was.
It gives one pause
to know the cause
is this man Claus.**

CHILDREN

**Dear Mr. Claus
please say that you'll never leave us.
Please believe us,
we don't want you to go!
When you are here, Mr. Claus,
there never are sad times,
only glad times.
Claus, we love you so.**

(DANCE SECTION WITH CLAUS AND ALL.

(MUSIC CHANGES. TOWNSPEOPLE FREEZE WITH HAPPY FACES. AWGWAS ENTER THROUGH THE CROWD SEEING THE SMILES AND HAPPINESS)

AWGWAS

**What is this we see?
Can it really be?
Is that a smile on ev'ry wretched face?
And what is that we hear--
that sound that stings the ear?
It's laughter, and it's clearly out of place!
Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha!?!?
These are not the poor, pathetic mortals we've been nagging--
the foolish lives we love to rile and vex.
They're filled with so much happiness it makes me feel like gagging
and makes me want to wring their little necks.
But wait, there's something more,
something we cannot ignore.
That stranger seems to be the reason why.**

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**It's all because of him
they're now no longer grim.
The question now is..... "who is this guy?"
Aargh!!
We'll see just what King Awgwa has to say about the traitor.
He needs to know the damage that's been done.
Then he'll devise a way to neutralize the agitator
and make him pay for spoil-ing our fun.**

AWGWA #1

Come on! We've got to tell Scourge what's going on here!

(AWGWAS LEAVE TO REPORT WHAT THEY'VE SEEN TO SCOURGE; THE LIGHTS CHANGE ON THE TOWNSPEOPLE AND THE CELEBRATION CONTINUES.)

TOWNSPEOPLE

**His name is Claus!
We call him Claus!
It only took a twinkle in his eye
and in a flash he was our friend.
and all our gloomy days are at an end.
They're full of ho-ho-ho-s and ha-ha-ha-s
all thanks to Claus.**

**His name is Claus!
We call him Claus!
This man is blessed for he can fill a child's eyes with wonderment,
He is a mortal who is clearly Heaven sent.
And, though it may conflict with nature's laws,
make no mistake,
the man's a saint.
He's Santa Claus!**

(BLACKOUT)

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Scene 9 – Claus’ cottage – a few weeks later

(THERE IS EVIDENCE OF MORE AND MORE CARVED CATS HAVING BEEN CREATED. IN FACT CLAUS IS AT WORK AT HIS TABLE PUTTING THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON ANOTHER)

CLAUS

(WITH A PAINT BRUSH IN HIS HAND) Just one more stripe to paint on his tail and..... there! Not too bad, if I do say so myself. *(THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. HE CONTINUES TO WORK WHILE HE SPEAKS)*

You are welcome here, whomever you are.

(A GOVERNESS ENTERS. CLAUS LOOKS UP FROM HIS WORK.)

Hello, there.

GOVERNESS

Sir. May I ask if this is the cottage of the gentlemen who creates the wooden animals for the children?

CLAUS

(CHUCKLING AS HE INDICATES THE TOYS WHICH SURROUND HIM)

None other! *(STANDING)* The name is Claus.

GOVERNESS

I am Helen, governess to the daughter of the the Lord of Lord. She wishes to speak with you.

CLAUS

She, too, is most welcome here.

GOVERNESS

(STEPPING ASIDE AND ANNOUNCING) Miss Dolly Dibble, sir!

(A BEAUTIFULLY DRESSED LITTLE GIRL OF ABOUT 8 OR 9 WITH BLONDE HAIR IN RINGLETS ENTERS SMILING. THE GOVERNESS STANDS BY THE DOOR)

CLAUS

(BOWING SLIGHTLY TO HER) I am most honored to have the daughter of the Lord of Lerd in my home.

DOLLY

(VERY MANNERLY AND INTELLIGENTLY)

Thank you, Mr. Claus. I am so happy to meet you.

CLAUS

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What is it I can do for you?

DOLLY

I am here to ask if you would also make a toy for me as well?

CLAUS

But, I make them for the poor children who have nothing else to amuse them.

DOLLY

But being a daughter of a Lord can be very lonely. I spend most of my days alone at my window watching the other children play. Having a toy of my very own would make me so happy. Won't you please make one for me, Mr. Claus?

CLAUS

(SMILING) How could I refuse such a request? *(HE OFFERS HER ONE OF THE CARVED ANIMALS)* Here.....this is for you. *(SHE DOES NOT TAKE IT)* Is there something wrong? You don't like this one? You can have your pick of any of the others if you wish.

DOLLY

It's not that.....it's just.....

CLAUS

Yes?

DOLLY

I was hoping that you could make me one that might be different from the others?

CLAUS

Different?

DOLLY

Yes, something that could become a special friend to me so I won't be so lonely.

CLAUS

Well now.....I don't know what that would be.

DOLLY

I know you'll think of something. Please?

CLAUS

MAKING A DECISION) Since your heart longs for it so, you shall have the toy *you* desire.

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DOLLY

Oh, thank you, Mr. Claus. *(SHE HUGS HIM)* Thank you!

CLAUS

Come back in three days and I promise to have it ready for you.

DOLLY

(AS SHE RUNS TO THE DOOR) I shall count the moments until then. *(SHE TURNS BACK TO HIM ONE LAST TIME)* You really are a nice man....and what the children call you is right.....Santa Claus. *(SHE SMILES AND EXITS WITH THE GOVERNESS.)*

CLAUS

(HE CHUCKLES) Santa Claus!? *Ho Ho Ho!!!! (TO THE CARVED ANIMALS)* Well now, dear friends. I guess we've got some thinking to do if we're going to keep our promise to her, haven't we? *(LOOKS AROUND AND SPIES A LUMP OF CLAY)*. Hmm.....perhaps this lump of clay may have some possibilities. What do you think? *(HE SITS BACK DOWN AT HIS TABLE AND BEGINS TO WORK WITH THE CLAY)* Something that can be a special friend to Dolly. Hmm.....

MUSIC CUE #10 - NECILE'S ENTRANCE

(MUSIC UNDERSCORES ENTRANCE OF NECILE. NOTE: SHE WILL NOT COME THROUGH THE DOOR BUT FROM ELSEWHERE OFFSTAGE. MUSIC UNDERSCORES THE ENTIRE SCENE BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM.)

NECILE

Hello, Claus.

CLAUS

Mother! *(HE GETS UP AND HUGS HER)* It's so wonderful to see you. But.....does grandfather know you're here?

NECILE

Of course not. I told him that the grove of trees near the pond needed weeding. That should give me a few moments with you but I can't stay very long. *(SHE PICKS UP ONE OF THE CARVED ANIMALS)* I've heard about the toys that you've been creating. How delightful they are.

CLAUS

Grandfather told me that all humans are put on earth for a purpose. I think that I've found mine. To bring whatever happiness I can to the children who have so little.

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(HE BEGINS TO WORK THE CLAY ONCE MORE.)

NECILE

It is a very noble purpose, Claus.

CLAUS

At first, I made them for only the poorest of the children. But I've just had a visit from the daughter of one of the Lords of the town requesting a toy for herself, something that will cure her loneliness. What that would be, I don't really know.

NECILE

Keep working. It will come to you, I'm certain.

CLAUS

I hope so. But does that mean that I am now to make toys for all the rich children as well?

NECILE

It seems to me that one child is like another, since they are all made of the same clay. Rich children may suffer loneliness as much as poor.

CLAUS

And yet, if that is so, then I will surely lack the time I'll need to create toys for all the children who wish them.

NECILE

If you like, I will speak to your grandfather about it and we'll find a way to help you.

CLAUS

That would be wonderful. It seems that I still depend on you, mother.

NECILE

And I hope that will never change. I must go before I am missed. I will return any chance I can.

CLAUS

But, coming here may be too dangerous.

NECILE

A risk that any mother would gladly take for her child. In the meantime, if you are ever in need of my help, you need only to say these words,

(MYSTERIOUS WIND CHIMES PLAYS UNDER THE FOLLOWING FOUR LINES)

*“Come fly past the boundary
immortals have heeded.*

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*Come fly to me mother
your help here is needed."*

NECILE'S ENTRANCE MUSIC BEGINS TO UNDERScore ONCE AGAIN

and I will come as quickly as I can.

CLAUS

Thank you.

NECILE

Goodbye, Claus. (*HUGS HIM*)

CLAUS

Goodbye, mother. I will see you soon, I promise.

(CLAUS LOOKS AFTER HER FOR A MOMENT AND THEN TURNS HIS ATTENTION BACK TO THE MATTER AT HAND.)

Well, back to work on Dolly's toy.

(HE LOOKS AT THE CLAY, AND IS AMAZED AT WHAT HE SEES.)

What.....what is this? What's happened to the clay?

(HE HOLDS IT UP AND WE SEE THAT IT IS A LITTLE PORCELAIN DOLL. HE IS SURPRISED, PUZZLED AND TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT'S HAPPENED)

Why.....it looks....just.... like.....a tiny human.....a little girl. Now how did I ever come up with.....

(HE LOOKS OFF TO WHERE NECILE JUST EXITED, REALIZES THAT SHE HAS HELPED HIM. SMILES)

Thank you, mother.

(NECILE'S ENTRANCE UNDERSCORING ENDS)

(AFTER A PAUSE, HE GOES BACK TO THE CLAY FIGURE)

You know....you look just like Dolly Dibble! I think that's what your name shall be.....dolly!

Yes, that will be a fine name for you. Dolly!

(THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR.)

Dolly Dibble, is that you again? *(AS HE CROSSES TO DOOR)* I think I've discovered the perfect toy for you.....but you weren't supposed to be back for three.....

(HE OPENS THE DOOR AND FINDS A RATHER BEDRAGGLED OLD MAN STANDING THERE) Oh, I'm sorry, I was expecting a friend of mine.

MAN

I humbly regret alarming you, sir.

CLAUS

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No, please, it is I, sir, who owe you an apology for the unconventional greeting. You are welcome in my home.

MAN

(ENTERING) Bless you, sir.

CLAUS

How can I help you?

MAN

If you could find it in your heart to aid a helpless old man with some food or drink.....

CLAUS

Of course.....anything you need. Please, sit down. *(LEADING HIM TO ONE OF THE CHAIRS AT THE TABLE)*

MAN

You are very kind, sir.

CLAUS

In fact, I'm a bit hungry myself so I think I'll join you.

MAN

It's been a long time since I've enjoyed the company of another at mealtime.

(AS CLAUS GETS TWO MUGS AND A PITCHER OF MILK FROM CUPBOARD AND BRINGS THEM TO THE TABLE)

CLAUS

You live alone then?

MAN

My wife passed on 10 years ago.

CLAUS

I'm sorry. *(POURING THE MILK)*

MAN

It's a lonely existence.

CLAUS

(AS HE GOES BACK TO THE CUPBOARD TO GET THE BREAD, TURNING HIS BACK ON THE MAN WHILE HE TALKS) I must admit that it sometimes gets rather

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lonely here as well. I do make many trips into the nearby towns to visit the children who live there. (*ONCE CLAUS' BACK IS TURNED, WE SEE THE OLD MAN REACH INTO HIS POCKET AND TAKE OUT A SMALL VIAL OF COLORED LIQUID.*)

MUSIC CUE #11A - SCOURGE

HE THEN PROCEEDS TO POUR IT INTO CLAUS' CUP OF MILK. BEFORE CLAUS TURNS BACK AROUND THE VIAL IS BACK IN THE MAN'S POCKET) I create these animal carvings for them. When I return home, however, the days do get quite lengthy and, as you, I long to have a good conversation with another human. (*CHUCKLING*) The chats I have with my wooden friends here are rather one-sided. (*BY THIS TIME, HE HAS RETURNED TO THE TABLE WITH THE BREAD AND SITS DOWN TO JOIN THE OLD MAN.*)

Here we are. Eat up....and there's plenty more if you desire.

MAN

I can't thank you enough, sir.

CLAUS

(HOLDING UP THE CUP FOR A TOAST) A toast! Here's to the first of many more meetings, many more such mealtimes.

MAN

And no more one-sided conversations.

CLAUS

(LAUGHING) Hear, hear!

(THEY BOTH DRINK FROM THEIR CUPS. CLAUS NOTICES THE RING ON THE MAN'S FINGER)

What an unusual ring.

MAN

An heirloom which has been passed down through the family for many, many years.

CLAUS

It's very unique.

MAN

Thank you.

(THEY BEGIN TO EAT)

CLAUS

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Where are my manners? I haven't even introduced myself. (*STANDS*) My name is Cla.....

MUSIC CUE 11B - SCOURGE

(*HE SUDDENLY FEELS VERY DIZZY*)

MAN

Is anything wrong?

CLAUS

I.....I don't know. I suddenly feel rather dizzy.

MAN

Can I do anything to help?

CLAUS

No....I'll be fine.....I guess I was just(*IT HITS HIM EVEN HARDER*). Maybe I was a lot hungrier tha...than.....I (*HE FINALLY GETS SO DIZZY THAT HE PUTS HIS HEAD DOWN ON THE TABLE AND PASSES OUT.*)

MAN

(*NOT MOVING, CAUTIOUSLY*) Claus? Claus, are you all right? (*REACHES OVER AND SHAKES CLAUS' A BIT*) Claus? (*HE STANDS AND CROSSES TO OTHER SIDE OF THE TABLE TO ASSURE THAT CLAUS IS DEFINITELY ASLEEP. ONCE HE IS SATISFIED, HE BEGINS TO REMOVE HIS DISGUISE AND WE SEE THAT IT'S REALLY SCOURGE.*)

So you're the contemptible fool who's been bringing wretched happiness to all the children, standing in the way of my work. Well now, isn't it a pity that you've made your last delivery of toys, sir?

(*MOVING TOWARD THE DOOR AND CALLING OUT LOUDLY TO THE OTHERS OUTSIDE*)

It's done!

(*IMMEDIATELY THE AWGWA HENCHMEN APPEAR. WHEN THEY SEE THAT CLAUS IS PASSED OUT AT THE TABLE, THEY CONGRATULATE SCOURGE.*)

ALL

Nice work, boss! You did it! I knew you'd pull it off!, etc.

(*THEY CONTINUE TO MAKE CONGRATULATORY NOISE*)

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SCOURGE

All right, that's enough. There's work to do. Some of you take him. The others clear out all these *(HE OVEREMPHASIZES WITH DISGUST)* despicable *toys!*
(TWO AWGWAS GO TO CLAUS, THE OTHERS CLEAR THE TOYS AND EXIT. JUST AS SLUDGE IS ABOUT TO EXIT, SCOURGE PICKS UP THE DOLL FIGURE FROM THE TABLE WITH TWO FINGERS, AS IF IT WERE AN UNDESIRABLE PIECE OF GARBAGE).

Here, you forgot this one!

(HE HANDS IT TO SLUDGE)

SLUDGE

(CHECKING IT OVER, HAPPILY) Hey, this is kinda cute. I wonder what he calls it?
(SCOURGE SWATS HIM ON THE BACK OF THE HEAD. SLUDGE CHANGES THE TONE OF HIS VOICE, TRYING TO SOUND "MACHO")

Sorry boss!! You got it boss!! I'm on it boss! *(HE EXITS)*

SCOURGE

(THE TWO CARRYING CLAUS BRING HIM TO SCOURGE) Sleep well my "friend" for, when you wake, you will be in a place where no one will ever find you. Soon, sadness and gloom will once again fill the lives of the hopeless humans. *(AMUSED)*
And how delightful that will be. *(GIVING THE FINAL ORDER TO THEM)* Go!
(HENCHMEN LEAVE LAUGHING. SCOURGE IS LEFT ALONE)

And thus ends the short reign of "Santa Claus."

MUSIC CUE 11C - SCOURGE

(HE EXITS LAUGHING).

(BLACKOUT)

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Scene 10 – A Cave Somewhere - a short time later

(CLAUS IS ASLEEP IN A CHAIR, HANDS AND FEET TIED. HE AWAKENS NOT GRASPING WHAT HAS HAPPENED)

CLAUS

Oh.....*(LIFTING HIS HEAD AND THEN SHAKING IT TAKING A FEW MOMENTS TO GET HIMSELF FULLY AWAKE.)* I must have fallen asleep. But..... *(REALIZES THAT HE'S TIED UP.)*

What's happened? Why am I tied up? *(LOOKING AROUND)* And how did I get here? I don't remember. *(TRYING TO REMEMBER)* I was working at my table....and there was a knock at the door and.....the old man! But.....no, wait...how could he have done this.....and for what reason? *(LOOKING AROUND AGAIN)* I wonder where I am! Hello! *(PERHAPS IT ECHOS)* Hello! Is anyone there? Anyone there who can help me? Hello!!!! *(HE TRIES TO GET HIMSELF LOOSE BUT TO NO AVAIL)* Help! Please help me! Anyone?!?! *(LOOKS AROUND AS IF TRYING TO FIND A ROCK OR SOMETHING)* I've got to find a way to get loose. *(HE TRIES AGAIN BUT STILL IS UNSUCCESSFUL)*. There's got to be someone nearby. Someone has brought me to this place. Hello!!! *(TRIES ONCE MORE TO LOOSEN HIS TIES)* Wait..... I know who can help me. *(HE RECITES THE WORDS THAT NECILE GAVE HIM)*

(MYSTERIOUS WIND CHIMES PLAY OVER THE FOLLOWING FOUR LINES)

*“Come fly past the boundary
immortals have heeded.
come fly to me mother
your help here is needed.”*

MUSIC CUE #12 - NECILE'S ENTRANCE

(NECILE ENTERS. AGAIN, MUSIC UNDERSCORES THEIR SCENE TOGETHER)

NECILE

I'm here, son. What has happened?

CLAUS

I don't know. It seems I fell asleep and when I awoke I found myself here in this cave, tied to this chair. *(NECILE BEGINS TO REMOVE THE TIES)* Where am I?

NECILE

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You are in an isolated area of the dark forest. This cave is one which is many miles off the nearest path. Had you not called for my help, it's doubtful anyone would have ever found you here.

CLAUS

I remember.....I had a visitor in my home.....an old man who needed my help. And.....that's the last thing I recall. But why would he or anyone else want to do this to me?

NECILE

It's sometimes difficult to understand human actions. Not everyone has a heart as good as yours. *(SHE HAS REMOVED THE TIES)* There.

CLAUS

Thank you, mother. You must leave quickly now. You can't be seen here while you are without your powers.

NECILE

Are you sure you will be able to find your way back?

CLAUS

I'll be fine. *(HE HUGS HER)* Now please go.

NECILE

(MUSIC SIGNIFY HER EXIT) Be well, my son.

CLAUS

I will, mother, I will.

(SHE IS GONE. HER MUSIC OUT)

And now to find my way out before my captors return. *(HE LEAVES.)*

(FROM THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE STAGE, SCOURGE ENTERS FROM THE SHADOWS.)

MUSIC CUE #13 - SCOURGE

HE SPEAKS ALOUD TO HIMSELF)

SCOURGE

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Well, now, my friend. What interesting company you keep. Dear, dear Necile. It's been a long time since the days we shared in the immortal realm. And did I hear him call you mother? (*HE BEGINS TO LAUGH*) Mother!!!!???! Oh, this is too good. But wait.....how can Necile be Claus' mother? He is a human, she an immortal. It's impossible. (*HE LAUGHS DEVILISHLY AGAIN*) No matter. If Necile is at his beck and call with only the recitation of a few insipid words, then this little game we play has suddenly taken on a new twist, indeed. And where Necile is.....Ak is not far behind.

MUSIC CUE #14 - AT LAST!

Well, well, well, it seems that the door to the immortal world is much closer than I thought. (*HE LAUGHS UNCONTROLLABLY*)

At last! At last!
At last, I've found the key
that will unlock the other side!
At last
the way is clear.
The immortal door will open wide!
That world's as good as mine.
Necile's the sign
I knew one day I'd find.
At last!
At last
that world will soon be mine!

CLAUS ENTERS, WORKING ON A TOY.

CLAUS
Now, at last, I can carry on.
There is much more work at stake,
for now, at last, I can see the path
that my life is meant to take.
Each child deserves the chance to grow
in joy and hope, combined.
And, so, I pledge my life to build
the dreams each child will find.

SCOURGE
That world's as good as mine,
Necile's the sign I knew one day I'd find.
At last!
At last!

CLAUS
At last

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that world will soon be mine!

their dreams will now be mine!

(Blackout)

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MUSIC CUE #15 - ENTR'ACTE

Act Two

Scene 1 – Claus' cottage - a few weeks later

MUSIC CUE #16 - MAKING TOYS

(CURTAIN OPENS REVEALING CLAUS ASLEEP AT HIS WORKTABLE. SURROUNDING HIM ARE VARIOUS WOODCARVINGS. IN ADDITION, DOLLS ARE ALSO NOW PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED).

(MRS. SANTA ENTERS, FROM OFFSTAGE (NOT THROUGH THE DOOR), CROSSES TOWARD CLAUS AND SHAKES HER HEAD)

MRS. CLAUS

The poor dear. *(CROSSING DOWNSTAGE TO ADDRESS THE AUDIENCE)*

Once Necile freed him from the cave, Claus returned home only to discover that all the toys he had been working on were gone. Not wanting to disappoint the children, he got right to work without wasting a moment. Soon he had created a new batch of wooden animals as well as many copies of the brand new toy that he was calling a dolly. As soon as one bag of toys was ready, he delivered them to the children and then came right back and started another....and another....and another. But it seemed that the more toys he delivered, the more children there were who asked for them. Pretty soon, just as he had predicted, there weren't enough hours in the day to meet the demand, and *(INDICATING THE STILL SLEEPING CLAUS)* he barely found time to rest. *(SHE BEGINS TO CROSS TOWARD WINGS)* But don't worry, as Claus soon found out, help was not far away. *(SHE EXITS)*

(NECILE AND AK ENTER FROM OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE STAGE.)

NECILE

Father, look here.

**See all the work he does,
all for the children he befriends.**

**Day after day,
never a moment's pause.**

**Think of the time that he spends
happily fashioning
trinkets and toys,
filling each item full of love.**

**Is there a way
we could offer our help to him,**

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something we're capable of?

AK

Here in his world

our law is unspoken:

each mortal must struggle,

must struggle somehow,

(NECILE IS ABOUT TO ARGUE, AK PUTS UP HIS HAND TO STOP HER)

but there

may be a time when

the law should be broken.

Maybe that time is now.

(NECILE BEAMS WITH HAPPINESS)

Seeing the work he's done—

children whose hearts he's won,

touching the life of each man—

all that I've seen

says we must intervene, for him

We will do all that we can!

(SINGING TO THE STILL-SLEEPING CLAUS)

Seeing the work you've done—

children whose hearts you've won,

it's time immortals began

helping you do

all the wonderful things you do,

all that we possibly can!

NECILE

Claus, dear,

come travel back

to your immortal home.

We'll help you do

all the wonderful things you do.

all that we possibly can.

(WITH CLAUS STILL ASLEEP AT HIS WORK BENCH AT CENTER, THE COTTAGE SET MOVES OUT AND A BRIGHT, COLORFUL IMMORTAL TOYSHOP MOVES IN AROUND HIM. IMMORTALS ARE BUSILY AT WORK MAKING TOYS AS THE NUMBER CONTINUE. AK AND NECILE LEND A HAND AS WELL.)

IMMORTALS

We're Santa's helpers.

We're making toys!

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**Fulfilling wishes
for all the girls and boys.
We can't imagine
a more merry place to be
than working here in
the toy factory.**

(AS SONG CONTINUES CLAUS FINALLY AWAKENS TO FIND HIMSELF IN THE MIDST OF THE COLORFUL SETTING. HE IS OVERJOYED AT WHAT HE SEES AND BEGINS TO CIRCULATE AMONG THE WORKERS EAGER TO SEE WHAT EACH IS DOING.)

*With ev'ry talent
that we employ,
each tiny detail
goes into ev'ry toy.
From dolly's dresses
to whiskers on a cat,
there's no one better
for duties like that!*

**We're helping Santa
make toys for ev'ry child.
How each one glistens and gleams.
We're helping Santa
bring joy to ev'ry child;
creating pieces of dreams.**

(DANCE BREAK WHERE TOYS ARE PASSED AROUND AND PACKED INTO BAGS)

**We are your helpers.
We're here for you.
Fulfilling wishes
with the help we pledge to you.
From this day forward**

**AK & NECILE
From this day on
all the work you do
forever will endure.
Our help we pledge to you.**

**ALL
immortals here will be
happy at work in
your toy factory.**

We're helping Santa

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**make toys for ev'ry child.
How each one glistens and gleams.
We're helping Santa
bring joy to ev'ry child** **NECILE**
creating pieces of dreams **creating pieces of dreams**
creating pieces of dreams. **creating pieces, for my dear Claus,**
 of dreams!

CLAUS

My friends, how can I ever begin to thank you?

AK

It is a privilege to offer our assistance, Claus. Your work has helped the humans understand how giving and sharing can generate goodness and happiness in their world.

CLAUS

It's most gratifying to hear you say that, grandfather. Thank you.

AK

It's Necile who should be thanked. I don't understand how she knew you were in need of our help.

NECILE

(CHANGING THE SUBJECT QUICKLY) Yes, well, I guess you'd better be on your way, Claus, if you want to make it home before nightfall.

CLAUS

You're right. But, with so many toys, I'm afraid it's going to several trips before I get them all transported to the human side.

NECILE

That's been taken care of, Claus.

CLAUS

What do you mean?

NECILE

We have a surprise for you.

AK

The royal blacksmith has generously offered the use of his sleigh and team of reindeer for delivery to the children.

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CLAUS

This is more than I could ever have hoped for.

AK

And I have assigned a group of immortals up in the North end of the kingdom to continue making more toys for as long as you need them.

NECILE

Don't forget to dress warmly, though. That's our snow region and it sometimes gets a bit frigid.

CLAUS

I'll remember. Thank you, grandfather. Somehow I will find a way to repay all of you for what you've done.

AK

No payment is necessary. Just continue to do what you can for the children.

CLAUS

I will. *(TO NECILE)* Goodbye, mother.

NECILE

(HUGGING CLAUS) Goodbye, Claus.

CLAUS

Goodbye, everyone.

ALL

(AD-LIBBING) Goodbye, Claus. Be careful. Come and visit soon, etc.

MUSIC CUE #16A: MAKING TOYS (Reprise)

(CLAUS EXITS)

ALL

**We're helping Santa
make toys for ev'ry child.
How each one glistens and gleams.
We're helping Santa
bring joy to ev'ry child
creating pieces of dreams.....
creating pieces of dreams.**

(Blackout)

Scene 2 – Claus's Cottage – the next day

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(CLAUS IS AT HIS WORKTABLE ONCE AGAIN, GOING OVER THE LIST. NEARBY ARE BAGS FILLED WITH THE TOYS THAT STILL NEED TO BE LOADED ONTO THE SLEIGH OUTSIDE).

CLAUS

(GOING DOWN THE LIST AND LOADING THE LAST THREE INTO THE BOXES)

.....one dolly in a pink dress for little Casey.....check.....one wooden lion for James.....check.....and last, but not least, one striped kitten for David.....check. Well, I think this is going to be quite the happy load. Now, one last review of my route and I can be on my way.

(HE STUDIES HIS NOTES. AS HE DOES SO, WE SEE YOUNG FREDERICK PEEK IN. HE STEPS INSIDE AND MOTIONS QUIETLY FOR HIS PARENTS TO COME INSIDE AS WELL. HE TIPTOES UP TO CLAUS AND PUTS HIS HAND OVER CLAUS' EYES.)

FREDERICK

Guess who?!!

CLAUS

(OBVIOUSLY KNOWING WHO IT IS) Oh my, now who could this be? I wasn't expecting any company today. *(TOUCHING FREDERICK'S HAND WHICH IS STILL COVERING HIS EYES)* I'm going to take a guess that it might be.....Frederick!

FREDERICK

You peeked!!

CLAUS

(LAUGHING) Hello, my friend! What a delightful surprise.

FREDERICK

(HUGGING HIM) Hello, Claus!

FATHER

Hello, Claus.

(CLAUS TURNS AND SEES THEM FOR THE FIRST TIME)

MOTHER *(GIVING HIM A LITTLE HUG)*

How's the most remarkable man in town?

CLAUS

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Well, I must say this is an unexpected surprise. How wonderful to see all of you.

FREDERICK

What are you working on?

CLAUS

Actually, I've just finished a new batch of toys and was about to load them onto my wagon outside.

FREDERICK

I like your reindeer. Do they have names?

CLAUS

I call them Dasher and Dancer. They're certainly going to make this trip much easier. I was just getting ready to leave.

MOTHER

(TO FATHER) Oh good, then we're not too late.

CLAUS

Too late for what?

MOTHER

Well, Claus, we've been doing some thinking.

CLAUS

Oh?

FATHER

You've been traveling further and further away from home to make your deliveries.

CLAUS

That's true.

FATHER

Did you ever think that the further you travel, the more you risk the chance of the children not recognizing who you are?

CLAUS

I hadn't thought of that.

MOTHER

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Well, we have, and we think that you need a uniform.....an outfit that every child will easily associate with you.

CLAUS

A uniform?

FATHER

Yes, something that will immediately say "That's Santa Claus!" to everyone.

CLAUS

I suppose it's not a bad idea. What do you think it should be?

MOTHER

I'm glad you asked! Frederick will you please help your father bring in the trunk?

FREDERICK

Sure.

(FREDERICK AND FATHER GO OUT THE DOOR AND RETURN QUICKLY WITH A SMALL TRUNK WHICH THEY PLACE BEHIND A CHANGING SCREEN OFF TO ONE SIDE OF THE ROOM (AND EXTENDING OFFSTAGE))

MOTHER

I hope you don't mind, Claus, but we've come up with a few suggestions. I'm hoping one of them will be just the thing we're looking for. They're in that trunk. (*PUSHING HIM BEHIND THE SCREEN WHERE HE WILL CHANGE*)

MUSIC CUE #17 - CLOTHES FOR CLAUS

CLAUS

But, I was just about to.....

MOTHER

It won't take long, I promise.

**Now then,
you need something that's appealing
let's remember that we're dealing
with the eyes of ev'ry child;**

FATHER

**something festive;
nothing...**

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**nothing overly suggestive.
Then again, it might be best if
you consider something styled
a little wild**

**BOTH
Please don't object
We suspect
we'll find a compromise.
But just for starters
let's try them on for size.**

(MUSIC VAMPS)

MOTHER
Well, how does the first one look, Claus?

CLAUS
I'm not sure this is exactly what we're after.

FATHER
Well, come on out and let us have a look at it. We'll help you decide.

CLAUS
All right.....

*(HE EMERGES FROM BEHIND SCREEN WEARING A BLUE JERSEY WITH A BIG "S"
INSIDE A SHIELD, ALA SUPERMAN.)*

(FREDERICK BEGINS CIRCLING AROUND HIM, LOOKING CLOSELY AT IT)

MOTHER
Well, it's not a bad color for you. It does bring out your eyes. It is rather casual, though.

FATHER
Hmm....maybe if you had tights to match.....and boots. Boots might be what's missing here.

CLAUS
Tights and boots?

MOTHER
Perhaps a cape.

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CLAUS
I don't know.

FREDERICK
I don't like it.

CLAUS
(*QUICKLY*) I think I agree with Frederick.

MOTHER
(*TRYING TO DECIDE*) Well.....all right. Not to worry. This is just the first one. We've got two more to look at. (*SHE PUSHES HIM BEHIND THE SCREEN ONCE MORE*) Why don't you try on the next one.

FATHER
Yes, that one's a bit fancier.

**Maybe
you should be a little daring
with the clothing that you're wearing
if you want to make it right.**

MOTHER
**Make it bolder.
Make it, in the eye of the beholder,
something young instead of older
You would be a splendid sight
all in white.**

CLAUS
(*SPOKEN*) But why can't I just.....

BOTH
**Have faith in us.
It's obvious
this is something you can't ignore:**

MOTHER
(*SPOKEN*) Besides....

BOTH
**This may be just
the thing that we're looking for!**

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(MUSIC VAMPS AGAIN)

MOTHER

What do you think, Claus?

CLAUS

Well, it's definitely white. And it definitely makes a statement.

MOTHER

(TO FATHER) I knew it!!!

FATHER

Let's see it.

(CLAUS APPEARS ONCE AGAIN FROM BEHIND THE SCREEN. THIS TIME HIS OUTFIT IS A ONE PIECE, WHITE, SPANGLED JUMPSUIT WITH AN OVERSIZED BELT, ALA ELVIS. A TOWEL IS ALSO FLUNG AROUND HIS NECK.)

MOTHER

(REALIZING IMMEDIATELY THAT THIS IS PROBABLY A MISTAKE) Oh, my.

FATHER

You're right....it does make a statement.

CLAUS

Why do I feel like I should be singing in a pub?

MOTHER

Well, to be honest, while I was sewing it, I had the feeling it might not work.

(CLAUS PULLS THE TOWEL FROM AROUND HIS NECK.)

But don't throw in the towel just yet. There's still one more.

(SHE BEGINS TO PUSH HIM TOWARD THE SCREEN ONCE MORE BUT HE STOPS. HE IS APOLOGETIC)

CLAUS

But wait.....

**I must confess I'm doubtful and wary.
Is it important and necessary
that when I'm taking toys to the children
I need to look so frightfully scary?**

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**Why should I try to alter or vary,
dressing in ways that seem so contrary?
I'm just content to be ordinary,
happy the way I am!**

(SHE DOES PUSH HIM BEHIND THE SCREEN ONCE MORE)

MOTHER
**But then,
think about the many children
who'll be positively thrilled when
they can spot you from afar.**

FATHER
**Recognition,
wearing....
wearing clothes in repetition,
will establish the tradition
of them knowing who you are.**

BOTH
**You'll be a star!
Don't give up yet.
Don't regret.
Try number three instead**

MOTHER
(SPOKEN) because.....

**we have a hunch that
you should be wearing red.**

FATHER *(TO FREDERICK)*

This is the one!

FREDERICK

I'm getting excited.

MOTHER

I think he'll be completely delighted.

FATHER

I hope you're right.

FREDERICK

I'm really excited!

MOTHER

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The moment of truth is near!

FATHER (*TO CLAUS BEHIND SCREEN*)

How does it look?

MOTHER

Do you like the color?

BOTH

Weren't we right....

that red is your color?

FREDERICK

I sure like red!

FATHER

Why choose something duller?

MOTHER

This is exciting, dear!

MOTHER

Are you ready?

CLAUS

(*SLIGHT PAUSE*) Yes.

FATHER

Well, don't keep us in suspense. Come on out!

(*DRUM ROLL. CLAUS ENTERS TENTATIVELY. THOUGH HE'S DEFINITELY IN A RED SUIT, IT'S A COMICAL CLOWN SUITE AND NOT THE FAMOUS OUTFIT THE WORLD WOULD LATER COME TO KNOW HIM WITH. AS SOON AS HE APPEARS MUSIC GOES OFF KEY THEN GRINDS TO A COMPLETE HALT WHILE THEY STARE AT HIM. FINALLY MOTHER TRIES TO PUT A POSITIVE SPIN ON IT. MUSIC WILL START SLOWLY, ALMOST UNDERSCORING AT FIRST*)

MOTHER (*SEARCHING FOR THE RIGHT WORD*)

Well it's.....

.....*cheery*.

FATHER (*ALSO TRYING TO BE POSITIVE*)

No mistaking it 0for.....dreary.

MOTHER

and, it's practical....

....in theory.

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FREDERICK (*LAUGHING AND POINTING*)
That looks horrible on you!

(MUSIC NOW BACK TO TEMPO)

MOTHER
(SPOKEN) Frederick!

CLAUS
**No,
it's
awful.
I couldn't loathe it more.**

MOTHER
Now, Claus.

MOTHER & FATHER
It's not so bad the more that we see it.

CLAUS
Children will scream and I guarantee it!

FREDERICK
**I think he's right,
it's worse than the ones before.**

MOTHER & FATHER
Well, maybe then....

CLAUS
Couldn't we just....

FREDERICK
Anyone would....

MOTHER & FATHER
....try it again?

CLAUS
....call it a bust?

FREDERICK
....run if they could!

MOTHER & FATHER
Maybe we should!

CLAUS

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Maybe we should!

FREDERICK

Maybe we should!

ALL

Give up for good!

MOTHER

I'm sorry, Claus. I'll keep working at it.

CLAUS

(QUICKLY) No! *(TRYING TO COVER HIS TRACKS)* I mean....I appreciate the work you've done.....and the idea of finding a suitable outfit is a very good one....but I can't let you waste any more time on it.

MOTHER

But I hate to let you down.

CLAUS

No.....you're not! Don't even give it another thought.....please!

MOTHER

All right, but when you're ready to try something else, you be sure to let me know.

CLAUS

It's a promise. And now I'll just slip back into my old work clothes and be off.

(HE DISAPPEARS BEHIND THE SCREEN)

FATHER

We'll load these last few toys onto your wagon for you, Claus.

CLAUS

That would be a tremendous help. Thank you.

(FREDERICK AND HIS PARENTS EACH CARRY ONE BOX OUT TO THE WAGON.

THOUGH MORE BOXES REMAIN, ODDLY, NONE OF THE THREE RETURN). I hope to make it to each town before nightfall. Having Dasher & Dancer will make a big difference. Not that I ever minded delivering the toys on foot. It certainly was good exercise.... *(CHUCKLING)* and I've been noticing lately that my waistline is starting to expand. But this way I'll be able to get to all the children so much faster. Not only that, now I'll be able to reach those children who may live further away than I could have ever walked.

(CLAUS COMES OUT FROM BEHIND THE SCREEN CARRYING HIS BOOTS. HE SITS IN ONE OF THE CHAIRS NEXT TO HIS WORK TABLE AND BEGINS TO PUT THEM ON. HE CONTINUES TO TALK AS IF THEY CAN HEAR HIM FROM WHEREVER THEY ARE.)

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Just think Frederick, this all started with that very first carving of Toyon I made for you the night you got lost. Who would have guessed that your happiness would soon spread to children all over the countryside?

(AS HE CONTINUES, SCOURGE SNEAKS IN....

MUSIC CUE #18 - SCOURGE

AND MAKES HIS WAY QUIETLY TOWARD CLAUS)

It's odd how things happen, isn't it?

(SCOURGE PUTS HIS HAND OVER CLAUS' EYES.)

Now, Frederick. I know it's you.

Frederick, you can't fool me twice, now. *(TOUCHING SCOURGE'S HAND)* Freder.....*(HE STOPS WHEN HE FEELS THE RING ON THE FINGER.)* That ring.....

(HE PULLS SCOURGE'S HAND AWAY FROM HIS EYES AND SEES HIM)

You're the old man!

(MUSIC UNDERSCORING STOPS)

SCOURGE

(SARCASTICALLY) Oh, I don't know, Claus. Old is such a relative term.

CLAUS

Who are you and what do you want with me?

SCOURGE

Who I am is irrelevant. And don't worry, it isn't *you* whom I want.....well, at least not primarily. I'm interested in someone who's very close to you.....a family member you might say.

CLAUS

I have no family. I was abandoned as a child.

SCOURGE

An orphan.....how pitiful.

CLAUS

It's the truth.

SCOURGE

You may have no *human* family, Claus, but it's not a *human* I'm looking for.

CLAUS

What do you mean?

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SCOURGE

Oh, I think you know. (*CLAUS IS SILENT*) Shall I give you a hint? All right. Does the name Necile mean anything to you? (*CLAUS REACTS JUST ENOUGH FOR SCOURGE TO NOTICE*) Well, well, I can see that it does. And how fitting because it's Necile whom I need. I would appreciate it if you would send for her.

CLAUS

I can't do that.

SCOURGE

(*BORED*) Must you waste my time? (*RESIGNED TO THE LITTLE GAME THEY'RE PLAYING*) All right. Have it your way. I know that Necile is your mother, and that it only takes a few nauseating words from you to bring her here to the mortal side. But most importantly, I know that, once she is visible here, her powers are useless.

CLAUS

(*REALIZING WHO HE IS*) You're an awgwa, aren't you?

SCOURGE

You might say that I'm the Awgwa. So let's move this along, shall we?

CLAUS

Even if I *could* do what you ask, I'd never agree to do it for you.

SCOURGE

Then, don't think of doing it for *me*. (*CALLING OUT TO THE OTHERS*) Bring them in! (*A FEW AWGWA HENCHMAN BRING IN FREDERICK AND HIS PARENTS WHO HAVE BEEN BOUND TOGETHER, GAGS OVER THEIR MOUTHS.*)

Think of it, rather, as a way to spare the lives of these hapless humans you seem to be so fond of. Well, what do you say Claus? Will you do it, or do you bid a permanent farewell to your friends here?

(*FREDERICK AND HIS PARENTS, UNABLE TO SPEAK, MAKE NOISE, TRYING TO CONVINCING CLAU NOT TO DO IT*)

I'm waiting, Claus.

(*CLAUS REMAINS SILENT. SCOURGE SPEAKS SARCASTICALLY TO THE THREE*)

I'm sorry folks, but it seems that good-byes are in order.....

CLAUS

Wait!

SCOURGE

Did you say something, Claus?

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CLAUS

(SADLY) I'll do it.

(FREDERICK AND PARENTS TRY EVEN HARDER TO CONVINCHE HIM NOT TO DO IT.)

SCOURGE

A wise decision. *(TO THE THREE)* Oh, be quiet! *(TO THE AWGWAS)* Get them out of here. *(THE THREE ARE TAKEN OUTSIDE. SCOURGE MAKES HIS WAY TOWARD THE SCREEN CLAUS USED TO MAKE HIS CHANGES)* And, I'll just duck behind here to wait. We wouldn't want to spoil the surprise for Necile, would we? All right, Claus, you know what you have to do.

CLAUS

Yes.

(AFTER A PAUSE, HALF-HEARTEDLY)

(WIND CHIMES UNDERSCORE THE INCANTATION)

“Come fly past the boundary
immortals have heeded.
come fly to me mother
your help here is needed.”

(NECILE'S MUSIC BEGINS AND IN A MOMENT SHE ENTERS.)

NECILE

I'm here, Claus. Are you in need of my help? *(CLAUS IS SILENT)* Claus?

CLAUS

I'm sorry, mother.

NECILE

I don't understand.

SCOURGE

(JUMPING OUT, SHOUTING) Now!

(IN A FLASH, THE AWGWA HENCHMAN, WITH SLUDGE PROMINENT AMONG THEM, SWOOP IN AND GRAB CLAUS)

SLUDGE

Got him, boss!

SCOURGE

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Not *him*, you idiots.....*her*!

SLUDGE

Oh, sorry boss. (*SOME OF THEM RUSH TO GRAB NECILE*)

CLAUS

Mother, I.....

SCOURGE

Quiet! Welcome, welcome, dear Necile. I trust your journey was a pleasant one.

NECILE

What do you want, Scourge?

SCOURGE

I'm touched that you remember me after all these years. But let's not talk business yet, not here.....not when the hospitality of the Awgwa lair awaits both of you. (*SHOUTING THE ORDER TO THE AWGWAS*) Take them! (*AWGWAS LEAD NECILE AND CLAUS OUT.*) And release the other humans. They have fulfilled their usefulness. And destroy the toys. Once and for all we're going to wipe the smiles from the faces of children forever.

MUSIC CUE #18A - SCOURGE

(*HE IS LEFT ALONE ONSTAGE*)

Two pieces to the puzzle are in place. And now to pay a little visit to the place where the third and final piece awaits.....and then (*HOLDING UP THE VIAL AROUND HIS NECK*) the immortal kingdom and the nectar of life will be mine for the taking.

(*HE EXITS.*)

(*Blackout*)

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Scene 3 – At the Door to the Immortal Kingdom – not long after

(KNOOKS STAND GUARD AT ONE SIDE OF THE STAGE AT THE DOORWAY WHICH LEADS TO THE IMMORTAL REALM. FROM OFFSTAGE WE HEAR A VAIN ATTEMPT AT A HORN FANFARE. AWGWA ENTER CARRYING A PROUD SCOURGE ON A TRAVELING DIAS OF SOME SORT. SLUDGE AND AWGWA #2 STEP FORWARD TO ANNOUNCE.)

BOTH

(SPEAKING AT ONCE) You are now in the presence.....

(THEY STOP, AND LOOK AT EACH OTHER)

SLUDGE

What are you doing?

AWGWA #2

What are you doing?

SLUDGE

I'm announcing Scourge's entrance, just like I always do! *(STEPS FORWARD AND BEGINS AGAIN)* You are now in the presence.....

AWGWA #2

(PULLING HIM BACK) Oh, no, it's my turn to do it. You've already done it twice today. *(STEPS FORWARD)*

SLUDGE

(PULLING HIM BACK) I am the royal announcer, I get to announce him anytime he needs announcing!

(SCOURGE REACTS IMPATIENTLY)

AWGWA #2

But he told me I could have a chance. Why should you have all the fun?

SLUDGE

He can't just arbitrarily decide that. I have to be told about any changes.

(THEY BOTH BEGIN A VERBAL FRAY UNTIL SCOURGE STEPS DOWN TO THEM)

SCOURGE

(YELLING) Will you both just put a lid on it! *(SHOOING THEM BACK)* Get away.....get back.....get back!!

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AWGWA #2

Now see what you've done.

(SLUDGE STICKS HIS TONGUE OUT AT AWGWA #2)

SCOURGE

(LOSING HIS COOL) Stop that!

(BEFORE HE TURNS BACK TO THE KNOOKS, HE PULLS HIMSELF BACK TOGETHER)

(SMUGLY, TO THE KNOOKS) You are now in the presence of Scourge, King of the Awgwas.

SLUDGE

(SARCASTICALLY, OUT OF THE CORNER OF HIS MOUTH TO AWGWA #2) I was supposed to say that!

SCOURGE

Stop it! *(CALMLY AGAIN TO THE KNOOKS)* I demand to speak with Ak.

KNOOK #1

Awgwas are forbidden to speak with Ak. You should know that by now.

SCOURGE

Oh, but this time I think he might want to make an exception.

KNOOK #1

And why would he want to do that?

SCOURGE

Just tell him that it concerns Claus. That should be enough to peak his interest.

(KNOOKS LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER, WHISPER TO EACH OTHER)

KNOOK #1

Wait here.

(HE LEAVES. OTHER KNOOK STAYS ON DUTY)

(AWGWAS GATHER AROUND SCOURGE)

AWGWA #3

It worked boss!

AWGWA #4

We're as good as in!

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SCOURGE

Yes, once he finds out who we've got tied up back at the.....I mean once he hears who is enjoying the warmth of our accommodations, we'll be back inside that gate before we know it. And then it's only a matter of time before Ak is defeated

MUSIC CUE #19 - *JUST LIKE THE OLD DAYS*

and the chalice containing the nectar of immortality will finally be mine!

Think how beloved I'll be.

Poets will be at a loss (that's if they want to live!)

Their words will constantly praise

life after I become the boss.

Once I am wielding the pow'r

they'll say that Ak was a fraud ('cause I'll make sure they do!),

then I'll insist that they call me

something unpretentious like a god!

ALL

Oooohhhh!

SCOURGE

Just like the old days it'll be exhilarating,

(Pardon, if I overreact.)

being once more a member of the old gang,

havin' all my powers intact.

(HE LAUGHS SINISTERLY)

Oh, how delicious the day

when all the masses bow down (they better get used to it!).

I'll be so bashful and shy

while I get fitted for a crown!

AWGWAS

We'll be

living the life when you're running the show.

We'll be sitting on top while they grovel below,

dining like royalty, high on the hog,

while all the others eat crow.

As you

lay down the law, we'll be lying in bed

but we won't let the privileges go to our head.

Each gift from the masses we'll humbly receive,

or steal, if we have to, instead.

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SCOURGE

**How I've been counting the years,
patiently lying in wait (no wait, I'm lying),
more like I've been on the edge,
eager and tense and irate,
knowing that there'd come a day
when opportunity knocked (I think it's knocking now!)
and then the door to that world
would no longer be locked.**

AWGWAS

**Finally getting the love and respect;
respectfully loving the getting effect;
effectively wiping out Ak and his clan;
correcting the years of neglect!
Mastering everything we can perceive
and masters of those who refuse to believe
the day has arrived they could never foresee.
Oh, how they'll blubber and grieve.**

SCOURGE

**No more the life that we knew.
Give me the life at the top, and while you're at it,
stand back, 'cause I'm on the move.
Just like the old days,
the good as gold days,
I guarantee this Awgwa's gonna prove
that**

AWGWAS

**just like the old days
he'll be back in the groove.**

SCOURGE

Yeah!

KNOOK #1

(ENTERS AND ANNOUNCES)

All now acknowledge the presence of the Mighty Woodsman, Ak, ruler of the Immortal Kingdom.

(AWGWA HENCHMAN TRIP OVER THEMSELVES RUNNING TO ONE SIDE OF THE STAGE AND COMICALLY SHAKING AND COWERING BEHIND ONE ANOTHER.. SCOURGE, ON THE OTHER HAND, STANDS HIS GROUND AS AK ENTERS)

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AK

You have something to say to me, Scourge?

SCOURGE

It's been many years since we've stood face to face, hasn't it Ak? It makes me want to relish the moment.

AK

State your purpose.

SCOURGE

My, my, we are the impatient one, aren't we? (*TOYING WITH HIM*) It was a wise decision on your part to agree to see me, Ak.

AK

I was informed that your presence here has something to do with Claus.

SCOURGE

Correct. (*AGAIN TOYING WITH HIM*) It'll be so good to once again enjoy the beauty of the immortal realm.

AK

What of Claus?

SCOURGE

(*IGNORING HIM*) Does that berry patch still grow behind your quarters? I spent many, many hours there while I was plotting to overthrow you. Oh, what happy times, eh?

AK

I can see this is a waste of my time.

(*AK TURNS TO GO*)

SCOURGE

We have him!

AK

(*STOPS*)

What did you say?

SCOURGE

I said, we have Claus. He's our prisoner. And, if you ever want to see him alive again, you'll give the command to allow the Awgwas back into the immortal realm.

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AK

No Awgwa will ever set foot in the glade again.

SCOURGE

Oh, I don't know. Having Claus gives me a pretty strong feeling that's about to change.

AK

When Claus decided to live among the mortals, he did so with full knowledge of the possible perils of his choice. Immortal laws forbid us to intervene in the destiny of any human, even Claus. Now, I command you and your henchmen to leave here immediately.

(AK BEGINS TO LEAVE AGAIN)

SCOURGE

Not so fast, Ak. I have more wonderful news to share with you.

AK

We have no more to say to each other.

SCOURGE

Not even that we have another prisoner besides Claus? And this one's not human! It's one of your precious immortals.

AK

(STOPS, PAUSES) If an immortal has been so reckless as to become visible in the mortal realm allowing himself to be captured by your men, then the law dictates he be lost forever to our world.

SCOURGE

She.

AK

What?

SCOURGE

It's not a he, it's a she.

AK

The law makes no distinction. It must still be upheld.

SCOURGE

I see. Then it's going to be awfully lonely around your dinner table without Necile, isn't it?

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AK

Necile?

SCOURGE

Oh, didn't I mention that? Yes, it seems that the immortal we're referring to is none other than Necile, daughter of the great Ak. (*HE BOWS*) Suddenly the law isn't so perfect, is it?

AK

I command you to release them both.

SCOURGE

I have every intention of doing so.....that is, once you guarantee our entry back into the immortal kingdom. A small price to pay for the lives of your only daughter and her ward, don't you think?

AK

In the entire universe, there are none so cold, so contemptible, so hateful and so pitiable as the Awgwa race.

SCOURGE

Thank you. We do our best.

AK

You are scorned by even the youngest of humans.

SCOURGE

You're too kind.

AK

If you do not agree to the unconditional release of Necile and Claus, then you must be prepared to face the consequences.

SCOURGE

And those would be.....?????????

AK

War!

SCOURGE

(*FEIGNING FEAR*) Oh!

AK

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You have three days to decide. If you choose to obey my orders, then you and your race shall be spared. If not, then you leave me no choice but to declare war which will, once and for all, end your contemptible reign.

SCOURGE

Let me save you some time, Ak. Unless you *immediately* agree to *my* terms, then war it shall be. And I wouldn't be so sure about the outcome. So, what's it going to be?

AK

(*AFTER A PAUSE*) Reassemble here in two days.....and be prepared to battle with the immortal realm!

(*AK EXITS*)

SCOURGE

(*YELLING TO AK*)

It's always a pleasure, Ak!

(*TO HIS HENCHMEN*)

Well, it won't be long now, boys.

AWGWA #4

Do you think he means it, boss?

SCOURGE

Of course he means it.

AWGWA #3

What are we going to do?

SCOURGE

What else? Go to war.

AWGWA #2

Us against the immortals? How can we?

SCOURGE

Hey.....never underestimate an Awgwa with an attitude!

(JUST LIKE THE OLD DAYS (Reprise))

No more the life that we knew.

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**Give me the life at the top, and while you're at it,
stand back, 'cause I'm on the move.**

**Just like the old days,
the good as gold days,**

**I guarantee this Awgwa's gonna prove
that**

AWGWAS

**just like the old days
we'll be back in the groove.**

ALL

Yeah!

(Blackout)

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Scene 4 – The Awgwa Lair – later that day

(CLAUS AND NECILE ARE BEING RESTRAINED IN SOME MANNER, TIED TO EACH OTHER OR INDIVIDUALLY TIED TO CHAIRS, ETC. TWO OF THE AWGWA HENCHMEN ENTER AND UNTIE THEM AS SCOURGE ENTERS)

SCOURGE

And how are my guests doing? I trust your room is satisfactory and that the cuisine has been pleasing to your palates.

NECILE

Scourge, I'm the one you want. You have no need for Claus. I demand that you release him immediately.

CLAUS

No, mother.

SCOURGE

Correct me if I'm wrong, Necile, but you don't seem to be in a position to be making demands.

NECILE

Then I implore you as a fellow immortal.....please release him.

CLAUS

I won't leave you mother.

SCOURGE

Is there nothing so heartwarming as the love of a child for his mother? *(CHANGING ATTITUDE)* No one is going anywhere. I just came by to inform you that Ak has decided to go to war over the two of you.

CLAUS

What?

SCOURGE

I know. It seems like such a waste of good battle time. I gave him plenty of opportunity to avoid it but he's always been a stubborn one. Oh well, in two days it will be all over and I'll finally be sitting on that throne.

CLAUS

Your evil plan is hopeless, Scourge.

NECILE

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The Awgwas will never be able stand up against the power of the immortal realm.

SCOURGE

I wouldn't be so smug about it. And I'd be careful about what I was saying. It may come back to haunt you when I'm in charge and you're all taking orders from me. Besides, when I do ascend to the throne, (*TOUCHING HER FACE*) I'll be looking for someone as lovely as you sit by my side.

NECILE

That will never happen.

SCOURGE

Don't be too sure. Well, I must be off to prepare. Now don't be shy. I want you think of this as your house. Feel free to come and go as you please.

(*HE BEGINS TO LAUGH AS HE EXITS. AWGWA GUARD NEARBY LAUGHS AS WELL, ALMOST OVERDOING IT.*)

Aah, shut up.

CLAUS

Mother, can you ever forgive me for what I've done?

NECILE

I'm not without blame, Claus. Don't forget, I disobeyed my father's orders.

CLAUS

You came only because you thought I needed help.

MUSIC CUE #20 - *THE MAN YOU'VE BECOME*

I've really made a mess of things, haven't I?

NECILE

I came because you're my son and I would do anything to insure your safety and happiness.

**I'm so proud of the man you've become,
of the wonderful things you have done.
I remember the child
who grew up in my arms,
your little hand wrapped 'round my thumb,
and now I look at you
and the man that you've become.**

I'm so proud of the life you have made;

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**how you've faced your world unafraid.
Think of all of the joys
that could never have been
if it weren't for the part you played.
All because of you...
and the life that you have made.**

**And I too have learned
what it is to know love;
that such human emotions exist.
If it weren't for your smile
and the warmth of your hugs
think of all the love I would have missed.**

**I'm so proud of the man you've become--
the tomorrows you've given everyone,
for, if a child can dream,
then there's hope for the world.
There's no force it can't overcome.
And I'll always be proud,
to call you my son.**

CLAUS

If there was one thing I could wish for every human child, it would be that they could know the love of a mother like you.

**I'm proud of the child that you were,
and proud of the man
you have become,
so proud of the man
you have become.**

(Blackout)

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Scene 5 – At The Door to the Immortal Realm – two days later

MUSIC CUE #21 - THE BATTLE

(THE IMMORTALS ASSEMBLE. THE AWGWAS ASSEMBLE. CLAUS AND NECILE ARE BROUGHT IN, STILL BOUND TOGETHER.

(THE BATTLE BEGINS, INTENSE, YET RETAINING A COMICAL OVERTONE SO AS NOT TO BECOME TOO SCARY. THERE CAN BE NO BLOODSHED, SO TO SPEAK. CONFUSION AND HAVOC MUST BE WHAT TAKES THEIR TOLL ON THE AWGWAS. ALL AWGWA HENCHMEN (EXCEPT FOR SLUDGE WHO IS ACTING AS GUARD NEXT TO SCOURGE) ARE RENDERED HELPLESS ONE BY ONE. THE FINAL SHOWDOWN IS BETWEEN AK AND SCOURGE. BEFORE SCOURGE GETS INTO THE THICK OF IT, HE REMOVES THE VIAL OF NECTAR FROM AROUND HIS NECK AND HOLDS IT OUT TOWARD AK.)

SCOURGE

You may have defeated my good for nothing band of incompetents but I still have one drop of the nectar of immortality left. And, as long as I do, there's no way you can be rid of me for good.....not yet! *(HE SNAPS HIS FINGERS)* Sludge!

SLUDGE

(TRYING TO CORRECT HIM, ONCE AND FOR ALL) It's not Sludge boss. My name is....

SCOURGE

(CUTTING HIM OFF, EMPHATICALLY) Sludge!!!!

SLUDGE

(SNAPPING TO ATTENTION) Yes, boss!!

SCOURGE

(HANDING HIM THE VIAL) Guard this vial with your life!

SLUDGE

I get to guard the vial??!!!! I'm on it, boss. I'll put it here in my back pocket for safe keeping.

(HE DOES SO)

SCOURGE

And now Ak, you and I will settle this once and for all.

AK

Be careful, Scourge. Your jealousy will be your downfall.

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SCOURGE

Don't be too sure. Come and get me!

(AS AK AND SCOURGE BEGIN TO STRUGGLE, SLUDGE WATCHES, GIVING VOCAL ENCOURAGEMENT TO HIS MASTER FROM THE SIDELINES. SLUDGE'S ENTHUSIASM BEGINS TO INCREASE TO THE POINT WHERE HE BEGINS SHADOW BOXING AND GETS A BIT TOO CLOSE TO THE ACTION BETWEEN AK & SCOURGE JUST AS SCOURGE IS PROPELLED AWAY FROM AK. SCOURGE ACCIDENTALLY BELTS SLUDGE IN THE FACE. SLUDGE BEGINS TO COMICALLY WEAVE AROUND THE STAGE AS EVERYONE WATCHES. HE FINALLY FALLS TO THE GROUND AND, TO THE SOUND EFFECT OF A BOTTLE CRUNCHING, BREAKS THE VIAL OF NECTAR THAT WAS IN HIS BACK POCKET.)

SCOURGE

(AS HE DIES A COMICAL, MELODRAMATIC DEATH)

Sludge, you fool! Not the vial! We're doomed. It's turning black. It's all turning black! What a world. What a world!

(SCOURGE FINALLY DIES)

AK

The world is now finally free of the Awgwa menace!

(ALL CHEER. AWGWAS RUSH TO PICK UP SCOURGE AND SWIFTLY CARRY HIM OFF. SLUDGE RUNS OFF AS WELL.)

(ALL CHEER.)

(A CELEBRATORY DANCE ENSUES DURING WHICH CLAUS AND NECILE ARE FREED AND RUN TO AK.)

NECILE

(ONCE DANCE HAS ENDED)

Father, I'm so sorry for disobeying.

CLAUS

I'm sorry too, grandfather, for being the cause of all of this.

AK

Many years of Awgwa treachery made it necessary for this battle to take place. But now, the world is finally free of the Scourge, King of the Awgwas....

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ALL
Ptui!!

AK
(*CONTINUING*).....forever!

(ALL CHEER)

MUSIC CUE #22 - ONE MAN

But vigilance must always be our rule, for any evil, unopposed, can accomplish terrible deeds.
Each of us must insure that the powers of good will never be overthrown.

**One man,
one alone can have the power
and the courage that it takes to
help to rid the world of darkness and strife,
for with his one voice
shouting from the highest tower
a man can alter the path of this life.**

**And when they hear that one voice
that will echo from the distance,
other men will add their voices
and with harmony the world will be rife.**

CLAUS

**And though the years pass
and the world continues growing
still the echo of that one voice
can forever linger on to inspire.
For in each man's heart
a flame is always glowing
and if each man will nourish that flame
the world will warm from its fire.**

**And while that fire burns
then hearts are overflowing
and ev'ry man will make the right choice
the world can rejoice
in the noise that began long ago
from just one voice.**

AK
One man

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can defeat the strongest villain,
can outrun the fastest rival,
can outwit the smartest rebel or foe.

CLAUS

With just his one voice
he can make a contribution;
or discover a solution;
he can start a revolution!

CLAUS

Just one man
has the power
and the courage,
he can change things
Just one man
with his one voice
with a spirit
that will fight on

AK

when his voice can be heard
to move on undeterred
to stand up for what's right
and can conquer the night.
can ignite a desire
that turns into a choir
that is never undone
till the battle is won.

NECILE

One man standing tall
one man who hears the call
can part the angry seas
and make mountains fall.

ALL THREE (*A CAPELLA*)

The world will be better for this.
Life can fulfill it's promise
while there is still one man whose voice is heard!
Faith comes from true believing;
hope leads to new achieving.
One man convicted by his word.

CLAUS

One man
with his one voice
with a spirit
that will fight on
One man,
just one man,
can make such a
difference in this world...
Just one man.

AK

can ignite a desire
that turns into a choir
that is never undone
till the battle is won.
One man, just one man
One man, just one man
can make such a
difference in this world...
Just one man.

NECILE

One man standing tall
one man who hears the call
can part the angry seas
and make mountains fall.
Just one man
for only just one man
can make such a
difference in this world...
Just one man.

(Blackout)

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**Scene 6 – Limbo area , a few years later
and then various locations in the mortal world**

(MRS. SANTA ENTERS)

MRS. CLAUS

Well, with the Awgwas gone, Claus resumed his toymaking, with the help of his immortal friends, and his deliveries began once more. Soon even children who lived hundreds of miles away knew his name. And, as the years passed, he decided to set aside one "special" night each year to make his famous trip.....Christmas eve.....a magical night when a young one's dreams were never sweeter....

MUSIC CUE #23 - THE WAY IT ALL BEGAN

a night that brought out the child in everyone. And a night during which more and more traditions were waiting to be born.

**Christmas!
It's Christmas!
The world rejoices for a special reason.
Christmas!
It's Christmas!
Our hearts are filled with wonders of the season.
And dear old Claus is ready;
his sleigh is filled with toys.
It's time to make his festive trip
to all the girls and boys.**

ADD CHORUS

**Mankind is once more safe to dream
of goodness overflowing
and, as they're nestled in their beds,
each child will wake up knowing
that it's Christmas!
It's Christmas,
the time of year when there is peace on earth
and hope is celebrated;
the time of year when, more and more,
traditions are created.**

(NOTE: THE VISUAL ASPECT OF THE REMAINDER OF THE SONG IS VERY IMPORTANT. AS THE LYRICS ARE SUNG, THEY MUST BE VISUALLY ACTED OUT WITH AS MUCH CHARM, COLOR, AND WHIMSY AS CAN LOGISTICALLY BE ACCOMPLISHED.)

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GROUP #1

As Santa's name spread far and wide
and children came to know
of the jolly man who brought them toys
and traveled to and fro,
his sack became quite large, in fact,
it tripled soon in size
and when it got so heavy
he began to realize

CLAUS

*Two reindeer won't be strong enough
to pull this bulky load.*

GROUP #1

So he added six more to the group
to help him down the road.
But even then he wondered
how he'd make the long, long trip
with all the children on his list
who he wouldn't want to skip.
So Ak bestowed upon the team
the ability to fly,
and soon all eight
and the jolly man
had taken to the sky!

ALL

And that's the way it all began.
Traditions multiply:
why Santa's reindeer number eight
and the reason they can fly.

GROUP #2

Now Santa had to find a way,
as he made his yearly run,
to know the homes where children lived
from the homes where there were none.
So on their doors he asked each child
to hang a festive guide
and a wreath became the way he knew
there was a child inside.
But though the doors were clearly marked

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he sometimes found them locked.

CLAUS

And since each child is fast asleep

I'd wake them if I knocked.

GROUP #2

How could he leave the toys he brought?

It filled him with dismay.

Then a fateful glance up on the roof

and he knew he'd found the way.

The chimney ! It was obvious,

he chuckled to admit.

So he climbed inside

and he shimmied down

and it was a perfect fit!

ALL

And that's the way it all began.

Traditions multiply:

why children hang a Christmas wreath,

what chimneys signify,

why Santa's reindeer number eight,

and the reason they can fly.

GROUP #3

Inside a dark and gloomy hut

some children cried one night.

To keep each other safe and warm

they hugged and huddled tight.

Santa needed just the thing

to brighten up their lives.

CLAUS

No child should wake in darkness

when Christmas day arrives.

GROUP #3

Beside the hut a seedling grew

which left him with a thought.

He chopped it down and pulled it in

and placed it in a pot.

He dressed it up with candles

and with strings of berries too.

Not a branch was left ungilded

by the time that he was through.

That morning when the children woke

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**their tears would turn to glee
as they laughed and sang
and danced around
the very first Christmas tree.**

ALL

**And that's the way it all began
traditions multiply
how trees to trim and decorate
first twinkled in the eye,
why children hang a Christmas wreath,
what chimneys signify,
why Santa's reindeer number eight,
and the reason they can fly.**

GROUP #4

**Each year before his famous trip
dear Santa would inquire
of ev'ry boy and ev'ry girl
which toys they would desire.
One day a shy lad tugged his coat--
he wanted to be heard--
but no matter how far down he bent,
Claus could not hear a word.
He found the nearest chair then
reached out for his little friend.**

CLAUS

*Let's pull you up here on my knee.
Now, tell me once again.*

GROUP #4

**And as the lad was whispering
what Santa may have missed
the other children got in line
for a chance to share their list.
And soon all children ev'rywhere
when they saw the merry chap
were lining up
to have a chance
to sit upon his lap**

ALL

**And that's the way it all began
traditions multiply**

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how Santa's knee became the place
each child would occupy
how trees to trim and decorate
first twinkled in the eye,
why children hang a Christmas wreath,
what chimneys signify,
why Santa's reindeer number eight,
and the reason they can fly.

GROUP #5

Now Santa always left his toys
beside each child's head
and it sometimes took a bit of time
to find each child's bed.
Each year his trip got longer still
with more and more to find.
The more he searched through ev'ry room,
the more he got behind.
One night he spied a mantle
from which hung two drying socks
and Santa said..

CLAUS

*that's just the place
to leave a Christmas box.*

GROUP #5

And though it wasn't quite the thing
for which they were designed,
he dropped a present in each one;
and hoped they wouldn't mind.
And when the next year rolled around
he quivered with delight
for stockings hung from mantles
had become a common sight.

ALL

And that's the way it all began
traditions multiply
why stockings hung from mantles
are not only there to dry;
how Santa's knee became the place
each child would occupy,
how trees to trim and decorate
first twinkled in the eye,
why children hang a Christmas wreath,

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**what chimneys signify,
why Santa's reindeer number eight,
and the reason they can fly.**

**Traditions that we celebrate
will sometimes come and go
but, the ones we share at Christmas time
the world will always know.
They'll warm our hearts forever;
we'll embrace them all we can.
And we owe it all to Santa Claus
he's the way it all began.
That's why we love dear Santa Claus
he's the way it all began.**

(Blackout)

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Scene 7 – Ak’s Chambers – many years later

(AK IS PACING DEEP IN THOUGHT. NECILE ENTERS. NOTE: THOUGH MANY “HUMAN” YEARS LATER, NEITHER HAS AGED IN THE SLIGHTEST WAY)

NECILE

Father, may I speak with you?

AK

Of course, dear. *(SHE HUGS HIM)* You seem troubled.

NECILE

It’s about Claus.

AK

How is he? It’s been quite some time since I last spoke with him. He certainly has made a name for himself in the mortal realm, hasn’t he?

NECILE

He is very sick.

AK

I see.

NECILE

He has grown very old and I’m afraid the work that he has done for the children of the world will soon come to an end.

AK

His life has been well spent. What a happier place the world has been because of his benevolence. He will be missed.

NECILE

I fear he may die soon.

AK

Growing old and dying are natural laws of the human side, Necile.

NECILE

Yes, I understand that. But.....I implore you to make an exception.

AK

What do you mean?

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NECILE

Stop it from happening. Do something that will prevent Claus from dying.

AK

But there is nothing to be done, nothing that....

NECILE

(INTERRUPTING HIM) Make him immortal!

AK

What?!

NECILE

Make him immortal.

MUSIC CUE #24 - NECILE'S PLEA

AK

(GENTLY) Necile..

NECILE

You have the power to do it.

AK

Necile, the law states.....

NECILE

You can change the law.

AK

What you ask is impossible.

NECILE

Impossible for everyone, except for you.

AK

In all the world there is only one Mantle of Immortality and no mortal has ever dared to claim it. Why, doing so might alter the course of human existence; there's no way of knowing the impact it would have.

NECILE

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But the Mantle exists, and if it was created in the Beginning, it was because the Supreme master knew that some day it would be required. Until now, no mortal has deserved it but who would ever deny that Claus should have it bestowed upon him. A life such as his must be spared as long as there are children who need him.

AK

But...

NECILE

Of what use is the Mantle unless it is worn? What will it profit any one of us to allow it to remain in its lonely shrine for all time? Father, in all the world there is nothing so beautiful as a happy child. You alone can insure that every child yet to come will be able to experience the happiness that is Santa Claus.

(AK PACES A BIT)

AK

(CALLING OUT)

Seamus!

(SEAMUS ENTERS AND MUST INSTANTLY BE RECOGNIZED AS SLUDGE. IT SEEMS HE'S JOINED THE GOOD SIDE)

SEAMUS

(ENTERING) Yes, boss!!

AK

Send word to every immortal. Tell them to assemble at the cottage of Claus.

SEAMUS

Should I tell them why?

AK

Tell them.....*(HE LOOKS AT NECILE)*..... that Ak is about to bestow the Mantle of Immortality on the man whom the human world must never lose.

(MUSIC SWELLS)

SEAMUS

(PROUDLY AND HAPPILY) You got it, boss!!! *(HE EXITS)*

(NECILE RUNS TO HIM, HUGS HIM)

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NECILE

Thank you, father.....thank you.
(Fade out)

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Scene 8 – Claus’ Cottage – later that day

MUSIC CUE #25 - MAKE A DIFFERENCE (Reprise)

(AN AGED CLAUS LIES UNDER A BLANKET IN HIS BED. IMMORTALS AND HUMANS ARE PRESENT, KEEPING VIGIL. ONE FEMALE HUMAN SITS ON THE BED HOLDING CLAUS’ HAND)

(NECILE & AK ENTER)

NECILE
(CROSSING TO THE WOMAN AT THE BED)
How is he?

WOMAN *(WHO SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED AS THE FUTURE MRS. CLAUS, ALTHOUGH SHE IS NOT DRESSED IN THE RED DRESS SHE’S BEEN WEARING UP UNTIL NOW.)*
I’m afraid it won’t be long.

NECILE
You’ve been a wonderful friend to him. Thank you.

WOMAN
What else are neighbors for?

(SHE STEPS ASIDE. NECILE CROSSES IN TO CLAUS)

NECILE
Claus, can you hear me?

CLAUS
(OPENING HIS EYES, SMILING WEAKLY) Mother. I so hoped to see you one last time.
Thank you for coming.

NECILE
Claus, your grandfather is here with me. He has something to tell you.

(AK CROSSES TO BED)

AK
Hello, Claus.

CLAUS

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Grandfather. (*WEAKLY CHUCKLING A BIT*) Whatever it is, it must be important to be so honored with your presence.

AK

It is I who have come to honor you, Claus. To celebrate the life you have devoted to the children of the world. A life that has exemplified the power that virtue and kindness can have over darkness that sometimes threatens. A life that has so thoroughly and unselfishly fulfilled the mission of every man.....to leave the world better, in some way, than he found it. A life that mankind must never be without.

And so, by the power that has been entrusted to me as the Master Woodsman of the Universe, I bestow this Mantle of Immortality on Claus who will this day on forever be called the patron saint of children.

(MUSIC SWELLS. SLUDGE CARRIES IN THE MANTLE, ACCOMPANIED BY TWO IMMORTALS. THE RED MANTLE IS HELD IN SUCH A WAY THAT CLAUS MUST BE ABLE TO GET OUT OF BED AND DISAPPEAR BEHIND THE CAPE WITHOUT THE AUDIENCE SEEING WHAT HE IS WEARING. FINALLY THE CAPE IS BROUGHT DOWN AND ATTACHED TO HIS OUTFIT. WHEN CLAUS TURNS AROUND HE IS FULLY DRESSED IN THE RED SUIT THAT THE WORLD HAS COME TO RECOGNIZE HIM IN. HE IS GLOWING. HE THEN TURNS AND FACES ALL THOSE PRESENT WHO SURROUND HIM. AS HE DOES, ONE BY ONE THEY BOW IN RESPECT TO HIM AS THEY BEGIN TO SING.)

ALL (*INCLUDING AK & NECILE*)

Go and make a difference.

Make the world a better place.

And let all the goodness that's inside your heart,

that time will not erase,

bring joy to ev'ry child of the human race.

BY THE END OF THE SONG HE WILL HAVE MADE HIS WAY DOWNSTAGE CENTER INTO A BRIGHT HEAVENLY LIGHT.)

(Blackout)

MUSIC CUE #26 - HIS NAME IS CLAUS (Reprise)

(BOWS)

ALL

His name is Claus!

We call him Claus!

The man is blessed as he can fill a child's eyes with wonderment.

He's a mortal who is clearly Heaven sent!

And life will never be the way it was!

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**Make no mistake,
the man's a saint.
He's Santa Claus!**