CLAUS Vs. CLAUS

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. NORTH POLE -- SUNRISE

The sun rises from behind the vast white horizon that is the North Pole. A tiny red light appears from within the clouds. The light zips through the morning sky like a falling star.

Directly behind the red light, a team of Reindeer gallops across the sky pulling a large sleigh. RUDOLPH, with his shiny red nose, leads the sleigh team.

Rudolph is wearing some dark goggles and a microphone headset. All the Reindeer appear exhausted.

RUDOLPH

Tower, this is Santa-One. We've just past the outer beacon and request that you bring up those landing lights.

The Tower Chief responds over his headset.

TOWER CHEIF (O.S.)

Roger, Santa-One. The pattern is clear.

Rudolph sees the landing lights illuminate across the snow covered runway ahead below.

EXT. NORTH POLE AIRPORT -- MORNING

Near the runway is a small Airport, complete with a radar tower and ground crew.

RUDOLPH

Tower, I have a visual confirmation on those lights. Thank you, boys. We are now coming in for our final approach.

INT. AIRPORT TOWER -- MORNING

Inside the tower are many Elves, who look like normal humans with the exception of their pointy ears. The Tower Elves are overseeing the monitoring equipment as Santa-One comes in for a landing.

The TOWER CHIEF is an older looking Elf, he is wearing a headset like Rudolph's.

TOWER CHEIF

Roger that, Santa-One. See you on the ground.

EXT. NORTH POLE AIRPORT -- MORNING

Rudolph brings his sleigh team around on a sweeping arc and aligns the Reindeer with the upcoming runway. The team executes a perfect landing as they smoothly bring the sleigh across the runway.

Ground technicians run up to the Reindeer and bring them each some water. Another Elf stands ready to take the reigns from the sleigh driver. Behind him, a Limousine pulls up along side the sleigh.

The Elves all straighten up as the driver steps off the sleigh and onto the snow. SANTA stands proudly as he greats the landing crew. Santa is a powerful looking man with a large build and massive belly.

GROUND CREW MEMBER

Merry Christmas, Sir.

An Elf stands ready with the car door open. The Elf salutes as Santa enters the vehicle. The Limo pulls away from the airport and is joined by a pair of escort motorcycle cops.

INT. LIMO -- MORNING

Inside the limo, SANTA pulls off his hat wipes his brow. Sitting across from Santa is G, a large penguin who is smoking a cigar. G hands Santa a bottle of water.

G

What's shaking, Santa?

Santa grabs the bottle of water and chugs it down. He gasps for breath as he opens up his jacket.

SANTA

Oh man, you'd think this would get easier every year.

G

Not as long as you humans keep having babies.

G hands Santa a towel.

SANTA

Thanks, G.

Santa wipes his face with the towel and then rests it around his neck. He takes another swig of water and leans back in his seat and groans.

G

Jeez, maybe you should lay off all the milk and cookies.

Don't even start up with that crap again. I'm as fit as I've ever been.

G rolls his eyes.

G

Whatever, dude.

EXT. NORTH POLE CITY -- MORNING

The Limo and her police escorts speed down a highway that leads towards a gigantic city. The city is illuminated with millions of colored lights as the entire town has been decorated for the holidays.

In the middle of the city is a statue of Santa Claus that is as large as the tallest skyscraper. Blimps hover over the city, displaying the words "MERRY CHRISTMAS" written in neon lights. Spotlights move up and down, illuminating the skies above.

As the Limo drives through downtown North Pole City, more and more police escorts join the Limo motorcade.

INT. LIMO -- MORNING

Santa pulls off a boot and rubs his foot. G turns his nose up and looks away. The Limo drives through downtown North Pole City as thousands of Elves crowd the city streets, cheering as the limo passes them by.

SANTA

Are the boys set for the poker game tomorrow night?

G

Yeah, they're all down. All except Valentine, he's got lady trouble again.

SANTA

Bull. That little cherub is just trying to get out of paying me back the money he still owes me from last year.

Santa pours himself a large martini.

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Mrs. Claus isn't going to like that.

Santa gulps his drink, winces, and smiles.

SANTA

Mrs. Claus isn't here.

Santa pulls out a cigar and grins. G holds out his lighter as Santa lights his cigar. He takes a couple of deep puffs and then blows a ring of smoke around G's beak.

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Don't say that I didn't warn you.

Santa puts the cigar down and pours himself another drink.

SANTA

Relax.

EXT. CITY CENTER PLAZA -- MORNING

City Center Plaza is packed with thousands of Elves. The crowd circles around an enormous Christmas tree in the center of the plaza.

Near the tree is a stage setup, with a podium and some large video display screens. Standing at the stage, is ANGUS MACGONAGLE, the Elf Mayor of North Pole City.

Angus speaks into a microphone from behind the podium. A group of Elf reporters and television camera crews surround the stage.

**ANGUS** 

Folks, Santa will be here any minute. We have had confirmation that he's in his car and is heading our way.

Behind the Mayor, seated in a plush chair, is GRACE CLAUS. Grace is a middle-aged woman of great beauty and white-blonde hair. She smiles and waves to the crowd with a flair of nobility.

Behind Grace is LEMY, a tall Elf wearing a dark business suit. He stands ready behind her holding a clipboard.

GRACE

I bet the fat bastard is already drunk.

LEMY

Mrs. Claus, really!

Lemy straightens up, trying to maintain his joyful composure.

LEMY (CONT'D)

I don't think that you're being very fair. Sure, your husband occasionally likes to indulge himself. But he is probably the hardest working man in the entire world.

**GRACE** 

He's certainly not the most romantic man in the world.

LEMY

Santa not romantic? What about those long stem roses he gave you for your last anniversary?

GRACE

Lemy, don't play dumb with me. You sent those flowers.

LEMY

I'm his assistant. It's my job to help him out with a few errands here and there.

GRACE

Sure, all the stuff he doesn't care enough to do personally.

LEMY

That's not true and you know it. He's just been very busy.

GRACE

I bet you ten bucks that his lips never touch my skin.

LEMY

What?

GRACE

Just watch.

CAPT. O'HARA, an Elf wearing a police uniform, is listening into his radio headset. He looks up and gives the Mayor a "thumbs-up" sign.

**ANGUS** 

He's here! Santa's here!

Angus points to the main street as the large motorcade of cops roll onto the scene, followed by the Limo.

O'Hara nods to a pair of Elves wearing black suits and dark glasses. They nod back to him, scanning the crowd as they wait. The Limo stops near the stage as one of the dark suited Elves opens the car door.

The crowd CHEERS as Santa emerges from out of the Limo. Santa beams as he waves to the crowd. G drops out from the Limo and makes his way up to the stage.

Santa plays the crowd, shaking as many hands as he can. The crowd cheers are now a deafening roar, the Mayor and the

rest of the Elves on the Stage stand up and give Santa a round of applause.

Grace is still sitting in her chair, she is not applauding. The pair of dark suited Elves, help usher Santa away from the crowd and up to the stage. Santa smiles as he shakes hands with Capt. O'Hara.

Grace stands up and smiles politely to her husband. He smirks and gives her a small hug and quickly kisses her, his kiss misses her cheek by a couple inches. Lemy notices this as Grace raises her eyebrow and makes eye contact with him.

Santa turns his attention to Angus. He grabs the Mayor in a large embrace and then bows towards the crowd. The crowd goes wild.

The Mayor sits down as Santa takes the podium. All cameras are pointed at him as the large monitor behind the stage displays Santa's face on live television.

SANTA

Is this thing on?

The crowd laughs as he mockingly taps into the mike.

SANTA (CONT'D)

It has been a long year and a really long night for all of us, so I'll try to make this brief.

Grace sneers as Santa speaks.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Thanks to you, and I mean all of you, we have brought a little joy to the world. The spirit of Christmas lives and it does so because of all of your hard work. Thank you for making the world a better place.

The crowd becomes energized as they applaud Santa's words.

ELF IN CROWD (O.S.)

We love you, Santa!

SANTA

I love you too! I love all of you! Now go on and have some fun, you have earned yourselves a vacation. The plants will not open again until after New Years day. Until then, nobody works! Merry Christmas everyone!

Santa raises his arms as fireworks shoot out from behind the stage.

Confetti and snow rain down on the crowd as they continue to cheer.

EXT. SANTA'S CASTLE -- DAY

On top of a hill that towers over North Pole City is Santa's castle. The castle is playing host to a large celebration. Spotlights shine from outside of the castle walls as more fireworks explode over the city.

INT. MAIN DINING HALL -- DAY

Inside the main dining hall of Santa's castle is a large table set up with a couple hundred dinner guests. Penguins serve the dinner guests as Santa carves a large roasted turkey.

Grace, looking a bit melancholy, is seated next to him. On Santa's other side, are G and Lemy.

SANTA

White or dark meat, G?

G

Do I look like a stinking cannibal to you?

SANTA

Just messing with you.

Santa chuckles as G gives him a dirty look. Lemy notices that Grace is unhappy.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Pass that down, Lemy.

Santa hands Lemy a plate full of food.

LEMY

Santa?

SANTA

Yeah?

LEMY

Don't you think that you should serve your wife first?

SANTA

Sure, no problem.

Santa whips the plate around and startles Grace as he accidentally knocks over a large goblet full of red wine. The wine splashes all over Grace, ruining her white satin dinner gown.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Oh, crap. I'm sorry honey.

Santa snaps his fingers and a pair of penguins rush up and attempt to clean her off. Grace pushes the penguins back and sighs.

**GRACE** 

I'm just going to go upstairs and change.

Grace pushes the pair of penguins out of her way and leaves the table. Santa catches up from behind her as she exits the main dinning area.

SANTA

Grace, wait up.

GRACE

What?

SANTA

You okay? I didn't mean to ruin your dress.

**GRACE** 

It's okay. I'll survive.

SANTA

I'm still sorry, but since you're going to go change, maybe you could change into that outfit that Mrs. MacGonagle had made for you?

**GRACE** 

Are you crazy? That dress is the ugliest thing that I have ever seen!

SANTA

I know it's not very stylish, honey. But she did go through a lot of trouble for you and it is Christmas.

**GRACE** 

You have got to be kidding.

SANTA

Hey, it's not like I ask a lot from you. Come on, it's the end of the season and these people sacrifice a lot for us.

GRACE

Then you wear it.

Grace starts to walk away but Santa grabs her by the wrist.

Look, I've got to get back to the party. Just do it, I promise to make it up to you, okay?

GRACE

Okay, but you owe me.

SANTA

Great!

Santa kisses her on the forehead.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Don't forget the mittens.

Santa turns and runs back into the dinning hall. Grace watches him exit and then groans out loud.

GRACE

(mimicking Santa's

voice)

It's not like I ask a lot of you.

She turns around and marches upstairs.

GRACE (CONT'D)

What a jerk.

INT. MAIN BALLROOM -- NIGHT

The ballroom is full of Elves dressed in stylish formal attire. Santa is standing within a small group of the Elf Elite consisting of Angus, Lemy, Capt. O'Hara, and FRANCISCO CORDOBA. Francisco is a Spanish Elf with a pencil thin mustache, slicked black hair, and a dark tan.

Santa polishes off another martini. He motions for a nearby penguin waiter and exchanges his empty glass for a full one.

CORDOBA

The Elf population is now over one and a half million.

**ANGUS** 

It's amazing really, to think that we were once considered a dying species.

SANTA

Wasn't that hard, all we had to do was find your race a non-hostile environment to thrive in.

CORDOBA

The sad fact is that in order to save ourselves, we had to conceal ourselves in one of the most secluded places on Earth.

CAPT. O'HARA

All of us herded to this big ice cube at the tip of the world.

LEMY

Not all of us, over fifty thousand registered Elves live outside of the North Pole.

CORDOBA

True. But all of them had to surgically remove the tips of their ears.

ANGUS

Humans would still not accept us into their world if they knew we existed.

CAPT. O'HARA

Bloody humans, they always destroy what they fear and do not understand. No offense, Santa.

SANTA

Non taken, I've seen the human race do some incredible things. And I've seen them do some terrible things. I like individuals, but as a collective group-

ANGUS

They are a bunch of wankers.

SANTA

Exactly.

Santa lights up a cigar.

LEMY

But not all humans are bad, right Santa?

SANTA

Of course not, no species is all bad just as there isn't one that is all good.

CAPT. O'HARA

Don't get me wrong, Santa. (MORE)

CAPT. O'HARA (CONT'D)

I think you and your wife are great. In fact-

O'Hara stops talking. The music stops playing. People stop dancing. Everyone has their eyes fixed on Grace as she enters the main Ballroom, wearing the dress that Santa asked her to wear.

The dress is made up of Polar Bear fur and nothing else. The head of the Polar Bear has been hollowed out and is worn as a hood over Grace's head. Grace looks miserable as she walks towards her husband.

SANTA

Angus, that dress your wife made is a riot.

**ANGUS** 

I can't believe you got her to wear it. Doris will be so happy, she was starting to think that Grace didn't like it.

SANTA

Of course she liked it.

The crowd still stares at Grace as she crosses the dance floor. A few muffled laughs leak out from within the crowd. Santa slams another martini, turns, and walks up to his wife.

SANTA (CONT'D)

May I have this dance?

Santa takes her hand and leads her to the center of the dance floor as photographers shoot them with their cameras.

Cordoba and O'Hara both look at each other and laugh. Lemy gives them a dirty look as Angus finds his wife, DORIS, and holds her hand. His wife is beaming with pride.

Santa snaps his fingers and the band begins to play a waltz. The couple begins to dance.

**GRACE** 

I told you it was dreadful.

SANTA

I'm sorry that I doubted you. But look how happy you made Doris.

Grace looks over to Doris who smiles and waves back to her.

GRACE

This dress is absolutely horrible.

Oh come on, it's not that bad.

GRACE

And it's a darn good thing that you didn't have the polar bears cater this event.

SANTA

Penguins are cheaper.

GRACE

This thing is making me sweat like you wouldn't believe.

SANTA

You can go change right after we finish the dance.

Santa smiles and waves to the crowd as they continue to dance.

GRACE

You've been drinking again.

SANTA

What makes you say that?

Grace gives Santa a serious look and then reaches into his coat pocket and pulls out an empty martini glass.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Put that back.

Santa blushes as he looks over his shoulder and smiles back at the crowd.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Oh come on, it was just a few drinks.

**GRACE** 

Last time you had just a few drinks, you threw up all over Rudolph.

SANTA

Hey! You promised that you wouldn't bring that up again.

The song ends. The crowd applauds as Santa and Grace bow. The two of them exit from the dance floor as the band plays another song.

**GRACE** 

I'm going to bed now.

SANTA

What, already? It's early.

Grace quickly walks over towards the stairs. Santa has to jog to catch up with her.

GRACE

Look, I've made my appearance. We danced, I wore the stupid dress, and got our photos taken for the paper. What more do you want?

SANTA

Don't you want to stay for presents? I noticed that you haven't opened yours yet.

Santa beckons to a lavishly decorated Christmas tree. A lone present sits under the tree untouched.

GRACE

What did you get me?

SANTA

It's a surprise.

**GRACE** 

Yeah right, it's only a surprise because you don't know what it is.

SANTA

I didn't say that--

GRACE

Okay then, what is it?

SANTA

It's uh--

**GRACE** 

Well?

Santa tries to soften her with a smile.

SANTA

Why don't we just go and find out?

**GRACE** 

What is it, Santa?

Santa looks at her with a defeated expression.

GRACE (CONT'D)

That's what I figured. You don't even have a clue.

Grace storms up the stairs. Santa starts up after her, but stops as she twirls back and faces him. Grace glares at Santa with contempt.

GRACE (CONT'D)

If you really want to know what it is, why don't you go and ask your assistant?

A pair of penguin waiters are manning a small bar next to the stairs. They both stop what they are doing and watch this exchange.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I'm sure you had Lemy pick out the gift just like he did for Valentine's Day, my birthday, and our last anniversary.

The two penguins seem startled by this as they mumble something to each other.

GRACE (CONT'D)

You know, now that I think about it...Lemy's been more of a husband to me than you have.

SANTA

Hey, that wasn't a nice thing to say. Come on honey, it's Christmas.

**GRACE** 

Don't even go there, fat boy. I am so sick of Christmas!

Santa and the two penguins gasp.

GRACE (CONT'D)

That's right, you heard me correctly. I'm sick to death of it.

Santa angrily points his finger at Grace.

SANTA

I am going to pretend that you didn't just say that.

GRACE

Please do not bother me anymore, I just want to go to bed.

Grace turns around and marches up the stairs. Santa and the two penguins stand still as they watch her go.

SANTA

Try and get some rest, honey. Merry Chris-

Grace whips around and gives Santa a death-glare. Santa and the Penguins stiffen up at this sight. She stares at Santa for a few seconds and then coldly turns around and exits.

Santa stands with a blank expression on his face. He straightens himself up as the two penguins look at each other with puzzled expressions.

SANTA (CONT'D)

She's not feeling very well.

The penguins just stare blankly at him, one of them blinks twice. Santa gives them a wry smile and then grabs a bottle of gin from the bar.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Women.

Santa shrugs and takes a swig from the bottle. He winks at the two penguins and walks back towards the party, bottle in hand.

EXT. BALCONY -- NIGHT

Grace stands alone on a balcony overlooking the city. A single tear rolls down her cheek as she solemnly gazes into the full moon above her.

She wipes the tears from her cheek and then begins to stare at her wedding ring. She stares intently at her ring for a long minute. She cracks a tiny smile and shakes her head.

The noise from the party begins to intrude on her moment. She hears the sounds of champagne corks POPPING and the GASPS of party guests having a good time.

This is followed by the familiar sound of Santa's laughing. Grace notices this and focuses her attention through a large window that peers into the main ballroom.

INT. MAIN BALLROOM -- NIGHT

The party is in full swing as a large crowd of guests circle around the dance floor. They are all chanting for Santa as he plays "Limbo" with a group of female Elf bombshells. A blonde and a red-head hold up the bamboo stick as Santa inches his massive belly under.

Santa makes it under the stick and stands up straight. He smiles as a tall lanky brunette pours some champagne into his mouth. The crowd cheers as Santa guzzles the champagne, his entire head soaked. The brunette holds up a piece of mistletoe over his head.

The blonde and red-head both take notice of this and all three Elf women give Santa kisses all over his face. Santa looks like he is having the time of his life as he howls in ecstasy.

SANTA

You gals are being naughty!

EXT. BALCONY -- NIGHT

Grace's expression has changed from a peaceful calm to an uncontrollable rage. She tears herself away from the window and looks around for something to hit.

SANTA (O.S.)

Merry freaking Christmas to all and to all a good freaking night! Woo-hoo!

She notices her ring and then grits her teeth. Without hesitation, she tears the ring off from her finger and tosses it off the balcony.

EXT. ICE LAKE -- NIGHT

Outside of Santa's Castle is an enormous lake that has been frozen over. Large gaps of water are surrounded by small floating sheets of ice. Grace's ring falls down and bounces off a piece of ice and then rolls into the lake.

The ring sinks down into the black murky water.

EXT. BALCONY -- NIGHT

Grace looks down at the lake and smiles. She seems energized with a new sense of purpose. She smiles up at the moon and basks in its glow.

INT. MAIN KITCHEN -- MORNING

A half dozen Elf Chefs are busy preparing breakfast. A pair of Elves are making freshly squeezed orange juice as the HEAD CHEF presides over an APPRENTICE CHEF.

HEAD CHEF

Now preheat ze oven to four hundred and fifty degrees.

The Apprentice Chef turns and faces the massive oven. She reaches up and turns a knob up to four-fifty.

APPRENTICE CHEF

Four fifty.

The oven comes alive with the sound of the stove's burner IGNITING which is followed by SCREAMS.

The two Chefs jump back as the stove door bursts open and a naked fat man falls out and onto the stone floor. The kitchen is now flooded with black smoke.

HEAD CHEF

Mon Dieu!

The Head Chef reaches down and pulls out a very hung-over and burnt-up Santa. The Apprentice Chef looks mortified as the entire kitchen staff stares in awe at their master.

HEAD CHEF (CONT'D)

Mousier Claus, are you okay?

SANTA

Yeah, yeah.

Santa coughs, waving smoke away from his face. He squints and covers his eyes with one of his hands.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Would somebody pull those shutters down? It's too bright in here.

The Apprentice Chef bolts for the window and closes the shutters, making the kitchen darker.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Santa snorts and rubs out the sleep from his eyes. The Head Chef turns away, trying not to look at the naked Santa.

INT. MAIN BALLROOM -- MORNING

Santa walks across the main ballroom, one hand is clutching a blanket that is wrapped around his lower body. The other hand is holding a large vegetable drink with a celery stick pointing out from it. He is now wearing dark sunglasses.

Behind him, Lemy follows holding another vegetable drink in one hand and a clipboard in the other. The ballroom is a mess. Decorations are flung all about, the Christmas tree has been knocked over, and a large black soot stain surrounds the fireplace.

SANTA

What I don't understand is how come I passed out naked.

LEMY

You don't remember the fire?

Santa pauses and tries to reflect on the previous nights activities.

SANTA

Wait a minute, did somebody ask me to do the chimney trick?

LEMY

Ah, it's all coming back to you now.

I climbed down that chimney.

Santa points to the dirty fireplace.

SANTA (CONT'D)

But the fire was still on and it burned off my suit while I was still wearing it.

Lemy and Santa stare at a trail of black foot prints leading away from the ballroom. Lemy suppresses a smile as he and Santa turn back and look down at G.

G is laying passed out on the floor by the fireplace, he is still wearing a party hat. G snores loudly, his tongue hanging out from his drooling beak.

SANTA (CONT'D)

All because butter-ball here forgot to put out the fire.

LEMY

Who do you think asked you to do the trick in the first place?

Santa kicks the penguin, waking him up. G groans as he covers his eyes with a flipper, knocking over a couple empty bottles on the floor next to him.

SANTA

Good morning, precious.

G

Ugh. I don't want to live.

Lemy kneels down, helps G up and hands him the vegetable drink and a pair of sunglasses.

G (CONT'D)

Thanks, man.

G takes a sip from his drink and shudders. He smacks his beak and then notices Santa's state of undress.

G (CONT'D)

Looks like Santa got lucky.

SANTA

Oh please, I'm in enough trouble with the wife. Don't make any jokes like that around her.

G

No worries, my beak is shut.

G gets up from the floor and follows Santa and Lemy up the stairs.

SANTA

Speaking of the wife, have you seen her yet?

LEMY

Not since last night. It's a safe bet that you're still in the dog house.

SANTA

I keep this up and I'll have to get my own room.

G

Plenty of room at my pad, bro.

SANTA

Call me strange, but I don't like to sleep on a pile of dead fish.

G

Suit yourself.

LEMY

It might be a good idea to apologize to her. I went ahead and had the kitchen make her favorite breakfast.

G

Looks like he has some of it stuck to his back.

Santa growls at G, who chuckles. Lemy brushes off some flour from Santa's back.

SANTA

Thanks, Lemy. I don't know what I'd do without you.

INT. SANTA'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Santa bursts into the dark bedroom holding a tray of food adorned with a small vase with flowers. He is now wearing his a red velvet robe with the initials "SC" embroidered on the breast pocket.

The room is black and still. Santa puts the tray down on the dresser and walks up to the window and opens up the drapes, allowing the soft sun light to fill the room.

Santa quietly tip-toes over to the bed and then pokes a lump under the blankets.

(whispers)

Honey, wake up. It's breakfast time.

Santa nudges the lump again and gets no reaction.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Come on, sweetie. I've got a surprise for you--

Santa rolls the covers over and finds nothing but pillows. Santa shrugs as he walks into the bathroom and looks in there. Still no Grace. He walks out on to the balcony looking across the grounds.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Grace?

Santa comes back into the room and calls out again.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Grace!

A second goes by and Lemy and G peer their head into the bedroom.

G

Where's the broad?

SANTA

I don't know.

Santa sits down on the bed and picks up the phone. He dials a number and waits.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Sheila? It's Santa. Look, did Grace go out early this morning?

Lemy scans the room and notices that a sizable amount of clothes are missing from the closet. He tips open a jewelry box and sees that it is empty.

SANTA (CONT'D)

No, no, I'm sure she's out shopping or maybe just went for a walk. Just tell her to call me if you see her. No that's okay, I'll page her from here. Thank you.

Santa slams the phone down and picks up a cell phone from the end table.

Lemy crosses the room and peals off a small note that was taped to the dressing room mirror. As he reads the note, his eyes go wide with surprise.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Well, here is her cell phone. So she's probably still on the grounds.

Lemy clears his throat, getting Santa and G's attention.

LEMY

Santa, she uh...she left a note.

SANTA

What does it say?

LEMY

She's leaving you, sir.

SANTA

What?

G's eyes pop out from his head.

LEMY

She's gone sir. She says she's never coming back.

SANTA

Give me that.

Santa reaches for the note and Lemy pulls it away.

LEMY

Trust me, sir. You don't want to read this.

SANTA

Hand it over.

Lemy takes a deep breath and hands the note over to Santa, who just snatches it from him. Santa sits down on the end of the bed and reads the note while G reads over his shoulder.

Santa panics as he reads the note.

G

Whoa! I've never seen a lady write language like that before!

G rolls on the bed and laughs wickedly. Lemy looks like he is about to cry as Santa intently reads the letter. A few seconds go by and Santa looks away from the letter and stares blankly at the wall in front of him.

G (CONT'D)

(snorting)

She called him Tubby.

INT. MAIN DINING HALL -- DAY

Santa sits at the end of the long dinning room table that is surrounded by Elves, penguins, and a couple of reindeer. Angus, Capt. O'Hara, Rudolf, Lemy, G, and Cordoba are closest to Santa.

A large map of North Pole City is sprawled across the table. On the wall next the table is a massive television screen that displays various city security cameras. Three POLICE ELVES are seated near the screen, monitoring the cameras with headsets.

RUDOLPH

None of the reindeer flew her out, that much I can tell you.

LEMY

Who said she was going to leave city?

SANTA

He's right. She's gotta be hiding out somewhere in the city.

CAPT. O'HARA

We've issued an APB out for Mrs. Claus. The city's finest are out combing the streets as we speak.

SANTA

Did we notify the television stations yet?

CORDOBA

I don't think that we should go public with this yet.

SANTA

What?

**ANGUS** 

I agree with Cordoba on this one, sir. If word ever got out that your wife had left you, it would have a devastating effect on worker morale.

SANTA

Worker morale?

CAPT. O'HARA

Don't worry, Santa. We'll find her.

POLICE ELF

Captain? We've got a call coming in from the west side.

On screen.

Captain O'Hara nods to the Police Elf and the television screen winks into the large image of a SNOWMAN. Behind the Snowman is vast snowy horizon.

SNOWMAN

She's not here, sir.

SANTA

What happened with those tracks you guys spotted an hour ago?

SNOWMAN

Turned out to be Snow Beast tracks.

**ANGUS** 

Dear lord, man. Are you okay?

SNOWMAN

We were able to get away before it could sense us, sir.

G

I hate Snow Beasts.

G shudders as he puts out his cigar.

SNOWMAN

It was a big scare, but I'm happy to say that we didn't find anything around the beast.

CAPT. O'HARA

Thanks for trying, Frosty.

SNOWMAN

(to Santa)

Don't worry sir, I'm sure she'll turn up. Just in case, me and my boys will keep combing the west side until we hear otherwise.

SANTA

Thank you.

The Snowman salutes and the screen winks back to the surveillance cameras.

CAPT. O'HARA

(to Angus and Cordoba)

Just in case, I think we better check out all the rivers and lakes.

Angus and Cordoba both nod yes, as Santa looks up with a lost expression. Lemy places his hand on Santa's shoulder.

A female Elf, SHEILA, brings in a tray full of coffee and doughnuts. She places the tray on the table and turns to Santa.

SHEILA

Santa, I know it's a bad time. But your guests have arrived.

CAPT. O'HARA

Guests?

LEMY

Oh yeah, I totally forgot. It's his poker game tonight.

Santa stands up and takes a deep breath.

SANTA

Excuse me gentlemen, I have to explain the situation to my guests. Call me the second you get any news.

Santa exits the dinning room followed by Lemy and G.

INT. MAIN FOYER -- DAY

Standing at the main foyer is a small group of other holiday icons. The EASTER BUNNY, a nine foot tall rabbit, stands near a matching set of leather travel bags. SAINT PATTY, a short Leprechaun wearing all green, stands holding his bag of golf clubs.

PUMPKIN-HEAD, the Halloween King stands tall in his stylish black suit. He fills it out nicely, the only thing odd about him is his jack-o'-lantern head. Standing next to Pumpkin-Head is the GROUNDHOG, a small furry rodent who is holding a tiny black suitcase.

Santa enters the room, followed by Lemy and G, and shakes hands with all of his guests.

SANTA

I'm sorry for not meeting you guys at the airport, but we've had a bit of an emergency.

SAINT PATTY

Emergency?

SANTA

Grace has gone missing.

Saint Patty and Pumpkin-Head exchange confused glances with each other. The Groundhog scratches his head.

EASTER BUNNY

Missing? What are you talking about? I thought she just dumped you.

LEMY

Where did you hear that?

EASTER BUNNY

We just ran into her at the airport.

SANTA

You did? When?

SAINT PATTY

Aye, that we did. She's a fiery lass, that one. Boy, she sure didn't have anything nice to say about you, Santa.

G

You guys should have read the note she left him, it's a riot.

The Easter Bunny chuckles.

SANTA

What did she say?

EASTER BUNNY

What didn't she say was more like it. Boy, she nearly talked our ears off. She kept going on and on about how she's leaving you to start a new life.

SANTA

I've got to go stop her.

Santa reaches over to the closet and pulls out heavy winter coat.

EASTER BUNNY

Dude, she's gone. She took off on the plane that we came in on.

LEMY

How?

EASTER BUNNY

I think she slipped the pilot a couple of bucks not to say anything.

Santa's eyes go wide as he registers the news. Pumpkin-Head walks over to Santa and pats him gently on the back.

GROUNDHOG

I thought we were here to play some cards, enough about round-boy's wife already.

Santa gives him a dirty look. Saint Patty shakes his nineiron at the Groundhog.

SAINT PATTY

You blasted gopher, mind yer manners! You're only here because Valentine skipped out on us.

G stands over the Groundhog and growls.

GROUNDHOG

All I'm saying is, his wife left him. Big deal. If I had a dime for every time my old lady took off, I'd be the richest Groundhog in the world.

The Easter Bunny and Saint Patty nod their heads in agreement.

SAINT PATTY

The little rodent is right. Don't worry, lad. She'll come back to ya.

EASTER BUNNY

Oh yeah, she's just blowing off some steam. I'm sure she still loves you.

The Groundhog walks up to Santa and tugs on his pant leg. Santa looks down at the Groundhog.

GROUNDHOG

Is it true that you have hemorrhoids?

The Easter Bunny, Saint Patty, and the Groundhog all laugh. Santa is now angry.

INT. GAME ROOM -- NIGHT

Inside a dark cigar smoke filled room, Saint Patty, Easter Bunny, Pumpkin-Head, and the Groundhog are seated around a poker table. Santa is seated in the middle, he appears upset as he arranges the cards in his hand.

SANTA

If she wants to go, then I say let her go.

Santa grunts at a penguin who is dealing the cards.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Give me two.

The penguin slowly deals Santa two new cards, he looks scared of Santa.

EASTER BUNNY

That's the spirit, don't you take any of her crap.

Pumpkin-Head nods his head in agreement.

EASTER BUNNY (CONT'D)

The way I see it, she you really didn't give you any choice. She just took off without giving you a chance to redeem yourself.

SAINT PATTY

Here here.

EASTER BUNNY

Personally, I think we men get a bad rap. We get into trouble if we try to follow them, and then we get into more trouble if we just let them go. The whole thing is a no win situation.

GROUNDHOG

I heard that.

EASTER BUNNY

If you ask me, I think she's the one who made a big mistake. If I were you, I certainly wouldn't drop everything and run after her.

SAINT PATTY

It was bad enough that she ran off on you, but she didn't need to disrespect ya like that in front of all your mates.

Pumpkin-Head pats Santa on the shoulder as he nods in agreement with Saint Patty and the Easter Bunny.

EASTER BUNNY

I say you just chill and then wait for her to come crawling back to you. Then you'll have her just where you want her.

SANTA

I'm starting to think that maybe you guys are right. She shouldn't have run away, that wasn't right.

EASTER BUNNY

She'll be back, you'll see. They always come back.

Saint Patty raises his beer stein to the group.

SAINT PATTY

I'll drink to that.

All the players raise their glasses in a salute and then take a gulp. The Groundhog spits out his beer and glares at Santa.

GROUNDHOG

It's the North Pole and all you have for me is warm beer? What the heck is wrong with this place?

Santa snaps his fingers.

SANTA

Get the gerbil a cold brewski.

A serving penguin standing behind the wet bar bends over and pulls out a cold bottle of beer. The penguin waddles over to the Groundhog, who snarls at the penguin as he opens the bottle cap and pours it into a fresh mug. The Groundhog takes a sip and smiles.

GROUNDHOG

Now that's more like it.

The players all look at their hands. The Easter Bunny drops a chip onto the pile.

EASTER BUNNY

I bet twenty.

The Groundhog looks at his cards and then drops a couple chips into the pool.

GROUNDHOG

I see your twenty and raise you another fifty.

Pumpkin-Head shakes his head "No" and then folds.

SAINT PATTY

Too rich for my blood, I fold.

EASTER BUNNY

I'm in.

The Easter Bunny tosses a pair of chips into the pool and turns to Santa. Santa looks at his cards and then smiles.

SANTA

I'll see that fifty and raise you a hundred.

The Easter Bunny's ears drop down.

EASTER BUNNY

I'm out. I've seen that look on his face before, I know better than to mess with him now.

SANTA

That's a hundred to you, Groundhog.

The Groundhog sneers as he looks at his cards.

GROUNDHOG

I think you got nothing.

He drops some more chips onto the pile.

GROUNDHOG (CONT'D)

Let's see'em.

Santa grins as he unveils a straight flush. The Groundhog hisses as he throws down his three of a kind.

SANTA

And that, my friends, is why Groundhog Day isn't much of a celebrated holiday.

Santa grins proudly as he scoops the pile of chips to his side of the table. Behind the table, a large television screen winks on. The screen is filled with the image of Lemy, behind him a plane is parked in the background.

LEMY

Santa?

SANTA

What's up?

LEMY

We got a fix on that plane she's on, it's headed for the United States. I have their projected landing coordinates right here.

Santa looks blankly at the screen. He looks over to the Easter Bunny and Saint Patty who solemnly nod back at him.

LEMY (CONT'D)

Your sleigh team is on red alert and can take off as soon as you are ready, sir.

SANTA

Stand down, Lemy. I'm not going anywhere.

LEMY

Excuse me, sir?

Look, I don't need to explain myself to you. Just let it go. Mrs. Claus will come back when she's ready to come back.

Pumpkin-Head playfully slaps Santa on the shoulder, encouraging him.

LEMY

But Santa, what if something happens to her? She hasn't been out on her own like this in over a thousand years.

Santa contemplates this for a second.

SANTA

Lemy?

LEMY

Yes, sir?

SANTA

I want you to get on a plane and follow her.

LEMY

Sir?

SANTA

Take the Concord and you'll probably get there before she lands. Follow her progress and I'll contact you when I want a report.

LEMY

You want me to take care of her?

SANTA

Negative. I don't want her to even know that you're tailing her.

LEMY

How?

SANTA

Look, just keep tabs on her and make sure she stays out of trouble. And don't try to help her out, unless she is trying to come back home.

LEMY

I'm not following you, sir.

Look, she wanted independence. So I'm gonna give her all the independence she wants. You have your company card on you, right?

LEMY

Yes I do, but--

SANTA

Okay then, call me if anything goes wrong. Until then, have fun in the States.

LEMY

But sir, I--

SANTA

Santa, out!

Santa punches a button on his chair remote control and the screen winks off. Santa grabs a beer from a small refrigerator behind the wet bar. The surrounding players all stare at Santa in disbelief.

SANTA (CONT'D)

What?

They all look away, trying to appear casual.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Now let's play some cards!

INT. SANTA-CO EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

The Board of Directors of Santa-Co are seated around a long conference table. One wall has a large window with a spectacular view of North Pole City. On another wall is a large painting of Santa, he is in a business suit with a stoic expression on his face.

Hanging next to the painting is the company logo of <u>SANTA-CO</u>. There are logos for many well-known Human toy manufacturers under the Santa-Co logo. A digital tickertape is streaming stock quotes underneath.

The Executives are all high ranking Elves dressed in suits. At one end of the table is Francisco Cordoba, looking uneasy as he stares at Santa, who is standing at the other end.

Santa is putting golf balls into a practice hole as JARVIS, one of the Elf Executives, is in the middle of a report. As Jarvis speaks, he refers to a large screen behind him displaying pie-charts and production graphs.

**JARVIS** 

Sales for video game systems were up twenty percent this year. This was up seven points from our last projected estimate. As you can see by this chart--

Jarvis uses a laser pointer to trace the production curve in a colorful graph.

JARVIS (CONT'D)

Software sales are up almost three hundred percent of what they were last year.

Jarvis clicks a button on his pointer and the screen changes to show a graph displaying net and gross profits.

JARVIS (CONT'D)

This ends with us making a net profit of over one and a half billion dollars.

The seated Executives all applaud this news.

CORDOBA

If the world ever found out that we owned all the major toy companies, Christmas would be labeled as the biggest money making scam in history.

The rest of the Executives all laugh. Santa, indifferent, hits another ball into the hole.

CORDOBA (CONT'D)

Thank you, Jarvis. That was very impressive. This brings us to our next topic--

Santa hits another ball.

CORDOBA (CONT'D)

The loss of Mrs. Claus.

Santa's ball misses the hole.

SANTA

I really don't think that's an issue for the board of directors.

CORDOBA

I disagree. Mrs. Claus was a very public figure in the Elf community. Regardless of what her professional involvement was, her loss will have an impact on our work force.

Fine. Send out a press release, tell everyone that she left me. I don't care.

The Executives all look at each with concerned expressions.

CORDOBA

I don't think that would help either. Admitting that she left you will only tarnish your image and reduce employee confidence.

**JARVIS** 

There is a nasty rumor going around that she ran off with your assistant, Lemy.

Santa laughs.

SANTA

Lemy? Oh, that's just hilarious.

**JARVIS** 

Nobody's seen him since Christmas, sir. He did disappear around the same time that your wife did.

SANTA

Why don't we just tell the truth? She got mad and decided to take a little vacation away from me. No big deal.

CORDOBA

I don't think that's such a good idea either--

SANTA

You have a better idea?

Jarvis hands Cordoba the pointer.

CORDOBA

We came up with this.

Cordoba clicks the pointer and the image screen changes into a image of a newspaper with the headline "LOST AT SEA!" A large photo of Mrs. Claus is situated underneath the headline.

CORDOBA (CONT'D)

We'll go out with a press release stating that her plane went down somewhere over the Atlantic Ocean.

**JARVIS** 

If she ever comes back--

If?

JARVIS

Sorry. When she comes back to you, we'll just make up some cover story about her stranded on a deserted island before the rescue team could find her.

Santa sneers and shakes his head.

SANTA

That won't work.

CORDOBA

Marketing tried this excuse with a small test group. Ninety-five percent bought it without any questions.

JARVIS

Our numbers show that we'll only need to convince about sixty percent of our work force in order to maintain minimum production efficiency.

SANTA

Couldn't we just say that she had a flu bug or something like that?

CORDOBA

What, and have all the Elves think that you've been exposing us to some human virus? No way.

Santa sighs and then slinks into his chair at the table.

SANTA

I really don't care what you guys say, just don't make me look like a dork. Okay?

CORDOBA

Don't worry, Santa. We'll put such a spin on it that you'll come out smelling like a rose.

SANTA

Whatever.

**JARVIS** 

P.R. thought it would be a good idea if you made a few extra public appearances in the next couple of days.

CORDOBA

Given all the rumors flying around, we think it's very important to show them that everything is okay and that you're able to work.

Jarvis hands Santa a copy of the schedule.

SANTA

What's this?

Santa quickly reads through it and then stops on the second page.

SANTA (CONT'D)

These are mostly bars!

CORDOBA

Employee confidence can be won back if you are being seen, how do you say...uh, mixing it up with the blue-collar work force.

SANTA

(to Cordoba)

Cute.

**JARVIS** 

We have selected watering holes near the more industrial neighborhoods.

SANTA

I guess I can live with that.

**JARVIS** 

We all have to make sacrifices, sir.

Cordoba clears his throat.

CORDOBA

We also think it would be a good idea if you lost a few pounds.

SANTA

Are you serious?

CORDOBA

Deadly serious. You're vastly overweight and that's sending a bad message out to the troops.

**JARVIS** 

You have breasts, Sir.

Santa stands up and points to his belly.

SANTA

What?! In case you've forgotten, I'm Santa Claus. People expect me to have a belly.

**JARVIS** 

It's a different age, sir. People are more health conscious now, even Elves have to worry about things like cholesterol and high blood pressure.

CORDOBA

A recent survey shows that eightyfive percent of us would like to see you drop a few pounds.

SANTA

What about the kids, huh? What will they say if they see a thin Santa?

CORDOBA

If they see you at all, then you're not doing your job properly. But we can have some extra padding put into your suit if you'd like.

SANTA

You want me to wear a fat suit?

INT. LIMO -- DAY

Santa is sitting in the back of his Limo with G as they are being driven through the streets of North Pole City. Santa looks angry as G plays with the stereo.

G

Now that your old lady is gone, you and I can do some serious partying.

G selects a radio station that is playing some TECHNO MUSIC and cranks up the volume. He starts to groove to the beat of the music.

G (CONT'D)

If this bar doesn't have a good selection of women, I know of this club over on Candy Cane Hill that's always packed with hotties.

SANTA

This is a business function, G. We're not going to hit on women.

G

Speak for yourself, tubby!

G puts a pair of dark sunglasses on and hangs out the window. He waves at a pair of young female Elves, BAMBI and RANDI, who are standing at a street corner waiting for the light to change.

G (CONT'D)

Hey there! What are you fine ladies doing tonight, eh?

The two girls turn and sneer at the penguin.

BAMBI

In your dreams, bird boy!

G

Aw don't be like that, girl! I'm just trying to hook you up with a ride, that's all.

RANDI

No thanks, we don't take rides from strangers.

Santa pokes G in the butt.

SANTA

Come on, G. Let's go.

G

It's all good, baby. Don't you want to ride in the Limo with me and my friend here?

G moves over and the two girls get a glimpse of Santa.

BAMBI

Is that--

RANDI

Santa?

The two girls move up to the Limo and peer their heads inside the window. They both smile at Santa and G.

 $\mathbf{C}$ 

I see that you recognize my little friend here.

BAMBI

Hi Santa!

RANDI

Oh my god, I can't believe it's him!

Santa smiles politely and waves back.

G

I'm G, and Santa and I need a couple of escorts to accompany us tonight. Are you gals free?

The two girls look at each other and smile. Santa sighs and looks the other direction as G grins.

INT. THE SAFE HOUSE -- NIGHT

The bar is full of grungy tattoo covered biker Elves. Written in neon lights against a wall is "THE SAFE HOUSE". It's dark, smoky, and packed with rough looking patrons. Elves are packed around pool tables and games of darts.

In the background, behind the chicken wire covered stage, a band rocks the house. On the dance floor by the stage, a large crowd of Elves are moshing to the music. The dance floor is sectioned off with ropes like a boxing ring.

Seated at the bar are Santa and Bambi. Santa looks very tense and uncomfortable. He has a large glass of ice-water sitting untouched next to him. Bambi is completely engrossed in telling a story to Santa, she looks unaware that he is not paying attention to her at all.

BAMBI

Then after high school, I enrolled into beauty school. At first it was really exciting, we learned all about doing highlights and perms.

Santa turns his head around towards the dance floor and sees G stage-dive into the crowd. The crowd catches G as he lays on his back, riding the wave of hands that are holding him up.

BAMBI (CONT'D)

But it got to be kind of a drag because classes would run as long as two or three hours. So I dropped out six weeks later and got into telemarketing--

A BARTENDER leans forward towards Santa and Bambi.

BARTENDER

You want a beer, Santa?

SANTA

No thanks, too fattening. I'm on a diet.

BAMBI

I'll have another Bohemian lemonade.

The Bartender smiles at Bambi as he fixes her drink.

(CONTINUED)

BAMBI (CONT'D)

Don't you just hate diets? On a good day, I'll weigh a hundred and ten.

The music dies down and the crowd cheers at the band.

BAMBI (CONT'D)

So, how are you holding up?

Santa seems to wake up by the question.

SANTA

Excuse me?

BAMBI

I was just wondering how are you holding up, you know? It was so sad to hear about your wife's plane going missing like that.

SANTA

Oh yeah, that.

BAMBI

What's it been like now, four weeks?

Santa takes sip from water and stares at his reflection in a large mirror behind the bar.

SANTA

I'm holding up okay.

INT. SANTA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The bedroom is dark, the only light is coming from a beam of moonlight shining through an open window. Santa is lying down, staring at the emptiness that now occupies Mrs. Claus's side of the bed. His eyes are wide open and he looks sad.

INT. SANTA'S BATHROOM -- MORNING

Santa is hunched over his bathroom sink as he digs through the medicine cabinet searching for something.

SANTA

Where does she keep the darn toe nail clippers?

Santa gives up and grabs a large pair scissors. He raises up his bare foot to the sink and attempts to cut nails with the scissors.

INT. MAIN KITCHEN -- AFTERNOON

Santa is rummaging through the pantry. He stops and pulls out a large can labeled "UNCLE PACO'S SUPER HOT CHILI".

(CONTINUED)

Santa plops the can down underneath an electric can opened. He unsuccessfully tries to get it to work but after a few long seconds he just shrugs and gives up.

Santa looks around the kitchen and finds a giant meat cleaver. Santa places the can of chili on a cutting board and with one mighty swing, cleaves the can in two. Chili splatters all over Santa and the kitchen.

INT. GAME ROOM -- EVENING

Santa is sitting on a large reclining chair with a humongous bowl of chili resting on his lap. On a small end table next to him is a couple of bottles of beer and a bottle of hot sauce. Santa grabs the hot sauce and generously pours it all over the chili.

He puts the hot sauce down and picks up a small Television remote control and pushes a button. A big screen TV lights up and displays the show "BAYWATCH". Santa grins as he eats big gulps of chili while watching the buxom lifeguards running in slow motion.

INT. SANTA'S BATHROOM -- EVENING

Santa bursts into the bathroom and flings open the medicine cabinet. He grabs a large bottle of "SUPER STRENGTH ANTACID".

INT. THE SAFE HOUSE -- EVENING (THE PRESENT TIME)

Santa is still at the bar, staring at his reflection in the mirror. Bambi looks concerned for him and pats him on the shoulder.

BAMBI

Are you okay, Santa?

Santa awakes from his trance by the question.

SANTA

Oh, yes of course. Why do you ask?

BAMBI

I'm sorry, you just seem really tense.

G and Randi come up to the Bar next to Santa and Bambi. Both of them are very sweaty and look tired.

SANTA

(to Bambi)

I've been working a lot of late hours.

G

Hey, can we get a few waters over here?

The Bartender hands Bambi her drink and then pours out a pair of glasses of water for G and Randi.

SANTA

(to G)

You about ready to go?

G gulps down his water. He wipes his brow and then grabs Santa's water and then finishes it too.

G

Yeah. Just give me a second to catch my breath.

SANTA

Good.

The crowd on the dance floor clears the boxing ring area as spotlights turn on and shine down on the ring. All the bar patrons begin to seat themselves around the ring.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Safe House proudly presents amateur boxing night!

The crowd cheers at this announcement, Elves being to bang bottles against the tables and chant. The scene is primal and Santa suddenly becomes interested.

SANTA

They do boxing here?

G

Oh yeah, a lot of the Elves get fed up with working like slaves all day. So they come here and release all of that pent up aggression on each other in the ring. They have them all over the city.

The ANNOUNCER, a crusty old Biker Elf, stands in the middle of the ring next to ROCCO. Rocco is a mass of sweaty muscles, wearing nothing but trunks, shoes, and boxing gloves.

ANNOUNCER

Who's got the stuff to last three rounds with our reigning champion? Who here wants to go head to head with our boy Rocco, eh?

The crowd roars at Rocco as he raises his arms up over his shoulders. The big palooka glares around the audience, looking for his next opponent.

SANTA

I'll take him on!

The crowd is silenced by the booming voice of Santa. A spotlight turns from the ring and shines directly on Santa as he stands unflinching by the bar. His eyes focused directly on Rocco.

Every Elf in the bar stares in awe as they realize just who accepted the challenge. G stares in disbelief at Santa as he slowly takes off his coat and sets it by the bar.

## ANNOUNCER

Surely this man needs no introduction. You know him! You love him! He is the one, the only...Santa Claus!

The crowd comes alive and cheers louder than ever as Santa makes his way through the crowd towards the ring.

INT. BOXING RING -- NIGHT

In the center of the boxing ring, the Announcer stands between the towering Rocco and Santa. Santa has stripped down to just his pants and a white tank-top.

Both Rocco and Santa stare at each other, oblivious to anything other than each other.

ANNOUNCER

Now I want a clean fight, Rocco. We don't you want you hurting Santa that much, okay?

Rocco grunts.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Okay boys, no hitting below the belts and you'd better stop when I tell you to stop. Let's get it on!

Santa and Rocco bang gloves together. The crowd cheers as they split apart from each other.

G is hanging by the pole in Santa's corner of the ring. He has a white towel around his neck.

G

Are you nuts? Do you realize how much trouble I'll be in if you get hurt?

Santa turns around, ignoring G, and continues to stare at Rocco while he puts on a mouth guard.

G (CONT'D)

Hey, fatty! I'm talking to you!

G waves his towel at Santa, who doesn't flinch. He sinks down from the ropes and grips the ring with his flippers.

(CONTINUED)

He looks worried as he lays his beak down against the floor.

G (CONT'D)

He's so gonna die.

DING! DING! The bell rings.

The two combatants come together as Rocco quickly unleashes a pair of light jabs towards Santa. Santa blocks the blows as he dances around Rocco, sizing him up.

Rocco swings with a powerful uppercut, but misses as Santa ducks his head out of the way. Santa sees an opening on Rocco and smiles.

INT. BOXING RING CROWD -- NIGHT

The crowd stops cheering. The faces of excited boxing fans change from expressions of amusement to those of horror.

Sounds of multiple PUNCHES and GROANS fill the air. The entire crowd GASPS at once as their eyes follow something fall down to the floor.

SMACK! The sound of a body hitting the mat.

INT. BOXING RING -- NIGHT

G has his eyes closed shut. The crowd is dead quiet. G opens one eye and then quickly opens them both as he stares in awe.

Santa stands untouched over the fallen Rocco. Santa raises a gloved hand up and smiles. His glove has a few of Rocco's teeth attached to it. He blows the teeth off from the glove and watches them bounce on to the floor.

G jumps up and stands up on the pole in Santa's corner clapping his flippers together.

G

That's my boy! You da man!

The crowd follows G and cheers for Santa, who turns and faces the them with his arms raised in the air. He basks in the glory of the moment as the Announcer comes up slowly behind him, looking down at Rocco in amazement.

The Announcer grabs Santa's wrist and raises it up.

ANNOUNCER

Our winnah! Savage St. Nick!

The crowd cheers louder.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Do you have anything to say?

(CONTINUED)

The Announcer holds the microphone up to Santa, who coldly scans the audience with his piercing eyes.

SANTA

Who's next?

INT. MAIN BALLROOM -- DAY

The main ballroom has been transformed into a fully equipped boxing gym. The once spacious room is now filled with Nautilus machines, punching bags, free weights, and a full sized boxing ring.

Santa is working out on one of the punching bags as G holds the bag from moving. G appears to be coaching Santa, as he is doing his best "Burgess Meredith" impersonation.

G

Come on, ya bum! When I get done with ya, you're going to eat lightning and crap out thunder.

Santa beats on the bag with more intensity.

G (CONT'D)

Is that all ya got? You gotta have speed if you want to beat the champ. You gotta move like greased lightning!

## MONTAGE OF SANTA WORKING OUT

- Santa jumping rope.
- Santa lifting weights.
- Santa jogging through the snow.

INT. MAIN BALLROOM -- DAY (SIX MONTHS LATER)

Santa is shadowboxing in the center of his boxing ring. Santa's belly is now gone, months of intense training has given Santa a new physique. His upper body is now muscular without a hint of body fat.

G stands behind him in one corner of the ring. A small bench and a large metal pail are situated next to G as he prepares a fresh towel for Santa.

Cordoba and Jarvis enter the gym, both seem taken aback by the surrounding equipment. G notices the two Elves and blows his whistle.

G

Take five. You got company, big Daddy.

Santa comes to a stop and turns around. His hair and beard are longer, making him look almost feral as he catches his breath.

CORDOBA

Santa.

**JARVIS** 

It's good to see you, sir.

Santa takes the towel from G and grabs a small water bottle. He takes a swig of water and then spits it out into the pail.

SANTA

What's up?

CORDOBA

You missed another meeting with your board of directors.

SANTA

(to G)

What day is it?

G looks confused by the question and just shrugs. Jarvis takes a good look at Santa's flat stomach.

**JARVIS** 

Wow! You've done really well on your diet, sir.

Santa smiles as he sits on the small bench, his arms gripping the ropes above him.

CORDOBA

I thought we asked you to lose just a few pounds?

SANTA

If you guys are here to ask me to pork up again, you can just kiss my butt.

**JARVIS** 

Oh no, sir. I think what Mr. Cordoba was trying to say was--

CORDOBA

We aren't here to talk about your health. We came to discuss your excessive absence from work.

SANTA

Is that right?

JARVIS

Lately, your presence hasn't been felt around the office. People have noticed you being gone, sir.

Santa shakes his head and smiles at G.

SANTA

(to Cordoba)

You. Take your shirt off.

Cordoba and Jarvis take a step back.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Relax, I just need a sparring partner.

Jarvis breathes a sigh of relief as Cordoba begins to take off his tie.

CORDOBA

What's with all this interest in boxing?

SANTA

It's your fault, really. You guys wanted me to do more with the blue collar workers.

**JARVIS** 

Excuse me?

SANTA

I've joined the North Pole Boxing circuit. So far I'm undefeated with eleven first round KO's.

Cordoba takes off his shirt and lets G fit him with a pair of boxing gloves.

CORDOBA

That's really nice, Santa. But I don't think you should be neglecting your other responsibilities.

SANTA

Don't be such a spoil sport, Francisco. Tell you what, I'll invite all of executive management to tonight's fight.

Santa gets up from his chair and begins to stretch.

**JARVIS** 

That's a great idea, sir. We can all meet afterwards and then bring you up to speed on what's been going on.

SANTA

Sounds fair to me.

CORDOBA

I can live with that. Uh, Santa?

SANTA

Yeah?

CORDOBA

Promise that you'll go easy on me, okay? I haven't done this sort of thing since college.

SANTA

Do you really think that I'd hurt you?

Santa smiles warmly as G snickers quietly behind him.

INT. EXHIBITION HALL -- NIGHT

The Exhibition Hall is jammed packed with thousands of boxing fans. Seated at ringside are Cordoba, Jarvis, Capt. O'Hara, and Angus. Both Cordoba and Jarvis have black eyes.

**ANGUS** 

I can't believe he actually hit you quys.

Jarvis smiles, he is missing one of his front teeth.

**JARVIS** 

I really don't think he intended to hurt us. He just doesn't know his own strength.

Cordoba sneers.

CAPT. O'HARA

I caught one of his fights at some dive on the east side. The guy's an animal. I certainly wouldn't want to go up against him in the ring.

The boxing ring is surrounded by dozens of sports photographers and television cameramen. In the center of the ring is the Snowman, he is the announcer for this event.

SNOWMAN

Our challenger needs no introduction, I give you...the one...the only...Santa!

The crowd cheers as Santa stands up and waves his gloved fist up high. G stands on the pole behind him, twirling his white towel over his head.

CORDOBA

Well, it looks like he's been able to make everyone forget about Mrs. Claus being missing.

The Snowman lowers his voice and turns up the drama.

SNOWMAN

It is now my pleasure to present the current heavyweight champion of North Pole City. The god of gods...Zeus!

The crowd comes alive as ZEUS, a blond and beautiful Elf with a flawless physique and a handsome face, climbs into the ring.

**ANGUS** 

Well, I think Santa's in for it now. Nobody's ever been able to go the distance with Zeus. I'll bet fifty that Santa goes down within the first three rounds.

CAPT. O'HARA

I'll take that bet.

**ANGUS** 

You're on.

Cordoba and Jarvis exchange worried glances.

INT. SANTA-CO EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM -- NIGHT

Angus, shocked, is seated at the table with a large glass of water next to him.

**ANGUS** 

I can't believe Santa didn't kill him after that last punch.

Jarvis plops two white tablets into Angus's water. Capt. O'Hara smiles as he counts his money in the background. The tablets begin to fizz.

CAPT. O'HARA

I warned you that he was an animal.

**JARVIS** 

It's a good thing those paramedics were able to get Zeus's heart started again.

Cordoba is standing by the window, he looks uneasy.

CORDOBA

Did you notice the way the crowd booed at Santa?

**JARVIS** 

They did seem pretty unhappy.

CAPT. O'HARA

Was that before or after they carried Zeus off on a stretcher?

ANGUS

I think both.

CORDOBA

Santa's given us a really big problem.

CAPT. O'HARA

What do you mean?

CORDOBA

Just think about it for a second. Santa nearly beat an Elf to death on live television.

**JARVIS** 

Highest rated event in the history of our network.

Angus sips from his drink.

CORDOBA

Workers don't like to see their boss pounding other employees to a pulp. They'll resent him now.

**ANGUS** 

What can we do? Force him to give up boxing?

CORDOBA

No, he needs to be humbled before the masses. The people need to see him beaten in the ring.

JARVIS

I agree. If he's defeated in a fair fight, people will feel sympathy towards him again.

**ANGUS** 

But who? He's already fought his way through the professional boxing circuit.

Cordoba turns from the window and faces Capt. O'Hara.

CORDOBA

Do you have anybody on the force who could handle him?

CAPT. O'HARA

No way, not in his current shape.

ANGUS

What about a polar bear?

**JARVIS** 

Who do you think his sparing partners are?

**ANGUS** 

Dang.

CORDOBA

Captain, what about the prison? Surely we must have some tough inmates who wouldn't mind taking a poke at the big guy.

INT. EXHIBITION HALL -- NIGHT

The Exhibition Hall is jammed packed with thousands of Elves holding various signs that read: "SANTA SUCKS!" , "DECK HIS HALLS!" , and "ELF POWER!"

Santa stands waiting in the center of the ring. The crowd boos and throws things at him. G yells back at the crowd, giving them the flipper.

The Snowman stands at the center of the ring holding his microphone as he keeps his distance from Santa.

SNOWMAN

A month ago, in one of the most controversial fights of all time, Savage Santa did the impossible and became the first human heavyweight champion of the North Pole.

Capt. O'Hara, Angus, Cordoba, and Jarvis are seated far away from ringside. The four Elves look nervous.

CAPT. O'HARA

I think this was a bad idea. This guy can be very difficult to control.

CORDOBA

How big is he?

CAPT. O'HARA

He's the biggest one I've ever seen. And it's a real mean one too.

**JARVIS** 

Wait a minute, we don't want to kill the guy. We just need Santa to take a few punches and fall down. **ANGUS** 

Santa would never take a fall on purpose. Guys, this is the only way.

CORDOBA

What are your boys planning to do if that thing goes wild and attacks the crowd?

CAPT. O'HARA

We've got snipers up in all the rafters. If things get ugly, they'll pump him with tranquilizer darts powerful enough to stop an entire herd of Elephants.

The lights all go off and the crowd grows quiet. A single light shines down on the Snowman.

SNOWMAN

Fresh from a five year stay at the Yukon Cornelius Center for the criminally insane, and making his professional boxing debut.

A large metal cage is lowered by a chain down onto the ring. Its contents are covered by a black curtain. A loud metallic CLINK is heard from beneath the curtain.

SNOWMAN (CONT'D)

Our challenger weighed in at nine hundred and fifty pounds. Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you--

The cage lifts up again and reveals the enormous ABOMINABLE SNOW BEAST chained to the detached cage base.

SNOWMAN (CONT'D)

The Abominable!

The Snow Beast is about ten feet tall and covered in shaggy white fur. Its mouth is covered by a restraining muzzle.

SNOWMAN (CONT'D)

This is the first time a Snow Beast has ever competed in the history of this sport.

Santa stares into the beast's eyes, he stands firm and begins to size his opponent up. G looks like he just urinated on himself.

G

You're gonna die! That's it, I'm throwing in the towel now.

G drops his white towel onto the floor but nobody notices. Everyone's eyes are fixed on the Snow Beast. Santa moves over to his corner and kicks the towel off the ring floor.

SNOWMAN

Okay boys, have a fair fight.

The Snowman quickly exits from the ring.

Jarvis, Angus, and Capt. O'Hara all exchange worried glances and then look to Cordoba.

CORDOBA

Here we go.

DING! DING! The bell sounds off.

The manacles holding the Snow Beast pop off at the sound of the bell. The Abominable charges at Santa with a pair of massive boxing gloves that cover its paws.

Santa dances around the Snow Beast, dodging each mighty swing. The Abominable lets out a deafening ROAR and then pounds on its chest in fury.

The crowd collectively GASPS as the creature goes into a bezerker rage. The Abominable raises up its covered paws to its face.

SNIKT! Sharp monstrous claws burst out from both gloves.

The monster charges at Santa again. The Snow Beast swings at Santa with one claw across his chest, cutting him.

SANTA

Argh!

Santa falls back, grasping his chest. The crowd cheers after seeing him fall.

Cordoba claps his hands and cheers for the Abominable with the rest of the crowd. Jarvis turns to Capt. O'Hara with a panicked look.

**JARVIS** 

We have to stop this now!

Capt. O'Hara pulls out a walkie-talkie.

CAPT. O'HARA

Sniper team?

SNIPER (O.S.)

Yes, sir.

CAPT. O'HARA

Do you have a clean shot?

CORDOBA

No!

Cordoba grabs the walking talkie from O'Hara's hand and then points to the ring.

CORDOBA (CONT'D)

Not yet! He's still up!

Santa rises up from the floor with three bloody claw marks across on his chest. Santa turns his head and glares directly into the Snow Beast's eyes. He then raises a gloved hand and motions at the Abominable to bring it on.

The Abominable tears off the muzzle from it's face and ROARS. The creature tosses the muzzle aside and reveals its razor sharp teeth!

The Snow beast hits Santa across the face. Santa takes the hit but does not fall, his mouth is now bleeding. The Abominable takes a step back, confused by Santa not falling down.

G

Save yourself! Run away!

Santa smiles wickedly, his teeth are now dripping red with blood.

SANTA

Let's go, cupcake.

Santa lets out his own ROAR and jumps up and hits the Abominable right in the face. The Snow Beast CRIES in pain and falls down.

Cordoba, shocked, stands up in disbelief at the sight. The crowd cheers for a brief second as Santa turns the tide in his favor.

Santa sits on the Abominable's chest and begins to beat the creature senseless.

Jarvis, Capt. O'Hara, and Angus all stand up and watch. The cheering ends and the crowd is now silent.

ELF IN CROWD

Stop it! You're hurting it!

The crowd begins to boo and hiss as Santa stands up from the fallen snow beast. The Abominable's teeth have been knocked out!

CORDOBA

Ugh. I can't believe that guy, he's just made things worse!

Cordoba hands Capt. O'Hara the walkie-talkie as Jarvis and Angus look away from the barbaric display.

CAPT. O'HARA

Drop him.

Three small red dots (Laser sights) appear on Santa's back. The muffled sounds of SILENCED GUN SHOTS are heard.

Santa looks confused for a second as his rage fades away. He falls, face first, down onto the mat. Three tranquilizer darts are sticking out from Santa's back.

INT. SANTA-CO EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM -- MORNING

Santa, with an innocent expression on his face, is seated at the end of the long conference room table. The Board of Directors are seated around the table, surrounding Santa, with sour expressions on their faces.

Cordoba is standing by the window, he is unshaven and his hair is tousled. Jarvis sits in a chair directly next to him, he looks like he hasn't slept in a week.

CORDOBA

I hope you're happy, Santa. I really do.

Santa folds his arms against his chest and sighs.

CORDOBA (CONT'D)

You are personally responsible for halting the productivity of this corporation.

**JARVIS** 

Sir, our latest figures suggest that we may not be able to make our Christmas deadline.

SANTA

Come on now, it can't be that bad.

Cordoba's nostrils flare up at the sound of Santa's voice.

CORDOBA

Oh you don't think so, huh? (to Jarvis)

Can somebody please sum up the past two weeks for our illustrious leader?

Jarvis stands up from his chair and clicks on a remote control device. The large screen behind the table turns on and displays a photo of a couple thousand Elves holding picket signs.

**JARVIS** 

Since your title bout, we've had over eighty percent of our work force go on strike.

Jarvis clicks his remote and the screen changes images. This one is of riot cops shooting tear gas canisters into a crowd of protesters. The city streets look like a war zone, as it is covered in fire, smoke, and over all chaos.

JARVIS (CONT'D)

Remember those riots last week?

Santa winces.

JARVIS (CONT'D)

Well, they ended up costing us over seven million dollars in property damage alone.

Jarvis clicks again, and the screen now shows the Snow Beast being pushed in a wheel chair. His teeth are missing and the rest of him in covered in bruises and bandages.

JARVIS (CONT'D)

Oh yeah, and the Abominable Snow Beast is now suing us for personal injury.

Santa appears uneasy as he shuffles in his seat.

CORDOBA

Don't forget to show him what's on the front page of tomorrow's paper.

Jarvis clicks and the screen displays the front page of the newspaper "The North Post". The headline reads: "DID SANTA MURDER HIS WIFE?" A large photo of Grace is under the headline.

Santa ignores the headline and focuses on the picture of Grace.

**JARVIS** 

This is not good, sir.

Santa slams the table with his fist. All the executives jerk back and stare at Santa with frightened eyes.

SANTA

Aw gee, I guess maybe we should have told the public the truth about my wife?

CORDOBA

I think it might be too late for that.

SANTA

You think?

CORDOBA

Your wife is the least of our problems now. Since you started beating on Elves, the people have begun to see you in a different light.

**JARVIS** 

They hate you, sir.

CORDOBA

Not only will they not work for you anymore, but I'm afraid that we might have a full on Elf rebellion coming our way.

SANTA

I guess I'll have to do something to--

CORDOBA

You have to leave. And you have to leave now.

Santa stands up and balls up his fists.

SANTA

I beg your pardon?

CORDOBA

You have to disappear for a while. I think if you're gone, this whole thing will just blow over in a couple of weeks.

JARVIS

P.R. is working on a new advertising campaign to restore your public image and win back the people's confidence.

CORDOBA

Go on a cruise or something. Take a break and clear your head. We should have everything up and running by Christmas Eve.

SANTA

I'm not going anywhere, I founded this empire. It's mine!

CORDOBA

Santa, if you stay, I can guarantee that in a ten days time you'll have an army of angry Elves ransack your castle.

**JARVIS** 

They'll put you in the dungeon, sir.

SANTA

I'd like to see them try.

CORDOBA

That's not all, sir.

**JARVIS** 

The citizens of North Pole City will be thrown into a brutal civil war.

CORDOBA

The city will be destroyed, and the Elves will no longer have a home.

**JARVIS** 

Without a home, the surviving Elf population will have to venture out into the Human world. And we all know how human beings treat us Elves.

CORDOBA

Santa-Co will fall, and all of those human toy companies that we supply will no longer have any merchandise to sell.

**JARVIS** 

Parents won't be able to buy their children presents for Christmas.

CORDOBA

And Santa Claus won't be there to bring his presents either. He'll be chained to a wall in an ice cold dungeon deep within the frozen depths of the North Pole.

**JARVIS** 

All alone, for the rest of eternity.

Santa slowly sits back down into his chair.

CORDOBA

And all because you were too much of jerk to step out for a vacation and let us do our jobs.

Santa looks out the window at the city skyline. The statue of Santa is missing its head. Elf vandals have blown it off with explosives.

CORDOBA (CONT'D)

What's it going to be, sir?

EXT. ICE LAKE -- DAY

G is relaxing on a large floating inner tube in the middle of the lake near Santa's castle. He is wearing a pair of sunglasses and holding a glass of lemonade in one flipper.

G reaches down with his free flipper and pulls out a fish from underneath the water. He tosses the fish up in the air and swallows it in one mighty gulp. G chews the fish and then takes a sip from his lemonade.

G repeats this process and pulls another fish from the water. He catches it in his mouth and begins to chew.

CRUNCH! G stops chewing when he hears the metallic crunching sound. He sits up and pulls something out from inside of his mouth.

G's stares at Mrs. Claus's wedding ring as sparkles reflect from the embedded diamonds.

INT. SANTA'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Santa is in his bedroom pulling clothes out from his closet. G quietly enters the room and sits on the bed next to a large travel bag.

SANTA

Ah, there you are.

Santa stuffs the bag with some clothes and then begins to zip it up.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Pack your bags, we are going to Bermuda.

G looks up at Santa with watery eyes.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Don't be sad, little buddy. It's only for a little while.

G sniffs and looks down at his flippers. Santa pulls the bag off the bed and sits next to him.

SANTA (CONT'D)

What's wrong, G?

G places something into Santa's hand and then looks away.

SANTA (CONT'D)

What's this?

Santa opens his hand and sees his wife's wedding ring. His eyes begin to water up and he looks like somebody died. G snorts up his tears and begins to pat Santa on the back.

G

I found it in the lake. She must have tossed it in there before she left.

Santa, mesmerized, stares at the ring.

SANTA

She left me?

A single tear runs down Santa's cheek.

SANTA (CONT'D)

She really left me?

G stands up on the bed and looks angry.

G

Duh! You big dummy!

G slaps Santa in the face, he drops the ring.

G (CONT'D)

You treated her like a member of your staff. Of course she left you!

Santa shakes his head and looks back at G.

SANTA

Why didn't you say something?

G

It's not my place to tell you that you're being an ass!

G slaps Santa in the face again.

G (CONT'D)

Besides, you wouldn't have listened to me even if I had tried.

SANTA

I have got to find Lemy.

G

Where is he?

SANTA

I sent him to look after her.

G

That was months ago! You never checked in with him?

SANTA

I've been busy.

G slaps Santa in the face, knocking him off the bed. G stands on the edge of the bed looking over Santa, ready to hit him again.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Knock that off!

Santa rubs his chin with one hand and picks up the ring with the other.

SANTA (CONT'D)

I have to find Grace.

Santa gets up and exits the room. G stands alone on the bed calling out after him.

G

Just in the nick of time, eh fatty?

EXT. SEATTLE -- DAY

The city of Seattle. The emerald city stands majestically against a cloudy backdrop. The Space Needle is decorated with Christmas lights.

EXT. SEA-TAC AIRPORT -- DAY

A jet lands on a runway of the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL -- DAY

Santa, dressed in a red velvet suit, exits the baggage claim area followed by G. G, wearing a matching brown trench coat and fedora, is carrying two large suitcases.

A group of Limo drivers and cabbies form a crowd by an exit. From behind this crowd, a bearded man with long hair shouts towards Santa.

LEMY

Santa, over here!

Lemy, wearing a flannel shirt and ripped up jeans, steps out with his arms outstretched and a smile on his face.

LEMY (CONT'D)

Guys, it's me!

Santa and G stare at him with looks of confusion. Lemy walks up and embraces Santa. Santa seems uncomfortable with Lemy's new look.

LEMY (CONT'D)

I almost didn't recognize you guys. Santa, you look great!

Lemy pats him on the stomach.

LEMY (CONT'D)

Been on a diet, eh?

Lemy bends down and attempts to hug G, but is stopped as G shoves the two suitcases into his arms.

EXT. AIRPORT PARKING LOT -- DAY

Lemy, carrying the two suitcases, leads Santa and G out to his car. Santa and G look at the car with contempt.

SANTA

Is this your car?

Lemy smiles as he shoves the suitcases into the back of a classic 1960's VW Beetle. The automobile looks worn out and has skeletons painted all over its black body.

Written in blood red across the side of car are the words: "SANTA'S LITTLE HELPER"

LEMY

It's partially mine, I co-own it with my two roommates. The three of us formed a band.

Lemy points to the words on the doors.

LEMY (CONT'D)

That's our band name. Guess who came up with it?

Santa sneers as Lemy opens the car door. G slaps Santa on the butt and chuckles.

G

Shotqun!

INT. LEMY'S CAR -- DAY

Santa is in the back seat as G sits up front with Lemy as he drives.

SANTA

Lemy, what the heck happened to you?

G takes off his fedora and holds out a cigar. Lemy smiles and pushes in the cigarette lighter.

LEMY

You told me to keep an eye on her, so I did my best to blend in with the locals.

(MORE)

LEMY (CONT'D)

When she enrolled at her school, I went ahead and did the same. I figured that I could keep better tabs on her if we went to the same school.

SANTA

She's in school?

LEMY

Yeah, she's been at the Seattle Art College for the past six months.

The cigarette lighter pops out. G pulls it out and lights up his cigar.

LEMY (CONT'D)

(to G)

Better do that now, because you won't be able to smoke at my place. Both my roommates have gone straight edge.

G

Straight edge?

LEMY

No smokes or booze.

G seems offended by the concept.

SANTA

What's her major?

LEMY

What, my roommate's?

SANTA

No, my wife's!

LEMY

Oh, she's in the computer animation program.

G

What did you choose?

LEMY

I picked the music business program. That's how I met my roommates. We started the band shortly after that.

G

Cool! Have you had many gigs?

LEMY

Just a couple. Like I said, we've only been together for six months.

SANTA

How is she?

LEMY

Who?

SANTA

Grace!

LEMY

Sorry, dude, I must be spacing out or something. She seems fine, great even. I don't think I've ever seen her happier.

G flicks his cigar butt out the window.

LEMY (CONT'D)

(to G)

Dude! Don't do that, you'll get me a ticket.

SANTA

How has she been supporting herself?

LEMY

She got an art scholarship. Full room and board, plus supplies. Your wife has a lot of talent, I've seen some of her work.

Santa looks stunned.

LEMY (CONT'D)

She also works part-time at this coffee shop near campus. But I think she just does that for extra spending money.

INT. LEMY'S APARTMENT -- DAY

The apartment is spacious and cluttered with human skulls and little stone gargoyles. There is a Christmas tree, in the back corner next to a set of drums. The tree has been spray painted black and has barbed wire around it instead of tinsel.

Three black stockings hang off the mantle of the bricked over fireplace. Embroidered in red yarn on the stockings are the names: "LEMY", "ZAC", and "SAM". Hundreds of unlit candles surround the main living room of the apartment.

The front door swings open and Lemy looks proud as he ushers Santa and G into his domicile.

LEMY

Here it is, my own little Shangri-La.

G takes off his hat and coat and places them on top of his suitcase. He turns around and comes face to face with a small casket, exactly the same height of G, leaning against the wall.

SANTA

Nice tree.

Santa grimaces as he stares at the Christmas tree, Lemy smiles and flicks a light switch on the wall next to him. Red lights turn on inside the black Christmas tree. Santa just nods his head and continues to look about the room.

G

What the hell is this?

G carefully opens the door to the mini-casket, its hinges CREAK and reveals a plush red velvet interior.

LEMY

Oh, I made that for you.

G eyes shoot wide open as he quickly SLAMS the casket shut.

LEMY (CONT'D)

Chill dude, it's for you to sleep in.

G looks up at Santa with a lost expression.

SANTA

Where am I going to sleep?

INT. LEMY'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Lemy stands proudly in the center of his bedroom as Santa and G peer inside. Lemy's room is cluttered from floor to ceiling with junk. Various electric guitars and amplifiers are mixed in with tools and other electrical equipment.

LEMY

You can have the bigger one in my room, I'll just sleep on the couch next to the penguin.

G hops inside and stares at a couple of teddy bears lying on top of Lemy's worktable. Next to the bears is a soldering gun and a candy dish full of tiny colored beads. G peers inside the dish and takes one bead and sniffs it. Santa scans the room and focuses on a large sized casket lying in the center of the floor. The casket door is open, revealing a plush velvet interior.

SANTA

Lemy, what's the deal with all the caskets?

LEMY

One of my roommate's father works at a funeral parlor, he let us have these so we wouldn't have to waste money on beds.

Lemy plops into the casket and lays flat.

LEMY (CONT'D)

They're quite comfortable once you get used to them. We used to have four of them, but we sold one to this guy we know. He thinks he's a vampire.

SANTA

Maybe we'll just check into a hotel.

LEMY

It's already cool with my roommates if you guys want to stay. Save your money.

SANTA

We'll see, I don't know if that thing will be good for my back.

G takes the golden bead into his mouth and swallows it. He makes a sour face and gags.

G

Yuck! That tastes like BLEEP!

G's eyes go wide as he stands sill for a second. Santa and Lemy turn and stare at him.

G (CONT'D)

What the BLEEP happened to my voice?

Lemy climbs out from the casket and runs up to his worktable. Lemy yanks the candy dish from G's flipper and holds it out.

LEMY

Did you swallow one of these chips?

G

Chips? I thought they were BLEEP-ing candies!

Santa stands next to Lemy and picks up one of the Teddy Bears off from the worktable and examines it.

SANTA

What are these?

LEMY

I was just tinkering with some new toy ideas. These are designed to help prevent kids from swearing.

SANTA

What?

LEMY

I placed anti-cursing computer chips into the toys. Every time the child says a bad word, it gets bleeped out.

G

BLEEP! BLEEP!

SANTA

Kids don't swear that much.

LEMY

Are you kidding? I got the idea after I baby-sat for my neighbor's kid. That little brat curses like a sailor.

SANTA

I don't buy that, not for a second.

Santa tosses the bear at Lemy, who catches it.

LEMY

Santa, when was the last time you hung out with any kids?

SANTA

I visit every child once a year, you know that.

LEMY

Oh please, they're asleep! You can't count that.

G jumps up and down, trying to get Lemy's attention.

G

How do you turn the BLEEP-ing thing off?

LEMY

You can't. It's got a lithium battery inside it, so it'll last you about five years.

G

What?

LEMY

Maybe you'll pass it through your system in a couple of days.

G

BLEEP that!

INT. LEMY'S APARTMENT -- DAY

G is pouting on Lemy's sofa with his flippers folded across his chest. Santa and Lemy are seated at a table in the kitchen.

SANTA

So she goes to the same place for lunch every day?

LEMY

More or less, her classes are early in the morning and she works at the coffee shop in the afternoons. The mall food court is near the shop, so she usually just eats there.

SANTA

Sounds good to me.

Santa looks at his watch.

SANTA (CONT'D)

I guess we have a couple of hours to kill before she'll be there.

LEMY

What do you plan to do?

SANTA

I'm not a hundred percent sure. I have to play this whole thing very carefully. Let's face it, she's not going to be very happy to see me.

LEMY

That's a safe bet.

SANTA

For starters, I just want to see her with my own eyes. It's almost been a whole year now.

Lemy looks uneasy.

LEMY

Santa, before we go, I think I should warn--

The front door swings open. ZAC, early 20s, large black pompadour, arms covered in tattoos, enters the apartment holding a grocery bag.

Behind him, enters SAM, female, early 20s, ears and lip pierced, arms covered in tattoos, and wearing large combat boots. Zac and Sam both smile as Santa and Lemy both stand up to greet them.

ZAC

Hey Lemy.

LEMY

Guys! I want you to my guests.

SAM

You must be Lemy's uncle.

Santa grunts as he shakes both of their hands.

ZAC

I'm Zac.

SAM

Sam.

SANTA

You guys can call me Santa--

Lemy jabs Santa in the ribs.

LEMY

Santana, his name is Fernando Santana.

ZAC

How cool, kind of like the musician.

SANTA

Uh yeah, that's right.

Sam looks over Santa's red velvet suit and suppresses a laugh.

SAM

That's a fearsome outfit you got there, Santana.

SANTA

Really? I was a little worried that it might be a tad out of style.

SAM

Oh no, on you it works.

Zac quietly snickers and stops as he notices the penguin sitting on his couch.

ZAC

Dude! We're not supposed to have any pets inside the building.

G

BLEEP you!

Sam and Zac jump back as G gives them both the flipper.

SANTA

Don't worry, he's house broken.

INT. PACIFIC PLACE MALL -- AFTERNOON

The Pacific Place Mall in Seattle is a large shopping center situated in the center of downtown. The mall is crowded with holiday shoppers.

Santa is now wearing a tight black T-shirt with a large white skull printed on the chest. Between the shirt, his long white hair, and untrimmed beard, he looks like the leader of biker gang.

Lemy and G, incognito in his coat and fedora, stand next to Santa on a balcony over looking the entire mall. Lemy is holding a small radar dish and wearing a pair headphones.

SANTA

I don't know about these clothes. If she sees me in these, she's really going to think that I've lost it.

LEMY

Relax okay? You would have stuck out like sore thumb had you came in here wearing your velvet Elvis number.

SANTA

Remind me to buy a new suit later.

G scans the food court below them with a pair of binoculars. He chuckles and points downward, handing the binoculars to Santa.

G

Check it out, fake Santa.

Santa takes the glasses and takes a look at the FAKE SANTA, dressed in the classic Santa Claus garb ordering something at a cafe.

SANTA

How pathetic is that? That's not even a real leather belt.

Santa scans the food court and locates Grace seated alone a at table.

SANTA (CONT'D)

There she is!

Grace now looks like she is in her mid-thirties. Her hair has been cut shorter and she's lost some weight since we saw her last.

She no longer has the aura of unhappiness that she had back at the North Pole.

She appears content as she skims through a book. Santa looks away from the binoculars and stares at his wife with his own eyes. A tiny smile cracks from his mouth.

Smitten, he cannot take his eyes off of her. Behind Santa, Lemy looks worried and begins to pace back and forth.

G

Holy BLEEP! That fake Santa is walking up to her!

Santa snaps out of his haze and looks through the binoculars.

The man in the Santa suit hugs Grace from behind and then kisses her on the cheek. He places a pair of paper coffee cups on the table and hands Grace a sandwich wrapped in plastic.

SANTA

Who is that?

LEMY

I'm sorry, I meant to warn you about him before.

SANTA

Warn me?

LEMY

He's her boyfriend.

SANTA

Her what?

G

Whoa.

Santa's face turns red. He starts to leave but is stopped by Lemy and G.

SANTA

Let go of me, I mean it!

LEMY

No, Santa! If you go over there and make a scene, Grace will never forgive you. Think it through, man! You can't waste your only shot like this.

G

He's right!

Santa struggles with them for a few seconds and then stops. He takes a deep breath and sighs.

SANTA

You're right.

Lemy and G slowly let go of Santa and the three of them resume their positions on the balcony. G grabs the binoculars and stares at Grace and her new friend.

G

He's pretty cute.

Lemy kicks G.

G (CONT'D)

BLEEP!

SANTA

I want to hear what they're saying. Do you have that thing working yet?

Lemy adjusts his listening device and hands Santa an extra pair of headphones. Lemy bends over and shares his headphones with G.

GRACE (O.S.)

And then he said that it was going to be in the student art show! I was so excited.

FAKE SANTA (O.S.)

That's great! I told you that he liked your work, I'm so proud of you.

Santa gives Lemy the thumbs-up gesture as they continue to listen in.

INT. MALL CAFE -- DAY

Grace sits at a small table at a cafe in the center of the Mall food court. CECIL DEVAY, the man in the Santa suit, is seated next to her.

I just can't believe that my work is going to be in the show.

CECIL

What's so hard to believe? You have a lot of talent.

GRACE

Well thank you, but I can't help but feel a little uncomfortable. After all, I'm only in my second semester.

CECIL

Just think how good your work will be come this time next year.

Cecil smiles at Grace, who blushes. A LITTLE GIRL, about six, tugs on his coat. Cecil turns and smiles warmly at the young girl.

LITTLE GIRL

Santa? You dropped your napkin.

The little girl holds up a paper napkin and Cecil gently takes it back. Grace looks touched as she smiles at the girl.

SANTA

Why, thank you! What a nice young lady you are.

The little GIRL'S MOTHER stands up from her chair and smiles at Cecil and Grace.

GIRL'S MOTHER

Come on, sweetie. Santa's on his coffee break now, don't bother the poor man.

LITTLE GIRL

(to Grace)

Are you Mrs. Claus?

Grace's smile quickly fades away. Cecil notices this and tries to change the subject.

CECIL

No, she's just one of Santa's helpers. Here you go, honey.

Cecil produces a small candy cane from inside his pocket and hands it to the little girl.

LITTLE GIRL

Thank you.

The little girl smiles and waves good-bye as her mother scoops her up and exits.

CECTL

Bye, bye!

Cecil waves to the little girl and then turns back to Grace.

CECIL (CONT'D)

You okay, Grace?

Grace's sad expression says it all.

**GRACE** 

Yeah, I'll be okay. I was just thinking, that's all.

CECIL

Ah, him again.

Grace frowns.

GRACE

Can't help it. He was really into Christmas, so I can't escape it.

CECIL

I'm sorry that I came dressed in costume, but my shift starts in fifteen minutes. I had to come dressed so I could have coffee with you.

GRACE

It's okay, Cecil. Really.

CECIL

I take it that he still hasn't tried to contact you.

**GRACE** 

Nope. But that's okay, I'm not sure that I ever want to see him again.

CECIL

Oh hey, he can't be all that bad. I don't believe that you would have married someone who didn't have at least one redeeming quality.

**GRACE** 

He used to be great, but then he just became this--

CECIL

Unbearable pig?

Hey, that's not nice.

CECTL

I was just quoting you, that's all.

INT. BALCONY -- DAY

Santa looks mortified as he continues to listen in.

INT. MALL CAFE -- DAY

CECIL

Tell you what, why don't you tell me something good about him for a change?

Grace takes a sip from her coffee and then smiles.

**GRACE** 

Something good?

CECIL

Yeah, something pleasant. How did you guys meet?

**GRACE** 

Whoa. That was a long time ago, it was a different age then.

CECIL

I'm sure it seems like it now.

GRACE

Well, I was much younger then. I had this job at a bar. I guess you could say that I was like a cocktail waitress.

INT. THE BOAR'S HEAD TAVERN -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

The Boar's Head Tavern is set in medieval times. The tavern is full of barbarians, pirates, and other rogues. Grace, many years younger, is busy serving a large group of scoundrels seated by the bar.

GRACE (V.O.)

It was kind the kind of place where all the dredges of society would get together and relax. It was a real dive and the customers were rude and never tipped.

SLAR, a large stinky Barbarian, CLANKS his empty metal tankard against a wooden table.

SLAR

Serving wench! More ale!

Grace rushes over to Slar holding a small pitcher. Slar sets his tankard down and leers at Grace as she refills his drink. The goblet now full, Grace turns around, only to be slapped on the butt by Slar.

She twirls around and glares at Slar, who just laughs and returns to his drink.

GRACE (V.O.)

The men treated all the waitresses like pieces of meat. It was horrible.

Grace returns to the bar, collects some empty glasses and places them on a tray. A pair of rogues HOWL at her as she continues to do her job.

She takes the tray full of glasses behind the bar and sets them down below the bar. She bends over to pick up her cleaning rag and finds a clean cut peasant seated directly by her at the bar.

The peasant is Santa, young, cheerful, and thin.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Then one day, I met a nice young man.

SANTA

Hello.

GRACE

Greetings, sire.

Grace's eyes lock with Santa's as the two gaze at each for the first time.

GRACE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I guess you could say that it was love at first sight.

Santa, now seated in his own booth, is laughing and chatting with Grace. The two seem very interested in each other.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Whenever he showed up, it was like nobody else existed. He focused his complete attention on me and he made me feel great.

STAR

Wench! I want some stew!

Slar grunts towards Grace. She smiles at Santa and then quickly rushes off to the kitchen. Santa locks eyes with Slar and gives him a stern look.

Grace returns with a small pot of stew and serves a couple of spoonfuls into Slar's bowl. She puts the pot down by the fireplace and returns to Santa's booth.

GRACE (V.O.)

Not only was he polite, but he would always leave a present behind as a tip.

The booth is empty. There are a few gold coins on the table and a small box with a golden ribbon tied around it.

Grace smiles as she picks up the box and opens it. Inside she finds a beautiful gold necklace.

GRACE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Every night he would come, and ever night he would leave a present. Never once did he ask for anything more than my company.

Grace, now wearing the necklace, is sitting at a table with Santa. They are both laughing and holding hands.

SLAR

Wench! Ale!

Grace whispers something in Santa's ear before she walks over to Slar with the pitcher of ale. Slar glares at her necklace and smiles.

SLAR (CONT'D)

Nice bauble you have there, lassie.

Grace looks uncomfortable as Slar fingers her necklace. He gives it a hard yank and tears it off. Grace looks mortified as Slar stands up from his chair, laughing at her.

Slar laughs until he realizes that Santa is standing behind him. Santa pinches Slar by the neck, which seems to cause him great pain. Paralyzed, Slar holds out the necklace.

SANTA

There's a good boy, Slar.

Grace notices this and takes her necklace back.

GRACE (V.O.)

He was also the first person to treat me like an equal and not talk down to me because I was a woman.

Santa releases Slar, who drops to his knees. He then walks over to the fireplace and points at a boiling pot of stew.

SANTA

He looks hungry.

Grace smiles, wraps her cleaning rags around her hands and grabs the steaming pot. She holds the pot up high and then pours the piping hot stew all over Slar's head.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF TAVERN -- NIGHT

It has been snowing outside of the Boar's Head Tavern.

Slar's SCREAMS are followed by the large barbarian bursting out from the tavern. His stew covered face is scalding hot as it steams up the cold night air.

Slar dives into a bank of snow, head first, in an attempt to squelch the heat.

INT. THE BOAR'S HEAD TAVERN -- EVENING

Santa and Grace hold hands and look deep into each other eyes as the rest of the tavern bursts into laughter at Slar's misfortune.

INT. BALCONY -- AFTERNOON (THE PRESENT TIME)

Santa, with a slight smile on his face, nods his head and he continues to listen.

INT. MALL CAFE -- AFTERNOON

Grace looks glum as Cecil hangs on her every word.

**GRACE** 

It wasn't too much later that I realized that this was the man I wanted to spend the rest of my life with.

CECIL

So what happened?

**GRACE** 

His work consumed him and I became just another thing in the background. It didn't happen overnight, it took many years to change him completely. As his work grew, it demanded more energy from him. Pretty soon, he had no energy left for anything else.

CECIL

What about kids?

**GRACE** 

We both wanted them, but we just kept putting it off. After a while, we just stopped talking about it. CECIL

Ouch.

**GRACE** 

He's not a bad man, really. I don't think he realizes exactly what he's become.

CECIL

He sounds like a busy man.

**GRACE** 

You don't know the half of it. He's the CEO of one of the biggest companies in the world. And boy, if things don't go the way he wants, he sure gets upset.

CECIL

So he's got a temper.

GRACE

It's more of an impulse problem, really. He hates to waste time and expects everyone to move at the snap of his fingers.

CECIL

Wow, was he like that with all of his employees?

**GRACE** 

Oh yeah, work was his private little kingdom.

CECIL

Are his majesty's royal subjects were happy with all of this?

GRACE

They all love him like a father. Sometimes I get the impression that they don't like it, but they've never done anything to show otherwise.

CECIL

Did you ever try talking to him about it?

GRACE

Yeah, a couple of times. But he didn't like to talk about work related issues with me.

CECIL

I guess that made things even more difficult.

You bet it did. Our entire life revolved around his work.

Cecil looks at his watch and winces.

CECIL

Uh oh, I've got to run. Dinner later?

GRACE

Sure, come pick me up when your shift is over.

CECIL

Sounds like a plan.

He stands up from the table.

**GRACE** 

Hold on, I'll walk you back. My break is almost over too.

The two pick up their drinks and exit the cafe.

EXT. MALL ROOF -- SUNSET

As the sun disappears, the city of Seattle begins to light up. Santa stands on the roof of Pacific Place Mall, coldly staring off into the distance.

Lemy and G are behind him, giving him room to sulk.

LEMY

I'm sorry, Santa. I should of warned you, but I still wasn't a hundred percent sure that they were an item.

G

Who is he?

LEMY

I'm not sure yet. I think he might be another student, because I've seen him around campus.

SANTA

His name is Cecil DeVay and he teaches creative writing at your school. When he's not teaching, he's usually on the road with a Broadway show. He's a good man. Every Christmas he donates his time and plays Santa for various charities.

Lemy and G look astounded.

LEMY

You know him?

SANTA

Of course I do, I'm Santa Claus. It's my job to know everybody.

G

Just say the word and I'll break his kneecaps.

Santa and Lemy both stare at G.

G (CONT'D)

What?

Lemy turns to Santa and pats him on the shoulder.

LEMY

So what's our next move?

SANTA

We go home and try to fix things over there.

LEMY

What about your wife?

SANTA

It's over. She's happy here. I'm not about to come in and take that away from her.

LEMY

You've been in town less that twelve hours and now you want to run back home?

SANTA

I had my chance, and I failed her. End of story. She's better off without me.

G

Martyr.

SANTA

Guys, I'm serious. She deserves a good man like Devay, he'll be able to give her all the things that I couldn't.

Santa turns his back to them and lowers his head.

LEMY

What a bunch of crap.

Excuse me?

LEMY

I'm sorry, but I'm not going to sit here and watch you play "woe is me" all night.

Santa turns around, upset.

SANTA

I'm sorry if I seem a little depressed, I did just lose the love of my life.

LEMY

There you go again. I just spent the better part of this past year on assignment here because you wanted to make sure she'd be okay. I'm not going to let you waste all my time and effort just because you want to give up.

SANTA

I'm sorry, Lemy. But I think it may finally be over between us.

LEMY

Keep talking like that and I'm going to quit and leave you myself.

SANTA

Well, what do you suggest I do?

LEMY

For starters, how about taking some responsibility for your hand in all of this?

SANTA

I thought I was! I'm stepping aside so she can begin a new life. It's my fault that things didn't work out between us. I can accept that.

LEMY

Okay then, what about closure? She'll never be truly happy until you resolve this with her.

SANTA

How?

LEMY

You can apologize for being such a lousy husband. Let her know that you're sorry for your end of it.

G

Personally, I think that's the least you could do before you wuss out on her.

LEMY

I agree with G. Knowing her, she probably feels guilty for leaving you. She should know that you do not blame her for taking off.

Santa begins to speak, but stops. He considers this for a minute and then nods in agreement.

SANTA

Yeah, I guess I do owe her that much.

INT. LEMY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Santa, unable to sleep, lays flat inside Lemy's casket. He stares at the ceiling above him, deep in thought.

INT. LEMY'S BATHROOM -- MORNING

Santa glares at his reflection in the bathroom mirror as he ties back his long hair. He then tugs at his unkempt beard and frowns.

SANTA

I can't face her looking like this.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SEATTLE -- MORNING

Santa, still wearing the skull t-shirt, makes his way through crowded Seattle sidewalks. He stops in front of a swanky beauty salon and looks up at the window display.

The Salon is littered with various Hairstyle ads. Santa focuses on one displaying a male model with white hair just like his. The model's hair is short and professionally styled.

INT. MEN'S CLOTHING STORE -- MORNING

Santa, his hair now cut short and his beard trimmed neatly, is browsing through a men's clothing store. He sees an outfit he likes and pulls it off the rack.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SEATTLE -- DAY

Santa is a new man. His excellent physique complements his new stylish black clothes and leather coat.

He pulls out a pair of black sunglasses and slowly puts them on. His new look is now complete.

Santa strides down the crowded city sidewalks, turning the heads of many ladies as he passes them by.

INT. SHAKES COFFEE HOUSE -- DAY

Shakes Coffee House is your typical trendy Seattle coffee shop. It is bustling with young working professionals standing in line, waiting for their double mochas.

Poster ads hung all over the shop walls display the slogan: "GOT THE SHAKES?" A large sign in behind the counter reads: "SHAKES COFFEE: SUPPLYING YOUR NEED FOR A HIT."

A team of coffee shop employees, hover behind the counters as they try to fill orders as fast as they can. Working behind an industrial sized cappuccino machine is Grace. She is busy preparing drinks as the impatient customers stand watching her work.

SLARTON, a modern day descendant of Slar the Barbarian, taps his expensive watch and sighs.

STARTON

Miss? How about that latte?

Grace pours steaming hot liquid into a paper cup and then covers it with a plastic lid. She places the drink on the counter by Slarton.

GRACE

Double Mocha!

A woman forces her way past Slarton and grabs the drink.

GRACE (CONT'D)

(to Slarton)

Its coming, sir.

SLARTON

Hopefully today, right?

Grace quickly turns a few switches and places a small metal pot under a steaming coffee nozzle. She bends down behind the counter and pulls out a small carton of milk.

She rises back up and finds Santa, standing at the counter, waiting for her.

SANTA

Hi.

It takes Grace a few seconds, but she quickly recognizes Santa and freezes. Her eyes go wide as she marvels at her husband's new look.

Santa smiles warmly, just happy to be this close to her.

SANTA (CONT'D)

You look good, Grace.

Slarton sneers at this display. He SIGHS loudly, trying to get Grace's attention.

GRACE

What happened to you?

SANTA

Just plenty of exercise and eating right. That's all.

Grace eyes slowly roll over Santa's new physique.

SLARTON

Oh, Miss?

Grace focuses on Santa's massive upper-body, her jaw remains wide open as the coffee machine behind her BEEPS.

SLARTON (CONT'D)

Miss!

Startled, Grace quickly regains control of herself.

GRACE

(to Slarton)

I'm very sorry, sir.

Grace turns towards the coffee machine and prepares Slarton's drink. Slarton snarls at Santa, who towers over him. Santa leans down to Slarton's face and gives him a cold stare.

SANTA

A little patience would do you well, Slarton.

Slarton inches away from Santa and quietly waits. Grace finishes his drink and hands it to Slarton.

**GRACE** 

I'm sorry for the delay, sir.

SLARTON

Oh, it's no problem. Thank you very much.

Slarton smiles like an idiot and then runs away. Santa chuckles as he watches him exit.

SANTA

He's so getting a lump of coal in his stocking.

Never thought I'd ever see you here.

SANTA

I can imagine.

GRACE

So what brings you by? Was it a work related emergency?

SANTA

I'm fine, Grace. How are you?

**GRACE** 

Cute.

SANTA

I came to see you, actually. And If you'll permit me, I would like to talk with you in private.

GRACE

Sure, why not? Better late than never.

Grace looks over her shoulder at the crowd of people waiting for drinks.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I can't leave just yet, but I can take a break in few minutes.

SANTA

No problem, I totally understand about having to work. Don't worry, I'm not going anywhere.

Grace gives Santa a slight frown.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Tell you what, I'll just sit over there and wait for you.

Santa smiles, turns around and walks over to an unoccupied table and sits. Grace, unable to take her eyes off her husband, tries her best to ignore him and continue her work.

EXT. WESTLAKE CENTER -- DAY

Grace and Santa are seated on a bench outside Westlake Center, a popular shopping center in downtown Seattle. They are seated at opposite sides of the bench, a large gap separates them.

**GRACE** 

So.

Yeah?

GRACE

So why didn't you ever call me?

Santa, ashamed, looks down at his shoes.

SANTA

Because I'm a jerk.

GRACE

Okay, I'll buy that. You've been a jerk for years.

Grace chuckles and Santa tries to smile.

SANTA

When you first left, I was worried sick and had my entire staff searching for you.

Grace folds her arms across her chest and listens.

SANTA (CONT'D)

But then I ran into some friends of mine who saw you at the airport.

GRACE

Ah, the other holiday moguls.

SANTA

Yeah, them. They told me about all the bad things you were saying about me and I got a little angry.

**GRACE** 

Good.

SANTA

Yeah. Well, I called off the search and decided to just let you go. I guess I figured that you'd eventually come back to me.

**GRACE** 

What on Earth made you think that I was going to do that?

SANTA

Pride. Arrogance. Ego. Vanity. Take your pick.

GRACE

All of the above.

Santa winces at that last comment.

So I just threw myself into work.

GRACE

Was this before or after you sent Lemy to spy on me?

Santa raises and eyebrow and bites his lower lip.

SANTA

When did you notice Lemy?

**GRACE** 

Are you kidding? I used to see Lemy more often than I would see you.

SANTA

I take it that he's not much of a super-spy.

GRACE

Not even close, but I know how serious he takes his job. I didn't want to upset him by letting him know that I knew he was there. After a while, he seemed more interested in his music than me.

SANTA

Nice.

GRACE

At first, I thought you sent him to bring me back. I soon realized that he was just there to watch me. I then figured that you were just waiting for me to fail and wanted me to come back crawling on my hands and knees.

Santa looks ashamed.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Seeing him at school everyday, was like having a physical reminder to keep me going. I became so determined to make it on my own, that I think it made me a stronger person.

SANTA

It must have worked because you look better than you have in years.

**GRACE** 

And I feel better too. I love going to school and working with computers.

Grace smiles, looking please with herself.

GRACE (CONT'D)

What about you? It looks like our time apart has done you some good as well.

Santa looks uneasy as he shuffles in his seat.

SANTA

Nah.

GRACE

Don't be so modest! I think you look great. In fact, I don't think you've ever looked this good.

Grace winks at Santa, making him blush.

EXT. SHAKES COFFEE HOUSE -- DAY

Grace and Santa walk down a sidewalk and stop in front of the entrance to Shakes Coffee House. Santa takes Grace by the hand and holds her closer to him.

SANTA

Can I see you after work?

Grace hesitates for a beat.

GRACE

Sure, I guess that would be okay. Just to warn you though, I have a final exam tomorrow. So I can't stay out that late.

SANTA

That's fine, I'll take what ever time I can get.

**GRACE** 

Why don't we go to the Dragon Club? Lemy's band is playing.

SANTA

Have you ever heard his band?

**GRACE** 

Oh yeah, I always try to make it to their shows. I don't know if you'd like their type of music, but I think they're a lot of fun to watch.

SANTA

(fake enthusiasm)
Sure, that sounds great.

How about I meet you there before the show starts?

SANTA

Deal.

Santa leans forward for a quick kiss good-bye but Grace quickly stops him.

**GRACE** 

Not yet, Santa. You're still in trouble.

Santa smiles and nods in agreement.

SANTA

Sorry, old reflex.

Grace gives him a quick peck on the cheek and dashes into the coffee shop.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE EMPLOYEE BREAK ROOM -- DAY

Grace enters the employee break room and leans back against the door, closing it. She takes a deep breath and then puts her hands into her coat pockets. She looks concerned as she feels something inside that shouldn't be there.

Grace pulls out a tiny box wrapped with a golden bow. Her eyes tear up as she looks at the gift and smiles.

INT. LEMY'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Zac and G are sitting on the floor of the apartment, playing a video game. Sam is busy packing up her drum set behind them. The front door bursts open and Santa enters the room.

SANTA

Guys! Guys!

Sam, Zac and G are startled, as Lemy enters from his bedroom.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Guess what?

LEMY

What?

SANTA

I have a date with Grace tonight!

G

No way.

Sam and Zac turn to each other with confused expressions.

SAM

(to Zac)

Grace?

Zac quickly shrugs back unable to answer.

SANTA

We are going to meet up later at your gig. How cool is that?

LEMY

Great!

G bounces off from the couch and bumps chests with Santa.

G

Boo-ya!

Santa slumps down on to the couch as G goes back to playing his game.

SANTA

She's still upset with me, but she is willing to talk. So it's a start.

LEMY

That's wonderful news, Santa.

Santa's smile fades away as he notices the video game that G and Zac are playing.

SANTA

What kind of video game is that?

ZAC

Isn't it great?

G

It's called Elf Uprising.

ZAC

You play one of Santa's elves and lead a revolt against the Evil Santa Overlord. It just came out today.

Santa watches the screen as a thousand pixilated Elves hoist the Tyrant Santa up over the angry mob and run him out of the North Pole.

(-

I got him! Squeal like pig, fat boy!

G and Zac high-five each other and continue to play their game as Santa looks nervous. Lemy walks up from behind Santa and pats him on the shoulder.

LEMY

Maybe it's not from one of your companies?

SANTA

I can't deal with this now, I'm meeting with Grace tonight. Set up a video conference for tomorrow morning.

LEMY

You got it.

INT. THE DRAGON CLUB -- NIGHT

The Dragon Club is a combination Chinese take-out restaurant and lounge. Lemy, Zac, and Sam dominate the tiny stage as they play their hardcore Ska/Punk MUSIC. A small crowd of angst ridden youth pound on one another in the pit near the stage.

Zac is playing lead guitar as Sam violently beats her drums in the back. Lemy sings, more like shouts, intense lyrics as he furiously strums his bass guitar.

G, wearing headphones, spins records from behind a large turntable setup next to the stage. Behind the band is a large banner that reads: "SANTA'S LITTLE HELPER"

EXT. ALLEY OUTSIDE THE DRAGON CLUB -- NIGHT

Santa stands waiting outside in an alley near the front entrance of the Dragon Club. He checks his watch and then begins to paces around.

In the alley, next to him, three large men appear from out of the shadows. MR. CINATRA, B-DAWG, and MAIN-G form a small group of hardcore looking Gangsta thugs.

MR. CINATRA

(to Santa)

Hey, big man! Give me some change!

Santa, too absorbed in waiting for his wife, does not notice them until they get right behind him.

SANTA

What was that?

B-Dawg throws a bottle down on the ground, shattering it.

B-DAWG

My partner asked you for some change, snowflake.

Santa turns around and sizes up the three men. He looks disappointed as they each pull out weapons.

Hey guys, I realize that times are tough these days. But you really shouldn't have to resort to this type of behavior to make ends meet.

MAIN-G

Get a load of this cat, man.

SANTA

I'm serious, Leonard.

Main-G is taken aback as Santa speaks out his real name.

SANTA (CONT'D)

If you prefer that I call you Main-G, that's fine too.

MR. CINATRA

(to B-Dawg)

Leonard?

Main-G pulls up his pistol and points it to Santa's face.

MAIN-G

How you know my name?

SANTA

I know you all very well. Just as I know that your Momma would be very upset if she knew you still had that gun.

Main-G's eyes go wide.

SANTA (CONT'D)

You promised her just a few weeks ago that you were going to go straight. Didn't you, Leonard?

Main-G lowers the gun and looks ashamed with himself. Santa pats him on the shoulder and takes the gun.

B-DAWG

What're you doing, man?

SANTA

And you!

Santa steps up to B-Dawg who is holding out a large knife.

SANTA (CONT'D)

You get caught by the police this time and you'll be tried as an adult. You'd be going to prison this time, B-Dawg.

B-Dawg pauses as Santa takes the knife from his hand.

MR. CINATRA

Yo, let's get out of here.

SANTA

That's right, Mr. Cinatra. You want to go home and visit with your daughter before your shift begins.

Main-G and B-Dawg exchange confused glances.

MAIN-G

You have a daughter?

B-DAWG

Screw that, you have a job?

Mr. Cinatra looks down at his feet.

SANTA

That's right David, got's a beautiful little girl. Don't you David?

MR. CINATRA

Yes she is, sir.

SANTA

And you've got a decent job too, don't ya?

MR. CINATRA

Yes, sir.

SANTA

Then why are you out with these guys looking for trouble? You don't even need the money! Don't try to impress your friends by stealing things. Impress them by helping them get legitimate work.

B-DAWG

Is your place hiring?

MR. CINATRA

They are actually.

Cinatra slowly takes off the brass knuckles from his hand as Santa steps up to him.

SANTA

Tell you what, guys. If David here gives me those brass knuckles, I'll give you each a thousand bucks for your weapons.

MAIN-G

Seriously?

SANTA

Big time.

Santa smiles as he pulls out a large money clip from his inside pocket. Mr. Cinatra smiles and hands Santa to brass knuckles.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Fair trade.

Santa hands them each a small wad of cash. Mr. Cinatra and B-Dawg smile as they count their money, while Main-G looks up at Santa with a skeptical expression.

MAIN-G

You a cop?

SANTA

Nope, just no longer in the mood to beat anybody senseless. You guys caught me at good time.

The three thugs look a little nervous now.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Oh heck, if you punks would tried that on me a few weeks ago...I would have had to bust a cap in your asses.

Santa holds up the gun, knife, and brass knuckles and CRUNCHES them flat between his hands.

MR. CINATRA

We gotta go now. Thank you, sir.

The three thugs turn and run away. A cab pulls up in front of the Dragon Club containing Grace. Santa takes the clump of metal in his hands and drops it into a trash bin.

SANTA

Such nice boys. Merry Christmas!

Santa smiles and waves before turning around and exiting the alley. Grace exits the cab and faces Santa.

INT. THE DRAGON CLUB -- NIGHT

Grace and Santa share a private booth overlooking the stage and crowd. The band continues to play and Santa looks nauseous.

**GRACE** 

I told you they were an acquired taste.

They're not as bad as I thought they were going to be. But have you noticed that all of their songs contain the words screaming, bloody, and death?

**GRACE** 

Yeah, but that's just part of their charm.

SANTA

Nothing like a good love song, eh?

Santa and Grace laugh. G notices this, yanks his headphones off and rushes over to Sam. He whispers something into her ear and the music begins to slow down.

LEMY

(to the audience)

Are you all having a good time?

The crowd cheers a resounding YES!

LEMY (CONT'D)

Now if you guys don't mind, we'd like to try something a little different tonight.

Santa and Grace exchange confuses glances with each other.

LEMY (CONT'D)

There are two people here with us tonight that we'd like to play a special song for.

The spotlight moves from Lemy over to Santa and Grace's booth. They look embarrassed as the entire crowd stares at them.

LEMY (CONT'D)

Hit it, G.

The band starts to play a classic slow song as G, wearing a pair of dark sunglasses, walks on stage. Lemy adjusts the microphone stand to accommodate G's height. The penguin then steps up to the mike and speaks in a very deep, Barry White style, voice.

G

That's right, you two crazy kids. This one is for you. Aw yeah.

The crowd begins to applaud at Santa and Grace, urging them to dance. Santa shrugs, stands up, and offers his hand to her. Grace shakes her head and takes his hand.

The crowd splits open and allows them to take the center of the dance floor. The spotlight follows them as the crowd circles around the floor, giving them room to dance.

G (CONT'D)

Here is a little song that I used to sing to all my lady friends back home.

G begins to sing, in his deep and sexy voice, a slow dance tune.

SANTA

The last time we danced, it didn't end very well.

**GRACE** 

You know, I was just thinking the very same thing.

Santa and Grace are close together, the closest they've been since they have been reunited.

SANTA

I miss you, Grace. I really do.

**GRACE** 

I've missed you too.

SANTA

I'm not mad at you for leaving. It was my fault for giving you a reason for going.

**GRACE** 

I know, but I can't help but think that maybe I should have tried harder to talk things out with you.

SANTA

Oh, come on. We both know that you tried to talk to me on multiple occasions. I needed a swift kick in pants and you gave it to me.

Santa gazes at his wife and notices her wearing a new necklace.

SANTA (CONT'D)

I see that you found your gift.

Grace smiles as she feels her necklace.

GRACE

I sure did, you sneaky boy. Thank you very much by the way.

Think of it as a delayed anniversary present.

GRACE

I guess this means that I have delayed valentine's and birthday presents to look forward to as well.

SANTA

Don't push your luck.

Santa smiles he turns Grace around and then dips her. A pair of hardcore punk rockers are moved by the scene and start to weep.

GRACE

I'm glad that you came here.

SANTA

Me too.

**GRACE** 

What made you realize that I wasn't coming back?

SANTA

I didn't. I just got tired of waiting for you.

GRACE

You must really love me. I know how important this time of year is for your type of work.

SANTA

They can handle things without me.

GRACE

You never used to think like that.

SANTA

I see a lot of things differently now.

**GRACE** 

Well, that's encouraging. Maybe there's hope for you after all.

The song ends and the crowd cheers for G and the band.

G

Thank you!

Santa moves forward, about to kiss Grace, when the sound of MUSIC explodes onto the scene. Lemy's band kicks it into high gear as the crowd ignites into a violent frenzy.

Grace is pulled away from Santa as they stand in the middle of a frantic mosh pit. Santa pushes his way through the crowd and grabs Grace.

SANTA

Let's get out of here.

EXT. SPACE NEEDLE OBSERVATION DECK -- NIGHT

Santa and Grace cuddle near each other in the cold night air on the deck of the Space Needle. The two of them gaze at the Seattle city lights.

**GRACE** 

This is nice.

SANTA

Let's just hope security doesn't find us.

GRACE

So that's how you get into all those homes that don't have a chimney.

SANTA

Trade secrets, my dear. Just don't share them with anybody else.

**GRACE** 

You would of made an excellent cat burglar.

Santa laughs.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Did you see anybody while I was away?

Santa stops laughing.

SANTA

No. Why?

**GRACE** 

Just curious.

SANTA

Did you?

Grace straightens and sits up and to face Santa.

**GRACE** 

There was one guy who I am friends with. His name is Cecil, he's one of the teachers at my school.

SANTA

Is it serious?

Listen to you. No it's not serious! Early on I explained to him that I wasn't looking for a relationship. And he respected my wishes.

SANTA

That was nice of him.

Grace's eyes narrow.

GRACE

Admit it, you were worried. I could tell that you've been wanting to bring that up all night.

SANTA

Yeah.

GRACE

We are just friends. Nothing inappropriate ever happened.

SANTA

Thanks for being the one to bring that up. I really wouldn't blame you if you tried to find someone else after the way I treated you.

**GRACE** 

I'd kill you if you were with another woman.

Santa likes this reaction.

SANTA

Really?

**GRACE** 

I know that I've never wanted anybody else. I couldn't handle you with another woman.

SANTA

I love you, Grace. I've always loved you. Even when I wasn't there for you. I never meant to neglect you, but I'm sorry that I did.

A tear runs down Grace's cheek.

SANTA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry for not figuring it out myself. I've been a fool.

Grace grabs Santa by the neck and kisses him passionately.

I love you too.

Santa kisses her again.

GRACE (CONT'D)

And I promise to let you know if you're ever being a jerk again.

SANTA

I promise to listen this time.

INT. GRACE'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Santa and Grace are locked together in Grace's bed. Santa's eyes slowly open and he looks down and sees Grace. He gently kisses her on the forehead and holds her.

Grace's eyes open and she smiles up at him.

SANTA

Good morning, sleepy head.

**GRACE** 

What time is it?

SANTA

Who cares?

Grace smiles as Santa kisses her on the lips. She closes her eyes and then rests her head on his chest as he stokes her hair.

Grace's eyes shoot open and she quickly sits up.

**GRACE** 

What time is it?

Grace looks around the room and sees a digital alarm clock that reads: "8:15 a.m."

GRACE (CONT'D)

Crap!

Grace leaps off the bed and frantically starts to get dressed.

SANTA

What's wrong?

**GRACE** 

I'm late for class!

SANTA

Can't you miss a day?

It's the final! If I miss it, I'll fail this class! Where's my other shoe?

Santa gets out of the bed and helps her look for the shoe. Clothes are scattered throughout the apartment.

SANTA

Just get dressed, I'll find your shoe.

Grace runs into the bathroom and slams the door. Santa puts on a frilly pink bathrobe and continues to comb the bedroom floor. He finds her other shoe and picks it up.

Grace comes bursting out of the bathroom, she is sloppily dressed and has a bit of toothpaste smeared on the edge of her mouth.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Here you go!

Santa tosses her the shoe. She catches it and then grabs his shoulder for support as she slips on the shoe. Santa wipes the toothpaste off from her face and hands her a backpack.

GRACE

Thanks!

She takes the bag and darts out of the room with her shoes untied. Santa turns around, shakes his head, and laughs to himself.

SANTA

So that's what that feels like.

Grace bursts back into the room and kisses Santa on the cheek.

**GRACE** 

Meet me after class for lunch. I'll call in sick at the coffee shop.

She runs out of the room again, leaving Santa standing alone in her bedroom with his hand on his cheek.

INT. GRACE'S KITCHEN -- MORNING

Santa, still dressed in the pink bathrobe, is making himself some breakfast in Grace's kitchen. Toast pops out from a toaster as Santa pours tea into a cup. He brings the food and sits down at the kitchen table.

Santa, happy, hums to himself as he flips through a Seattle newspaper laying on the table. He quietly scans the classified section of the paper.

His mood quickly changes from happy to angry as he reads one of the ads.

SANTA

Those ungrateful bastards!

INT. ART COLLEGE OF SEATTLE SHOWROOM -- DAY

Santa, surrounded by art students, is standing in the middle of a large art showroom. Hundreds of pieces of art in various different mediums are on display. A large banner is hung against the wall that reads: "ART COLLEGE OF SEATTLE STUDENT ART SHOW"

Santa, standing with the newspaper under his arm, appears to be waiting for somebody. He checks his watch and continues to pace around the room. Next to him are a couple of TV monitors that are cycling tapes of student animation projects.

A brief computer animated cartoon plays out as Santa watches. The animated short features a fat and dopey looking Santa Claus trying to stuff his plump body into a small chimney.

The Santa has to suck in his gut and have one of the Reindeer push him into the chimney. The scene cuts to a family living room with a large Christmas tree majestically standing in the background.

The camera pans from the tree onto the Fireplace which is lit. The fat Santa comes crashing down onto the fire and burns himself.

SCREAMING as he runs across the living room with his butt on fire, the Santa beats out the flames with his sack of toys. He calms down for a second and catches his breath. He then hears GROWLING behind him.

The Santa turns to find an angry guard dog snarling behind him. The screen goes black and we hear the sound of a BITE followed by more SCREAMS. Across the black screen appear the words: "ANIMATED BY GRACE CLAUS"

SANTA

Lovely.

Santa glares at the television screen with a sour expression as a large group of art students walk past the showroom. Lemy enters the showroom.

LEMY

Hey, what's up?

SANTA

About time. What took you so long?

LEMY

I'm sorry, but it's finals. I had to turn my cell phone off during class.

SANTA

Whatever. Did you bring it?

LEMY

Yeah.

Lemy holds up a leather case and hands it to Santa.

LEMY (CONT'D)

What's going on?

SANTA

I need to contact work now. Is the camera in the bag?

LEMY

Yeah, everything you asked for is there. You're video conference isn't for another hour.

SANTA

No time to explain. Is there some place I can go to hook this up and dial in?

LEMY

Sure, follow me.

INT. COMPUTER LAB A -- DAY

Lemy leads Santa into an unoccupied Computer Lab. Next to the door is a large indoor window, students are seen walking past through the hall.

Santa opens up the case, which reveals a Computer laptop and digital video camera. Lemy helps Santa set up the computer and hooks the network cable to one of the lab computers.

LEMY

Do you need the server ID number?

SANTA

I know it.

Grace walks by the window and notices Santa and Lemy. She enters the room and smiles.

GRACE

Hey, what are you doing here so early?

Santa, startled, whips around and sees Grace. He steps away from the laptop and nudges Lemy to take over.

Oh, hi honey. I need to make a quick video conference call, so I contacted Lemy.

GRACE

Is everything okay?

SANTA

Yeah, just some work stuff that needs to be taken care of.

Santa looks anxious and Grace gives him a suspicious look.

GRACE

Well, I'm done with my finals. I'll just go get my stuff and meet you back here.

SANTA

You do that.

Lemy looks up from the laptop.

LEMY

Santa? I've got them.

Santa smiles at Grace.

SANTA

Excuse me, I have to take this.

GRACE

No, you go right ahead. I'll be back.

Santa turns around and seats himself in front of the laptop. Grace starts to walk out of the room but hangs back by the door.

The screen on the laptop shows Cordoba, looking very uncomfortable, staring back at them. The Santa-Co logo is hanging on the wall behind him.

CORDOBA

Santa! Is everything okay?

Santa scowls back that the screen, the digital video camera is placed on top of the laptop screen.

SANTA

Don't play games with me, Cordoba. I think you know damn well what I want to talk about.

Cordoba's eyes widen as he tries to smile.

CORDOBA

Excuse me?

Santa holds up the newspaper to the camera.

SANTA

I just found your little ad. Did you really think that I wouldn't see it?

CORDOBA

Oh that! Just think of it as a back up plan, nothing more. I wouldn't take it that seriously.

SANTA

Santa-Co is looking for a new CEO and you don't want me to take it seriously?

CORDOBA

Santa, you're making it sound worse than it really is.

SANTA

Is that right?

Santa pushes a button on his laptop and the camera that is pointed on Cordoba pans around to the left. Cordoba, panics and tries to stop it but fails.

The camera now reveals the other side of the board room which has a small group of people dressed as Santa Claus. They all appear to be waiting for something and some are holding resumes in their hands.

SANTA (CONT'D)

You're already conducting interviews?

Cordoba runs back into frame and tries to smile.

CORDOBA

It's not what you think.

Behind Cordoba, two large doors open as Jarvis leads the Easter Bunny, Saint Patty, Pumpkin-Head, and the Groundhog (all dressed in a Santa suits) out from another office.

Jarvis shakes hands with the Easter Bunny as Cordoba grunts in their direction. They all notice the camera and quickly freeze.

SANTA

You back stabbing ingrates, when I get my hands on you I'm gonna--

Grace looks confused as she steps out of the room and waits in the hallway. She stands there and contemplates for a second before walking off.

INT. COMPUTER LAB B -- DAY

Grace enters another unoccupied computer lab. She sits down at one of the computers and logs on. She opens up and Internet browser and types in a website address. A small box appears on the monitor reading: "ENTER PASSWORD"

Grace enters her password and the screen loads up the " $\underline{\text{NORTH}}$   $\underline{\text{POLE NEWS: THE NPN NETWORK}}$ " Grace quickly scans the listed articles and clicks on a link.

INT. COMPUTER LAB A -- DAY

Santa sits with his head sunk down low. Lemy is seated in a chair next to him.

LEMY

Maybe Cordoba was telling the truth. It might not be as bad as it looks.

Santa groans.

SANTA

I've got to get back there and settle things with the Elves. I'm this close to losing my job forever.

LEMY

You may have made some mistakes, but you're still the original Santa. They'd never keep you out of it completely.

SANTA

Fingers crossed.

Santa lets out a great big sigh. He looks up and sees Grace standing by the door, looking furious.

SANTA (CONT'D)

You okay, honey?

**GRACE** 

Don't you honey me, you lying sack of reindeer dung.

Lemy's eyes go wide. He backs off from Santa, trying to stay out of the way.

SANTA

Excuse me?

I can't believe that I fell for your act.

SANTA

What are you talking about? What act?

Grace holds up a print out of a website article, the headline reads: "DID SANTA MURDER HIS WIFE?"

**GRACE** 

You just wanted to clear your name so you could get your job back.

Santa quickly registers what she is thinking.

SANTA

No, no, no!

(pointing to the laptop)
That wasn't what it looked like, you don't understand--

GRACE

Did P.R. think that getting me back would restore your tarnished image?

Santa gets up and tries to comfort Grace, but she jumps back.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Don't touch me!

SANTA

Grace, listen to me--

**GRACE** 

You make me sick.

Grace rips off her necklace and throws it in Santa's face. With that, she turns and runs out of the room. Santa, speechless, just stands there with a lost expression on his face.

INT. GRACE'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Santa, Lemy, and G are laying around in Grace's empty apartment. They all look haggard and tired.

LEMY

How long are we going to wait here?

SANTA

I shouldn't have let her run off.

LEMY

She hasn't shown up for work in three days.

G

We searched all over town.

(to Santa)

Let's face it, she's gone buddy.

SANTA

No, she's still in town. I can feel it.

Santa pushes window blinds apart and peers outside.

LEMY

Santa, tomorrow night is Christmas Eve.

SANTA

So?

LEMY

What are you going to do about work?

SANTA

I really don't care about that anymore. If they found someone better for the job, then good for them.

G

You're serious?

Santa releases the blinds and turns to face them.

SANTA

Yeah, I'm serious. The only thing that matters to me now is finding Grace.

LEMY

Okay then. Let's say she's still in town, where else should we look?

G

Maybe she checked into a hotel?

LEMY

Perhaps we should call the police.

Santa sees something across the room and walks up to the fireplace.

G

Screw that, I don't want to be seen with any cops. I've got a rep to protect.

Santa picks up a framed photo off the fireplace mantle. The photo is of Grace and Cecil.

She's with DeVay.

INT. CECIL DEVAY'S TOWN HOUSE -- NIGHT

Grace is seated on a large plush couch with a wool blanket wrapped around her. A cozy fire is crackling in the fireplace next to her. She gazes at the dancing flames, deep in thought.

Cecil enters the room holding a steaming hot cup of tea.

CECIL

Hot stuff coming through.

He smiles as he places the cup on a coffee table next to Grace.

CECIL (CONT'D)

Can I get you anything else?

Grace looks up and smiles weakly.

**GRACE** 

No thank you, Cecil.

Cecil smiles back and sits down on the opposite side of the couch.

CECIL

I was thinking that maybe we could take a boat up to Canada tomorrow and spend Christmas in Victoria. My treat.

GRACE

That sounds nice, I could use a vacation.

CECIL

I thought you might want to leave town for a few days.

**GRACE** 

Thanks again for letting me stay here. You've been a great help.

CECIL

Anytime. You're always welcome to use my place as a hideout.

Grace smiles and then sips her tea.

BEEP! BEEP!

The two beeps came from the kitchen. Grace is startled by the sound and Cecil laughs.

What was that?

CECIL

It's just the microwave. I thought you might want some popcorn while we watched TV.

BEEP! BEEP!

CECIL (CONT'D)

I'll be right back.

INT. DEVAY'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Cecil enters through a swinging door into his kitchen. He peeks at the microwave and notices that it is still on, the sound of POPS still coming from it. He stands there for a second and scratches his head.

BEEP! BEEP!

Startled, Cecil whirls around him and see G standing on the counter. Their eyes are parallel with each other as G glares at Cecil.

G

What's shaking, bub?

The penguin leaps off the table and tackles Cecil, knocking him to the ground. Cecil, still in shock, is easily pinned by the feisty bird.

Lemy, wearing a black ski mask, enters from behind the counter and duct tapes his hands and feet together. G covers Cecil's mouth with his flipper.

INT. CECIL DEVAY'S TOWN HOUSE -- NIGHT

A muffled THUMP is heard and Grace quickly sits up.

GRACE

Cecil?

No answer.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Is everything okay?

INT. DEVAY'S KITCHEN -- EVENING

Lemy prods Cecil in the ribs with a fork as G slowly releases his flipper from his mouth.

G

(whispering)

Answer her.

CECIL

Uh yeah, everything's fine. I just dropped a bowl that's all.

INT. CECIL DEVAY'S TOWN HOUSE -- NIGHT

Grace stands up from the couch, still holding on to the blanket and slowly walks towards the kitchen. The doorbell RINGS and Grace looks towards the door.

GRACE

Don't worry, I'll get that.

Another THUMP is heard and Cecil GROANS.

CECIL (O.S.)

Thank you!

Grace looks back towards the kitchen as the doorbell RINGS again. She sighs and quickly walks over to the front door and answers it. It's Santa.

SANTA

I need you, Grace. I've never lied about that.

Grace grits her teeth and tries to slam the door in Santa's face. Santa quickly stops her by catching the door with one hand, easily over powering her.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Don't make me break down this door.

GRACE

Go away.

SANTA

If you won't hear me out, then our marriage is over!

Grace is taken aback by Santa's serious tone.

SANTA (CONT'D)

I'm getting really sick of you running away from every time we have a problem. If you won't give me a chance to explain myself, I can guarantee that you'll never see me again.

Grace quickly straightens up and folds her arms across her chest.

GRACE

Fine. Explain yourself.

Remember when you asked me what it was that made me realize that you weren't coming back?

GRACE

Yeah.

SANTA

Well, I lied. I didn't realize it until G found your ring at the bottom of our lake.

Santa pulls out the ring and holds it up.

SANTA (CONT'D)

When we took our wedding vows, we both swore that we would love each other to the end of time. Through hardship and prosperity. No matter what.

**GRACE** 

I remember.

SANTA

This ring symbolized your love for me and your commitment to our marriage. And you tossed it into the lake and left me without looking back.

GRACE

I was mad at you. You hurt me pretty bad.

SANTA

You left for good reasons. But you gave up on me...and on us.

**GRACE** 

Hold on a sec, you gave up on us first. You stopped being a husband way before I even left.

SANTA

Fair enough, I did fail as a husband. But you did your part as well. Rather than stay and fight it out with me, you chose to run away, humiliate me to my friends, and then demean my image through your artwork.

GRACE

You saw my cartoon?

Yeah, I saw it. Outside of the subject matter, I'd say you had a lot of talent.

**GRACE** 

Why didn't you tell me that you were going to lose your job?

SANTA

I didn't tell you about my problems at work because I didn't want you to learn about all the horrible things I did while you were away.

GRACE

Why not?

SANTA

Because I was ashamed of myself!
After you left, I was worried sick.
Then I felt like a total fool when I heard all the bad things you were saying about me. I filled up with a lot of rage and hostility. Add to that a couple thousand years of on the job related stress and I became a powder keg just waiting to explode.

GRACE

So you got into boxing.

SANTA

Yeah, I got into boxing. I channeled all my stressed into physical violence and pummeled the crap out of anybody who'd step into the ring with me.

**GRACE** 

Why?

SANTA

You want to know why? You really do? I wanted to feel some pain. Every time I stepped into that ring, I prayed that somebody would beat me senseless. When that didn't happen, I just imagined that I was my opponent and that I was beating on Santa Claus myself. After a while, I got to like it.

GRACE

You got to like it? I don't understand...

I wanted to beat myself up because I felt guilty for treating you and everybody else like dirt. It took time, but I didn't realize it until recently. My subconscious knew it before I could figure it out.

**GRACE** 

But you're such a kind and gentle man.

SANTA

Yeah, but I have my off days just like anybody else. I had a lot of good intentions. But as it turns out, I wasn't a good Santa. As my work grew, so did our cooperation. After awhile, I treated the Elves like my own personal army. I stopped caring about why I was Santa in the first place. I became a working machine that demanded results and didn't have enough time for anything or anybody that wasn't work related.

Santa gets on his knees and pleads.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Grace, I didn't find you to save my job. I came here to find you. When I saw that you didn't want your ring anymore, I just figured that you stopped loving me.

**GRACE** 

I never stopped loving you.

SANTA

I didn't know that. But I did know that you leaving was all my fault. So I couldn't blame you for going.

GRACE

Why didn't you say something before?

SANTA

I wanted to you love me again for who I am. I wanted to earn your love back, not guilt you into coming back because you felt sorry for me.

**GRACE** 

What about work?

This isn't about work, it's about us.

**GRACE** 

You can't stop being Santa Claus. The world needs you.

SANTA

I know now that the Elves can survive without me. And I've learned that Christmas can survive without me. But I've always known that I cannot survive without you. And I'm sorry that I haven't made you feel as important to me. But you are, and have always been the most important thing in my life.

Grace grabs Santa by the collar and kisses him.

On the porch next to them is a hidden camera with a tiny red light on.

EXT. CITY CENTER PLAZA -- NIGHT

Thousands of Elves have gathered at City Center Plaza in North Pole City. They are all watching a large screen television screen that has a live image of Santa and Grace kissing. They have been watching this whole exchange.

ELF IN CROWD

That was beautiful.

Groups of sentimental Elves begin to wipe tears from their cheeks.

INT. SANTA-CO EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM -- NIGHT

Cordoba and Jarvis sit by a their laptop in the Santa-Co board room. Behind them is a large screen displaying Santa and his wife. Cordoba smiles into the camera on top of his laptop which now displays the image of G and Lemy standing over the bound Cecil.

CORDOBA

Gentlemen, I think we did it.

LEMY

Did you get the transmission out in time?

JARVIS

It's pumping out live as we speak.

G

Make sure nobody mentions anything about this when we get back. If they find out that we left a camera back there, we are all dead men.

INT. DEVAY'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

G and Lemy are staring into their laptop in Cecil's kitchen. A fold out satellite dish is on the counter next to the kitchen. Lemy "high-fives" G as Cordoba's happy face fills their laptop screen.

CORDOBA

I'm sending the sleigh team out to you now. Be sure to remind him that he still has a job to do.

LEMY

Will do.

EXT. DEVAY'S FRONT PORCH -- NIGHT

Grace and Santa are locked in each other's arms as they passionately kiss each other.

INT. GRACE'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Grace awakes in her bed, alone. She sits up and rubs the sleep from her eyes. To the side of her bed is her day calendar, the date reads: DECEMBER 24

She looks at her ring and smiles. Santa bursts into the room holding a tray full of breakfast and juice. Grace, surprised, stands up from her bed.

GRACE

What are you doing here?

SANTA

I spent the night, remember?

**GRACE** 

But it Christmas Eve, you should be working!

SANTA

Not today.

GRACE

What?

SANTA

This is your gift, me spending all of Christmas Eve with you.

You called in sick?

SANTA

Something like that. I just realized that you and I have never spent Christmas Eve together.

GRACE

Wow, that's right.

SANTA

Next year, and every year after that, I want you to join me on my run.

GRACE

Really?

SANTA

Yeah, but only if you want to. I don't want it to conflict with your school schedule.

GRACE

I can keep going to school?

SANTA

Yeah, I figured we'd just get a bigger place over here and I could telecommute or something.

Grace grabs Santa by the neck and kisses him, almost forcing him to drop his tray.

**GRACE** 

But what about this Christmas? Who'll bring everyone presents?

SANTA

I got some friends to fill in for  $\operatorname{me}$ .

EXT. LONDON -- NIGHT

Rudolph and his Reindeer team are parked on top of a large Tudor home in London, England. Fighting in the back of the sleigh is Lemy and G. Both are wearing Santa outfits, with fake beards and everything. G yanks the bag of toys from Lemy.

G

It's my BLEEP-ing turn!

LEMY

That last one didn't count.

Rudolph turns his head and grunts at them.

RUDOLPH

Keep it down, you morons. These people are trying to sleep!

G

Yeah, yeah. Keep your nose on.

LEMY

Wait a second, how do we know if these are the right presents for this address?

G rolls his eyes and grabs the bag.

G

Who cares? Beggars can't be choosers!

INT. GRACE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Santa and Grace are snuggled up next to each other on the couch next to the fire. The two of them are drinking hot cocoa and listening to soft Christmas MUSIC.

**GRACE** 

This is nice.

SANTA

Sure is.

Grace looks back at her tree and frowns.

**GRACE** 

It's a shame we didn't have time to get some gifts to put under the tree.

Santa chuckles.

SANTA

Well, if you have been a good girl this year...Then there should be plenty of Christmas presents under that tree come tomorrow morning.

**GRACE** 

Come again?

SANTA

What? You don't believe in Santa Claus?

FADE OUT: