MRS. SANTA CLAUS VS. THE LIVING DEAD

Written by Josh Wellman

Excerpt: Christmas Eve Eve

INT. NORTH POLE WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Cheerful Christmasy music plays as we see the festive workshop: towering stained-glass windows, vaulted ceilings, old-fashioned architecture cobbled together during various eras.

Elves consult lists and gleefully portion out magic dust to pour into the intakes of large, festive-looking replicator machines which spit out various gifts at the bottom.

There, other elves retrieve them, tag them, and put them on a conveyor belt.

The conveyor belt takes the toys/gaming systems/etc. into another, boxy-looking Victorian-era wrapping machine with absurd-looking gaskets, tubes, and moving parts.

Gifts emerge beautifully wrapped on the other side, where giant red sacks await.

The gifts tumble gently into the bags.

A bag fills up, and an elf labels it “CLEVELAND, EAST 70th STREET-EAST 90th STREET,” then uses magic dust to shrink the bag.

The bag is placed gently onto a padded wooden cart.

The next bag is already ready. A different elf places it on the cart.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Elves scurry up and down a hallway in the workshop complex.

A strong, kind female voice rises above the flurry of activity.

KATARINA (O.S.)
Has anybody seen my husband? He can’t be that hard to spot.

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We see KATARINA KRINGLE, late 60s, elegant, dressed like Mrs. Claus because… well, that’s who she is.

She bustles purposefully and carries a ridiculously thick old-timey leather binder stuffed with papers.

KATARINA
And where are we on global weather reports? We need those reports within the hour, darlings!

ESTRID, head elf, catches up with her, consulting a list as she walks.

ESTRID
No Santa sightings for now, Mrs. Santa.

KATARINA
Ah, Estrid, thank God. Well, if he’s not here, he’d better be in the office.

An ELF tries to get her attention… fails. Follows.

ESTRID
Weather reports are being prepared and compared against the human reports.
Let’s see…
(consults list, reads:)
“Gift replicators are operating at full capacity. No errors.” “Dress rehearsal is scheduled for…” uh…

More elves are following now. More and more tag along as the scene progresses.

KATARINA
The usual time, that one I know already. Thank you though.
How are we on magic dust?

ESTRID
We’ve had to increase allowances for the elves running the toy replicators.

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KATARINA
It takes so much of it to create all these stupid electronics children want lately!

ESTRID
We'll need to get more silver to keep supplies up after Christmas Eve.

KATARINA
But we're doing fine for now?

ESTRID
Yes, ma'am.

KATARINA
Then we're relieved we're doing fine for now, good. Any disasters at this point?

ESTRID
No, ma'am.

KATARINA
We're like a well-oiled machine-we should be after two hundred and fifty years of … this.

She's barely noticed the growing number of elves following her and Estrid, trying to get her attention.

She and Estrid are at a big, intricately-carved wooden door. Katarina puts her hand on the doorknob.

KATARINA
Anything else?

ESTRID
Nothing pressing that I'm aware of, ma'am.

An excited chorus of elf voices pops up in a high-pitched cacophony.

KATARINA
Holy sh–… One at a time, my dears! Yes, Bjorn?

BJORN, an elf, looks concerned.

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BJORN
Mrs. Santa, we’re a little concerned about the ice in the landing zone.

KATARINA
It’s been a warm winter. Do you have a solution?

BJORN
We should test it out after the dress rehearsal.

KATARINA
We can firm it up with some magic dust and a cooling incantation, if we need to. Thank you. Coordinate with Estrid, please.

More shouting elves.

KATARINA
Freya?

FREYA, an elf, steps forward, looking perplexed. Bjorn instinctively takes off his cap and steps back when he sees her. Is he blushing? He’s blushing!

FREYA
We’re having some trouble with a couple of the reindeer, Mrs. Santa.

KATARINA
Bruised egos?

FREYA
Yes, ma’am.

KATARINA
We had some of that in the 1950s and 80s. My husband can tackle it. Thank you.

More clamoring.

KATARINA
Sweet baby, Jee-zu- ok, um… Otto.

OTTO, an elf, takes off his hat and looks down.

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OTTO
Mrs. Santa…

KATARINA
It’s okay, sweetie. No need to be shy.

OTTO
I’ve made something for you… and for Mr. Santa… for when you can take a break.

KATARINA
Oh, that’s so sweet! Thank you.

OTTO extends a box, and opens it.

Inside is a beautiful small cake, in Christmas colors and with gold lettering.

Katarina tilts her head quizzically.

KATARINA
Otto, what’s…

OTTO
Your initials! Kris and Katarina Kringle!

KATARINA
“K, K…” Oooh-kay, Otto, thank you.
(suppresses a laugh)
We have Google now. Look up what else our initials might be used for so you don’t get in trouble. For now, Mr. Santa and I will eat the evidence!

Otto beams and steps back, blushing. Katarina balances the box with her huge book. There’s more clamoring.

KATARINA
Ok, two more for now…

CUT TO:

BANG!

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INT. SANTA’S OFFICE - NIGHT

Katarina slams the door shut behind her and leans against it to catch her breath.

KRIS KRINGLE, 60s, is Santa Claus. He slowly turns in his leather chair behind a desk.

There’s a fire in the fireplace, a Christmas tree in the window, and the aurora borealis glows outside the window.

Kris stands and extends his arms.

KRIS
Trina, my darling!

KATARINA
Hello, dear. I’ve been looking all over the workshop for you.

She sets down her book and the cake on his desk and they embrace warmly.

KRIS
I’ve been checking the list of naughty boys and girls.

KATARINA
We both know that list doesn’t exist.

Kris chuckles, an unspoken: “‘You caught me.’ (in on the joke) Again.”

KATARINA
And, we have to remember it’s not just boys and girls anymore. It’s, boys, girls, and…
(a real realization)
I don’t actually know the wording. I’ll Google it later.
But the important thing is to remember that we don’t want Santa Claus to misgender a little one for Christmas! This isn’t that difficult.

KRIS
Yes it is.

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KATARINA
Yep, yeah it is but… uh, …
So was gay. So was Mormon. So was Justin Bieber for a moment, and he turned out just fine. We roll with it and, we learn. We grow. With the world we serve.

KRIS
God, I adore you.

KATARINA
I adore you.
Fatso.

He chuckles. (That’s a thing Santa does a lot, in case you haven’t heard a lot about him in other literature.)

She pours a brandy, downs it in a gulp, is pouring another when:

KRIS
What’s this?

He’s opened the cake box.

KATARINA
That’s an accidentally-racist cake… from Otto.
(drinks)
Our initials.

Kris laughs authentically. It’s that “ho ho ho” laugh, with a warm, magnanimous understanding.

KRIS
His Christmas spirit has always been … fervent. What a sweet soul. I’m surprised our initials haven’t gotten us, what do they say, er, “canceled”, already.
(moves to sit back down at the desk as her eyes silently admonish him)
Now, what do I have to do?

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KATARINA
There’s some sort of drama with the reindeer I need you to handle. But first in…
(pulls out a pocket watch)
…a little under an hour, we have the United Nations Liaison for Clausal Affairs.
She’s been coordinating, um… the “simultaneous multi-location” with NORAD.

KRIS
Do I have to?

KATARINA
Yes, we *have* to.

She cuts two slices of cake while Kris speaks.

KRIS
Simultaneous location. U.N. Liaison. NORAD. We’ve been doing this for two and a half centuries. All the wrong things change, and all the wrong things stay the same. War is always there, disease is always there. But good old-fashioned yesterdays are replaced by… gadgets and acronyms. And pronouns.
Oh, before you tell me I’m becoming an old curmudgeon, I know not all the wrong things stay. A child’s hopeful eyes. The joy of a wish fulfilled. Why, the human population was less than a billion people when we were called to duty here, and now it’s over seven billion. It’s extraordn’ry, we still manage to get to every child in the world in one night. … … … Barring the odd oversight.

KATARINA
I was about to say, remember the time you missed that Italian girl

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three years in a row and then she died of cholera?

KRIS
And maybe a broken heart.

KATARINA
I’m pretty sure it was just the cholera.

KRIS
You’re no fun.
But you’re awfully sexy when you’re in take-charge mode.

KATARINA
Can it, Fatsanova. For the next 72 hours, I’m the least sexy woman on earth as far as you’re concerned.

KRIS
I highly beg to differ, “Mrs. Claus.”
(grasps her hand)
But do you understand, I miss when it was just magic. Why do we have to bring in all this… gobbledygook from outside?

KATARINA
Possibly because you once nearly caused a nuclear war and almost wiped out all life on earth? On Christmas?

KRIS
Well, there’s that…
But of course that was a rhetorical question.
Of course, I understand, up in my brain.
But in my heart… I’m just so tired.
We should… could… possibly jostle ourselves just a bit here, too.
Find a right, new way to make things less stale.
I think everyone feels it.

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KATARINA
I don’t disagree entirely, but I sure don’t think Freya is feeling it.
And anyway Christmas Eve Eve isn’t the day to start doing things differently, darling.
Now, let’s eat some… c-c-cake,
(hands him cake, smiles)
and then you suit up.
(British accent)
Spit spot.

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