MRS. SANTA CLAUS VS. THE LIVING DEAD

Written by Josh Wellman

Excerpt: Dress Rehearsal

EXT. ST. NICHOLAS SQUARE - NIGHT

St. Nicholas Square, the heart of North Pole City, is a quaint, European-looking village. The workshop and offices frame in one part, the apartments/housing for elves frame another part, and anchoring the square is a church: St. Nicholas Church.

In front of the church is a marble statue of St. Nick himself, holding a golden scabbard and festooned in red and green garland.

Celebrating elves cheer as the PORTAL glides into the square from the office wing.

Miranda Hart follows the portal, looking a bit harried but keeping it together.

Estrid, Freya, and Katarina exit from the church.

Estrid and Freya stand off to the side, taking notes, comparing events against clipboards, etc.

Katarina stands before the statue of St. Nick.

KATARINA
Ho, ho, ho!
…
Everyone pretend I’m my husband. We’ve done this two hundred and fifty-two times, together. So, ho-ho…
(lovingly mocks her husband)
Ho ho ho to one and all. On this night of nights, we stand before the church of St. Nicholas, founder of yada yada, discoverer of magic yada yada, First Santa Claus, blah blah, spirit of Christmas … you know this entire speech.
Love for all the children of the

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earth, yay yay, hurrah hurrah.
Peace for all manki–let's make
that "humankind" from now on,
Freya? A little late on that one.
Anyway…
Second Santa Claus, third Santa
Claus, grand tradition. Now it's
our high privilege, yawn yawn,
next custodians of a line of magic
and love for all eternity… blah
blah he improvises until our ears
bleed with the sheer, sweet joy of
Christmas, and then he ends with a
hearty… HO, HO, HO!!!
Ok.
Aaaaaaaand… trumpets!
(silence)
I rushed through that a bit, dear,
my apologies.
Trumpets?
Trumpets!!

On a balcony above the entrance to the church, an elf sprinkles magic dust over statues with trumpets, which animate and play a perfect fanfare.

KATARINA
Yep. Just like that. Maybe a
little quicker on the uptake, if
you can my sweet darling?

TRUMPET ELF
Absolutely Mrs. Santa!

Flings dust and trumpets play again.

The reindeer have already started entering in grand procession to a chorus of trumpets and elves' voices raised in glorious elf-voiced song: "Ahhhh!". One reindeer stops, causing others in the rear to bump into her, and a group stumble/halt.

DONNER
Should we go out and come in
again?

KATARINA
Um… uh, no, darlings. Just…

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Some reindeer have started to go back.

KATARINA
It’s fi-
(whispered, temporarily defeated)
Ok.

The reindeer go back out. Katarina stands expectantly. She looks up at the trumpet elf.

TRUMPET ELF
Oh!

Trumpet Elf flings magic dust with glee. Two of three trumpets animate and sound a fanfare.

The reindeer come back in, in grand procession, but Trumpet Elf sprinkles the third trumpet and now everything sounds completely wonky.

KATARINA
It’s fine, just proceed, everyone. You’re doing … fine. Just … fine.

Rudolph soars in, nose aglow, and lands at the front of the team, with the trumpet fanfare finally aligning to play a phrase from his theme song.

Blitzen rolls her eyes.

RUDOLPH
I think we need to do that again.

Katarina looks at him with surprised, Mom-is–annoyed forbearance.

KATARINA
I don’t think that’s necessary.

RUDOLPH
I do.
(he notices her “patient” expression)
Please, Mrs. Santa?

KATARINA
Very well, Rudolph.
Everyone, back out. Then, on my cue–I repeat, ON MY CUE, trumpets.

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(Trumpet Elf is about to sprinkle, Katarina's swift admonishing glance prevents another debacle)

Here's a chance to get it right, darlings.

Everyone resets. Katarina takes a deep breath:

KATARINA
Aaand, "ho, ho" GO!

Trumpet Elf sprinkles the magic dust, and the fanfare begins, properly!

Blitzen turns to Vixen.

BLITZEN
I don't think I need a dress rehearsal for walking. I know what I'm doing: standing in the back. As always. I'm going for a run.

VIXEN
I wouldn't-

BLITZEN
No one will even notice I'm gone. It's five minutes. For my sanity. I'll be back. Go. Go!

She trots past the other reindeer as they quizzically look at her, forming their procession into the square.

Blitzen then takes off at a gallop away from the square.

Behind her, the trumpets are muffled—but it sounds like they've finally got it right!-as:

EXT. NORTH POLE - NIGHT

Blitzen runs through the night, with North Pole City growing smaller and slightly hazier in the distance behind her.

OMINOUS MUSIC.

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Looking up ahead, she squints her eyes quizzically. Then she slows her pace, and stops.

“ARRGH…” A faint snarl is audible.

BLITZEN
What the holly?

SLOP… SLURPCRUNCH! … the disconcerting sound of raw flesh being devoured.

Blitzen’s eyes grow wide with horror and disgust. She shrieks, deerishly:

BLITZEN
Oh my– what the-

A Viking zombie stumbles to its feet and makes its way towards her.

Jason’s voice howls out:

JASON (O.S.)
I hear you! Get to the helico- Oh, my god, no! Nope! What the…

Sounds of a fight and a zombie skull squish. His footsteps recede, at a sprint.

Blitzen’s EYES process the scene around her: what’s this threat?! Are there other monsters? It’s so dark! She squints.

Behind her, another Viking zombie swipes at her rear hip with a snarl.

She screams again, provoking more snarls in the darkness. Uh- oh!

EXT. ST. NICHOLAS SQUARE - NIGHT

Katarina is speaking, actually enjoying leading the dress rehearsal, now.

KATARINA
… and so it is my great honor to present to you, North Pole City’s longest-running “quintette”, together since 1955… THE ELVETTES!

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Five youthful-looking ELVETTES, dressed in glitteringly Christmasy ELF-MEETS-ELVIS COSTUMES, assume the spot before the statue of St. Nicholas, and rollicking music starts to play: “Santa Bring My Baby Back (to Me)”!

Off to the side, the REINDEER gossip, unheard, amongst themselves, looking around ostensibly for Blitzen.

Miranda and Estrid walk together to a screen near the Portal, as Miranda seems to explain something.

ELVETTES
(sing)
SANTA BRING MY BABY BACK TO ME.
SANTA BRING MY BABY BACK TO ME.

LEAD ELVETTE steps forward from the center.

LEAD ELVETTE
I DON’T NEED A LOT OF PRESENTS…

KATARINA
(off to the side, quietly)
Well…

LEAD ELVETTE
TO MAKE MY CHRISTMAS BRIGHT.
I JUST NEED MY BABY’S ARMS WOUND AROUND ME TIGHT.
OH, SANTA, HEAR MY PLEA:

ELVETTES
SANTA BRING MY BABY BACK TO ME!

EXT. NORTH POLE - NIGHT

As the song continues in the background, Blitzen is using her hooves to bitch-slap a Viking zombie, whose forward shamble is barely interrupted.

BLITZEN
What are you?!

VIKING ZOMBIE #1
Aaaaargh…

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BLITZEN
NOT HELPFUL INFORMATION, YOU CRrrETIN!
(shrieks again)
Get away! Leave! Why are you so mean! Fu- Hoof you!

She kicks off three more undead with her back legs(!) in rapid succession: THUD! THUD! THUD!, right, left, right. They each fall backwards and flail to get up.

She pummels her primary, front-on Viking zombie attacker with her front hooves until her hoof penetrates its chest cavity.

It falls backwards into the snow with a GRUNT and a SNOWY PFFT, and its wound leaks green fluid and old blood into the snow… perfect Christmas colors!

BUT IT’S GETTING BACK ONTO ITS FEET!

Her eyes: “WHAT?!”

She spins back towards North Pole City, and her attackers, including the leaky one, regroup. She takes off at a gallop.

The song continues in the background, and the lyrics are: “Please make these reindeer hurry, their time is drawing near…”

INT. SANTA’S OFFICE - NIGHT

Kris is now fully dressed in his uniform again. The Elvettes’ song is just barely audible from here, mostly as the rhythm/bass, with muffled lyrics.

Bjorn runs a lint roller over him.

KRIS
Thank you so much, Bjorn! I know this isn’t your usual purview.

BJORN
It’s my honor, Mr. Santa.

Kris smiles.

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KRIS
Well, I’d better get to the rehearsal and finish it out. How do I look?

BJORN
Just like you ought to, sir. Perfect.
(pause, then, humbly bold)
Mr. Santa… I have wondered… Freya. I … think I… I think I might like her… and you have a wife. I wonder if…

Kris turns, magnanimous and joyous.

BJORN
I’m sorry, sir. You must get out there.

KRIS
(a bit disappointed)
Quite right.
But I’m delighted to hear you finally-

EXT. ST. NICHOLAS SQUARE - NIGHT

The Elvettes continue their performance.

Katarina can’t help but bop a little bit to the music.

LEAD ELVETTE
…AND FILL MY HEART WITH JOY, THEN SANTA, HEAR MY PLEA:

Miranda and Estrid do a little dance together at the monitor for The Portal. As far as they know, their work is done for right now.

Ominous music creeps in underneath the jaunty bass line.

ELVETTES
SANTA BRING MY BABY BACK TO ME!

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EXT. NORTH POLE - NIGHT

The song is audible clearly in the distance, echoing loudly from North Pole City several hundred yards off.

Blitzen runs, but another Viking zombie emerges from the darkness directly in her path. This one seems to be off by itself and is seemingly attracted by the glittering lights or music of the town.

Blitzen tries to avoid it, but stumbles and takes a tumble. While trying to get up, the undead fiend sets upon her. She kicks, and it stumbles back.

It lurches forward as she gets up, and her antler impales it under its chin and up through its skull, lifting the head clear off its body.

The head dies instantly, and the body crumples into the snow.

She screams again, trying to shake the head off of her antler, but it’s stuck fast.

She takes off at a full gallop once more, still trying to shake the head off her antler.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Kris and Bjorn walk down the hallway. The song is reaching a climax in the background. Otto walks out of a doorway and bows, blushingly.

KRIS
At ease, my dear friend. At ease. And thank you for the delicious cake.

Otto utterly glows with honored pride.

EXT. ST. NICHOLAS SQUARE - NIGHT

The square is full of life: elves, humans, and reindeer alike drawn out of whatever else was on their minds, most of them full-on dancing along with The Elvettes as they perform their grand finale:

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ELVETTES
SANTA BRING MY BABY BACK, OH,
SANTA BRING MY BABY BACK.
OH, SANTA BRING MY BABY BACK TO
MEEEEEEEEEEEE!

CHEERS! APPLAUSE!

LEAD ELVETTE
(over the applause)
Long live Christmas!
And also Hanukkah and Kwanzaa and
Solstice!

Blitzen sprints into the square, the now-un-undead head still impaled on her antler.

BLITZEN
Help me! Someone help! PLEASE HELP
ME!

The cheers are too loud. She looks around frantically.

In breathless desperation, she leaps up onto the main platform, in front of The Elvettes, who are shocked.

In the brighter light, a mix of red blood and green goo runs down from her antlers, over her neck, down the rest of her body.

The applause turns into gasps and a few boos.

Rudolph runs towards the stage.

RUDOLPH
What’s the meaning of this?

DANCER
This is not the time, Blitzen!

KATARINA
Is everything all right, dear?

BLITZEN
(frantic)
Noooooooo! Someone, look at my
head! Or its head!!! There are
dozens, and they tried to eat
me!!!

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A confused, frightened babble courses through the crowd as they finally notice what’s impaled on her antler.

Some elves scream in panic over the hubbub as Katarina takes center stage, gently laying a comforting hand on Blitzen’s neck, carefully avoiding any … fluids.

KATARINA
Everyone, please try to remain calm. We’ll figure out what’s happening.

“ENH! ENH! ENH!”: A loud alarm starts sounding, and red lights flash.

Katarina looks around in bewilderment.

Miranda and Estrid, at the console for The Portal, exchange looks of concern.

MIRANDA
What the-

ESTRID
I’ve gotta go!
(starts to run, stops just long enough to add:)
Something’s happening! I’ve never seen-COME!

Estrid dashes away, as the reindeer aside from Blitzen and Rudolph, rush to where she was just standing, and turn their attention to the screen of the console.

Miranda, also gazing intently at the screen, sees shambling, lack-of-heat figures advancing as EXCLAMATION POINTS on the screen, towards St. Nicholas Square.

She looks around to take in the surrounding scene. Without conscious intent, while assessing the situation, she comfortingly strokes Dancer between her antlers.

Dancer flinches.

DANCER
What do we do?

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Miranda looks in the direction Estrid ran, and she’s gone. Miranda’s eyes reply wordlessly to Dancer: “I have no idea.”

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