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THE NIGHT BEFORE

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THE NIGHT BEFORE was first performed on March 23, 2007 by the Village Playhouse of Wauwatosa at the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts in Brookfield, WI, as part of the 22nd Annual Wisconsin Playwrights Original One-Act Festival: Tom Zuehlke, producer, and Mike Crowley, director.

VIDA: Heather Clayton

REMY: César Gamiño

SANTA: Mark Wyss

THE NIGHT BEFORE

HOLIDAY FARCE. It's the night before Christmas and all through the house, there's a creature stirring, but it isn't a mouse! Sound asleep, Remy and Vida awaken when they hear a loud crash. As Remy searches the house in the dark, he encounters Santa Claus, mistakes him for a burglar, and accidentally shoots him. When Remy calls the police to report that Santa has been shot, the police just think he's had a few too many Christmas cocktails. Not knowing what to do, Vida suggests hiding Santa's body in the freezer or living as fugitives in Paraguay. But with a little bit of blackmail, a smidgeon of vengeance, a recumbent bicycle, and a 50-inch high-definition TV, Remy celebrates his best Christmas ever! This short holiday play is easy to stage and will spread holiday laughter – guaranteed!

Performance Time: Approximately 20 minutes.

CHARACTERS

(2 M, 1 F)

VIDA: Slightly neurotic; wears pajamas.

REMY: Vida's naïve, innocent husband; wears pajamas.

SANTA CLAUS: Wears a Santa suit with "CK"
monogrammed on the collar.

SETTING

Christmas Eve. Vida and Remy's bedroom. There is a bed and a nightstand with a lamp and telephone far SL. SR and DS should remain open.

PROPS

Gun
Large chocolate chip cookie
Coat, for Remy
Suitcase
Camera phone

SOUND EFFECTS

Crash
Gunshots
Car starting and squealing away

**“YOU KNOW,
IN THIS DAY AND AGE,
SANTA OUGHT
TO KNOW BETTER
THAN TO SNEAK
INTO SOMEBODY’S HOUSE
IN THE MIDDLE
OF THE NIGHT!”**

—REMY

THE NIGHT BEFORE

(AT RISE: Christmas Eve, evening. Vida and Remy are in bed. Vida is awake and Remy is sleeping. Pause.)

VIDA: Remy? Are you awake? Remy! *(She punches him to wake him.)* Remy!

REMY: Huh...? What...?

VIDA: I didn't wake you, did I?

REMY: What is it? What's the matter...?

VIDA: Remy, I heard something...I'm not sure exactly what it was...I heard some kind of a noise...It was loud and it woke me up. I think it came from downstairs...

REMY: No...I'm sure it was nothing...

VIDA: It woke me up!

REMY: Just the house settling...

VIDA: Remy! It was not the house settling!

REMY: You were probably just dreaming. What time is it?

VIDA: No, Remy, listen to me: I think someone could be inside our house.

REMY: Inside the house? No, Vida...it was just the cat.

VIDA: We don't have a cat.

REMY: Sure we do. An orange tabby...

VIDA: I'm allergic to cats.

REMY: Why did I think we had one?

VIDA: We've never had a cat.

REMY: Just as well. I don't particularly like cats... *(He rolls over to go back to sleep.)*

VIDA: What are you doing? No, don't go back to sleep! Remy, I heard something!

REMY: Vida, if we don't have a cat, then you can't possibly have heard a cat...

VIDA: I didn't say I heard a cat! Remy, wake up...I think someone could be in the house! We could have a serious situation on our hands...

(Vida turns on a bedside lamp.)

REMY: Vida...please...the light...

VIDA: Remy, I think someone could be in the house. Didn't you hear what I said? I think I heard someone breaking into our house. Didn't you hear it?

REMY: No, I didn't hear anything.

VIDA: How could you not? It was loud.

REMY: You know why I didn't hear it? Because I was sleeping, because I am tired, because I had a very long day. Now, put out the light, Vida, and go back to sleep.

VIDA: I'm sure I heard something. I heard a sound and it woke me up. Or, I woke up and then I heard a sound. Either way, I heard something.

REMY: Put the light out. Please? It's blinding me.

VIDA: Is it bothering you?

REMY: Yes, very much.

VIDA: Well, it's bothering me knowing someone could be breaking into our house.

REMY: No one is breaking into our house.

VIDA: You're not listening to me: I definitely heard a noise. It sounded like glass breaking, like maybe a window breaking. Remy, please, you have to go and check...

REMY: It's the dead of night, and I'm in my pajamas. The house is cold, the bed is warm...I don't want to get out of bed right now. I'll check it out in the morning when the light is better.

VIDA: There could be someone in our house right now.

REMY: Then, chances are, they'll be gone by morning. Now turn out the light, and come back to bed. You know what a grouch I can be when I don't get my 11 hours...

VIDA: How can you sleep knowing that someone could be in our house?

REMY: Turn out the light, and I'll show you...

VIDA: Please, Remy. I'd feel better knowing for certain that there's no one inside the house. *(No response.)* Remy!

REMY: Inside? You think someone broke a window and came inside the house? Aren't you forgetting about the alarm system? If somebody broke a window, it would trigger the alarm system. All the lights would be on, not just the one that's blinding me. And the alarm company would be calling. The phone would be ringing right now. So, seeing as how all the lights aren't on and the phone isn't ringing, it's safe to assume no one is in our home!

VIDA: But...I'm sure I heard something.

REMY: I believe you, Vida! I'm sure you did hear something, but it probably came from outside. Most likely it was one of those raccoons knocking over the garbage cans again. Every morning we're picking up toppled garbage cans. You know what a racket they make.

VIDA: What if the alarm isn't working? What if...what if they cut the wires!? What if...what if you didn't activate it? What if you forgot to turn it on? Can't you just go downstairs and check? I know I heard something...I'd feel better knowing...

REMY: Vida, I'm telling you everything is all right! The alarm is on and it works. This house is more fortified than Fort Knox. We've got deadbolts on all the doors, bars across the downstairs windows...there is no way that anyone is getting inside this house. You're safe in here. I'm here. There's nothing to worry about. Now go back to bed...

VIDA: There's no point to going back to bed. Not in the state I'm in. Look at me. My hands are shaking. There is no way I'm ever getting back to sleep. I'm wide awake...

REMY: (*Flirtatious.*) Really?

(*He nuzzles her.*)

VIDA: Remy...all right. How about this...I'll make a deal with you: If you go downstairs and check the house, when you get back, when you've determined that everything is okay...then we can have a cuddle if you still want to...

REMY: After I go downstairs? That's a tempting offer...but I'll pass...

VIDA: Remy! What is the matter with you? Why won't you go and check?

REMY: Because I'm tired of this! You wake me up twice a week because you "heard something" and every time it turns out to be raccoons knocking over the garbage cans! I have done everything you have asked to fortify this house! There is no way anybody is getting in here without us knowing. Now, we are going to put our heads back on our pillows, and we're going back to sleep. These middle-of-the-night antics of yours have to stop. I don't want any more talk about sounds in the night! I'm tired and —

(A crash is heard offstage.)

VIDA: What was that? Did you hear that?

REMY: Yes, I heard that...

VIDA: Someone is in here! What are we gonna do?

REMY: We're gonna keep quiet, and we're gonna stay calm. Turn out the light!

VIDA: Is somebody in here!

REMY: Vida, the light! Now be quiet! Just hold on and stay calm and let me check it out... *(Remy creeps around to the edge of the SL flat, peers around the corner, and listens.)* I don't hear anything... Nothing. You see? It probably came from outside...

(Crash.)

VIDA: That definitely came from inside! What are we gonna do?!

REMY: It's all right! Just stay calm... *(Remy lifts up the mattress and retrieves a gun.)* I've got this covered.

VIDA: You've got a gun? You never told me you had a gun.

REMY: It's for protection.

VIDA: When did you get a gun? Is that a good idea? Why don't we just call the police?

REMY: The police will never get here in time—if they decide to show up at all. We can handle this ourselves. I know how to use a gun. Stay here. Wait for me to come back...

VIDA: No way! You think if something happens to you they won't come looking for me? I'm not staying up here alone...I'm coming with you.

REMY: All right. But stay behind me and keep quiet.

(Remy and Vida disappear behind the flat.)

VIDA: *(Offstage. Shouts.)* Remy! There he is! He's got something in his hand!

REMY: *(Offstage. Shouts.)* Hey! Stop! No!

(Vida screams and then several gunshots are heard. A few moments later, a man wearing a Santa Claus suit and holding a large chocolate chip cookie, staggers in mortally wounded, and collapses. After a moment, Remy and Vida enter, running.)

VIDA: Oh my gosh! Remy! You shot Santa Claus!

REMY: Is that...? No! It can't be. Is that really Santa Claus?

VIDA: It's not the UPS man!

REMY: It's somebody dressed up as Santa! Pretty good ploy, don't you think? Dressing up as Santa and breaking into people's houses during the holidays...

VIDA: Remy, look at the monogram on his collar: "C.K."

REMY: Calvin Klein?

VIDA: Chris Kringle!

REMY: Right, right!

VIDA: You shot Santa Claus!

REMY: That would explain why the alarm didn't go off—he came down the chimney!

VIDA: He's dead!

REMY: Dead? Are you sure?

VIDA: Yes! Oh my gosh, Remy! You killed an unarmed Santa!

REMY: It was dark! I thought he had a gun!

VIDA: It's a cookie! He's holding a cookie!

REMY: I thought he was a burglar...you know, in this day and age, Santa ought to know better than to sneak into somebody's house in the middle of the night! People are prepared to defend themselves!

VIDA: This is bad! This is so very bad! What are we gonna do?

REMY: We're going to remain calm, and we're going to call the police and explain what happened. It was an accident...

VIDA: Are you kidding? Call the police? Do you think they won't arrest you...press charges?

REMY: I thought someone was robbing my home...I have the right to defend my home...

VIDA: Do you really think it will matter to anybody if it actually was self-defense? You killed Santa...and I'm an accomplice! They'll have us all over the TV, have our picture in every newspaper! Remy, there is no way we can go to the police with this. It would be suicide!

[END OF FREEVIEW]