

*The Life and Adventures
of Santa Claus*



Adapted from the story by L. Frank Baum

Tracy Wells

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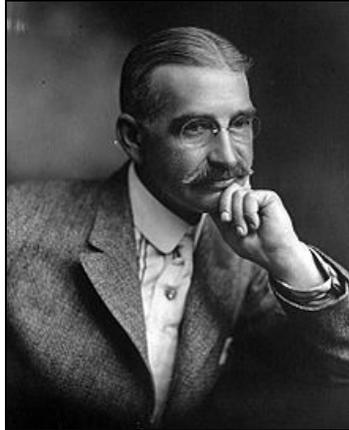
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For Connor and Natalie

The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus

HOLIDAY CLASSIC. Adapted from the book by L. Frank Baum. As a baby, Santa Claus is found orphaned in the Forest of Burzee and is adopted by a wood nymph. When Santa becomes an adult, he goes to live in the Laughing Valley and begins to make toys in his workshop and give them to children in the nearby village. This enrages the Lord of Lerd, who has banned all toys in the village. Santa's toys have also angered the Awgwas, who are annoyed that the children are so busy playing with toys, they don't have time to be naughty anymore. The Awgwas, with the help of the Lord of Lerd and Jack Frost, set out to rid the land of Santa Claus once and for all. Young audiences will delight in learning Santa's real name and what it means, how he became immortal, who built his workshop, why he loves the color red, and why he delivers toys at night.

Performance time: Approximately 75-90 minutes.



Lyman Frank Baum (1856-1919)

About the Story

Children's book author L. Frank Baum was born in Chittenango, NY, and grew up on his family's large estate. Baum loved Christmas and was known for dressing as Santa Claus for his family. *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus* was published in 1902, and Baum published a sequel in 1904 entitled, "A Kidnapped Santa Claus." Santa, Ryls, and Knooks appear again in Baum's novel *The Road to Oz* in which the Wizard of Oz makes giant soap bubbles to carry them back to the Laughing Valley. Baum's best known work is his children's novel, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, which is the basis for his 1902 musical *The Wizard of Oz* and the 1939 film adaptation featuring Judy Garland. Baum wrote 55 novels, 83 short stories, and 200 poems before he died of a stroke in 1919. He spoke these final words to his wife before he died: "Now we can cross the Shifting Sands." This is a reference to the magical dessert that surrounds the Land of Oz, which causes anyone who sets foot onto the sand to turn into sand, thus cutting Oz off from the rest of the world.

Characters

(9 M, 9 F, 23 flexible)

(With doubling: 7 M, 9 F, 16 flexible)

SANTA CLAUS: Young man at the start of the play who grows into the older, white haired and bearded Santa Claus at the end of the play; wears at least one article of red clothing until he dons a traditional Santa suit near the end of the play; male.

JACK FROST: Creates ice and snow and likes to nip at the noses of children; yearns to live in the Forest of Burzee; wears blue and white and is adorned with snow and ice; male.

AK: Master Woodsman; wears a cloak and white clothing that is adorned with leaves, flowers, and twigs; has a long beard and carries a long wooden staff; male

NECILE: Claus's foster mother, a wood nymph; wears green and is adorned with leaves and twigs; female.

QUEEN ZURLINE: Queen of the wood nymphs; wears green and is adorned with leaves and twigs; female.

NELKO: Wood nymph; wears green and is adorned with leaves and twigs; female.

KILTER: Wood nymph; wears green and is adorned with leaves and twigs; female.

FAIRY QUEEN: Fairy; wears wings and a pastel flowing costume; female.

WISK: Fairy; wears wings and a pastel flowing costume; female.

RYL PRINCESS/PRINCE: A Ryl, an elf-like creature; wears a crown and purple clothing adorned with flowers; flexible.

NUTER: A Ryl, an elf-like creature; wears pink clothing adorned with flowers; flexible.

YELLOW: A Ryl, an elf-like creature; wears bright yellow clothing; flexible.

- RED:** A Ryl, an elf-like creature; wears bright red clothing; flexible.
- BLACK:** A Ryl, an elf-like creature; wears black clothing; flexible.
- GREEN:** A Ryl, an elf-like creature; wears bright green clothing; flexible.
- BLUE:** A Ryl, an elf-like creature; wears bright blue clothing; flexible.
- PRINCE WILL:** A Knook, a gnome-like creature, who is the guardian of the forest animals; wears grey and brown clothing; male.
- PETER:** A Knook, a gnome-like creature; wears grey and brown clothing; male.
- LORD/LADY OF LERD:** Rich lord/lady of the village who has outlawed toys in the village; wears expensive-looking clothes; flexible.
- BESSIE BLITHESOME:** Rich, spoiled daughter of the Lord/Lady of Lerd who would like to have friends and play with toys; wears an expensive-looking dress; female.
- MAYRIE:** Girl who lives in the village; wears rags in shades of gray and brown; female.
- WEEKUM:** Mayrie's brother; wears rags in shades of grey and brown; male.
- MARGOT:** Girl who lives in the village; wears rags in shades of gray and brown; female.
- NED:** Boy who lives in the village; wears rags in shades of grey and brown; male.
- MERCHANT 1, 2:** Village merchants who want to hire children to work for them for pennies; flexible.
- FLOSSIE:** One of Claus's reindeer; flexible.
- GLOSSIE:** One of Claus's reindeer; flexible.
- KING/QUEEN OF WATER SPRITES:** Wears blue clothing adorned with water-like accessories; flexible.
- KING/QUEEN OF SLEEP FAYS:** Carries a bag filled with glitter; flexible.
- KING/QUEEN OF SOUND IMPS:** Carries a bugle; flexible.

KING/QUEEN OF WIND DEMONS: Wears flowing grey clothing; flexible.

KING/QUEEN OF LIGHT ELVES: Wears bright yellow, reflective or sequined clothing that catches the light; flexible.

KING/QUEEN AWGWAS: Fearsome beast and ruler of the Awgwas; wears a crude crown made of "stone"; flexible.

AWGWAS 1-5: Fearsome beasts; flexible

YOUNG CLAUS: Claus at age 5; wears at least one red article of clothing; male.

ADOLESCENT CLAUS: Claus at age 13; wears at least one red article of clothing; male.

Options for Doubling

YOUNG CLAUS/WEEKUM (male)

ADOLESCENT CLAUS/NED (male)

MERCHANTS/FLOSSIE/GLOSSIE (flexible)

KING/QUEEN OF WATER SPRITES/AWGWAS (flexible)

KING/QUEEN OF SLEEP FAYS/AWGWAS (flexible)

KING/QUEEN OF SOUND IMPS/AWGWAS (male or
female.)

KING/QUEEN OF WIND DEMONS/AWGWAS (male or
female.)

KING/QUEEN OF LIGHT ELVES/AWGWAS (male or
female.)

Setting

The Forest of Burzee and Laughing Valley.

Set

Forest of Burzee. there should be a few free standing trees and an optional forest backdrop. Trees and woodland plants are present.

The Village. There should be shop fronts and houses with chimneys painted in brown and grey and looking as if they were made of stone and wood, circa 1500-1600s. One house has a window and door that opens. If set allows, Claus can be seen on top of a roof entering the chimney. All scenery should be in shades of brown and grey.

Claus's workshop in Laughing Valley. A window with a view of a mountain and meadow is CS. Inside the workshop is an empty shelf, a bed, and a worktable with tools and a stool. There is a small fireplace with a stack of logs and smaller pieces of wood next to it.

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I

Scene 1: The Forest of Burzee.

Scene 2: The village.

Scene 3: Claus's workshop in Laughing Valley.

Scene 4: The village.

Intermission

ACT II

Scene 1: The Forest of Burzee.

Scene 2: The village.

Scene 3: The Forest of Burzee.

Scene 4: Claus's workshop in Laughing Valley.

Props

Small basket for baby doll	Large toy bag
Baby doll	2 Wooden toy soldiers
Red baby blanket	Wooden toy sailboat
2 Carts for Merchants	Wooden puppy
Misc. wares for Merchant's carts	6 "Rock" swords, for Awgwas
2 Baskets with handles	Gray beard (not white), for Claus
Small package of chicken bones	Toy bear
Large horn, for Ak	Toy horse
Ax	2 Wands, for Fairies
Chisel	2 Thorns, for Ryls
Hammer	2 Vines, for Knooks
Pillow	4 Tree branches
Blankets	Glitter
Pot of flowers	2 Toy dolls
Small wood pieces	Sleigh (opt.)
Wooden cat	Wooden flute
Painted wooden cat	Small potted pine tree
5 Small paint cans labeled red, blue, green, yellow, and black	Christmas tree ornaments
5 Paintbrushes	White wig, for Claus
	White beard, for Claus
	Traditional Santa suit with large belly

Special Effects

Door knock
Howling wind
Nighttime lighting
Bright light effect

*“Man is only able to live upon this earth
for a short while.
He must toil for the things he needs
and then pass away
as the leaves do in autumn.
Yet every man has his purpose,
which is to leave the world better
than he found it.”*

—Claus

ACT I

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Forest of Burzee. Trees and woodland plants are present. A small basket containing a baby doll wrapped in a red blanket is at the base of a tree. Necile enters, followed by Nelko. Both are wearing green dresses with ornaments of leaves and twigs.)

NECILE: What a glorious day to be a wood nymph!

NELKO: Oh, Necile, you think every day is glorious in the Forest of Burzee.

NECILE: Well, it is! Our forest home is such a magical, wondrous place filled with beautiful trees that need the care of wood nymphs like us to make sure they grow big and strong.

NELKO: And they sure have grown big and strong.

NECILE: I remember when these trees were saplings. It seemed like it would take forever for the saplings to turn into fully grown trees. But here we are—many years later—and they are magnificent.

NELKO: Many years later is right! What birthday are you celebrating this year? Is it 212 or 213?

NECILE: It's 219, actually, although I don't look a day over 187, if I do say so myself!

(Necile and Nelko giggle.)

NELKO: We should probably begin our chores for the day. These weeds aren't going to pull themselves.

NECILE: How true! *(Starts to pull "weeds" near a tree.)* We have tended to these trees for many years and have fended off weeds, drought, and have even stopped the dreaded Gadgols from wounding the tree trunks with their dangerous poisons. The trees are big and strong now and only need us to maintain them.

NELKO: How wonderful is that! It means we have done our duty as wood nymphs.

NECILE: Yes, but there must be more to our work than just pulling weeds and watering roots. Don't you ever feel like there's something missing, Nelko?

NELKO: Quiet, Necile! You wouldn't want Ak, the Master Woodsman, to hear you. He wouldn't like you saying such things.

NECILE: He just wants to make sure that the woods and forests are protected and that all of the creatures that reside here live in harmony. I have no wish to change that. I just wish there was something more out there for me.

NELKO: If you don't water that tree over there, then you will have plenty to do. Its leaves are already drooping. If it doesn't get some water soon, you'll be busy trying to keep it alive.

NECILE: I suppose you're right. I'm just going to collect some water from the stream to feed this tree's thirsty roots. *(Starts to cross to the tree where the basket is located. Sees basket.)* What's this? *(Bends down and picks up the doll.)* Why, it's a baby! A human baby boy!

NELKO: A baby?! What's a baby doing out here? We are miles from human civilization.

NECILE: I don't know. *(Snuggling doll.)* But isn't he adorable?

NELKO: Don't get too attached, Necile. You know it is against the laws of the forest for nymphs to interact with humans. Queen Zurline won't like this one bit.

NECILE: But he's all alone and needs someone to care for him. I could be his mother. I'll make Queen Zurline see how much I want to care for this child.

(Ak and Queen Zurline enter.)

NELKO: It looks like you won't have to wait very long to speak with her. Here she comes. And she's brought Ak, the Master Woodsman, with her.

(Zurline and Ak approach. Nelko and Necile curtsy.)

AK: *(To Nelko and Necile.)* It's always nice to see wood nymphs hard at work protecting the forest.

ZURLINE: *(Indicating baby.)* What do you have there, Necile?

NECILE: *(Holding doll tightly.)* Please don't be angry with me, Your Majesty. But I found this human baby lying in a basket over by that tree. He is all alone, you see, and needs someone to care for him.

ZURLINE: I suppose you think you are the one who should be caring for this child?

NECILE: It would make me ever so happy if you would allow it, Your Majesty. You see, I have toiled in these woods for more than a century and have cared for these trees as if I were their own mother.

AK: And what a fine job you have done, Necile.

NECILE: *(Smiles.)* Thank you, Master Woodsman.

ZURLINE: That is what we nymphs do best...we care for trees and forest plants. We don't care for children. Are you unhappy being a wood nymph?

NECILE: I have enjoyed my work these many long years, but, lately, I have begun to feel like something is missing from my life. All that's left for me to do here in the forest is to maintain the work that I have already done. What I yearn to do is to help bring new life into this world. If I were to care for this child, then I could do that.

ZURLINE: *(To Ak.)* The human race has never penetrated the Forest of Burzee. Allowing Necile to care for this child would break the laws established by you, Master Woodsman. I leave it to you to decide what is to become of this child.

AK: For the first time within my knowledge, a nymph is asking to defy my laws.

NECILE: (*Holding out baby.*) I implore you, Master Woodsman, to look upon the sweet face of this infant. See how weak and helpless he is. Surely, he cannot harm our beautiful forest home.

NELKO: But the law...

NECILE: The law is made by the Master Woodsman. If he allows me to care for the baby, then who in this world has the right to oppose me?

ZURLINE: (*Chuckles.*) I'm afraid she has you trapped, dear Ak. Now you must give us your decision.

AK: (*Stroking his beard thoughtfully.*) Necile shall keep the baby, and I will give it my protection. But I shall warn you all that this is the first time I have relaxed the law, and it shall be the last time. Nevermore, until the end of the world, shall a mortal be adopted by an immortal. Otherwise, we would abandon our happy existence for one of trouble and anxiety.

NECILE: Oh, thank you, kind Ak.

NELKO: What will you call him, Necile? He must have a name.

NECILE: I shall name him "Claus," for that means "little one."

[END OF FREEVIEW]