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Family Plays

Freely adapted from L. Frank Baum's
A Kidnapped Santa Claus

Santa Claus is Missing!

Fantasy
with optional music



Book and lyrics by Sylvia
Ashby

Music by Scott Taylor

Santa Claus is Missing!

“Students at all grade levels were very attentive ... they understood the serious parts, laughed during the comical parts ... All of the faculty had positive statements about the play and actors. The length was just right.”

(Principal, Lubbock High School, Lubbock, Texas)

Fantasy with optional music. Book and lyrics by Sylvia Ashby. Music by Scott Taylor. Freely adapted from the L. Frank Baum book, A Kidnapped Santa Claus. Cast: 1m., 1w., 9 either gender. A band of symbolic demons, such as Hateful, Jealous and Selfish, try to kidnap Santa Claus to keep little children from enjoying Christmas. Since the demons and Repentance represent abstractions—personifications of abstract qualities in the manner of the medieval morality plays—it is important to clearly establish their characters as quickly as possible. A simple identification option would be to label the demons with letters on their costumes. The Santa Claus pictured here is lovable, though a bit scatterbrained. Mrs. Claus is the one who keeps him in line. She is warmhearted, but the effort to maintain order tries her patience. The humor in the Claus situation derives from the fact that this is a conventional relationship transposed to the fantasy realm. Even the youngest children very much enjoy the story and follow the action. Originally designed for touring, the play works in any kind of performance space: in school cafeterias, libraries, or on stages. There are two locales: Santa’s Shop, which requires a work table, and the Demon’s Cave, which requires two pillars or a pole. This play has been performed with and without songs. Audiences seem to prefer it with songs. The music is simple and the songs are easy to learn. Production notes are available at the back of the playbook. Area staging: Santa’s shop area on stage right and the demons’ cave on stage left. All characters except Santa and his wife can be men or women. Approximate running time: 30 to 40 minutes. Piano-vocal score available. Vocal score available. Demo/accompaniment CD available. Code: SX2.

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Santa Claus is Missing!

SANTA CLAUS IS MISSING!

Freely adapted

by

SYLVIA ASHBY

from L. Frank Baum's

A Kidnapped Santa Claus

with music by

SCOTT TAYLOR

A 'Stage Magic' Play

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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(SANTA CLAUS IS MISSING!)

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SANTA CLAUS IS MISSING!

Cast

WISK, an acrobatic Elf
PETER, an awkward Elf
PIXIE, a conscientious Elf
SANTA CLAUS
MRS. CLAUS
HATEFUL, the chief Demon
JEALOUS, a Demon
SELFISH, a Demon
REPENTANCE
RUDI, a Reindeer
TRUDI, a Reindeer

Note: All the characters except Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus may be male or female.

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First produced in December, 1988, by Lubbock, Texas, High School under the direction of Cynthia Johnson; and by Slaton Junior High School, Lubbock, Texas, under the direction of Carrie Chandler.

ABOUT THE PLAY

This script is freely adapted from an L. Frank Baum story, "A Kidnapped Santa Claus." Originally designed for touring, the play works in any kind of performance space—in school cafeterias, in libraries, on stages. There are two locales: Santa's Shop, which requires a work table; and the Demon's Cave, which requires two pillars or a pole.

Because the Demons and Repentance represent abstractions—personifications of abstract qualities in the manner of the medieval morality plays—it is important to clearly establish their characters as quickly as possible. Identifying the Demons through letters on their costumes is a simple but helpful device.

The Santa Claus pictured here is lovable though a bit scatterbrained. Mrs. Claus is the one who keeps him in line. She is warm-hearted, but the effort to maintain order tries her patience. The humor in the Claus situation derives from the fact that this is a conventional relationship transposed to the fantasy realm.

Even the youngest children very much enjoy the story and follow the action. Referring to Lubbock High School performances in the elementary school cafeteria, a principal wrote, "Students at all grade levels were very attentive . . . understood the serious parts, laughed during the comical parts . . . All of the faculty has positive statements about the play and actors. The length was just right . . ." (About thirty minutes)

This script has been performed with and without songs. Audiences seem to prefer it with songs. A piano/vocal score is available from the publisher; the music is simple, the songs easy to learn. Production Notes can be found at the back of this playbook.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Though this script can be presented in more elaborate fashion, these notes suggest some of the easier ways to handle production elements.

Properties

Small hand mirror, gaudy jewelry—Selfish
 Giant hanky—Jealous
 Small whip—Hateful
 Large calendar—Hateful
 Long list—Santa Claus
 Toys, including some stuffed animals—Elves
 Dolls—Mrs. Claus
 Cap—Wisk
 Walking staff—Repentance
 Sack—for toys
 Ankle and wrist chains—hang from pillars
 Clubs—Demons
 Sleigh—can be constructed of plywood or cardboard and ride on rollers or slide on a wooden runner. If only the front of sleigh is used, it should be high enough to mask Santa's sack which he'll have to carry along—with reins in the other hand.
 Locks—not realistic but something large, exaggerated. The locks don't actually have to open and close; all this business can be mimed.
 Keys for locks—Demons

Costumes

Costume the **Demons** in exaggerated outfits to show they are not real but more monster-like, though not too frightening. Their identifying letters can be painted or sewn on. **Hateful** is garbed in all black. **Repentance** wears a long robe. To further set him apart from the Demons, design Repentance's "R" in an old-fashioned or Gothic style, and give the Demon's modern, block letters. **Selfish**'s mirror can go into a pocket or hang from a belt. **Reindeer** can get along without realistic animal outfits; the antlers are the main ingredient—plus festive costume pieces. For protruding ears, **Rudl** can use some red add-ons.

Lights and Sound Effects

Lighting effects are not indicated in the script. If the play is performed on a conventional stage, lights can be dimmed as the action shifts between Shop and Cave. And night—with moon and stars—can be suggested for Santa's travel and capture.

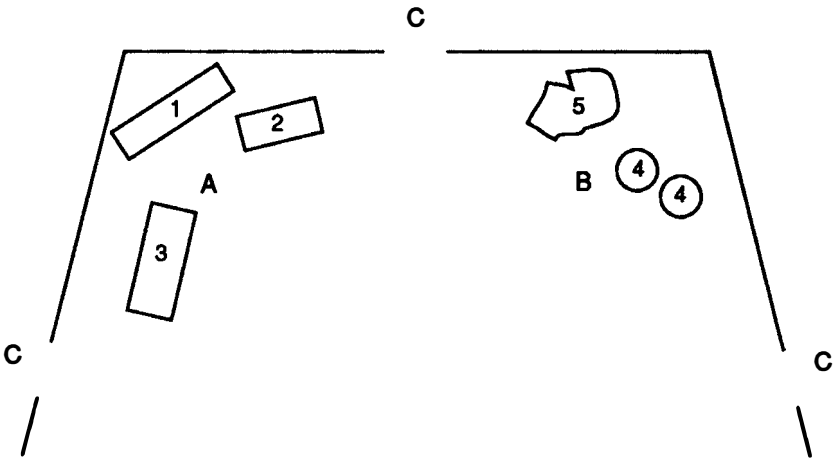
Whenever the Reindeer enter, there is a loud jingling. There is also a loud horn blast right before the Elves descend on the Demons.

Ending

It is important to give the Demons a fairly good thrashing to satisfy childrens' sense of justice.

Set

Because of the simplicity of the scenery, the show lends itself to touring. Mainly, an abundance of colorful toys sets the scene for Santa's shop. The cloth on the work table also adds color. The Demon's cave requires some way of chaining Santa: Consider pillars—described in script—or a single sturdy pole (perhaps a hall tree). A rock or bush can suggest the entrance to the cave.

Floor Plan**A—Santa's workshop**

- 1—Shelves filled with toys
- 2—Workbench or toy chest
- 3—Work table covered with bright cloth

B—Demon's cave

- 4—Pillars or poles
- 5—Rock or bush (optional)

C—Entrances and exits

SANTA CLAUS IS MISSING!

[Santa's shop is at Stage Right; the Demon's cave at Stage Left. Demons wear monstrous, unrealistic costumes, their chests blazoned with identifying letters, Superman-style. SELFISH, always admiring herself in a small hand mirror, is a vain vamp, laden with gaudy jewelry. JEALOUS, always complaining, constantly bawls into a giant hanky. Their leader, HATEFUL, is mean and tough: He wears a menacing black outfit, falls into threatening "Muscle-Man" poses, carries a small whip tucked in his belt.]

AT RISE: HATEFUL, followed by SELFISH and JEALOUS, enters with large calendar]

HATEFUL. Do you know what day this is! *[Rips off huge "23" revealing "24"]*

SELFISH & JEALOUS. *[Snarling]* Yes! December 24!

SELFISH. It's that awful time of year again—

JEALOUS. Our cave is EMMMMP-TYYYYYY! *[Blubbers noisily into hanky]*

SELFISH. All because of him—that horrible Santa Claus!

HATEFUL. That Claus person ruins things for all of us—

JEALOUS. By making children *[bawling]* HAAAPP-YYYYY!

DEMONS. How dreadful!

SELFISH. And happy children are *[sneering]* good children!

DEMONS. How disgusting!

HATEFUL. He brings joy to their grubby little faces! I hate that fatso. *[Hurls calendar off. As the Demons converse, SANTA enters Workshop at Stage Right, stands quietly checking off very long list]*

JEALOUS. How about me! Do children pay attention to Madame Jealous? *[Indicates the "J" on her chest. More weeping]* OHHHH NOOOOOOO.

SELFISH. Cry baby! No one visits me either! *[Pointing to "S" on chest]* Lady Selfish: The one and only, the world's first and foremost, the lovely and enchanting: Me!

JEALOUS. Lady Selfish! Bragging again as usual!

SELFISH. Madame Jealous! Whining again as usual. What about *[quickly]* me, me, me? I'm lonesome too, you know. *[Showing off]* Well, what do you think of my new outfit?

JEALOUS. You always have a new outfit. *[Attacking her]* NOT FAIRRRRR. *[This turns into a noisy hair-pulling squabble]*

SELFISH. Jealous because clothes look good on me, me, me?

HATEFUL. *[Breaking up battle]* Stop fighting and listen!

JEALOUS. What is it now? Another speech?

HATEFUL. Fellow Demons, times have changed. In the good old days, boys and girls were bad. Mean and hateful—like me!

SELFISH. Selfish—like me!

JEALOUS. Jealous—like me!

SELFISH. Our cave was busy then. *[SANTA carefully rolls up long list]*

JEALOUS. Nowadays Santa makes toys for youngsters everywhere. Does anyone give me toys? *[Cries noisily]* OHHH NOOOO.

HATEFUL. QUIET!

SELFISH. Nowadays Santa makes youngsters polite and playful! What good does that do me, me, me?

HATEFUL. If they don't care about you, how do I—Prince Hateful—stand a chance?

JEALOUS. *[Sniveling]* All because of one fat old man in a red suit! *[SANTA puts list in pocket and exits]*

SELFISH. Santa Claus! What a ridiculous name for a grown man.

HATEFUL. *[Indicating each one]* Once upon a time, being Hateful—or Selfish—or Jealous—counted for something. But not any more:

Music No. 1: DOWN WITH SANTA CLAUS

DEMONS. *[Singing]*

Down, down, down with Santa Claus.

Children are good now—

Act like they should now—

Down, down, down with Santa Claus!

Children are sweet now;

We can't compete now—

Down, down, down with Santa Claus!

JEALOUS. Children reject us . . .

SELFISH. We don't matter any more.

HATEFUL. Children neglect us . . .

DEMONS. So life is such a bore.

SELFISH. It's plain to see

They don't care about me, me, me.

HATEFUL. It's plain as day

He's in our way—

DEMONS. Down, down, down with Santa Claus!

[DEMONS exit Left. Focus shifts to Santa's shop. Piled with toys, a work table is covered by a bright cloth. Santa's half-filled sack sits downstage. Squealing and laughing, three fun-loving ELVES bring toys, play tag]

WISK. Peter, watch me! Watch me. *[Does acrobatic bit]*

PETER. Wisk, watch me! Watch me. *[Fails miserably attempting cartwheel. ELVES play leapfrog as SANTA enters, joining their fun]*

SANTA CLAUS. Watch me! Watch me! *[Plays leapfrog with Elves. ELVES squeal and applaud. During Santa's antics, MRS. CLAUS enters with dolls. Good-hearted and motherly, she struggles in vain to maintain order]*

MRS. CLAUS. Aren't you getting a little old for that sort of thing, dear?

SANTA CLAUS. I can't help it—I'm in a wonderful mood. Tonight's the night. I can hardly wait! *[Befuddled]* My list! My list! *[MRS. CLAUS produces list from Santa's boot. ELVES play catch with stuffed animals]*

MRS. CLAUS. Pixie!

PIXIE. *[Curtseys, a bit shamefaced]* Yes, ma'am.

MRS. CLAUS. Peter!

PETER. *[Bows, also shamefaced]* Yes, ma'am.

MRS. CLAUS. Wisk!

WISK. *[Cartwheels]* Yes, ma'am. *[Grinning]*

MRS. CLAUS. Good gracious! This is a workroom, not a playground!

ELVES. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. CLAUS. Santa, I am at my wit's end. Your Elves do nothing but play, play, play.

SANTA CLAUS. Now, dear. Everyone knows that Elves are supposed to have a good time. 'Specially today. Besides, they've worked hard all year long. *[ELVES sing and dance:]*

Music No. 2: ELF, ELF, ELF

PIXIE. I'm happy I'm me,
I'm glad I'm myself!

PETER. I'll always be
A merry elf!

PIXIE. A merry little, very little . . .

ELVES. Elf, elf, elf!

[Snatching Wisk's cap, PETER plays keep-away with PIXIE]

PETER. A happy little, snappy little . . .

ELVES. Elf, elf, elf!

PETER & PIXIE. A pleasing little, teasing little . . .

ELVES. Elf, elf, elf!

A hurry scurry

No time to worry

Little elf, elf, elf!

[SANTA intercepts cap, runs off pursued by ELVES]

MRS. CLAUS. *[Calling after them]* Gracious sakes! Do you know what day this is!

[MRS. CLAUS exits Right as DEMONS enter cave]

HATEFUL. December 24th! That spells trouble!

JEALOUS. And what are we doing about it? NOTHIINNNG!

Hateful, we don't even have a plan.

HATEFUL. Where's that lazy no-good Repentance?

SELFISH. You mean . . . *[on bended knee]* Mr. "Oh, I'm sooooo sorry!"

JEALOUS. You mean . . . *[on bended knee]* Mr. "Oh, will you pleasee forgive me?"

HATEFUL. *[Agreeing]* That's Repentance!

SELFISH. He's back there in his den, I suppose. *[Not grotesque or harsh like Demons, REPENTANCE enters with a tall walking staff and wearing a long robe adorned by large "R" on chest. Elderly Repentance tends to be indecisive, hesitant]*

JEALOUS. *[Moaning]* Our cave is empty, Repentance. But so is your den!

REPENTANCE. *[Trying to explain]* Because—because the time for Repentance is *after* an evil deed.

SELFISH & JEALOUS. Yeah—yeah—we know all that!

REPENTANCE. But if—if young folk are well behaved—they can do without my services.

SELFISH. Then you admit Santa's bad for your business also!

HATEFUL. *[Threatening]* You're in this mess too. Along with us.

REPENTANCE. [*Sadly*] True enough. [*Gesturing to each Demon*] When youngsters aren't jealous or selfish or hateful, they have little need for repentance.

SELFISH & JEALOUS. For Mr. "Oh I'm soooo sorry."

HATEFUL. [*Snarling*] Tomorrow morning those creatures will laugh and sing—

JEALOUS. [*Whimpers*] OHHH NOOOOO.

HATEFUL. All because of jolly old You-Know-Who!

JEALOUS. [*More whimpering*] NOT FAIRRR.

SELFISH. [*Filing nails*] Personally, I think all that white fur looks cheap!

HATEFUL. Let's go to his workshop and wreck those nasty toys. [*Flexing muscles*]

REPENTANCE. No, Prince Hateful. Santa's shop is under special protection. Everything is safe there.

JEALOUS. Maybe we can tempt him into our cave?

SELFISH. [*Seductive*] I can lure him over. Easily.

JEALOUS. [*Sneering*] You!

SELFISH. [*Primps*] When I put on the old charm, he'll melt like snow in summer.

JEALOUS. [*Sarcastic*] That I'd like to see!

HATEFUL. [*Crossing quickly*] Hurry up. I'm ready to knock some sense into old Ho Ho Ho.

SELFISH. [*Showing Jealous*] Santa will simply love this new bracelet.

JEALOUS. Do I ever get anything new? [*Weeps*] OHHH NOOOOOOO!

HATEFUL. QUIET! What about you, Repentance? Coming with us?

REPENTANCE. I—I can't decide . . . It's—it's all very confusing.

SELFISH & JEALOUS. [*Mocking*] "On one hand—"

REPENTANCE. I certainly am neglected—like all of you—

SELFISH & JEALOUS. "But on the other hand—"

REPENTANCE. [*Defensive*] I rather like the old gentleman!

HATEFUL. So we do all the dirty work! Good-bye, Repentance!

SELFISH & JEALOUS. Mr. "Ohhh, I'm soooo sorrryyy!" [*DEMONS laugh. REPENTANCE reluctantly exits as DEMONS cross to Santa's shop, singing:*]