

THE HOUSE OF SANTA CLAUS

A Christmas Fairy Show

By Edward Eggleston

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ARRANGEMENT OF THE STAGE:

The stage should not be less than twelve feet in depth nor less than fifteen in width. The beauty of the stage is greatly enhanced by surrounding it with a fence of popcorn. There should be upright posts back center, should be bits of lath eighteen inches high, the lower end nailed to the edge of the platform, and the whole wrapped with strings of popcorn. Then draw two strands of the corn from post to post, to represent horizontal rails. At down center, there should be a gate with a pointed arch over the top. This should also be of lath, wrapped with popcorn. There should be three strands in the gate and a diagonal brace. The popcorn fence is not essential, but it is a great addition to the beauty of the scene, giving the stage a weird and fairy-like appearance, and contrasting finely with the dark green behind. Down R. and down L., two small Christmas trees may be planted.

The house is centered in the back between the upright posts, and is nine feet in length and six in depth. It should be about six feet high at the eaves. The frame is of studding, and it is first covered with lath nailed six inches or more apart. Cedar boughs are then so interwoven as to entirely cover it. The roof is thatched in the same way. A chimney can be made by knocking out both ends of a packing-box such as is used for shoes. The box is kalsomined or painted to look like stone; cleats are nailed around the chimney near the top, to imitate ornamental stonework. The box is securely nailed to the timbers of the house, and there is a ladder inside the house, so arranged that Santa Claus can put his head and shoulders out at the top. Down right of the house is a doorway two feet wide, in which is a door on hinges. Make it open frame covered with pink tissue-paper. The window down L. of the house is two feet square and made like the door, but intersected with strings of popcorn for sashes. Over the doorway is a transparency like a transom. It reads "Santa Claus," and is lighted by a lantern behind. The house should be provided with a doorbell. Every precaution must be taken against fire. The house should stand about two feet from the wall, and the back may be left open.

Back L. and R., two pumpkin faces are suspended or put upon any support that may be found convenient.

On stage L. there should be either a miniature tent or a dense arbor of evergreens. If the tent is used, a Chinese lantern may be suspended on the top outside.

CHARACTERS, COSTUMES, ETC.:

-Santa Claus: Should be a boy of fourteen or sixteen years of age, with good acting qualities, especially a sense of drollery. He should have any appropriate costume, wig, mask, etc. He carries a snuff-box and a red or yellow handkerchief. He is also provided with a whistle.

-The Dwarfs (Drako & Krako): Two boys of ten or twelve of age. They wear masks and a red tunic of paper-muslin, stuffed, to give them a hunchback appearance. They carry staffs, little tin trumpets, stoop as they walk, and speak in a squeaky falsetto. Their stations are just inside the house in the back L. and R. They appear from behind the house in every case except the very last.

-The Fairy Queen: Should be a little girl from six to nine years of age, dressed in gauze, with

wings of the same material. Stripes or stars, or spangles of gold paper, add to the effect of her dress. She wears a coronet and carries a wand.

-The Committee: Should consist of three girls in ordinary dress. They may use their real names. Committee 3 should be a rather small girl.

SCENE

PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS:

The superintendent, pastor, or director conducts the introductory exercises from some point in front of the stage. No one must be seen on the stage until the dialogue begins.

At the time of beginning, the house conceals Santa Claus and his two dwarfs, and a grown person who has charge of the lights and who acts as prompter. There is no light on the stage except that in the transparency over the door, and that in the pumpkin faces. There are a large number of tapers or lamps inside the house, carefully arranged to avoid the danger of fire. These are not lighted until the signal is given in the dialogue. The Fairy Queen is concealed in her bower far center L., with some one who has charge of her, and an automatic music-box, that stands upon the floor of the platform, wound up and ready to be started at the proper time. The Committee of girls sit in the audience, and not together.

After appropriate introductory exercises, a teacher (or stage manager) rises in his place and speaks in substance as follows:

TEACHER: Mr. Superintendent (or Mr. Director if not at a Sunday-school), I see some very pleasant decorations here, but no presents or refreshments for the scholars. I move that a committee of three be appointed to go up to Fairyland and inquire of Santa Claus. I would like to know why this Sunday-school has been left out.

ANOTHER TEACHER: I second that motion.

(Superintendent puts this question to vote, and declares it carried, in due form.)

SUPERINTENDENT: I would appoint--let me see--girls are better at coaxing than boys, I think--I will appoint 1, 2, and 3. *(Calling The Committee girls by their real names)*, who will please come forward.

(1, 2, and 3 rise from their places in their several classes, and come forward to the superintendent.)

SUPERINTENDENT: Girls, you see we are without any candy or anything of the sort for our scholars. Old Santa Claus has forgotten us. He never did so before. Now I want you three to proceed to Fairyland and see if you can find him. Tell him we must have something. Don't come down without something. We can't have all these children disappointed.

(The Committee proceed by the steps to the stage C. L. They stop to examine the first pumpkin face.)

3: What a strange face! Wonder who it is!

2: One of Santa's tricks, I suppose.

1: They do say that he's full of fun. But this must be his house. Let's find the door. *(All proceed to the front.)* Here it is.

2: Isn't it cute? I'd like to live here.

3: And play dolly-house?

1: Here's a doorbell. Santa Claus has all the latest improvements, I declare.

2: Ring it.

3: No, don't; I'm afraid.

1: Pshaw! Santa never hurts anybody. Don't you see his name over the door? *(Rings. After a pause.)* I wonder why he doesn't answer. Maybe he isn't at home.

2: Gone sleigh-riding, as sure as I live!

3: I guess he's gone to bed. Maybe his mama wouldn't let him sit up late.

1: Let's look around, and see what we can find. You two go around that side, and I'll go around this. See if you can't find him behind the face that's hanging up there.

(1 goes to the left, around the house, while 2 and 3 go around to the right. They proceed timidly to the back of the house, out of sight of the audience, whereupon the dwarfs blow sharp blasts upon their horns, and the girls all rush back to the front of the house.)

1: I'm so scared!

2 and 3: Oh, dear! I'm so scared!

1: What could it be? Guess old Santa Claus made that noise just for fun. I wish the superintendent had come himself, or sent some of the boys!

2: I'll bet the boys would run from that noise. Don't you?

1: Yes. Boys never are as brave as girls, anyhow. But let's go back again, and see what there is there.

3: I'm afraid.

1: Well, you stay here, and 2 will go that way, and I will go this way.

(1 again goes to the right, 2 to the left. They proceed more timidly than before to the rear of the house, disappearing behind it. The dwarfs blow their horns, the girls reappear, crying out in alarm, and the dwarfs run out after them. The girls hurry back to the front of the house, followed by the dwarfs--one

coming round end of the house, the other round the other. They speak in high, squeaky tones.)

DRAKO: What do you want?

KRAKO: What are you doing here?

1: We want Santa Claus. But we did not know there were two Santa Clauses.

(The Dwarfs laugh long and loud.)

DRAKO: We are not Santa Clauses. We are the dwarfs that take care of Santa Claus's store-rooms, full of goodies and presents.

KRAKO: But there's nothing left to take care of now. Santa's given away all he had this Christmas.

1: But we must see old Santa. Our Sunday-school has been left without anything, and we want to see good old Claus himself.

DRAKO: But you can't. He's asleep.

KRAKO: He was out all night last night, and now he's tired to death and sleeping like a top. Thunder wouldn't wake him.

1: But we must see him.

2 and 3: Yes, we *must*.

KRAKO: If you'd been riding over roofs all night--

DRAKO: And climbing down chimneys--

KRAKO: And filling stockings--

DRAKO: And Christmas trees--

KRAKO: And climbing up chimneys again--

DRAKO: And getting your hands and face all over soot--

KRAKO: And driving reindeer--they *do* pull--

BOTH DWARFS: I guess you'd be sleepy too.

1: But we must have something for the children.

2 and 3: We *must* have something.

DRAKO: There isn't a thing left.

KRAKO: Not a thing.

1: What will the superintendent say?

2: What will the children say?

3: What will the infant class say?

1: And what will the deacons say?

2 and 3: Yes, what will the deacons say?

BOTH DWARFS: Deacons! Oh, my! Ha, ha! *(The Dwarfs now give a blast apiece, and retreat into their hiding places.)*

1: Well, I'm going to wake up old Santa Claus.

2: Maybe he'll be cross.

1: But we must have something. *(Rings.)* I wonder why he doesn't answer.

3: Ring louder.

1: Well, here goes. *(Rings three or four times.)*

(Santa Claus, appearing at the top of the chimney, blows his whistle.)

1, 2, and 3: Oh, dear!

SANTA CLAUS: Who's there? Who rang my bell, I'd like to know? Pity if I can't sleep Christmas night, when I'm tired to death. Who's there, I say?

1: Oh, you dear old Santa Claus! Don't be angry. Some of your little friends have come to Fairyland to see you. Come down.

SANTA CLAUS: Ha, ha, ha! Some of my little friends come to see me! Well, well! *(Blows his whistle.)* Light up the house, fairies, light up the house. *(Whistles again, and then descends the chimney and reappears at the front door. The house is lighted within.)* How do you do, girls? How do you do? *(Shakes hands all around, and then, with great deliberation, takes a pinch of snuff.)* Well, I'm glad to see you. What can I do for you?

1: Why, you see, Santa Claus, our Sunday-school is left without anything this Christmas.

SANTA CLAUS: *(Sneezes and uses his bandana.)* What? You don't tell me so! What's the name of your school?

1: The _____ Sunday-school.

SANTA CLAUS: Oh, yes! And your superintendent is Mr. _____? I know him like a book. I've filled his stockings many a time when he was a little fellow. I don't know how I came to miss that school. But

you see, I'm getting old and forgetful.

2: How old are you, Santa?

SANTA CLAUS: Oh, now! Do you think I'd tell you that?

3: You must be as old as the Centennial.

SANTA CLAUS: Pshaw! I used to fill George Washington's stockings when he was a little boy.

2: No! Now, did you?

SANTA CLAUS: Of course I did.

2: What did you put in them?

SANTA CLAUS: What did I put in little Georgie Washington's stockings? Well, now, that's more than a hundred years ago, and an old man's memory isn't strong. I can't remember but one thing.

1: What's that?

SANTA CLAUS: A hatchet.

2: Oh, my!

3: That same little hatchet?

SANTA CLAUS: The very same little hatchet. (*Laughs.*) But I did not give him the cherry-tree.

1: Yes; but we must have something for our school, good Santa Claus.

SANTA CLAUS: But you can't. I've given away all I had, and turned the reindeer out on the mountains to pasture, and the times are so hard that I can't afford to hire a lively team.

1: Yes; but we must have something.

2: Yes; we must, dear old Santa.

3: Yes, indeed.

SANTA CLAUS: (*Takes snuff and sneezes.*) Well, what *is* to be done? How many scholars have you got this year?

1: About _____.

SANTA CLAUS: So many! Why, you must be growing. I hope you haven't any Christmas bummers among them--folks that come to Sunday-school to get something to eat. I hate that kind.

2: I don't think we have many of that sort.

SANTA CLAUS: Well, I always did like that school, and now I've gone and forgotten it! I wish something could be done. (*Blows his whistle long and loud, and shouts.*) Dwarfs, here! Drako, where are you? Krako, come! Wake up! (*Whistles again.*)

(*Enter Dwarfs, each blowing his horn.*)

SANTA CLAUS: Now, my little rascals, what have you got for the _____ Sunday-school?

BOTH DWARFS: (*Bowing very low.*) Nothing, my lord.

SANTA CLAUS: (*Takes snuff and sneezes.*) I don't see that I can do anything for you.

1: But we cannot go back without something. The children will cry.

SANTA CLAUS: Dwarfs, go and look again.

(*They go back behind the house as before. After a time, they reappear.*)

DRAKO: We cannot find a thing.

KRAKO: Not one thing.

SANTA CLAUS: (*Takes snuff.*) Well, my little friends, this is very embarrassing--very; but I haven't a thing left.

1: But we can't go back. What will the superintendent say? We must have something.

2: Something or other.

3: Yes, something.

SANTA CLAUS: I'll go and see myself. (*Exit into house. After a considerable delay, reenters.*) Yes, I find a box of candy, nuts, and popcorn in the closet.

1, 2, and 3: Candy, nuts and popcorn! Good!

SANTA CLAUS: What have you got to put the things in?

1: Why, we haven't got anything.

SANTA CLAUS: Well, then, the children will have to take off their stockings and let me fill them.

1, 2, and 3: Oh, Santa Claus! We couldn't, such a cold night as this.

SANTA CLAUS: (*Takes snuff, looks perplexed, walks about the stage.*) Well, I don't know what to do.

1: Oh, dear!

2: Oh, dear!

3: Oh, dear! Dear! Dear!

SANTA CLAUS: (*Starting up.*) Now I have it.

1: Have what?

SANTA CLAUS: An idea.

3: An idea? (*Addressing 1.*) What's an idea? Can you put candy into an idea?

1: Be still, 3. Let's hear what Santa Claus's idea may be.

SANTA CLAUS: I know who will help me out of this trouble. There's my friend the Fairy Queen.

1: The Fairy Queen!

2: Oh, my!

3: Goody! Goody! Goody!

(*Santa Claus blows three blasts on his whistle and listens. The music-box in the fairy bower begins to play.*)

SANTA CLAUS: Listen! She's coming!

1: Fairy music!

2 and 3: Sh-h!

(*The Fairy Queen comes down from L., skipping and reciting or singing.*)

FAIRY QUEEN:

In the secret rocky dell,
There the fairies love to dwell;
Where the stars on dewdrops glance,
There the fairies love to dance.

BOTH DWARFS: (*Bowing to Santa Claus.*) The Fairy Queen, my lord!

SANTA CLAUS: (*Bowing.*) Hail, Queen of the Fairies!

1, 2, and 3: (*Bowing.*) Hail, Queen of the Fairies!

FAIRY QUEEN: (*Bowing.*) Hail, Santa Claus! Hail, little friends!

Oh, stocking-filler Santa Claus,
I heard you whistle--what's the cause?
You rough and shaggy childrens' friend,

Why did you for a fairy send?

SANTA CLAUS: (*Taking snuff.*) Why, you see, here's a Sunday-school forgotten, ____ hundred children! I want to give them something. But they haven't got anything to put it in.

FAIRY QUEEN:

How would fairy stockings do?
White or black or pink or blue?

1: Fairy stockings!

2: Oh, my!

3: Goody! Goody! Goody!

FAIRY QUEEN: (*Waving her hand toward C. L.*)

Whatever Santa Claus shall say,
That let Fairyland obey.

SANTA CLAUS: (*Entering the house and blowing his whistle.*) Fill up the stockings, fairies; fill up the stockings.

(The Dwarfs enter, this time by the front door, and return, carrying between them a basket full of little pink tarlatan stockings filled with candy, nuts, etc., which are then distributed to the children.)

CURTAIN