

THE LEGEND OF THE TOYMAKER

Written by H. Schussman

Based on Life and Adventures of Santa Claus
By L. Frank Baum 1902

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Draft
information

Contact
information
Cell Number (916) 591-5712
Email h.schussman@yahoo.com

FADE IN

EXT. FOREST - DAY

From ground level we can see young tree-trunks, standing close together, with their roots intertwining as they burrow into the earth. Their rough coating of bark, and strange gnarled limbs and branches intertwine above. The world is young.

NARRATOR

Have you heard of the enchanted Forest of Burzee? For thousands of years it has flourished in all its magnificence, the silence of its enclosure unbroken except by the chirp of busy chipmunks, the growl of wild beasts and the songs of birds.

Here sounds are soft and earthy. A fat bee buzzes past the camera. Above, the bushy foliage roofs the entire forest. The sunbeams find a path through which to touch the ground in little spots, casting weird and curious shadows over the mosses, the lichens, and the drifts of dried leaves.

NARRATOR (cont'd)

Yet Burzee has its inhabitants. Nature peopled it in the beginning with Fairies, Knooks, Ryls and Nymphs. As long as the Forest stands it will be a home, a refuge, and a playground to these sweet immortals who live undisturbed in its depths.

NECILE the Nymph springs into being; radiant, lovely, straight and slim as the sapling she was created to guard. Her hair is the color of a chestnut; her up-tilted eyes are as dark as olives; her cheeks bloom a vibrant coral over her warm complexion; her lips are full red, pouting, and sweet.

All nymphs are female and similar in appearance. For costume she wears an oak-leaf green flowing tunic; all the wood-nymphs dress in that color. Her dainty feet are sandal-clad.

NARRATOR (cont'd)

Once, long ago there lived within the great Forest of Burzee a wood-nymph named Necile. When she was created she could not have told; Queen Zurline could not have told; the great Ak himself could not have told.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)

It was long ago when the world was new and nymphs were needed to guard the forests and to minister to the wants of the young trees.

Necile's home is beneath the shade of a wide-spreading tree. When the trees put forth their new buds, Necile runs from tree to tree checking on her precious buds.

She pulls hurtful weeds growing near her trees and she carries water from the brooks and pools to moisten the roots of her thirsty dependents.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Now, centuries later, the trees are older and sturdy and can bear the drought better than when fresh-sprouted.

So Necile's duties have lessened. She wanders from tree to tree in the dense forest, but there are no weeds now. Necile looks bored as flicks a leaf in passing.

She walks almost to the edge, where she looks longingly through the trees at the valley beyond.

Another pretty Nymph gently pulls Necile from the edge, back into the deep forest. Necile is dejected.

While this mood lay heavy upon Necile it chanced that the great AK, THE MASTER WOODSMAN visits the Forest of Burzee. Ak welcomes the wood-nymphs, who, as is their custom, gather at his feet and listen to his words of wisdom. Ak is tall, and very stout and strong. His ebony skin is a startling contrast to his grey beard and long wavy grey hair.

Ak is sitting next to QUEEN ZURLINE, and Necile sits at his feet and earnestly listens.

Ak, stroking his grizzled beard thoughtfully with his powerful knobby hand, speaks with a British accent;

AK

We live so happily in our forest,
that we know nothing of the sorrow
and misery of those poor mortals who
inhabit the open spaces of the Earth.
They are not of our kind, it is true,
yet compassion is important. Often as
I pass by the dwelling of some
suffering mortal I am tempted to stop
and banish the poor thing's misery.

He gently pets the head of a squirrel who is listening attentively. It climbs onto his knee.

AK (cont'd)

Yet suffering, in moderation, is the natural lot of all mortals, and it is not our place to interfere with the laws of Nature.

Queen Zurline nods her auburn head at the Master Woodsman.

QUEEN ZURLINE

Nevertheless, it would not be a vain guess that Ak has assisted these helpless mortals.

Ak smiles sheepishly.

AK

Sometimes, when they are very young I've stopped to rescue them from misery. The adults I dare not interfere with; they must bear the burdens Nature has imposed upon them. But the helpless infants, the innocent children, should be happy until they become full-grown and able to bear the trials of humanity. So I feel I am justified in assisting them. Not long ago -- a year, maybe -- I found some poor children huddled in a wooden hut, slowly freezing to death. Their parents had gone to a neighboring village for food, and had left a fire to warm their little ones while they were absent. But a storm arose and drifted the snow in their path, so they were long on the road. Meanwhile the fire went out and the frost crept into the bones of the waiting children.

Necile scoots forward to hear better. Her eyes are glued on Ak as he speaks.

QUEEN ZURLINE

(softly)

Poor things. What did you do?

AK

I called my assistant, Nelko, bidding him fetch dead wood from my forests and breathe upon it until the fire blazed again and warmed the little room where the children lay. Then they ceased shivering and fell asleep until their parents came.

The Queen beams upon the Master Woodsman.

QUEEN ZURLINE

I'm glad you did thus.

Necile echoes in a whisper:

NECILE

I, too, am glad.

EXT. EDGE OF FOREST - DAY - VISUAL FLASHBACK

On the edge of the forest a wee little infant is flailing about in a bed of grass. A large, beautiful lioness (SHIEGRA-picture adult Nala) is crouched, ready to pounce upon this baby... her dinner.

AK (V.O.)

On this very day, as I came to the edge of Burzee I heard a feeble cry, which I judged came from a human infant. I looked about me and found, close to the forest, a helpless babe, lying quite naked upon the grasses and wailing piteously. Not far away, screened by the forest, crouched Shiegra, the lioness, intent upon devouring the infant for her evening meal.

EXT. FOREST - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

The eyes of every nymph are on Ak as they lean forward to hear what happens next.

QUEEN ZURLINE

(breathlessly)

And what did you do, Ak?

Ak grins mischievously and ruffles the hair of a nearby nymph.

AK
 Not much, being in a hurry to greet
 my Nymphs.

EXT. EDGE OF FOREST - DAY - VISUAL FLASHBACK

AK (V.O.)
 But I commanded Shiegra to lie close
 to the babe, and to give it her milk
 to quiet its hunger.

Shiegra curls her great body around the crying baby. The child quiets and snuggles close to the warmth of Shiegra's belly.

AK (V.O.) (cont'd)
 And I told her to send word
 throughout the forest, to all beasts
 and reptiles, that the child shall
 not be harmed.

EXT. FOREST - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

QUEEN ZURLINE
 I'm glad you did thus.

But this time Necile does not echo the Queen's words, for the nymph suddenly sneaks away from the group.

EXT. FOREST/EDGE OF FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Swiftly Necile's lithe form darts through the forest paths until she reaches the edge of mighty Burzee, where she pauses to gaze curiously about her.

Peering through the trees Necile sees the child lying on the grass. But now it's sweetly sleeping with Shiegra, who is curled around him.

Softly Necile creeps to the side of the babe and kneels upon the grass, her long robe spreading about her like a gossamer cloud.

Shiegra raises her giant head to watch the Nymph, whom she knows.

Necile's lovely countenance expresses curiosity and surprise, but, most of all, a tender, womanly pity. The babe is newborn, chubby and pink. It's entirely helpless. While the Nymph gazes the infant opens its eyes, smiles upon her, and stretches out two dimpled arms.

In another instant Necile has caught it in her arms and is hurrying with it along the forest paths.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

The Master Woodsman suddenly rises, with knitted brows.

AK

There is a strange presence in the Forest.

Then the Queen and her Nymphs turn and see standing before them Necile, with the infant clasped tightly in her arms and a defiant look.

And thus for a moment they remain, the nymphs filled with surprise and consternation.

But the Master Woodsman gazes intently upon Necile. Then the great Ak, to the wonder of all, lays his hand softly on Necile's flowing locks and kisses her forehead.

AK (cont'd)

For the first time within my knowledge,

(gently)

a Nymph has defied me and my laws;
yet in my heart I can find no word of chiding. What is your desire, Necile?

She begins to tremble and falls to her knees in supplication whilst clutching the babe...

NECILE

Let me keep the child!

AK

(in surprise)

Here, in the Forest of Burzee, where the human race has never yet penetrated?

NECILE

Here, in the Forest of Burzee. It is my home, and I am weary for lack of occupation. Let me care for the babe! See how weak and helpless it is? Surely it cannot harm the forest of Burzee, nor the Master Woodsman of the World?

Necile looks up at Ak boldly.

AK
 (sternly)
 But the Law, Necile, the Law!

NECILE
 The Law is made by the Master
 Woodsman. If he bids me to care for
 the babe he himself has saved from
 death, who in all the world dare
 oppose me?

Queen Zurline, who is listening intently to this conversation, claps her hands gleefully at Necile's answer. Laughing, she says;

QUEEN ZURLINE
 You are fairly trapped, O Ak! Now, I
 hope you give heed to Necile's
 petition.

The Woodsman, as is his habit when in thought, strokes his sculpted beard slowly. Then he says:

AK
 Necile shall keep the babe, and I
 will give it my protection. But I
 warn you all, this is the first time
 I have relaxed the Law, so shall it
 be the last time. Otherwise we would
 abandon our happy existence for one
 of trouble and anxiety. Good night,
 my Nymphs!

Then Ak is gone from their midst in a split second, and Necile hurries away to her bower with her new-found treasure.

EXT. NECILE'S HOME - DAY

The next day finds Necile's bower the most popular place in the Burzee Forest. The Nymphs cluster around her, as the child lay asleep in her lap, with expressions of curiosity and delight.

Even the Queen comes to peer into the innocent baby's face and to hold a helpless, chubby fist in her own lovely hand. The queen smiles lovingly at Necile.

QUEEN ZURLINE
 What shall we call him, Necile? He
 must have a name you know?

NECILE

Let him be called Claus, for that means A Little One.

The Nymphs clap their hands in delight.

Necile gathers the softest moss in all the forest for Claus to lie upon, and she makes his bed in her own little shelter.

For baby-food the Nymphs search the forest for the Goa-flower which grows upon the slim Goa-tree (this is an invention of Frank Baum) and when the blue balloon-shaped flowers are opened, they are full of sweet milk.

The soft-eyed does willingly give a share of their milk to support the little stranger. While Shiegra, the lioness, creeps stealthily into Necile's bower and purrs softly as she lays beside the babe.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Little Claus flourishes and grows bigger and sturdier day by day, while Necile teaches him to speak and to walk and to play.

He is sweet and gentle as he stoops to set aright a turtle who's fallen on its back. He walks fearlessly though-out the forest visiting the lion's den and the sitting amongst them.

EXT. NECILE'S HOME - DAY

MANY curious immortals come to visit the little stranger, looking upon him with much interest.

The RYLS (males) come to admire Claus. They are cousins to the wood-nymphs, though much shorter and darker. Ryls watch over the flowers and plants. There are five colors represented in the Ryls, which are red, yellow, blue, green, and black. Their clothes match the color they provide to the flowers.

Next come the KNOOKS (males) to shoulder the other immortals out of the way. The Knooks duty it is to watch over the beasts of the world, both gentle and wild. Their anxieties make the Knooks look old and worn and crooked, and their natures are a bit rough.

The FAIRIES (females) flutter up with delicate long wings which are almost translucent, to see the human. Fairies are dainty creatures with fair skin and platinum hair.

Claus looks upon the immortals who throng around him with fearless eyes and smiling lips.

MONTAGE - CLAUS MATURES

-- He rides laughingly upon the shoulders of the merry Ryls;

-- The Fairies bestow little outfits befitting the human child.

-- He mischievously pulls the gray beards of the low-browed Knooks;

-- And rests his curly head confidently upon the dainty bosom of the Fairy Queen herself.

-- Yet, Claus comes to realize he has no one like himself. He compares his hand to a knook's crooked hand, then to Shiegra's paw.

-- His stout legs carry him far into Burzee's heart, where he gathers supplies of nuts and berries, as well as roots.

-- Necile follows him readily through the forest paths, as do many of her sister nymphs, explaining all the mysteries of the gigantic forest. He listens attentively and gazes where they point.

-- The boy laughs when the panther growls, and strokes the bear's glossy coat while the creature snarls and bares its teeth menacingly.

END MONTAGE

EXT. FOREST - DAY

One day Ak comes back to the forest of Burzee. He finds, sitting in the circle of immortals, a broad-shouldered stalwart youth, who stands almost as high as the Master himself. Claus now has a short curly-blond beard and long wavy hair.

Ak pauses, silent and frowning, to inspect Claus. The clear blue eyes meet his own steadfastly, and the Woodsman gives a sigh.

As Ak sits beside the fair Queen, he is strangely silent and reserved. He strokes his beard many times with a thoughtful motion.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The next morning, AK calls Claus aside, in a kindly fashion.

AK

Bid goodbye, for a time, to Necile
and her sisters, for you shall
accompany me on my journey through
the world.

Claus smiles happily, for the adventure pleases him. But Necile weeps for the first time in her life, and clings to the boy as if she cannot bear to let him go. Necile is still as dainty and beautiful as when she dared to face Ak with the babe clasped to her chest... immortal.

Ak beholds the two clinging together, looking like brother and sister, and again he wears his thoughtful look. Taking Claus to a small clearing in the forest, the Master Woodsman says;

AK (cont'd)

Hold tightly to my belt while we
journey; for now we shall circle the
world and look upon many of the
haunts of the men from whom you are
descended.

In silence Claus grasps firmly the belt of the great Ak.

EXT. ABOVE EARTH - DAY

Then the vast Forest of Burzee seems to fall away from their feet, and the youth finds himself passing swiftly through the air at a great height. Before long there are spires beneath them, while buildings of many shapes meet their downward view. It is a city of men and Ak pauses to descend.

EXT. PRIMITIVE CITY - DAY

Ak leads Claus to its enclosure. With a serious look at Claus, Ak says:

AK

So long as you hold fast to my belt
you will remain unseen by all
mankind. To release your grasp will
be to separate yourself forever from
me and your home in Burzee.

Claus grips the belt and remains invisible, only a crinkle in the atmosphere surrounding them indicates their presence.

However, they are visible to each other. Thereafter with each moment passed in the city, the youth's wonder grows. He now finds the earth swarming with creatures of his own kind.

CLAUS

Am I one of these?

Ak nods his head solemnly.

CLAUS (cont'd)

What are we called? I'm not a Nymph,
nor am I a Knook, a Fairy, or Ryle.

AK

You are a mortal man, a human.
Indeed, the immortals are few, but
the mortals are many.

Claus looks earnestly upon his fellows... happy, sad, pleasant, and anxious faces mingle before him.

He watches a group of children romping around in the street.

AK (O.S.)

Childhood is the time of man's
greatest content. 'Tis during these
years of innocent pleasure that the
little ones are most free from worry.

Because they are invisible Claus has to be pulled to the side by Ak to prevent some children from tumbling into them. Ragged little ones roll in the dust of the streets, playing with scraps and pebbles.

CLAUS (O.S.)

Tell me, why don't these babies fare
alike?

Other children, richly dressed strut along with their hands held by servants.

Claus turns his gaze upon Ak, who continues to survey the children.

AK

Because they are born in both cottage
and castle. The difference in the
wealth of the parents determines the
lot of the child. Some are carefully
tended and clothed in silks and
dainty linen; others are poor and
covered with rags.

EXT. FIELD IN A PRIMITIVE CITY - DAY

Claus and Ak descend together at the edge of a field where children are playing while their parents work.

CLAUS

Whether rich or poor, all seem
equally fair and sweet.

AK

While they are babes -- yes. Their
joy is in being alive, and they do
not stop to think. As they become
adults the doom of mankind overtakes
them... they find they must struggle
and worry, work and fret, to gain the
wealth so dear to the hearts of
humans. Such things are unknown in
the Forest where you were raised.

Claus is silent a moment.

CLAUS

Why was I raised in the forest, among
those who are not of my race?

AK

(gently)

I found you abandoned at the forest's
edge and left prey to the wild
beasts. The loving nymph Necile, your
adopted mother, rescued you and
brought you up under the protection
of the immortals.

Claus furrows his young brow in thought.

CLAUS

Yet, I am not one of them.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Claus stands holding Ak's belt in a village. He is surveying his fellow mankind. He watches an extremely ancient man moving slowly down the cobblestone road.

CLAUS

I will become old such as this man?

AK

Yes, you are not immortal. Necile
seems now like a sister to you.

(MORE)

AK (cont'd)

By and by, when you grow old and gray, she will seem like a daughter. Yet another brief span and you will be but a memory, while she remains Necile.

Claus turns to Ak and demands;

CLAUS

Then why, if man must perish, is he born?

Looking askance at Claus, Ak raises two brows in surprise at his tone.

AK

Everything perishes except the world itself and its keepers. But while life lasts, everything on earth has its use. The wise seek ways to be helpful to the world.

EXT. ABOVE EARTH - DAY

Claus remains grave and thoughtful while they resume their journey homeward.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

At last they return to the Forest of Burzee, where the Master sets Claus down within the circle of Nymphs, among whom the pretty Necile anxiously awaits him.

The brow of the great Ak is now calm and peaceful; but the brow of Claus has become lined with deep thought.

Necile sighs at the change in her foster-son, who until now had been ever joyous and smiling.

The Master Woodsman of the World turns his gaze frankly upon Claus and prompts:

AK

Well?

The teen understands, and rises slowly to his feet beside Necile.

Once only, his eyes pass around the familiar circle of nymphs, every one of whom he remembers as a loving comrade.

CLAUS

I have been ignorant until the great Ak, in his kindness, taught me who and what I am. You, who live so sweetly in your forest, ever fair and youthful and innocent, are no fit comrades for a son of humanity.

Tears come unbidden to dim his sight, so he gazes steadfastly at the Master.

CLAUS (cont'd)

For I have looked upon man, finding him doomed to live for a brief space upon earth, to toil for the things he needs, to fade into old age, and then to pass away as the leaves in autumn.

Claus places a fist over his chest dramatically.

CLAUS (cont'd)

Yet every man has his mission, which is to leave the world better in some way than he found it. I'm of the race of men, and man's lot is my lot. For your tender care of the poor abandoned babe you adopted, my heart will be forever grateful. My mother--

Claus stops and kisses Necile's forehead.

CLAUS (cont'd)

I shall love and cherish her while life lasts. But I must leave you, to take my part in the endless struggle to which humanity is doomed, and to live my life in my own way.

He strikes a pose as only a teenager can do.

QUEEN ZURLINE

(speaking gravely)

What will you do?

CLAUS

I must devote myself to the care of the children of mankind, and try to make them happy. Since your own tender care brought me happiness and strength, it is just and right that I devote my life to the pleasure of other babes.

Now he's really getting into it, pacing back and forth, causing several indulgent smiles.

CLAUS (cont'd)

Thus will the memory of the loving
Necile be planted within the hearts
of thousands of children for many
years to come, and her kindly act be
recounted in song and in story while
the world shall last.

Claus stops his strutting and turns to Ak.

CLAUS (cont'd)

Have I spoken well, O Master?

AK

You have spoken well. Yet one thing
must not be forgotten. Having been
adopted as the child of the Burzee
Forest, you have gained a distinction
which forever separates you from your
kind.

Ak comes alongside Claus and puts an arm around his shoulder.

AK (cont'd)

Therefore, when you go forth into the
world of men you shall retain the
protection of the Forest. In any need
you may call upon the Nymphs, the
Ryls, the Knooks and the Fairies, and
they will serve you gladly. I, the
Master Woodsman of the World, have
said it, and my Word is the Law!

Claus looks at Ak with grateful eyes.

CLAUS

This will make me mighty among men. I
will try very hard to do my duty, and
I know the Forest people will give me
their sympathy and help.

QUEEN ZURLINE

We will!

PRINCE OF RYLS

Gladly!
(grinning)

PRINCE OF KNOOKS

You can count on us.
(MORE)

PRINCE OF KNOOKS (cont'd)
(scowling)

FAIRY QUEEN
We are here for you dear Claus!

Necile says nothing. She only hugs Claus and goes up on tiptoe to kiss him tenderly.

CLAUS
The world is big, but men are everywhere. I shall begin my work near my friends, so that if I meet with misfortune I can come to the Forest for counsel or help.

With this he gives them all a loving look and turns away. He goes forth bravely to meet his doom.

But Ak, who knows the teen's heart, is merciful. With a sweep of his gnarled hand he directs Claus' steps from a hidden vantage point.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Coming through Burzee to its northern edge, Claus reaches the LAUGHING VALLEY. On each side are rolling green hills, and a brook wanders midway between them to wind afar off beyond the valley. At his back is the dark Forest; at the far end of the valley, a broad plain.

The eyes of the young man, which had until now reflected his grave thoughts, become brighter as he stands silent, looking out upon the Laughing Valley. Then all of a sudden his eyes twinkle and grow merry and wide.

For at his feet the cowslips and daisies smile up at him in friendly regard; the breeze whistles gaily as it passes by and flutters the locks on his forehead.

The brook laughs joyously as it leaps over the pebbles and sweeps around the green curves of its banks.

The bees sing sweet songs as they fly from dandelion to daffodil.

The beetles chirrup happily in the long grass.

And the sunbeams gleam pleasantly over all the scene.

CLAUS
(shouts happily)
Here!

Claus, stretches out his arms as if to embrace the valley.

CLAUS (cont'd)
Here, in the Laughing Valley, I will
make my home!

While he stands smiling in the sunshine he suddenly sees beside him old NELKO, the servant of the Master Woodsman.

Silent Nelko carries an ax, strong and broad, with a BLADE that gleams like polished silver. This he places in the teen's hand, then disappears without a word.

Claus understands, and turning to the Forest's edge he selects a number of FALLEN tree-trunks, which he begins to clear of their dead branches.

The magical ax bites deep into the logs at every stroke. It seems to have a force of its own, and Claus has but to swing and guide it. He glances at the ax in surprise and strikes again. With a smile he continues.

When shadows begin creeping over the green hills, the young man has chopped many logs into equal lengths and proper shapes for building a cabin.

Then, Claus digs up some sweet roots and eats them, drinks deeply from the laughing brook, and lays down to sleep on the grass, first seeking a spot where NO FLOWERS grow, lest the weight of his body should crush them.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - NIGHT

And while he slumbers a joyful smile appears on his sleeping mouth.

While the moon peers over the hilltop, and floods with its soft beams, the body of the sleeping stranger, the Laughing Valley is filled with the odd, crooked shapes of the Knooks.

The Knooks speak no words, but work with skill and swiftness.

The logs Claus had trimmed are carried to a spot near the brook and fitted one upon another, and during the night a strong and roomy cabin is built.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

The birds come sweeping into the Valley at daybreak, and their songs, so seldom heard in the deep wood, arouse the stranger.

Sitting up, Claus rubs the sleep from his eyes and looks around. The house meets his gaze.

CLAUS
(gratefully)
I must thank the Knooks for this.

Then he walks to his dwelling and looks at the door curiously. He touches it. Nothing happens. He grabs the doorknob and tugs. Scratching his scalp he looks perplexed. Finally he turns the knob and enters with a proud look on his face.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

A LARGE room faces him, having a fireplace at the end and a table and bench in the middle. Beside the fireplace is a cupboard.

Another doorway is beyond. Claus enters here, and sees a SMALLER room with a bed against the wall and a stool set near a small stand. On the bed are many layers of dried moss brought from the Forest.

CLAUS
Indeed, it is a palace!

Claus smiles happily.

CLAUS (cont'd)
I must thank the good Knooks again,
for their knowledge of man's needs
and for their labors on my behalf.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

He leaves his home with a bounce to his step. Upon reaching the brook he drinks of the pure water, and then sits down on the bank to laugh at the mischievous gambols of the ripples as they push one another against rocks or crowd desperately to see which should first reach the turn beyond. And as they race away he listens to the song they sing:

THE BROOK
(chorus singing)
Rushing, pushing, on we go!
Not a wave may gently flow--
All are too excited.
Ev'ry drop, delighted,
Turns to spray in merry play
As we tumble on our way!

Next Claus searches for roots to eat, while the daffodils turn their little eyes up to him laughingly and lisp their dainty song:

DAFFODILS
(chorus singing)
Blooming fairly, growing rarely,
Never flowers were so gay!
Perfume breathing, joy bequeathing,
As our colors we display.

It makes Claus laugh to hear the little things voice their happiness as they nod gracefully on their stems.

A large colorful Butterfly lands on his hand.

BUTTERFLY
Hello Claus, welcome to The Laughing
Valley!

CLAUS
Thank you Miss Butterfly!

But another strain catches his ear as the sunbeams fall gently across his face and sing in a whisper:

SUNBEAMS
(chorus singing
softly)
Here is gladness, that our rays
Warm the valley through the days;
Here is happiness, to give
Comfort unto all who live!

CLAUS
Yes!
(shouts with a
laugh)
There is happiness and joy in all
things here. The Laughing Valley is a
valley of peace and good-will.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

That night he lays on his bed of soft moss and sleeps soundly.

Then come the Fairies, noiseless, bringing skillets and pots and dishes and pans and all the tools necessary to prepare food and to comfort a human. With these they fill the cupboard and fireplace, finally placing a stout suit of wool clothing on the stool by the bedside.

INT. BEDROOM AND MAIN ROOM - DAY

When Claus awakes he rubs his eyes again, laughs and speaking aloud;

CLAUS
Many thanks to my Fairy friends, and
thank you Master Ak for sending them.

With eager joy he examines all his new possessions, wondering what some might be used for. Picking up a pan, he looks curiously at it.

CLAUS (cont'd)
(quietly to himself)
I remember seeing these during my
adventure with the Great Ak. He must
want me to behave like my fellow man.
This means I must plow the earth and
plant food so when winter comes I
shall have saved plenty of food.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

He stands looking at the grassy valley with furrowed brow.

He stretches out his arms.

CLAUS
Ryls of the field flowers...

He utters a peculiar whistle he'd learned in the Forest, afterward he cries:

CLAUS (cont'd)
Come to me!

Instantly the air sparkles and a dozen of the strange little Ryls are squatting upon the ground before him. They nod to him in cheerful greeting.

Claus gazes upon them earnestly.

CLAUS (cont'd)
I have known and loved your brothers
of the Forest my whole life. To me
the laws of the Ryls, whether those
of the Forest or of the field, are
sacred.

He squats down and gently cups a delicate buttercup in his strong hand. The flower smiles lovingly up at Claus.

CLAUS (cont'd)

I have never willfully destroyed one of the flowers you tend so carefully; but I must plant grain to use for food during the cold winter, and how am I to do this without killing the little creatures that sing to me so prettily of their fragrant blossoms?

The Yellow Ryl, he who tends the buttercups, answers:

YELLOW RYL

Fret not, friend Claus. The great Ak has spoken to us about you. We are glad to favor the one the Master Woodsman loves. Therefore, do the good work you're resolved to undertake. We, the Field Ryls, will attend to your food supplies.

After this speech the Ryls disappear.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

When next Claus wanders back to his dwelling, a bowl of fresh milk is upon the table. Bread is in the cupboard and sweet honey fills a dish beside it. A pretty basket of rosy apples and a cluster of grapes are also awaiting him.

He calls out to the invisible Ryls;

CLAUS

Thank you, my friends!

Straightway he begins to eat of the food.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Thereafter, when hungry, he has but to look into the cupboard to find food supplies brought by the kindly Ryls.

His bedroom has warm blankets and clothing in the dresser.

A Knook cuts and stacks wood for his fireplace.

EXT. AWGWA BOULDERS - DAY

The scene is a terrible one. The evil AWGWAS have convened amongst the rocks and boulders, which is their home. They are gigantic in stature and have coarse, scowling countenances which show plainly their hatred of all mankind.

Their skin is grey and bulky, making them resemble the boulders they squat upon.

The KING of the Awgwas, being the ugliest and meanest stands in a commanding position on a high boulder.

KING AWGWA

Let's get to work!

They immediately disperse.

NARRATOR

I must now tell you something about the Awgwas, those terrible creatures who will cause our good Claus so much trouble and nearly succeed in robbing the children in the world of their earliest and best friend.

A little boy is playing around a poisonous berry-producing plant. He looks bored. An invisible Awgwa pushes fruit into his path. Boy picks up the berries and glances towards his home. He takes a bite...

NARRATOR (cont'd)

I do not like to mention the Awgwas, but they're a part of this history, and can't be ignored. They are mortals with magical powers. They're invisible to ordinary people, but not to immortals. They can pass swiftly through the air from one part of the world to another, and have the power of influencing the minds of children to do their wicked will.

The mom holds the boy while he clutches his stomach and writhes in pain.

NARRATOR (cont'd)

They possess no consciences whatever and delight only in evil deeds. Their homes are in rocky, mountainous places.

A little girl is busily making mud pies and talking to her dog, pretending the dog is a guest for dinner.

An Awgwa whispers in her ear. She looks at the house and throws the mud at the wall... splat!

NARRATOR (cont'd)

The Awgwa who could think of the most horrible deed for them to do is chosen to be King, and all the Awgwas obey his orders. Sometimes these creatures live to be a hundred years old, but usually they fight so fiercely among themselves many are destroyed in combat, and when they die that's the end of them. Mortals are powerless to harm them and the immortals shudder when the Awgwas are even mentioned. So they flourished for many years unopposed and accomplished much evil.

The mom sees the mud on her wall. She grabs the girl and makes her scrub it off amidst tears.

NARRATOR (cont'd)

One of the principal sources of power for the Awgwas is to inspire angry passions in the hearts of little children, making them quarrel and fight with one another, and make terrible choices.

An Awgwa laughs with fellow Awgwa at the little mud-thrower's misfortune.

MONTAGE - CLAUS VISITS VILLAGES

-- Seen from far away, Claus walks through his Valley to the plain beyond, and crosses the plain to reach the homes of children.

NARRATOR (cont'd)

Now, when Claus began to make children happy he kept them out of the power of the Awgwas; for children possessing such lovely playthings as he gave them had no need to obey the evil thoughts the Awgwas tried to thrust into their minds.

-- These homes stand singly with little families.

-- or in villages, and in nearly all the houses, whether big or little, Claus finds children.

-- Closer view - The youngsters run to him to see his merry, laughing face and the kind glance of his bright eyes;

-- and the parents regard the young man with some scorn for loving children more than their elders, but are content that the children have found a playfellow willing to amuse them.

-- Close view - The children romp and play games with Claus, and the boys ride upon his shoulders, and the girls nestle in his strong arms, and the babies cling fondly to his knees.

-- Wherever the young man chances to be, the sound of childish laughter follows him.

-- The sad faces of the poor and abused grow bright for once.

-- The cripple smiles despite his misfortune.

-- The ailing ones hush their moans.

-- The grieved dry their tears when their merry friend comes by to comfort them.

-- At the beautiful palace of the Lord of Lerd Claus is refused admittance. The servants at the castle of Lerd slam the door in the young stranger's face.

-- The fierce old Baron Braun leans over his castle wall and shouts down to Claus;

 OLD BARON BRAUN
 Go away! If I catch you here again,
 I'll hang you from a hook on the
 castle walls!

-- Whereupon Claus sighs and goes back to the poorer dwellings where he is welcome.

END MONTAGE

EXT. FOREST - DAY

After a time the winter draws near.

Shiegra becomes lonely and ill at ease without her friend, Claus. She paces at the edge of the forest sadly letting out the peculiar coughing growl of the lion as she gazes at the little cabin in the valley.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

The flowers live out their lives and fade and disappear; the beetles burrow far into the warm earth; the butterflies desert the meadows; and the voice of the brook grows hoarse, as if it has taken cold.

INT. CABIN - DAY

A large fluffy black cat strolls through his front door as though it lives there. It sits and looks up at him, blinking its giant eyes.

CLAUS

Well, hello there, kitty. Do you have a home?

She blinks at him, shakes her head no, and purrs.

CLAUS (cont'd)

Well you have a home now... I will call you Blinkie.

He fills a tiny saucer of milk for BLINKIE, who happily laps it up.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

Soon snowflakes fill all the air in the Laughing Valley, dancing boisterously toward the earth and clothe the roof of Claus's dwelling in a pure white blanket.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

One night someone raps at the cabin door.

CLAUS

Come in!

JACK FROST

Come out! You have a fire inside.

EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

So Claus comes out. It's JACK FROST, the sprite. Jack looks like an ice sculpture, being slightly transparent. He's a slim active fellow.

CLAUS
Well hello Jack Frost! How're you
tonight?

JACK FROST
(waving his arms as
he speaks)
There will be rare sport for me
tonight, Claus! Isn't this glorious
weather? I shall nip scores of noses
and ears and toes before daybreak!

Jack wiggles his fingers happily in Claus's face.

CLAUS
(seriously)
If you love me, Jack, spare the
children.

JACK FROST
(surprised)
But why?

CLAUS
They are tender and helpless.

JACK FROST
But I love to nip the tender ones!
The older ones are tough, and tire my
fingers.

Jack admires his fingertips.

CLAUS
The young ones are weak, and cannot
fight you.

JACK FROST
True... Well, I will not pinch a
child this night.
(beat)
If I can resist the temptation. Good
night, Claus!

CLAUS
Good night Jack.

Jack Frost runs on to the nearest village.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Claus is laughing at the ornery old frost man as he comes in
and closes the door.

He throws a log on the fire, which burns up brightly. Beside the hearth sits Blinkie. Her black fur is soft and glossy, and she purrs never-ending songs of contentment.

CLAUS
(to Blinkie)
I shall not see the children again
until spring.

Blinkie kindly pauses in her loud purring to listen.

CLAUS (cont'd)
The winter is upon us, the snow will
be deep for many months, and I shall
be unable to play with my little
friends.

The cat raises a paw and strokes her nose thoughtfully, but makes no reply.

Claus becomes weary with having nothing to do other than feeding the fire from the big wood-pile the Knooks bring him.

One evening he picks up a stick of wood and begins to cut it with his sharp knife. Claus whistles as he carves away portions of the stick.

Blinkie sits up on her haunches and watches him, listening at the same time to her master's merry whistle.

Claus glances between the cat and the stick he is whittling, until presently the wood begins to have a shape like the head of a cat, with two ears sticking upward.

Claus stops whistling to laugh, and then both he and the cat look at the wooden image and then at each other.

Then he carves out the eyes and the nose, and rounds the lower part of the head so it rests upon a neck.

Blinkie sits up stiffly, as if watching with some suspicion what will come next.

Claus smiles and nods to himself. He plies his knife carefully, forming slowly the body of the cat, which he makes to sit upon its haunches as the real cat is doing, with her tail wound around her two front legs.

The work costs him much time. Finally he gives a delighted laugh at the result of his labors and places the wooden cat, now complete, upon the hearth opposite the real one.

Blinkie thereupon glares at her image, raises her hackles in anger, and utters a defiant meow. The wooden cat pays no attention, and Claus, much amused, laughs again.

Then Blinkie advances toward the wooden image to eye it closely and smell of it intelligently. Satisfied, the cat resumes her seat and her purring as she neatly washes her face with her padded paw.

Claus has made the first toy.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - NIGHT

Snow covers the Laughing Valley now like a white comforter and pillows of downy flakes drift before the dwelling with smoke twirling skyward.

The face of the moon is hidden by dark clouds, and the wind pushes and whirls the snowflakes in every direction.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Claus is idly whittling a piece of wood before his blazing fire while the wind whistles and shrieks in its play outside. Blinkie licks her tail lazily, pausing occasionally to stare at the coals with a look of perfect content.

The toy cat sits opposite the real one and gazes straight ahead, as toy cats should.

Suddenly Claus hears a noise that sounds different from the voice of the wind. It's more like a wail of a child in suffering and despair.

WEEKUM (O.S.)
(barely heard above
the shriek of the
wind)

Help!

Claus jumps up and listens, but the wind, growing boisterous, shakes the door and rattles the shutters. He waits until the wind is tired and then, still listening, he hears once more the cry of distress.

WEEKUM (O.S.) (cont'd)

Help!

Quickly Claus draws on his coat, and pulling his cap on, opens the door. The wind dashes in and scatters the embers over the hearth, at the same time blowing Blinkie's fur so furiously that she creeps under the table to escape.

EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Claus quickly closes the door and he is outside, peering anxiously into the darkness.

The wind tries to push him over, but Claus stands firm. The snowflakes stumble against his eyes and dim his sight, but he rubs them away and looks again. Snow is everywhere, white and glittering. It covers the earth and fills the air.

The cry is not repeated.

Claus turns to go back into the house, but the wind catches him unawares and he stumbles and falls across a snowdrift.

His hand plunges into the drift and touches something that is not snow. This he seizes and, pulling it gently toward him, finds it to be a child. The next moment he has lifted it in his arms and...

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

He carries the child into the house. The wind follows him through the door, but Claus shuts it out quickly with an elbow. He lays the rescued child on the hearth, and brushing away the snow he discovers it to be WEEKUM, a little boy who lives beyond the Valley.

Claus wraps a warm blanket around the little one and rubs the frost from his limbs. Before long the child opens his eyes and, seeing where he is, smiles happily.

WEEKUM

Hello Claus.

The boy's eyes drift closed before Claus can respond. Claus warms milk and wakes the boy. He feeds it to him slowly, while the cat looks on with sober curiosity.

Finally the little one curls up in Claus' arms with a sigh and falls asleep. Claus holds Weekum closely while he slumbers.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

The boy opens his eyes and sits up. Then, as a child will, he looks around the room to see what it contains. After a long moment of looking at Blinkie he says;

WEEKUM

Your cat is a nice cat, Claus. Can I hold it?

Claus nods with a gentle smile. But when Weekum reaches for Blinkie, she runs away and hides under the bed.

Next, Weekum studies the wooden cat.

WEEKUM (cont'd)
The other cat won't run away, Claus.
Can I hold that one?

Claus places the toy in his arms, and the boy holds it lovingly and kisses the tip of its wooden ear.

CLAUS
How did you get lost in the storm,
Weekum?

WEEKUM
I started to walk home from my
auntie's house and lost my way.

CLAUS
Were you frightened?

WEEKUM
Yes. It was cold, and the snow got in
my eyes, and-and I couldn't see. But
I kept on till I fell in the snow,
without knowing where I was, and the
wind blew the flakes over me and
covered me all up.

Claus gently strokes Weekum's head. The boy looks up at him.

WEEKUM (cont'd)
I'm not afraid now.

Claus smiles.

CLAUS
Now I will put you in my warm bed,
and you must sleep until morning.
Then I will carry you back to your
parents.

WEEKUM
May this cat sleep with me?

CLAUS
Yes, if you wish it to.

WEEKUM
It's a nice cat.

Claus tucks the blankets around him, and presently the little one falls asleep with the wooden toy in his arms.

INT. CABIN - DAY

When morning comes the sun floods the Laughing Valley with its rays, so Claus prepares to take the lost child back to his home.

He straps his snowshoes to his feet, and puts on a thick red wool coat.

WEEKUM

May I keep the cat, Claus? It's nicer than the real cat. It doesn't run away, or scratch, or bite. May I keep it?

CLAUS

Yes, indeed.

Claus wraps the boy and the wooden cat in a warm cloak, perches the bundle upon his own broad shoulders, and then...

EXT. VALLEY TO PLAINS - CONTINUOUS

He tramps through the snow, through the drifts in the Valley and across the plain beyond to the poor cottage where Weekum's family lives. A woman is out front feeding a couple of goats.

WEEKUM

See, mama!
(shouts as he nears
the cottage)
I've got a cat!

The woman weeps tears of joy over the rescue of her child and hugs Claus many times.

Claus walks back to his home in the Laughing Valley with a happy smile.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

That evening he says to Blinkie:

CLAUS

I believe the children will love the wooden cats almost as much as the real ones, and they can't hurt them by pulling their tails and ears.

Blinkie nods and switches her tail.

CLAUS (cont'd)

I'll make another.

The next cat is better made than the first. While Claus sits whittling it out he sees a YELLOW RYL approach. Claus opens the door and the Yellow Ryl comes in to pay him a visit.

YELLOW RYL

What are you making?

Claus holds up the carving for inspection.

The Yellow Ryl is so pleased with the man's skill that he runs away and brings several of his fellows back with him.

The RED RYL, the BLACK RYL, the GREEN RYL, the BLUE RYL, and the Yellow Ryl come in and sit in a circle on the floor while Claus whittles and whistles and the wooden cat takes shape.

YELLOW RYL (cont'd)

If it could be made the same color as the real cat, no one would know the difference.

Claus holds it up and looks critically at the sculpture.

CLAUS

(skeptically)

The little ones, maybe, wouldn't know the difference.

RED RYL

I will bring you some of the red dye I color my roses and tulips with, and then you can make the cat's tongue red.

GREEN RYL

I'll bring some of the green I use to color my orchids with, and then you can color the cat's eyes green.

YELLOW RYL

The eyes will need a bit of yellow,
also. I must fetch some of the yellow
I use to color my buttercups with.

The Black Ryl points at Blinkie. Everyone turns to inspect
the cat, who pauses in her grooming to stare back.

BLACK RYL

The real cat is black. I will bring
the black paint I use to color the
eyes of my pansies with, and then you
can paint your wooden cat black.

BLUE RYL

I see you have a blue ribbon around
Blinkie's neck. I'll get some of the
color that I use to paint the
bluebells with, and then you can
carve a wooden ribbon on the toy
cat's neck and paint it blue.

So the Ryls disappear, and by the time Claus has finished
carving out the form of the cat they are all back with the
paints and brushes.

They make Blinkie sit upon the table, so Claus might paint
the toy cat just the right color, and when the work is done
the Yellow Ryl declares;

YELLOW RYL

It is exactly as good as a live cat!

RED RYL

That is, to all appearances.

Blinkie seems a little offended by the attention bestowed
upon the toy, and she stalks to the corner of the hearth and
sits down with her back to them with a dignified air.

But Claus is delighted and chuckles.

EXT. VALLEY TO THE VILLAGES - DAY

As soon as morning comes, he starts out and tramps through
the snow, across the Valley and the plain, until he comes to
a village.

INT. POOR HUT - CONTINUOUS

There, in a poor hut near the walls of the beautiful palace of the Lord of Lerd, a little girl lies upon a cot, moaning with pain.

Claus approaches the child and kisses her little brow and comforts her. Then he draws the toy cat from beneath his coat, where he had hidden it, and places it in her arms.

The little girl's eyes grow bright with pleasure! She hugs the kitty tight, as if it's a precious gem, and will not let go of it for a single moment. She falls into a sweet and refreshing sleep.

EXT. VILLAGES TO VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Claus laughs, whistles, and hums all the way home through the snow.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

When he gets to his house he finds Shiegra, the lioness, awaiting him. She's curled up on the porch trying to stay warm after having braved the snow-drifts, which all lions abhor, to see him once more.

CLAUS

Shiegra, my dearest friend!

Claus hurriedly opens the door for her. Shiegra is getting old and the hairs that tip her ears and tail have changed from tawny-yellow to white. She gets up slowly and saunters into the cabin.

He puts his arms around the neck of the lioness and hugs her lovingly. Shiegra grunts and growls as she cuddles.

Blinkie is in a far corner with her ears flattened back.

Claus tells his old friend;

CLAUS (cont'd)

I've been carving wooden cats for the children in the village, Shiegra. It gives me so much pleasure to make them happy... you should've seen Weekum's face when he cuddled the wooden cat. And the little sick child in the village was so happy when she received her toy cat.

SHIEGRA

These wooden sculptures must be very attractive, yet I can't see why you should make cats, which are very unimportant animals. Suppose, now that I am here, you make the image of a lioness, the Queen of all beasts. Then, indeed, your children will be happy and safe at the same time!

CLAUS

That's a good idea Shiegra!

He gets a piece of wood and sharpens his knife, while Shiegra crouches upon the hearth at his feet. With much care he carves the head in the likeness of the lioness, even to the two fierce teeth that curve over her lower lip and the deep, frowning lines above her wide-open eyes.

When it is finished he says;

CLAUS (cont'd)

You have a ferocious look, Shiegra.

SHIEGRA

Then the image is like me, for I am indeed terrible to all who are not my friends.

Claus now carves out the body, with Shiegra's long tail trailing behind it. The image of the crouching lioness is very life-like.

SHIEGRA (cont'd)

It pleases me.

Shiegra yawns and stretches her body gracefully.

SHIEGRA (cont'd)

Now I will watch while you paint.

The lioness places her big, padded paws upon the edge of the table and raises herself while she carefully examines the toy that is her likeness. The table tilts under her immense weight.

He brings the paints the Ryls had given him from the cupboard and colors the image to resemble the real Shiegra.

SHIEGRA (cont'd)

You are indeed skillful! The children will like that better than silly cats, I'm sure.

Then snarling at Blinkie, who arches her back in terror and whines fearfully--

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Shiegra walks through the door toward her forest home with stately strides.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

The winter is over now, and all the Laughing Valley is filled with joyous excitement. The brook gurgles more boisterously than ever and dashes so recklessly against the rocks it sends showers of spray high in the air.

The sun sends its rays dancing merrily throughout the Laughing Valley.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

One spring day Claus is eating his meal when he hears a timid knock on his door.

CLAUS

Come in!

No one enters, but after a pause comes another rapping.

Claus jumps up and throws open the door. Before him stands a small girl, MAYRIE, holding a smaller brother (JAN) fast by the hand. Behind the two is a pretty teen-age girl (GRETA).

After a quick glance up at Claus, the Mayrie looks at the ground shyly.

MAYRIE

Is you Tlaus?

CLAUS

(chuckles)

Indeed I am, my dear.

Claus squats down to eye-level.

CLAUS (cont'd)

You are very welcome here, and you have come just in time to share my dinner. What are your names?

MAYRIE

Mayrie, and this is my brother Jan.

Claus locks eyes with Greta. She blushes and looks away.

CLAUS
And is this your sister?

MAYRIE
Oh no! She's my Auntie.

He takes them to the table and feeds the little ones with fresh milk and nut-cakes. When they have eaten enough he asks:

CLAUS
Why have you made this long journey
to see me?

MAYRIE
I wants a tat!

Her brother, who has not yet learned to speak many words, nods his head and exclaims like an echo:

JAN
Tat!

CLAUS
Oh, you want my toy cats, do you?

The little visitors nod eagerly.

CLAUS (cont'd)
Unfortunately, I have but one cat now ready, for I carried two to children in town yesterday. The one I have shall be given to your brother, because he is the smaller. The next one I make shall be for you, Mayrie.

The boy's face is bright with smiles as he takes the precious toy Claus holds out to him, but little Mayrie covers her face with her arm and begins to sob grievously.

Greta rolls her eyes.

MAYRIE
I-I-I wants a t-t-tat!

Her disappointment makes Claus feel miserable for a moment.

Then he suddenly remembers Shiegra.

CLAUS

Don't cry darling. I have a toy much prettier than a cat, and you shall have that.

He goes to the cupboard and pulls out the carving of the lioness, which he places on the table before Mayrie.

The girl raises her face from her arm and gives one glance at the fierce teeth and glaring eyes of the beast. Uttering a terrified scream--

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

She rushes from the house. The boy follows her, also screaming lustily, and even drops his precious cat in his fear. Greta dashes after them.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

For a moment Claus stands motionless, being both puzzled and astonished. Then he throws Shiegra's image into the cupboard and--

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

He runs after the children, calling to them.

CLAUS

Wait! Don't be frightened. I locked the lion away in the cupboard.

Little Mayrie stops in her flight and her brother clings to Greta's skirt; but they both cast fearful glances at the house.

CLAUS (cont'd)

But why were you frightened at seeing it? It's only a toy to play with.

MAYRIE

It's bad... an'--an'--just horrid, an' not a bit nice, like tats!

CLAUS

Perhaps you're right. But if you'll return with me to the house I will make you a pretty cat.

INT. WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

So they timidly enter the house again, looking cautiously about. They watch Claus carve out a cat from a bit of wood and paint it in natural colors. It doesn't take him long to do this, for he's become skillful with his knife by this time.

GRETA

That's amazing.

Now it's Claus' turn to blush.

EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

After he watches his little visitors trot away on their journey homeward, Claus sits on his porch in deep thought.

Blinkie comes out on the porch to sit in the sun.

CLAUS

(to Blinkie)

There must be nothing to frighten the dear children, and while I know Shiegra well, and am not afraid of her, it's natural that children would be afraid. From now on, Blinkie, I will choose such mild-mannered animals as squirrels and rabbits and lambkins from which to carve my toys, for then the little ones will love rather than fear them.

He begins his work that very day, and before bedtime has made a wooden rabbit and a lamb. They are not quite so lifelike as the cats had been because he has no model before him.

But the new toys please the children, and they run out to meet him. He always carries his gifts to the sick or crippled children.

Greta watches him from the doorway of her sister's house. Claus stops to talk to her. A stocky young man, RUARC, steps out of the house to shake Claus' hand.

But those who are strong enough walk to the house in the Laughing Valley to ask for them. A little path is soon worn from the plain to the door of the toy-maker's cottage.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

This demand for his handiwork keeps Claus busily occupied. He draws a crude MAP upon his wall showing the villages he goes to. It also includes a few places on Earth where other people dwell. (This map will grow throughout the story)

A Knook surprises Claus by walking right through the wall with the map. Claus, still holding his paintbrush asks:

CLAUS

Goodness! How did you do that? How did you walk right through that wall?

KNOOK 3

(shrugging)

I don't know. All citizens of Burzee can go through things. Can't you?

CLAUS

No, I can't! What a wonderful gift!

KNOOK 3

That's unfortunate for you, but here are soft pieces of wood for you to carve... they won't dull your knife so quickly.

Claus holds up a chunk of wood to inspect it respectfully.

CLAUS

This is a nice piece of wood my friend. Thank you for this. I shall make a nice little lambkin with it.

The crooked little Knook shrugs again and walks out through the wall.

Claus opens the door to let in the fresh air. Soon the Ryls come bringing him more paints and brushes.

While Claus is still arranging the paints, the Fairies bring saws and chisels and hammers and nails, as well as knives.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Claus and Greta are sitting on a stone fence, chatting. Mayrie and Jan play along with the other children at their feet.

Mayrie's mother, BRENDA, stands at a window of her home with an infant on her shoulder and watches her sister with a smile.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

A rabbit hops up to Claus as he is sitting on his porch carving a toy rabbit. It giggles and shakes its head at the crude image. Hopping a few feet away, the bunny poses. Claus chuckles and makes a show of looking back and forth to the bunny.

EXT. STREAM-SIDE -DAY

Claus and Greta are walking slowly, holding hands. He turns to her and drops to one knee. Bowing his head he kisses her hand, then he looks up at her face and speaks.

With a big grin, she drops to her knees and throws her arms around him.

EXT. NEXT TO BURZEE - DAY

Greta with a wreath of flowers in her hair goes up on tip-toes to kiss Claus. They turn to they family and friends with smiles. Brenda and Ruarc are foremost.

Claus scoops her up in his arms and marches through the crowd toward his cabin. The mortals follow with cheering, with the immortals hugging Necile joyfully in the cover of the forest.

At the cabin he enters and kicks the door shut with one foot.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Claus soon turns his living room into a wonderful workshop. He builds a bench before the open window, and arranges his tools and paints so he can reach everything as he sits on his stool. And as he finishes toy after toy, he finds himself growing so happy he cannot refrain from humming, laughing and whistling all the day long. A pair of birds sit on the windowsill listening.

GRETA

You are always happy, my love.

CLAUS

It's because I live in the Laughing Valley, where everything else laughs with the most beautiful wife in the world!

He jumps up and swings her around as she laughs and protests.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

One day Claus sits before his door in the sunshine. He is busily carving the head and horns of a toy deer while a small deer poses. He looks up and discovers a glittering cavalcade of horsemen approaching through the Valley. The deer dashes away.

Greta comes out with a hand shading her eyes.

When they draw nearer he sees that the band consists of twenty men-at-arms, clad in bright armor and bearing spears and battle-axes. In front of these rides little BESSIE BLITHESOME, the pretty daughter of that proud Lord of Lerd who had once driven Claus from his palace.

Her pony is pure white, its bridle is covered with glittering gems, and its saddle is draped with cloth of gold, richly embroidered. A lovely gown flows down the side of her horse and her golden hair is pulled back into a bow.

Claus is surprised, but he continues to whittle as he watches with a slight frown until the cavalcade draws up before him.

Greta drops a quick curtsy.

The little girl leans over the neck of her palfrey and says:

BESSIE
Please, Mr. Claus, I want a toy.

Her voice is so pleading, Claus gets up to stand beside her, but he looks puzzled by her request.

CLAUS
But you are a rich lord's daughter,
Miss Blithsome, and have all that you
desire.

Bessie politely shakes her head.

BESSIE
Except toys. There are no toys in all
the world but yours, and I would
dearly love to have one.

Claus holds the little deer up as he speaks.

CLAUS

I make them for the poor children,
who have nothing else to amuse them.

BESSIE

Do poor children love to play with
toys more than rich ones?

CLAUS

I suppose not.

Bessie clasps her hands together and pleads earnestly.

BESSIE

Am I to blame because my father is a
lord? Must I be denied the pretty
toys I long for because other
children are poorer than I?

CLAUS

I'm afraid you must, dear, for the
poor have nothing else with which to
amuse themselves. You have your pony
to ride, your servants to wait on
you, and every comfort that money can
buy.

Bessie's brown eyes well with tears. She swipes them away as
she continues her argument.

BESSIE

But I want toys too... If I cannot
have one, I shall be very sad.

Claus is troubled. His usual smile is replaced with a
thoughtful expression. Gently he tells the girl;

CLAUS

Listen, my child, all the toys I'm
now making are promised to others.
But the next shall be yours, since
your heart so longs for it. Come to
me again in two days and it shall be
ready for you.

Bessie gives a cry of delight, and leaning over her pony's
neck she kisses Claus prettily upon his forehead. Then,
calling to her men-at-arms, she rides gaily away.

Claus shakes his shaggy head, and with a half-smile--

INT. WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Claus enters his workshop. He stands looking out the window. Greta comes alongside him, and he puts an arm around her shoulders.

CLAUS

If I am to supply the rich children as well as the poor ones, I shall not have a spare moment in the whole year!

He turns to Greta and demands;

CLAUS (cont'd)

But is it right I should give to the rich? Surely I must go to Mother and talk with her about this matter.

GRETA

That is wise, my dear.

So he sets the toy deer on the work-table...

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

He walks into the enchanted Burzee Forest and following a narrow trail, makes his way to the bower of Necile.

She greets him tenderly and lovingly, listening with interest to his story of the visit of Bessie Blithesome.

CLAUS

Mother, I have a dilemma. This morning I had a visit from the daughter of Lord Lerd... Bessie Blithesome. She is a charming, sweet little girl.

NECILE

What did little Bessie want?

CLAUS

She requested a toy. She is very rich and has no worries in the world. Should I give her a toy, Mother?

NECILE

We of the Forest know nothing of riches. It seems to me that one child is like another child, since they are all made of the same clay.

(MORE)

NECILE (cont'd)

Riches are like a gown, which may be put on or taken off, leaving the child unchanged. But the Fairies are the guardians of mankind and understand mortal children better than I. Let us call the Fairy Queen.

Necile gives a peculiar call, sounding like a bird. The FAIRY QUEEN appears. She is regal and beautiful with her long blonde hair and her shimmering gossamer gown. Her dainty nose is covered in freckles. Her semi-transparent wings gently rise and fall as she moves.

FAIRY QUEEN

Yes, my dear Necile?

NECILE

We have a question for you as you know human children better than we do.

The queen sits down on a log near Necile and Claus.

CLAUS

I think my toys should go to poor children who don't have any luxuries. Rich children can get along without my toys.

NECILE

I think Claus should treat every child equally. When they are little they are all the same and want to play whether they're rich or poor.

FAIRY QUEEN

Necile is right, for, whether it be rich or poor, a child's longings for pretty playthings are but natural. Rich Bessie's heart may suffer as much grief as poor Mayrie's;

The Fairy Queen waves her hands about as she talks.

FAIRY QUEEN (cont'd)

She can be just as lonely and discontented, and just as gay and happy. I think, friend Claus, it is your duty to make all little ones glad, whether they chance to live in palaces or in cottages.

CLAUS

Your words are wise, fair Queen, and my heart tells me they are as just as they are wise. Hereafter all children may claim my services.

Then he bows before the gracious Fairy Queen and, kissing Necile's rosy cheek, goes back to his Valley.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

At the brook Claus stops to drink, and afterward he sits on the bank. Taking a piece of moist clay in his hands, he stares across the brook, deep in thought. He doesn't notice that his fingers are working the clay into shape until, glancing downward, he finds he has unconsciously formed a head bearing a resemblance to the Nymph Necile!

At once he becomes interested. Gathering more of the clay from the bank he--

INT. WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Carries it to his house. Then, with the aid of his knife and a bit of wood he succeeds in working the clay into the image of a toy Nymph. With skillful strokes he forms long, waving hair on the head and covers the body with a gown of oak-leaves, while the two feet sticking out at the bottom of the gown are clad in sandals.

But the clay is soft, and Claus finds he must handle it gently to avoid ruining his pretty work.

He lays the image on a flat board and places it in the glare of the sun on the windowsill.

Greta touches it lightly.

GRETA

Is this your mother?

Claus nods.

GRETA (cont'd)

She's beautiful. I hope some day to meet her.

CLAUS

I hope so too. Maybe The Great Woodsman will allow it some day.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

The next morning, happening to notice the doll as it lay on the board, he finds the sun had baked it to the hardness of stone. It is strong enough to be safely handled. Claus now paints the nymph with great care in the likeness of Necile, giving it deep-brown eyes, rosy lips and ruddy-brown hair. The gown he colors oak-leaf green, and when the paint is dry Claus himself is charmed with the new toy.

He holds it up to show Greta who is sitting near the hearth with a basket of wool next to her. She pauses in her yarn-making to admire it.

Blinkie lifts her head to inspect it from her bed Greta made for her.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

When Bessie, riding upon her white pony, comes to his dwelling next day, Claus presents her with the new toy. The little girl's eyes are brighter than ever as she examines the pretty image. She loves it at once, and holds it close to her chest, as a mother does to her child.

BESSIE

What is it called, Claus?

Claus stands thinking for a moment with a finger to his lips, than he decides:

CLAUS

It's called a dolly, my dear.

BESSIE

I shall call the dolly Missy,
 (kissing it fondly)
 and I shall tend it and care for it
 just as Nanny cares for me. Thank you
 very much, Claus; your gift has made
 me happier than I have ever been
 before!

Then she rides away, hugging the dolly in her arms.

Claus gathers more clay from the brook.

INT. WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Claus is alone in the workshop.

Soon another dolly is lying on the board and he places it in the sun to dry. Then, with the clay that is left, he begins to make an image of Bessie Blithesome herself.

He finds he cannot make the silken robe of the lord's daughter out of the common clay. So he whistles to the Fairies to come to his aid.

As seen from INSIDE looking out the open window, the Fairies flit across the Laughing Valley, in through the wall, to his side.

FAIRY 1

Yes, Claus?

Claus holds the clay figurine for them to see.

CLAUS

Could you bring me colorful silks, so
I can make a real dress for this
dolly?

The Fairies set off at once on their errand, and before nightfall they return with a generous supply of silks and laces and golden threads.

They set it on the bench while Greta is stirring food over the fire.

CLAUS (cont'd)

Thank you, my friends.

Greta turns around. There's no one in the room.

GRETA

What?

She turns around and gives a gasp of surprise.

GRETA (cont'd)

Where'd that come from?

CLAUS

The Fairies brought it to me.

She looks around in confusion.

INT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Claus now becomes impatient to complete his new doll, and instead of waiting for the next day's sun he places the clay image upon his hearth and covers it over with glowing coals.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

By morning, when he draws the dolly from the ashes, it's baked hard.

Now Mrs. Claus becomes a dressmaker. She cuts the lavender silk, and neatly sews it into a beautiful gown that just fits the new doll. She puts a lace collar around its neck and pink silk slippers on its feet. Claus paints the face to resemble the color of flesh, and he gives the dolly Bessie's blue eyes and golden hair and rosy cheeks.

It's really a beautiful thing to look upon. While Claus is admiring it he hears a knock at his door, and little Mayrie enters. Her face is sad and her eyes red with continued weeping.

GRETA

Why, Mayrie, what has grieved you, my dear?

Claus takes the weeping child in his arms. Throwing her arms around his neck she sobs.

MAYRIE

I've--I've--bwoke my tat!

CLAUS

(suppressing a smile)

How?

MAYRIE

I--I dwopped him, an' bwoke off him's tail; an'--an'--then I dwopped him an' bwoke off him's ear! An'-- an' now him's all spoilt!

Claus laughs.

CLAUS

Never mind, Mayrie dear. How would you like this new dolly, instead of a cat?

Mayrie looks at the silk-robed dolly and her eyes grow big with astonishment.

MAYRIE

Oh, Tlaus!

She claps her small hands together with rapture.

MAYRIE (cont'd)
 Tan I really have 'at boo'ful lady?

CLAUS
 Do you like it?

MAYRIE
 I love it! It's better 'an tats!

CLAUS
 Then take it, dear, and be careful
 not to break it.

Mayrie takes the dolly with a joy that is almost reverent,
 and her face dimples with smiles as she hugs her aunt and...

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Starts skipping along the path towards home.

EXT - BOULDERS OF AWGWA - DAY

This is a meeting with the King of the Awgwas... he sits on
 the highest boulder looking around at the scowling faces of
 his people.

KING AWGWA
 There are, as you know, fewer naughty
 children in the world since Claus
 came to the Laughing Valley and began
 to make his toys.

They shake their heads and mutter fiercely.

KING AWGWA (cont'd)
 Why, Bessie Blithesome has not
 stomped her foot once this month, nor
 has Mayrie's brother slapped his
 sister's face or thrown the puppy
 into the rain-barrel. Little Weekum
 took his bath last night without
 screaming or struggling, because his
 mother promised he could take his toy
 cat to bed with him!

Many of them jump up and stomp their feet in anger.

KING AWGWA (cont'd)
 Such a condition is too awful for any
 Awgwa to think of. We are becoming
 weaker every day!
 (MORE)

KING AWGWA (cont'd)
 The only way we can benefit from the
 naughty actions of children is to
 take this person Claus away from
 them.

In a chorus, they shout:

ALL AWGWAS
 Destroy him!

AWGWA 1
 But what shall we do with him?

KING AWGWA
 I have a plan.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

That night Claus places four more toys upon his shelf. With a big smile and tuneless humming, he prepares for bed.

But while he sleeps a band of invisible Awgwas surround his bed. One Awgwa sprinkles a powder over the Claus' causing a deep sleep. They bind Claus with stout cords,

EXT. SKY AND DARK FOREST - CONTINUOUS

And then fly away with him to the middle of a dark forest in a far off place, where they lay him down and leave him.

EXT. DARK FOREST - CONTINUOUS

When morning comes Claus finds himself thousands of miles from any human being, a prisoner in the wild forest of an unknown land.

From the limb of a tree above his head sways a huge python. A few yards away crouches a savage panther, its glaring eyes fix upon the helpless Claus. One of those monstrous spotted spiders whose sting is death, creeps stealthily toward him over the matted leaves, which shrivel and turned black at its very touch.

But Claus is not afraid.

CLAUS
 Come to me, ye Knooks of the Forest!

Claus gives the low peculiar whistle the Knooks know.

The panther, which is about to spring upon its victim, turns and slinks away. The python swings itself into the tree and disappears among the leaves. The spider stops short in its advance and hides beneath a rotting log.

Claus is surrounded by a band of harsh-featured Knooks, more crooked and deformed in appearance than the Knooks of Burzee.

KNOOK 1

(gruffly)

Who are you to call on us?

CLAUS

The friend of your brothers in Burzee. I have been brought here by my enemies, the Awgwas, and left to perish miserably. Yet now I implore your help to release me and to send me home again.

KNOOK 2

Have you the sign?

CLAUS

Yes.

They cut his bonds, and with his arms free he makes the secret sign of the Knooks. With his palms together, he bends his middle finger on each hand and rotates his palms and wiggles the two fingers.

Instantly they assist him to stand upon his feet. An ANCIENT KNOOK whose flowing beard is pure white, grumbles.

ANCIENT KNOOK

Our brothers of Burzee make strange friends. But he who knows our secret sign is entitled to our help, whoever he may be.

The ancient Knook places a gnarled hand on Claus' shoulder.

ANCIENT KNOOK (cont'd)

Close your eyes, stranger, and we will conduct you to your home. Where shall we seek it?

CLAUS

Tis in the Laughing Valley.

FADE OUT TO DARKNESS WHEN CLAUS CLOSES HIS EYES.

ANCIENT KNOOK (V.O.)

(fading)

There is but one Laughing Valley in
the known world, so we cannot go
astray.

As he speaks the sound of the ancient Knook's voice seems to
die away,

FADE IN

...so Claus opens his eyes to see what causes the change.

EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

To his astonishment he finds himself seated on the bench by
his own door, with the Laughing Valley spread out before
him.

Greta comes out the door and smiles at him.

GRETA

Where have you been this morning, my
love? You got up very early.

He smiles and pulls her into an embrace.

EXT. AWGWA BOULDERS - DAY

We can see how angry the King Awgwa and his fierce band are
when it's known to them Claus has escaped from the far away
Forest. They scream, fight, and throw boulders at each
other.

EXT. BURZEE - DAY

That day Claus goes to the forest and relates his abduction
to Queen Zurline and Necile. Speaking indistinctly, he
marches back and forth waving his hands as he speaks. He's
clearly pissed off.

QUEEN ZURLINE

The Awgwas have become your mortal
enemies, so we must do all we can to
protect you from their power.

NECILE

It was cowardly to bind him while he
slept!

QUEEN ZURLINE

The evil ones are always cowardly,
but our friend's slumber shall not be
disturbed again.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

Queen Zurline herself comes (with the Fairy Queen, the Knook King, and the King of the Rylys) to the dwelling of Claus that evening. While Claus looks on the royals gather around his humble cabin.

Greta is inside, unaware.

With a wave of her hand, Queen Zurline places her magical Seal on every door and window to keep out the Awgwas. And under the Seal of the Nymphs is placed the Seals of the Fairies, the Rylys, and the Knooks. Each seal is a translucent shimmering strip in green, purple, yellow, and brown across the opening.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF CLAUS' HOME - NIGHT

That night the wicked band of Awgwas set out to seize Claus, but they find his dwelling guarded by the Seals of the Immortals.

One Awgwa attempts to touch the door, and is thrown backward like he'd been electrocuted. They look at each other baffled and disappointed.

KING AWGWA

(growls)

Never mind, he does not sleep always!

EXT. AWGWA BOULDERS - CONTINUOUS

They rage madly again, fighting and killing each other. Then they hold another meeting among the rocks.

KING AWGWA

It's useless to carry him where the Knooks reign, for he has their protection. So let us cast him into a cave of our own mountains, where he will surely perish.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Next day, as Claus travels to the village across the plain, he is suddenly set upon by the invisible Awgwas, who seize him and carry him away to the mountains. He fights and struggles to escape and shouts for help.

EXT. AWGWA COUNTRY - CONTINUOUS

There they thrust him within a deep cavern and roll many huge rocks against the entrance to prevent his escape. Claus falls back and scrapes his arm.

INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Deprived thus of light and food, and with little air to breathe, our Claus is, indeed, in a pitiful plight. He tries futilely to pull the rocks away. Finally he whistles the mystic song of the Fairies, which commands their aid, and they come to his rescue and remove several boulders.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Then transport him to the Laughing Valley in the twinkling of an eye.

The Awgwas, watch angrily from the edge of the Forest as Claus is set gently on his porch.

AWGWA 2

There must be a way to stop Claus
from giving away his stupid little
toys!

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

Those are happy days for Claus as he carries his accumulation of toys to the children. At almost every house the dear mothers have cookies and fresh milk for Claus.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Claus is seated at his workbench painting toy. Greta is making a sweater.

CLAUS

When I was a teen, I went on a
journey with the Master Woodsman, Ak.
He took me to see the world.

(MORE)

CLAUS (cont'd)
I still remember how sad it made me
feel to see all those little children
so unhappy.

Blinkie pauses in her paw-cleaning as though she is
listening to Claus.

Greta watches him silently.

CLAUS (cont'd)
There are children everywhere, and I
long to make them all happy with my
gifts.

She smiles at Blinkie.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

So Claus loads a great sack with all kinds of toys. He fills
a knapsack with food and puts it squarely on his shoulders.
Then he slings the sack of toys upon his pack that he might
carry it more easily.

Greta kisses him and stands on the porch waving goodbye.

Claus passes Brenda and the kids on the path to the cabin.

EXT. PLAINS AND VILLAGES - CONTINUOUS

Claus starts off on the longest trip he has yet undertaken.
Wherever he shows his merry face, in hamlet or in farmhouse,
he receives a cordial welcome, for his fame has spread into
far lands.

At each village the children swarm about him, following his
footsteps wherever he goes; The women thank him gratefully,
grasping his hand, for the joy he brings their little ones;
The men look upon him curiously that he should devote his
time to such an odd occupation as toy-making. But everyone
smiles upon him.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

When the sack is empty he goes back again to the Laughing
Valley. He goes into the cabin and comes out once more with
the bag full to the brim.

Greta accompanies him to the village and waves good bye from
her sisters home.

EXT. PLAINS AND VILLAGES - DAY

This time he follows another road, into a different part of the country, and carries toys to many children. After a third journey (seen from long distance), so far away that Claus is MANY DAYS walking the distance, the store of toys becomes exhausted and without delay he sets about making a fresh supply.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Claus makes many dolls, of all sizes, and dresses them in bright-colored clothing. He makes a number of toy drums with tiny sticks to beat them with; and he makes whistles from the willow trees, and horns from the bog-reeds, and cymbals from bits of beaten metal.

All this keeps him busily at work, and before he realizes it the winter season came, with deeper snows than usual.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

One morning he steps across the snowy yard and sinks into the snowdrift up to his armpits. He cannot not leave the Valley.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

So Claus remains at his work-bench, whistling and singing as merrily as ever.

One bright sunny morning he looks through his window to see two of the deer he knows walking toward his home. Claus looks surprised that the deer walk on the surface of the snow as easily as if it were solid ground.

EXT./INT. DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

When the FLOSSIE and GLOSSIE come near he opens the door and calls to them:

CLAUS

Good morning, Flossie! Hello Glossie.
Tell me how you are able to walk on
the snow so easily?

FLOSSIE

It is frozen hard.

EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Glossie comes up and stands next to Flossie. Both are tall deer with light-brown fur, arched necks, and are slender. Flossie has a more delicate face and darker fur around her eyes. Glossie has white fur around her eyes. (Santa's reindeer are female, because males lose their antlers in the fall)

GLOSSIE

Jack Frost has breathed on it, and the surface is now as solid as ice.

CLAUS

Great! I'll be able to carry my pack of toys to the children.

FLOSSIE

Is it a long journey?

Greta steps to the doorway in awe. Both Flossie and Glossie startle and turn to run.

Claus sees what scared them and puts up a hand.

CLAUS

Fear not my friends. This is my wife, Greta. She can be trusted to never hurt you.

The deer stop and step timidly back to the porch.

CLAUS (cont'd)

Yes, it is a long journey... it will take me about a week, for the pack is full.

Glossie taps the icy shell with her hoof.

GLOSSIE

But the ice would melt before you could get back. You must wait until spring, Claus.

Claus sighs and looks down. He sees the deer's feet.

CLAUS

Had I your quick feet, I could make the journey in a day.

GLOSSIE

But you do not.

Glossie looks at her own slender legs with pride.

CLAUS

Perhaps I could ride upon your back?

Flossie shakes her head decisively.

FLOSSIE

Oh no; our backs are not strong enough to bear your weight. But if you had a sled, and could harness us to it like they do horses, we might draw you easily, and your pack as well.

Claus slaps his thigh in delight.

CLAUS

I'll make a sled! Will you agree to pull me if I do?

FLOSSIE

Well, we must first go and ask the Knooks, who are our guardians, for permission; but if they consent, and you can make a sled and harness, we will gladly assist you.

CLAUS

Then go at once! I am sure the friendly Knooks will give their consent, and by the time you are back I shall be ready to harness you to my sled.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Flossie and Glossie gladly run over the frozen snow to ask the Knooks if they might carry Claus on his journey.

EXT. FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Meantime the toy-maker hurriedly begins the construction of a sled, using material from his wood-pile. He makes two long runners that turn upward at the front ends. Across these he nails short boards to make a platform. It is soon completed, but is as crude in appearance as possible for a sled to be.

The harness is more difficult to prepare, but Claus twists strong cords together and knots them in the shape of a collar, so they will fit around the necks of the deer. From these run other cords to fasten the deer to the front of the sled.

Flossie and Glossie prance playfully up to Claus in the yard.

GLOSSIE

William Knook said we could go, but we must be back in the Forest of Burzee before sunrise tomorrow morning.

FLOSSIE

That's not a very long time, but we are swift and strong, and if we get started by this evening we can travel many miles during the night.

CLAUS

And tonight is a long winter night.

Claus hurries on his preparations as fast as possible. After a time he fastens the collars around the necks of his steeds and harnesses them to his sled. Then he places a stool on the little platform, to serve as a seat, and a sack filled with toys on the floorboard.

GLOSSIE

How do you intend to guide us? We've never been out of the Forest before, except to visit your house... we don't know the way.

Claus looks at the harnesses with his head tilted to one side for a moment. Then he brings more cords and fastens two of them to the spreading antlers of each deer, one on the right and the other on the left.

CLAUS

Those will be my reins, and when I pull them to the right or to the left you must go in that direction. If I do not pull the reins at all you may go straight ahead.

FLOSSIE

Very well.

GLOSSIE

(glancing back)

Are you ready?

Greta pulls his big wool beanie over his bushy blonde head and buttons it tightly to the collar. He pulls on the leather gloves and kisses her goodbye.

Claus seats himself upon the stool, places the sack of toys at his feet, and then gathers up the reins.

Glossie winks conspiratorially at Flossie.

CLAUS

All ready.

(he shouts)

Away we go!

The deer lean forward, lift their slender limbs, and the next moment away flies the sled over the frozen snow. The swiftness of the motion surprises Claus, and he topples over backwards. With a hearty laugh he sets himself aright.

Greta chuckles from the porch.

EXT. PLAINS AND VILLAGES - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

In a few strides they are across the Valley and gliding over the broad plain beyond.

The day has turned into evening by the time they start, for, swiftly as Claus had worked, many hours had been consumed in making his preparations. But the moon shines brightly to light their way.

Away and away they speed, on and on over the hills and through the valleys and across the plains until they reach a village where Claus has never been to before.

Here he calls on them to stop, and they immediately obey. But a new difficulty now presents itself, for the people had locked their doors when they went to bed. Claus tries the door and finds he cannot enter the houses to leave his toys.

Claus retraces his steps to the sled in disappointment.

CLAUS

I am afraid, my friends, we have made our journey for nothing. I shall be obliged to carry my playthings back home again without giving them to the children of this village.

FLOSSIE

What is the matter, Claus?

CLAUS

(waves a hand at the
home)

The doors are locked. I can't get in to deliver my toys, and I don't want to wake them up because that'll take forever.

Glossie looks around at the houses. The snow is quite deep in that village, and just before them is a roof only a few feet above the sled.

A broad chimney, which seems to Glossie big enough to admit Claus, is at the peak of the roof. She points with her long nose to the roof.

GLOSSIE

Why don't you climb down that chimney?

Claus looks at it.

CLAUS

That would be easy enough if I were on top of the roof.

GLOSSIE

Then hold on fast and we will take you there.

EXT. ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

The deer give one bound to the roof and land beside the big chimney.

CLAUS

Goodness!

Well pleased, Claus slings a smaller bag of toys over his shoulder and gets into the chimney.

INT. CHIMNEY - CONTINUOUS

There is plenty of soot on the bricks, but he does not mind that, and by placing his hands and knees against the sides he creeps downward until he reaches the fireplace.

INT. ROOM TO ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leaping lightly over the smoldering coals he finds himself in a large sitting-room, where a dim light is burning.

From this room two doorways lead into smaller chambers. In one a woman lays asleep, with a baby beside her in a crib.

Claus laughs silently for fear of waking the mother. Then he slips a big doll from his pack and lays it in the crib. The little baby smiles up at him. Claus creeps softly from the room and enters at the other doorway.

Here are two boys, fast asleep with their arms around each others necks, their father snoring next to them. Claus gazes at the little boys lovingly a moment and then places upon the bed a drum, two horns and a wooden elephant. He does not linger, now that his work in this house is done,

EXT. ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Claus climbs out of the chimney again and seats himself on his sled. He's filthy with soot, but his cheeks are rosy with excitement.

CLAUS
Can you find another chimney?

FLOSSIE
Easily enough!

Down to the edge of the roof they race, and then, without pausing, leap through the air...

EXT. ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

To the top of the next building, where a huge old-fashioned chimney stands.

FLOSSIE
Don't be so long this time, or we shall never get back to the Forest by daybreak.

Claus makes a trip down this chimney also and...

INT. ROOM TO ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Finds five children sleeping in the house, all of whom are quickly supplied with toys.

MONTAGE - GOING FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE

-- When he returns the deer spring to the next roof,

-- but on descending the chimney Claus finds no children in that DREARY home.

-- When he has climbed down the chimneys of all the houses in that village, and has left a toy for every sleeping child, Claus finds his great sack is not yet half emptied.

CLAUS
 (calls to the deer)
 Onward, friends! We must seek another
 village.

-- So away they dash, although it is long past midnight,

-- They come to a large city, the largest Claus has visited since he began to make toys. But, not daunted by the throng of houses, he sets to work at once and his beautiful steeds carry him rapidly from-

-- one roof to another, only the highest being beyond the leaps of the agile deer.

-- At last the supply of toys are exhausted and Claus seats himself in the sled, with the empty sack at his feet, and turns the heads of Glossie and Flossie toward home.

END MONTAGE

EXT. SLED - NIGHT

FLOSSIE
 What is that gray streak in the sky?

CLAUS
 (surprise)
 It's the coming dawn of a new day.

GLOSSIE
 Good gracious! We won't be home by
 daybreak, and the Knooks will punish
 us and never let us come again.

FLOSSIE
 We must race for the Laughing Valley
 and make our best speed. Hold fast,
 friend Claus!

Claus holds fast and the next moment is flying so swiftly over the snow that he can't see the trees as they whirl past.

Up hill and down dale, swift as an arrow shot from a bow they dash, and Claus shuts his eyes to keep the wind out of them and leaves the deer to find their own way.

The gray streak in the sky is growing BRIGHTER every moment. Finally the sled comes to a sudden stop and Claus, who is taken unawares, tumbles from his seat into a snowdrift. As he picks himself up he hears the deer crying:

FLOSSIE (cont'd)
Quick, Claus, quick! Cut away our
harnesses!

He draws his knife and rapidly severs the cords, and then he wipes the moisture from his eyes and looks around him.

EXT. PORCH - DAY- CONTINUOUS

The sled had come to a stop in the Laughing Valley, only a few feet from his own door. In the East the day is breaking, and turning to the edge of Burzee he sees Glossie and Flossie just disappearing in the Forest.

EXT. VILLAGES - DAY

For miles in every direction people are talking about Claus and are showing each other the gifts, smiling and laughing with joy. The children hold up their gifts questioningly, there was but one reply

DAD
The good Claus must have been here,
my darlings; for his are the only
toys in all the world!

CHILD
But, how did he get in?

At this the fathers scratch their heads and shrug.

But the mothers, watching the glad faces of their dear ones, whisper to each other;

MOM 1
(piously)
A saint has no need to unlock doors
if it pleases him to enter our homes.

And, afterward, when a child is naughty and disobedient, its mother says:

MOM 2

You must ask the good Santa Claus for forgiveness. He does not like naughty children, and, unless you behave, he will bring you no more pretty toys.

Claus overhears a mother saying this and shaking his head sadly whispers to himself;

CLAUS

I bring toys to the children because they are little and helpless, and because I love them.

EXT - LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

One day, Claus sets out to carry his toys to the local little ones.

But an Awgwa, who has been set to watch his movements, springs upon him and snatches the toys from his grasp. Not being able to see the Awgwas, Claus looks around helplessly and sees his bag of toys disappear over the hill.

INT - WORKSHOP - DAY

Still Claus perseveres, and makes more toys and starts with them for the villages. This time he grips his toy-bag and looks around cautiously for the Awgwas.

EXT - LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

And always the Awgwas attack and rob him as soon as he leaves the Valley. As they flit away with his sack of toys Claus shakes a fist in the air at them.

EXT/INT - AWGWA COUNTRY - DAY

They throw the stolen playthings into one of their lonely caverns, and quite a heap of toys accumulated.

EXT - LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

Claus becomes discouraged and gives up all attempts to leave the Valley.

Then children try coming to him, since they find he did not go to them.

But the wicked Awgwas race around them and cause their steps to go astray and the paths to become crooked, so never a little one can find a way into the Laughing Valley. The path begins to grow over.

Greta stands behind him and massages his slumped shoulders.

INT - WORKSHOP - DAY

He devotes all his hours to toy-making, and when one plaything is completed he stands it on a shelf he's built for that purpose.

When the shelf becomes filled with rows of toys: toy horses, dogs, cats, elephants, lambs, rabbits and deer, as well as dolls of all sizes, plus balls and marbles of baked clay painted in bright colors.

Often, as he glances at this array of toys, good old Claus becomes sad. One day his jolly face wrinkles as tears come. After a few moments of crying softly, he abruptly brushes the moisture from his cheeks and continues making the toy.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

And at last, he ventures to the Burzee forest. Ak greets him with a smile that fades quickly when he sees Claus' crestfallen face.

Ak listens gravely to the recital of Claus, stroking his beard with the slow, graceful motion.

CLAUS

As you know, I was kidnapped, but my good brothers, the Knooks rescued me. The Nymphs, the Knooks, the Fairies, and even the Ryls placed a protective seal on my little home. Then the fairies rescued me the second time.

Ak nods approvingly.

CLAUS (cont'd)

But Great Ak, now every time I leave my home they steal the toys and I don't know what they do with them. Their strength exceeds mine and I can't see them.

Ak frowns.

Claus looks down at his wooden clogs in despair.

CLAUS (cont'd)
 I stay in my workshop working on toys, but I can't bring them to my little children. I don't know what to do.

Claus raises pleading eyes to the great Ak.

AK
 From the beginning I have approved the work you are doing among the children, and it annoys me that your good deeds should be thwarted by the Awgwas.

Ak waves a great hand to indicate his immortal band.

AK (cont'd)
 We immortals have no connection with the evil creatures who have attacked you. We've always avoided them, and they, in turn, have taken care not to cross our paths. But in this matter I find they have interfered with one of our friends, and I will ask them to abandon their persecutions, as you are under our protection.

CLAUS
 Thank you Master Woodsman.

AK
 Worry not my child. We will solve this problem in time. Be patient.

Claus bows and goes back to the Laughing Valley.

Ak at once travels to the mountains of the Awgwas.

EXT - AWGWA BOULDERS - CONTINUOUS

There, standing on the bare rocks, he calls:

AK
 King Awgwa and your army, I command you to appear!

Instantly the place is filled with throngs of the scowling Awgwas, and their King, perching himself on a point of rock, demands fiercely:

KING AWGWA
 Who dares command us?

AK

It is I, the Master Woodsman of the World.

King Awgwa spreads his long arms to indicate the rocks.

KING AWGWA

Here are no forests for you to claim. We owe no allegiance to you, nor to any immortal!

AK

(calmly)

That is true. Yet you have ventured to interfere with the actions of Claus, who dwells in the Laughing Valley and is under my protection.

Many of the Awgwas begin muttering at this speech, and their King turns threateningly on the Master Woodsman.

KING AWGWA

(shouting)

You are set to rule the forests, but the plains and the valleys are ours! Keep to your own dark woods! We will do as we please with Claus.

AK

You shall not harm our friend in any way.

KING AWGWA

Shall we not? You will see! Our powers are vastly superior to those of mortals, and fully as great as those of immortals.

AK

It is your conceit that misleads you! You are transient creatures, passing from life into nothingness. We, who live forever, pity but despise you.

Ak shakes his regal head scornfully at this unruly group.

AK (cont'd)

On earth you're scorned by all, and in Heaven you have no place! Even the humans, after their earthly life, enter another existence for all time, and therefore are your superiors. How then dare you, who are neither mortal nor immortal, refuse to obey my wish?

The Awgwas spring to their feet with menacing gestures, but their King motions them back.

KING AWGWA
(his voice trembles
with rage)

Never before, has an immortal declared himself the master of the Awgwas! Never shall an immortal venture to interfere with our actions again! For we will avenge your words by killing your friend Claus. Not you, nor all the immortals can save him from our wrath. We defy your powers! Begone, Master Woodsman of the World! In the country of the Awgwas you have no place.

AK
You will not win this conflict.

KING AWGWA
Soon your friend will be destroyed.
This is war!

Even as he speaks the Awgwas look a little nervous.

AK
This is not war.

Ak turns away and comes to his Forest of Burzee.

EXT. BURZEE - DAY

Ak's words are inaudible as he walks back and forth in anger (as seen from above at an angle then shifts back to ground level). The forest folk listen to him quietly.

AK
What shall we do?

The prince of the Knooks stabs the air emphatically with his crooked finger.

PRINCE OF KNOOKS
These creatures are of no benefit to the world. We must destroy them.

The prince of Ryls nods in agreement.

PRINCE OF RYLS

(calmly)

Their lives are devoted only to evil deeds. We must destroy them.

The Fairy Queen shakes her head sadly as she speaks.

FAIRY QUEEN

They have no conscience, and endeavor to make all mortals as bad as themselves. We must destroy them.

Queen Zurline rises to her feet majestically.

QUEEN ZURLINE

They have defied the great Ak, and threaten the life of our adopted son. We must destroy them.

The Master Woodsman smiles.

AK

You speak well, Queen.

Ak begins pacing back and forth gracefully, calmly, his long cloak brushing upon the soft forest floor as he moves.

AK (cont'd)

These Awgwas we know to be powerful creatures, and they'll fight desperately; yet the outcome is certain. For we who live can never die, even if conquered by our enemies, while every Awgwa who is struck down is gone forever.

He pauses as he looks seriously at his audience.

AK (cont'd)

Yet this is a serious thing to kill a mortal...

(beat)

Even if it is an Awgwa. First we will protect Claus from the thieving Awgwas. But if that doesn't work... then prepare for battle, which is coming. Let us resolve then to show no mercy to the wicked!

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Claus fills his sack with toys and leaves his cabin.

EXT. VILLAGES - DAY

He quickly supplies the little ones living nearby, often leaving gifts without being seen.

Fairies work unseen by Claus, to prevent the Awgwas from harming Claus. A bush is crushed by the weight of an invisible Awgwa.

Aware of the skirmishes surrounding him, Claus travels with a watchful and serious expression.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

Flossie and Glossie come for a visit. The valley is again covered in snow.

CLAUS

Where have you been my friends? I've missed you. I was hoping we could take another journey.

GLOSSIE

We got in trouble with Will Knook and we just now have been taken off restriction.

CLAUS

Because of our last trip?

FLOSSIE

Yes, we were one minute late.

Claus scratches his thick curly beard thoughtfully.

CLAUS

Can you ask Will's permission to go again?

They nod and prance off to the woods.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

The next day, WILL KNOOK, the chief guardian of the deer, comes to him, surly and ill-tempered, to complain.

WILL KNOOK

You kept Glossie and Flossie beyond daybreak, in opposition to my orders.

Claus and Greta are seated on the bench in front of their little home. He looks frustrated with the irate Knook. Greta stares in awe.

CLAUS

It was an accident... and it could not have been very long after daybreak.

WILL KNOOK

It was one minute after, and that is as bad as one hour. And now they're begging to go again. I shall set the stinging gnats on them, and they'll thus suffer terribly for their disobedience.

Claus jumps to his feet in alarm.

CLAUS

Don't do that! It was my fault.

But Will Knook will listen to no excuses, and hobbles away grumbling and growling in his ill-natured way.

GRETA

Goodness! Who in the world was that odd little man?

CLAUS

That is Will. He's a Knook. All knooks are hard creatures because they control all the beasts of the world, but Will is especially difficult.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Claus enters the Forest yet again, this time to consult Necile about rescuing the good deer from punishment.

He takes his snow shoes off at the edge as there is no snow inside the Burzee forest where it is always spring-like.

To his delight he finds his friend, the Master Woodsman, seated in the circle of Nymphs. Ak is equally delighted to see Claus.

AK

What brings you back into Burzee so soon?

CLAUS

I'm ashamed to say I got Flossie and Glossie in trouble. It was the night last winter when they helped me draw my sled to deliver toys to the children. William Knook told them to be back before daybreak. They were only one minute late, and they ran swifter than a bird flies to get home.

Claus clasps and unclasps his hands in anxiety as he pleads his case.

CLAUS (cont'd)

Will threatens to send the stinging gnats upon them! I do not wish my friends to be punished if I can save them. Let him send the gnats upon me instead.

Ak strokes his beard thoughtfully a moment. He stretches an arm out and a bird lands on it.

AK

Please fetch the Knook Prince, and also the Fairy Queen and the Prince of Ryls.

The bird flits off and almost immediately the Burzee royals are present and seated.

Claus tells his story again (inaudibly - seen from high above) at Ak's request. Then Ak addresses the Prince of the Knooks:

AK (cont'd)

The good work that Claus is doing among mankind deserves the support of every honest immortal. Before long the name of Claus will be lovingly known in every home that is blessed with children.

Ak sweeps his arms to encompass the forest.

AK (cont'd)

Moreover, he is a son of our Forest, so we owe him our encouragement. You, Prince of the Knooks, have known him these many years; am I not right in saying he deserves our friendship?

The Prince, crooked and sour of visage as most Knooks are, looks only upon the dead leaves at his feet and mutters:

PRINCE OF KNOOKS

You are the Master Woodsman of the World.

Ak rolls his eyes, but continues, in soft tones:

AK

It seems the deer which are guarded by your people can be of great assistance to Claus, and as they seem willing to draw his sled I beg that you will permit him to use their services whenever he pleases.

The Prince does not reply, but taps the curled point of his shoe with the tip of his spear, as if in thought. Then the Fairy Queen speaks to him in her gentle way:

FAIRY QUEEN

If you consent to Ak's request I will see that no harm comes to your deer while they are away from the Forest.

The Prince of the Ryls steps to his friend and adds:

PRINCE OF RYLS

For my part, I will allow the deer who assist Claus the privilege of eating my casa plants, which give strength, my grawle plants which will make them fast, and my marbon plants to give long life.

Queen Zurline sits next to the Prince of Knooks and places a gentle hand on his stiff shoulder.

QUEEN ZURLINE

The deer which draw the sled of Claus will be permitted to bathe in the Forest pool of Nares, which will give them sleek coats and wonderful beauty.

The Prince of the Knooks, hearing these promises, shifts uneasily on his seat. Finally he turns to his Knooks and says:

PRINCE OF KNOOKS

Step forward Will Knook and tell us your opinion.

When surly Will steps forward, he protests loudly against granting them their request.

WILL KNOOK

Deer are deer, and nothing but deer. Were they horses it would be right to harness them like horses. But no one harnesses deer because they are free, wild creatures, owing no service of any sort to mankind. It would degrade my deer to labor for Claus, who is only a man in spite of the friendship lavished on him by the immortals.

PRINCE OF KNOOKS

You have heard... there is truth in what Will says.

Ak nods thoughtfully.

AK

Call Flossie and Glossie.

The deer are brought to the conference.

AK (cont'd)

Hello Flossie and Glossie.

The deer bend a knee to the Master Woodsman.

AK (cont'd)

Do you object to drawing the sled for Claus?

GLOSSIE

No, indeed! We enjoyed the last trip very much.

FLOSSIE

And we tried to get home by daybreak, but were unfortunately a minute too late.

AK

A minute lost at daybreak shouldn't matter. You're forgiven for that delay.

The Knook Prince grunts and points at the two deer.

PRINCE OF KNOOKS

(sternly)

Provided it does not happen again!

CLAUS

So you will permit them to make more
journeys with me?

The Prince reflects while he gazes at Will, who is scowling, and at the Master Woodsman, who is smiling. Then the Prince stands up and addresses the company:

PRINCE OF KNOOKS

Since you all urge me to grant the favor, I will permit the deer to go with Claus once every year, on Winter Solstice, provided they always return to the Forest by daybreak. Claus may select up to ten deer, to draw his sled with reins, and those shall be known among us as Reindeer, to distinguish them from the others. And they shall bathe in the Pool of Nares, and eat the casa and grawle and marbon plants and shall be under the especial protection of the Fairy Queen. And now cease scowling, Will Knook, for my words shall be obeyed!

The Prince hobbles quickly away through the trees, and Will, looking as cross as ever, follows him.

(Note to artist; from this point in time these deer will gradually become thicker-chested, have bushier fur, have thicker fur around their hooves, and their necks won't be as curved. When the other eight deer are assigned to Claus they also will transition from a regular deer to a reindeer.)

Glossie and Flossie run home, kicking up their heels delightedly at every step.

CLAUS

When is Winter Solstice?

AK

In about five days.

CLAUS

Then I can't use the deer this year, for I shall not have time enough to make my sackful of toys.

AK

The shrewd Prince foresaw that, and therefore named Winter Solstice as the day you can use the deer, knowing it would cause you to lose an entire year.

(MORE)

AK (cont'd)
However, it was nice of him to give
you the longest night of the year.

CLAUS
(sadly)
If I only had the toys the Awgwas
stole from me, I could easily fill my
sled for the children.

AK
Where are they?

CLAUS
I don't know, but those wicked Awgwas
probably hid them in the mountains.

Ak turns to the Fairy Queen.

AK
Could you find them?

FAIRY QUEEN
I can try.

EXT. AWGWA COUNTRY - CONTINUOUS

A band of Fairies immediately fly to the mountain haunted by
the Awgwas and begin a search for the stolen toys amongst
the caverns.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

As the days creep past, Claus works as hard as he can while
waiting for news from the Fairies.

Greta brings him a cup of cocoa and a plate of fruit-bread.

Claus gratefully nibbles and sips as he works. He works hard
every moment, but it takes considerable time to carve out
and shape each toy and to paint it properly, So only half of
one shelf above the window is filled with playthings ready
for the children on time.

Claus looks often out the window as he works.

EXT. AWGWAS - CONTINUOUS

On the next morning the Fairies search in a new way... They join hands and move in a straight line through the rocks that form the mountain, beginning at the topmost peak and working downward, so that no spot could be missed by their bright eyes.

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

His face is sad on the day of Winter Solstice as he talks to Flossie and Glossie.

CLAUS

Let us take these toys to some children who haven't received any toys in their little lives.

FLOSSIE

You are right Claus. We should be happy with what we can do.

GLOSSIE

(nodding)
Next year will be better.

EXT. AWGWA COUNTRY - CONTINUOUS

At last the Fairies discover the cave where the toys are heaped up by the wicked Awgwas.

It does not take the Fairies long to burst open the mouth of the cave, once they find it. They each seize as many toys as they can carry.

INT. WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Claus gives Greta a hug and gathers up his meager bag of toys.

EXT. ABOVE EARTH - CONTINUOUS

They all fly to Claus and --

INT. WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

They come right through his walls to lay the toys before him.

Greta gasps and takes a stumbling step backwards, but Claus beams upon his friends.

CLAUS
 (joyfully)
 Oh my Fairy friends, thank you ever
 so much.

FAIRY 1
 There's still more toys, so we will
 be back soon.

CLAUS
 I must leave now, but we'll have
 plenty of toys for next year. And now
 that I'm better at making them, maybe
 I can improve on these toys.

He looks around his small cabin.

CLAUS (cont'd)
 (to himself)
 I think I need a bigger workshop.

The Fairies look at each other and nod knowingly.

FAIRIES
 Goodbye Claus. We will be back.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

The fairies flit away to talk to some Knooks in Burzee. We can't make out what is said, but the Knooks nod and show they agree with the Fairies' plans.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

One spring morning when the water is frolicking along the rocks and the insects are busily working, Claus takes his cup of coffee out on his little porch and stops with the cup halfway to his lips in astonishment.

A band of Knooks are sitting upon the grass waiting for him to come out. Nelko, the servant of Ak is with them. He is holding a gleaming ax. Karl the Knook stands and announces;

KARL
 It is time to build you a bigger
 workshop. We will wait while you and
 Nelko cut some wood.

Claus immediately sets his cup down and rolls up his sleeves.

He and Nelko cut logs from the DEAD trees in the forest for the rest of the day. Of course Nelko cuts much more wood than Claus can cut.

As they cut the wood, the Knooks begin building an extension to Claus' home. The new room is twice the size of the entire original cabin.

Greta hustles around the crowd providing cookies and fruit.

Claus' rosy cheeks glow with joy as he observes the handiwork of the Knooks.

He comes inside to see what is being done there.

INT. NEW WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

A giant work bench is placed before a large window opening.

The Fairies, flapping their delicate wings, place thick opaque sheets glass which are perfectly fitted into the window frames.

The Knooks are building shelves all around.

The Ryls are filling the new shelves with paint and brushes.

In one corner the Knooks are working diligently at a project that Claus can't see.

He goes over to them and looks over their crooked shoulders to see what they are doing.

CLAUS

What is this?

KARL

A kiln for your clay dollies. You put your sculptures here on this stone plate and slide it in there.

Karl points to the opening.

KARL (cont'd)

Then you close the door and let it cook the clay. The Fairies saw one in the city and explained how it works.

They all stand looking at the mysterious kiln in wonder.

FAIRY 1

First you build a big fire in there.

The Fairy bends over causing her wings to flair out as though for flight and points to an opening below the shelf. Claus squats down to inspect it.

CLAUS

This is amazing. I can't wait to try it.

GRETA

Me too... I think I can cook in this.

Claus walks to the other side of the room.

CLAUS

What is this tool used for?

He places a hand on a wood cutting machine.

KARL

It cuts wood for you.

Karl points to the foot paddles below.

KARL (cont'd)

You work these paddles to make it work.

FAIRY 1

You will still have to carve your toys, but this will help you get the blocks of wood to the correct size.

Claus' new workshop is a busy place as the immortals come to see what he does with his new equipment. By the time the weather turns cold again, the shelves are full.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

On Winter Solstice morning, he steps out onto his porch as Glossie and Flossie come prancing across the valley.

GLOSSIE

Hello Santa Claus.

CLAUS

Santa Claus? Where did you hear that?
I'm not a saint.

FLOSSIE

The Fairies said that's what the parents call you in the villages. We think it's true.

CLAUS

(with a belly laugh)

Well then you are saints also! And look how beautiful and strong you've become.

Glossie and Flossie prance and toss their heads about as they laugh. They are much thicker and shinier than last year. They look more like elk than deer.

CLAUS (cont'd)

Be ready for our journey at nightfall. We have a lot of toys to deliver.

The pair dash off to the forest.

EXT. FRONT YARD - NIGHT

With all his other labors he found time, since the last trip, to make new harnesses and to strengthen his sled. When the deer come to him at TWILIGHT (which is early afternoon that far north) he has no difficulty in harnessing them.

CLAUS

We must go in another direction tonight, where we shall find children I've never yet visited. And we must travel fast and work quickly, for my sacks are full of toys and running over the brims!

EXT. SLED - CONTINUOUS

So, just before the sun sets, they dash out of the Laughing Valley and across the plain and over the hills to the south. The air is sharp and frosty and soon the starlight touches the snowflakes and makes them glitter like diamonds. The reindeer leap onward with strong, steady bounds, and Claus laughs and sings while the wind whistles past.

CLAUS

(singing)

With a ho, ho, ho!
And a ha, ha, ha!
And a ho, ho! ha, ha, hee!
Now away we go,

(MORE)

CLAUS (cont'd)
O'er the frozen snow,
As merry as we can be!

Jack Frost hears him and comes racing up with his nippers, but when he sees it is Claus he laughs and turns away.

EXT/INT. VARIOUS ROOFTOPS AND HOMES - CONTINUOUS

Claus stops at some of scattered FARMHOUSES and climbs down the chimneys. Soon he reaches a VILLAGE and works merrily for an hour distributing playthings among the sleeping little ones.

He steps into a family room near Laughing Valley and finds cookies and milk on a little table by the fireplace. He quickly takes a bite of a thick cookie and a gulp of milk.

Then away again he goes, singing his joyous carol:

CLAUS
(singing)
Now away we go,
O'er the gleaming snow,
While the deer run swift and free!
For to girls and boys,
We carry the toys,
That will fill their hearts with
glee!

They stop at many chimneys and Santa Claus, with sparkling eyes, and a soot smeared face brushed red by the wind climbs into a chimney.

EXT. SLED - CONTINUOUS

But the sacks are empty at last, and the sled heads homeward; and again the race with daybreak begins.

Glossie and Flossie flee with a swiftness that soon brings them to the Laughing Valley.

It's true when Claus releases his steeds from their harness the eastern sky is streaked with gray, but Glossie and Flossie are deep in the Forest before day fairly breaks.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Claus is so wearied with his night's work that he throws himself upon his bed next to Greta in his soot-covered clothes and falls into a deep slumber, and while he sleeps the sun appears in the sky and...

INT. VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

(Narration during this village scene.) And the sun shines upon hundreds of happy homes where the sound of childish laughter proclaims that Santa Claus has made them a visit.

NARRATOR

When you remember that no child, until Santa Claus began his travels, had ever known the pleasure of possessing a toy, you will understand how joy crept into the homes of those who had been favored with a visit from the good man, and how they talked of him day by day in loving tones and were honestly grateful for his kindly deeds.

From an aerial view we can see them dashing about in the snow, showing off their new toys.

NARRATOR (cont'd)

No one was so greatly beloved as Santa Claus, because none other was so unselfish as to devote himself to making others happy.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

It's summer time now. Claus looks at his quickly filling shelves with a concerned expression.

EXT. SIDE YARD - CONTINUOUS

Claus goes out and looks at his sled, which looks SMALL now. Greta looks up from milking the goats.

GRETA

Is something wrong?

CLAUS

I need to build a new sled; larger and stronger and better-fitted for swift travel.

Claus turns back to the house.

CLAUS (cont'd)

I will pay a visit to the Gnome King.

EXT. MOUTH OF A VAST CAVERN - DAY

Claus climbs a steep trail to the mouth of a giant cavern. The GNOME KING is standing in the shadows. They speak for a moment and shake hands.

EXT. MOUTH OF A VAST CAVERN - DAY

Claus returns to the cavern with three drums, a trumpet and two dolls. The Gnome King gives Claus a pair of fine steel runners, curled beautifully at the ends.

The Gnome King's shy little Gnome children stay back in the cave's shadows, until their father beckons them forward. The King is greatly pleased with the toys, and he presents Claus with a string of sweet-toned sleigh-bells, in addition to the runners.

CLAUS

These will please Glossie and
Flossie.

He jingles the bells and listens to their merry sound.

CLAUS (cont'd)

But I should have two strings of
bells, one for each deer.

GNOME KING

Bring me another trumpet and a toy
cat, and you shall have a second
string of bells like the first.

The children giggle and hug each other at this news.

CLAUS

It's a bargain!

EXT. SIDE YARD - DAY

The new sled is carefully built, the Knooks bring plenty of strong yet thin boards to use in its construction.

Claus makes a high, rounding dash-board to keep off the snow cast behind by the hooves of the reindeer; and he makes high sides to the platform so more toys could be carried, and finally he mounts the sled upon the slender steel runners made by the Gnome King.

Claus paints it in bright colors. When all is finished he squats down to speak to a squirrel.

CLAUS

Please fetch Glossie and Flossie for me.

It nods and dashes away to the forest.

Soon the reindeer arrive to admire the sled, but gravely declare it's too big and heavy for them to pull.

GLOSSIE

We might pull it over the snow, to be sure, but we couldn't pull it fast enough to visit the far-away cities and villages and still return to the Forest by daybreak.

FLOSSIE

Especially over the ground where there is no snow.

Claus stands thinking for a minute.

CLAUS

I must add two more deer to my team.

FLOSSIE

The Knook Prince allowed you as many as ten. Why not use them all? Then we could speed like the lightning and leap to the highest roofs with ease.

CLAUS

A team of ten reindeer! That will be splendid. Please return to the Forest at once and select eight other deer as like yourselves as possible.

Flossie and Glossie nod their heads boisterously.

While Glossie and Flossie go to the Forest to choose their mates, Claus begins to consider the question of a harness for ten reindeer.

In the end he whistles for PETER KNOOK for assistance, for Peter's heart is as kind as his body is crooked, and he is remarkably shrewd, as well.

CLAUS (cont'd)

Peter, I need a harness for ten deer. I don't know how to make something like that.

PETER
I will make strips of tough leather
for the harness for you.

He pulls out a strap to show Claus.

PETER (cont'd)
This leather is cut from the skins of
lions who've died naturally. See on
one side is tawny hair while the
other side is cured to the softness
of velvet. They can be sewn
together... unlike twine which have
knots that rub the Reindeer's skin.

INT. WORKBENCH - NIGHT

Claus sews these strips of leather neatly into a harness for
the ten reindeer.

The fire burns in the background and Blinkie sits grooming
and watching her master. She sniffs the air and slinks
across the room to sniff the leather. With one paw she
playfully swats the hanging strap.

CLAUS
(with a laugh)
Oh, you like toys too, do you?

He ties a thin strip to a stick and pulls it back and forth
across the floor. Blinkie pounces on it playfully.

Claus goes back to work. Soon the harness and sled are
ready.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Now Claus devotes most of his days to the making of toys.
These are much better than the first ones had been, for the
immortals often come to his house to watch him work and to
offer suggestions. Claus looks skeptical at some of their
ideas.

MONTAGE - IMMORTALS OFFERING ADVICE

-- Necile cradles a doll while she talks.

NECILE
Wouldn't it be lovely if the dollies
could say Mama, or Papa?

-- A Knook is pretending to walk the lamb across the workbench.

KNOOK 1

The lamb should have a squeak inside them, so when a child squeezes them they'd say Baa-a-a-a!

-- Queen Zurline is leaning on her dainty elbows watching him work.

QUEEN ZURLINE

Could you put whistles in the birds, so they could be made to sing, and wheels on the horses, so children could draw them around.

-- The Ryl and a Knook sit on the workbench crowding Claus' space. Greta watches from her chair by the fire as she sews.

KNOOK 1

Many animals die in the Forest of Burzee and their fur can be brought to you. You could cover the small beasts you make.

RYL 1

I think the children would be amused if the donkey's head bobbed up and down.

After they leave, Claus makes a donkey with a nodding head.

He laughs a deep belly laugh at the toy. And so the toys grow in beauty and attractiveness every day, until they are the wonder of even the immortals.

END MONTAGE

EXT. SIDE YARD - DAY

One fine afternoon Claus is standing admiring the sled and harnesses. An orange leaf falls gracefully to the ground in front of him.

Claus looks to the plains and notes the golden hues of the fields. He looks to the surrounding trees to see the brilliant fall colors.

Just then a Red Ryl skips up to him.

RED RYL

Aren't the red leaves beautiful?

CLAUS

Yes, my little friend. You and the Yellow Ryls have done a magnificent job this autumn.

The Ryl nods happily and looks at the sled.

RED RYL

It's very big and very pretty, Claus, but it will get buried in the snow.

Claus looks surprised. He turns to contemplate the sled anxiously.

CLAUS

You're right. I need to build a covering for it.

RED RYL

I will ask the Knooks to help you.

The Red Ryl races off to the forest.

He immediately returns with a band of crooked knooks.

Claus stands next to them... all contemplating the sled.

EXT. SIDE YARD - DAY

A brand-new garage stands on the side-yard. It has plenty of space for the sled and a tack room for harnesses and other items related to the reindeer. Claus is arranging equipment along the hooks.

Greta is in the corner helping a knook build a pen for the goats.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

It's Winter and there is a monster load of gifts in the garage.

Claus is busily organizing the gifts, but he pauses to pet Blinkie who is weaving around his boots.

CLAUS

Goodness, Blinkie! You've grown fat.

She looks up at him and shakes her head.

Claus laughs his belly laugh at her apparent vanity.

EXT. WORKSHOP/ BEDROOM - NIGHT

A couple of days later, Claus is busily working at his workbench when he hears loud distressed meowing from his bedroom. Getting up, he and Greta go to look in their room. Blinkie is on top of the bed with a couple of kittens. She meows anxiously.

CLAUS

Oh my! You weren't fat... you were pregnant!

He rushes to her side to scoot a tiny ball of fur closer to her nipples.

But suddenly she whimpers and out pops another kitten. She births four in all. One is black, another is white, and the other two are black and white spotted.

Claus steps outside to get some air and...

EXT. PORCH - DAY

Claus almost trips over a large black and white cat. It looks up at Claus with questioning eyes.

CLAUS

Oh, so you're the father are you?

He stoops to pat the cat on his head.

CLAUS (cont'd)

Well fret not Pappa, you have four healthy kittens.

The cat presses its forehead against Claus' shin thankfully.

EXT. YARD/GARAGE - NIGHT

Claus fills sacks to the brim, and tucks every corner of the sled-box full of toys.

Then the eight deer appear and Flossie introduces them all to Claus. Each pair of deer steps forward as they are introduced.

FLOSSIE

This is Racer and Pacer, Reckless and Speckless, Fearless and Peerless, and Ready and Steady.

(Author note; this is what L. Frank Baum named them... not Dasher and Prancer, etc...) They are all exceedingly beautiful, with slender limbs, spreading antlers, velvety dark eyes and smooth coats of fawn color.

CLAUS

You are now reindeer. As time goes by and you eat the casa, grawle, and marbon plants, and you bath in the pool of Nares you will slowly change to be as magnificent as Flossie and Glossie. You will become bigger, stronger and have thicker fur and live for a very long time.

They all nod and rear up on their hind legs in excitement.

Claus places his hands upon his hips.

CLAUS (cont'd)

But you will also have children who will be domesticated like horses. Is this what you want?

They look at each other and then nod.

The new harnesses fit them nicely and soon they are all fastened to the sled by twos, with Glossie and Flossie in the lead. These wear the strings of sleigh-bells, and are so delighted with the music they make that they keep prancing up and down to make the bells ring. Claus now seats himself in the sled, draws a warm rug over his knees and his fur cap over his ears, and cracks his long whip as a signal to start.

EXT. SLED - CONTINUOUS

Instantly the ten reindeer leap forward and are away like the wind, while jolly Claus laughs gleefully to see them run and shouts a song in his big, hearty voice:

CLAUS

(singing)

With a ho, ho, ho!
 And a ha, ha, ha!
 And a ho, ho, ha, ha, hee!
 Now away we go
 O'er the frozen snow,
 As merry as we can be!
 There are many joys
 In our load of toys,
 As many a child will know;
 We'll scatter them wide

(MORE)

CLAUS (cont'd)
On our wild night ride
O'er the crisp and sparkling snow!

EXT. ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

He appears on the roof so suddenly the reindeer are astonished. While driving to the next chimney, Claus says to the deer;

CLAUS
I wish they would all hang up their stockings. It would save me a lot of time, that way I could visit more children before daybreak.

INT. VILLAGE HOME - DAY

When the four children jump out of bed next morning and run downstairs to get their stockings from the fireplace they are filled with delight to find the toys from Santa Claus inside them.

One child, however grows solemn as an Awgwa whispers in his ear. Still holding his toy the child begins cry as he lifts his toy as though to throw it.

The eager grin is wiped off the Awgwas face when a fairy intervenes and with a whip of her wand the Awgwa vanishes in a puff of dust. The boy's face clears as his mother approaches him with concern.

EXT. GIANT CAVERN - DAY

The next year Claus carries more presents to the children of the Gnome King, and that good-natured monarch gives him in return eight strings of bells, so finally every one of the ten reindeer is supplied.

EXT. SLED - CONTINUOUS

It is a merry tune the bells play as the sled speeds over the snow.

Claus returns to the Laughing Valley by daybreak. His beard is mostly white now and he has gotten chubby.

Greta greets him. She's now a middle-aged woman.

They wave goodbye to the deer and turn into the home, which is a twice as big again.

EXT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Once, just as the reindeer are ready to start on their yearly trip, a Fairy comes to Claus.

FAIRY 1

Claus, there are three little children who live beneath a rude tent of skins on a broad plain with no trees at all. These poor babies are miserable and unhappy, for their parents neglect them sadly.

CLAUS

Thank you for telling me. Be assured, I will visit them.

EXT. EDGE OF A FOREST - CONTINUOUS

During his ride he picks up the bushy top of a pine tree which the wind had broken off and places it in his sled.

EXT. SLED - NIGHT

Claus and his reindeer can visit the warm countries where there is no snow in winter, for there are little WHEELS inside the runners of his sled which permit it to run as smoothly over bare ground as on the snow.

EXT. IN FRONT OF TENT - NIGHT

It is nearly morning when the deer stop before the lonely tent of skins. Claus tiptoes to the flap and peers in at the poor children sleeping. Claus at once sticks the bit of pine tree in the sand and sticks many candles on the branches. He silently chuckles with joy.

He hangs some of his toys on the tree, as well as several bags of candies. Santa Claus works quickly, and when all is ready he lights the candles, thrusts his head in at the tent opening, and shouts:

CLAUS

Merry Solstice, little ones!

With that he leaps into his sled and is out of sight before the children, rubbing the sleep from their eyes, come out to see who's called them.

Their little faces light up with joy when they see the tree, sparkling with lights shining brilliantly in the gray night (It's summer's solstice on this side of the planet) and hung with toys enough to make them happy for years to come!

They join hands and dance around the tree, shouting and laughing, until they are obliged to pause for breath. And their parents, also, come out to look and wonder.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

One day the new Baron Braun comes to the house of Claus with his train of knights and pages and henchmen and, dismounting from his charger, bares his head humbly before Mr. And Mrs. Claus.

BARON BRAUN

Hello Claus, I am Baron Braun. My father didn't know your goodness and worth, and therefore threatened to hang you from the castle walls. But I have three children of my own, who long for a visit from Santa Claus, and I have come to beg that you will favor them hereafter as you do other children.

Claus is pleased with this speech.

CLAUS

Castle Braun is the only place I've never visited. I gladly promise to bring presents to your children this next year!

The Baron turns to go.

CLAUS (cont'd)

Wait!

Claus trots in the cabin and returns with several toys. He hands them up to Baron Braun. The Baron receives them with a huge smile.

BARON BRAUN

You truly are a friend to the children.

EXT. YARD - DAY

One sad day Claus is carrying dead Blinkie wrapped in one of his scarves to a little grave.

Her grown-up kittens follow solemnly and sit at the edge of the little mound (which he'd made by covering the grave while off-camera).

The cats sit in a semicircle around the little mound while a yellow Ryle plants daffodils on top of the grave.

Greta sniffs back her tears. A couple of the cats crawl into her lap and cuddle.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Santa Claus has grown old. The long white beard covers his cheeks and lays in long white wavy curls. His hair is white, too, and there are wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, which show plainly when he laughs.

The large map he had drawn shows on the wall. It is faded now.

NARRATOR

And now we come to a turning-point in the career of Santa Claus, and it is my duty to relate the most remarkable thing that has happened since the world began or mankind was created. We have followed the life of Claus from the time he was found a helpless infant by the Great Woodsman and reared to manhood by Necile in the great Forest of Burzee.

Claus had never been a very tall man, and now he is shorter and chubby. He uses a carved wooden cane as he slowly walks around his workshop.

Greta is old and her silver hair is piled on top of her head. She sits knitting in her rocking chair by the fire, watching Claus with concern.

But in spite of these things Claus remains as jolly, and his kind eyes sparkle as brightly as they did that first day when he came to the Laughing Valley.

NARRATOR (cont'd)

Yet a time is sure to come when every mortal who has grown old and lived his life is required to leave this world for another; so it is no wonder that, after Santa Claus had driven his reindeer many years, his immortal friends finally whisper amongst themselves that he'd driven his sled for the last time.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

The old Toymaker's strength is at last exhausted, for he makes no more toys, but lays on his bed as in a dream. The creatures of Laughing Valley and Burzee peek into his windows sadly. Greta sits at his side, holding his frail hand.

NARRATOR

All the Forest of Burzee became sad and all the Laughing Valley was hushed; for every living thing who'd known Claus loved him and brightened at the sound of his footsteps and his merry whistle. The Nymph Necile is still youthful and strong and beautiful.

Necile sits at his bedside at night stroking his white hair, while Greta slumbers peacefully at his side. Seated patiently in the corner shadows is the SPIRIT OF DEATH. Her black gown envelops her, making it impossible to make out any details.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The great Ak comes to visit the Forest at this time. Necile seeks him with troubled eyes.

NECILE

We are sad, Master Woodsman. My son, Claus, is very old now and the Spirit of Death is hovering over him.

At once the Master becomes grave, and he leans upon his ax, stroking his grizzled beard thoughtfully for many minutes. Then suddenly he stands up straight, and poises his powerful head with firm resolve.

Now, with a shrill whistle, Ak summons his fleetest messengers, and sends them away in a flash.

And when they are gone he turns to the anxious Necile and comforts her, saying:

AK

Be of good heart, my child; our friend still lives. And now run to your Queen and tell her I've summoned a council of all the immortals of the world to meet with me here in Burzee tonight. If they heed my words, Claus will drive his reindeer for countless ages yet to come.

EXT. BURZEE FOREST - NIGHT

At midnight there is a wondrous scene in the ancient Forest of Burzee, where all the immortal rulers who inhabit the earth are gathered together, along with all the citizens of Burzee.

There is the QUEEN of the WATER SPRITES, whose beautiful form is as clear as crystal but continually drips water on the bank of moss where she sits.

And beside her is the KING of the SLEEP FAYS, who carries a wand from the end of which a fine dust falls all around.

And next to him sits the Gnome King, the one who made the sled runners and bells. Beautiful jewels adorn his belt.

The next in the circle of immortals is the KING of the WIND DEMONS, slender of frame, restless and uneasy at being confined to one place for even an hour. Once in awhile he leaves his place and flies in circles around the glade.

Each time he does this the Fairy Queen is obliged to untangle the flowing locks of her golden hair and tuck them behind her pink ears. But she doesn't complain, for it is not often that the King of the Wind Demons comes into the heart of the Forest.

After the Fairy Queen, comes the KING of LIGHT ELVES. He bears a lightning-bolt in his right hand and a snuffer in his left, and his bright eyes rove constantly around, as if he longs to use his blinding flashes.

In addition to the immortals I have named are the KING of the KNOOKS, who has come from his home in the jungles of India; The KING of the RYLS, who lives among the lovely flowers and luscious fruits of Valencia.

Sweet Queen Zurline of the Wood-Nymphs completes the circle of immortal rulers.

But in the center of the circle sits three others who possess powers so great that all the Kings and Queens show them reverence.

These are Ak, the Master Woodsman of the World, who rules the forests, the orchards, and the groves;

KERN, the Master Husbandman of the World, who rules the grain fields, the meadows, and the gardens. He's dressed like a strong farmer with a broad-brimmed hat;

BO, the Master Mariner of the World, who rules under the seas and all the craft that float thereon. He looks like an old salty sea captain. He has gills along his neck that open and close occasionally.

When all have assembled the Master Woodsman of the World stands up to address them.

We see Ak speaking inaudibly for a some time, (from the vantage point of high up in the tree branches amongst the forest creatures) while everyone listens. His conclusion is clearly audible;

AK

And now, when Claus has won the love of all the world, the Spirit of Death is hovering over him. Of all men who have inhabited the earth none other so well deserves immortality, for such a life cannot be spared so long as there are children to miss him and to grieve over his death.

He pauses and glances around the circle, to find every immortal listening to him eagerly and nodding agreement.

AK (cont'd)

We immortals are the servants of the world, and to serve the world we were permitted in the Beginning to exist. But what one of us is more worthy of immortality than this man Claus, who so sweetly ministers to the little children?

Finally the King of the Wind Demons, who has been whistling softly to himself, cries out breathlessly:

KING OF WIND DEMONS

What is it you desire, O Ak?

All attention returns to Ak.

AK
 To bestow upon Claus the Mantle of
 Immortality!

That this demand is wholly unexpected is proven by many immortals springing to their feet and looking into each other's faces with astonishment and then upon Ak with wonder.

The Queen of the Water Sprites speaks in her low, clear voice,

QUEEN OF WATER SPRITES
 In all the world there is but one
 Mantle of Immortality.

KING OF LIGHT ELVES
 It has existed since the Beginning,
 and no mortal has ever dared to claim
 it.

And Bo the Master Mariner of the World arises and stretches his arms, saying:

BO
 Only by the vote of every royal
 immortal can it be bestowed upon a
 mortal.

Ak bows slightly to Bo.

AK
 (quietly)
 I know all this, but the Mantle
 exists, and if it was created, as you
 say, in the Beginning, it was because
 God knew that some day it would be
 required. Until now no mortal has
 deserved it, but who among you can
 deny that the good Claus deserves it?
 Will you not all vote to bestow it
 upon him?

They are silent, looking upon one another questioningly.

AK (cont'd)
 Of what use is the Mantle of
 Immortality unless it is worn? What
 will it profit any one of us to allow
 it to remain in its lonely shrine for
 all time to come?

GNOME KING

Enough! We will vote on the matter,
yes or no. For my part, I say yes!

FAIRY QUEEN

(promptly)

And I.

Ak rewards her with a smile.

KING OF RYLS

My people in Burzee tell me they love
him; therefore I vote to give Claus
the Mantle.

KING OF KNOOKS

(gruffly)

He is already a comrade of the
Knooks. Let him have immortality!

KING OF WIND DEMONS

(whistles)

Let him have it.

KING OF SLEEP FAYS

Why not? He never disturbs the
slumbers my sprites allow humanity.
Let the good Claus be immortal!

QUEEN OF WATER SPRITES

I agree.

KING OF LIGHT ELVES

If Claus does not receive the Mantle
it is clear none other can ever claim
it, so let us have done with the
thing for all time.

QUEEN ZURLINE

The Wood-Nymphs were first to adopt
him. Of course I shall vote to make
him immortal.

Ak now turns to Kern, who holds up his right arm and says:

KERN

Yes!

BO

Yes, I agree.

Ak, with sparkling eyes and smiling face, cries out:

AK

I thank you, fellow immortals! For all have voted 'yes,' and so to our dear Claus shall fall the one Mantle of Immortality that it is in our power to bestow!

KING OF SLEEP FAYS

Let us fetch it at once.

They bow assent, and instantly the Forest glade is deserted.

EXT. VAULT - CONTINUOUS

In a place midway between the Earth and the sky is suspended amongst the swirling Northern Lights a GLEAMING vault of gold and platinum, aglow with soft lights shed from the facets of countless gems.

INT. VAULT - CONTINUOUS

Within the high dome hangs the precious MANTLE of Immortality, and each Royal immortal places a hand on the hem of the splendid Robe and says, as with one voice:

ALL IMMORTAL ROYALTY

(in one voice)

We bestow this Mantle upon Claus, who is called the Patron Saint of Children!

At this the Mantle comes away from its lofty crypt, and...

EXT. SKY - CONTINUOUS

They carry it to the house in the Laughing Valley.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Spirit of Death is crouching very near to the bedside of Claus, and as the immortals approach she springs up and motions them back with an angry gesture. Her waist length black hair swirls around her silvery pale face. But when her silver eyes fall upon the Mantle they carry, she shrinks away with a low moan of disappointment and quits that house forever.

Softly and silently the Immortal Royalty hover around Claus. They look upon sleeping Greta, who is curled tightly against Claus' side. A questioning look goes around the group.

Bo shrugs. Kern nods his head and they drop upon Claus the precious Mantle, and it closes about him and Greta.

It sinks into the outlines of their two bodies and disappears from view. It becomes a part of their being, and neither mortal nor immortal can ever take it from them.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

And as Claus sleeps on, the red blood of everlasting life courses swiftly through his veins making his grey face pink.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

The next morning Claus opens his eyes and gazes around the familiar room, his old strength and health is renewed. He springs from his bed and stands where the bright sunshine comes in through his window and lets it flood him with its rays. He looks at his hands, not understanding what's happened to restore to him the vigor of youth. He glances at his reflection in the window and sees his beard remains the color of snow and the wrinkles still linger in the corners of his bright eyes. He laughs his deep belly laugh.

CLAUS
(bellows)
Greta!

Stepping into the big workshop, he picks up his plump little wife and twirls her about the room. Noticing the loaves of bread on the counter,

CLAUS (cont'd)
You have been busy.

Once released she bustles over to the kitchen.

GRETA
I don't know what's gotten into me!
I'm so full of energy.

Glancing at him she adds;

GRETA (cont'd)
And look at you Claus, I wasn't sure
you would make it through the night.

He plants a big kiss on her cheek.

CLAUS
It's a miracle, my love.

INT. WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Old Santa Claus moves about as briskly and merrily as a boy of sixteen, and is soon whistling contentedly as he busies himself fashioning new toys.

Then Ak comes to him. Claus hurries to let him in.

CLAUS

O Master Woodsman of the World, see me as a new man! Though I am old looking, I feel like a teenager!

Santa Claus tugs at his great white beard and dances a jig.

AK

Necile told us the Spirit of Death was hovering over you.

Claus stops cavorting about and listens intently.

AK (cont'd)

Since the beginning of time on Earth we have had the Mantle of Immortality in a secure, protected place. It was designed by the Supreme One and could only be used once. Yesterday we voted unanimously to bestow it upon you.

Claus is clearly overwhelmed.

CLAUS

But why me?

AK

You won it through your love of the children, Claus.

Old Santa Claus looks grave for a moment.

CLAUS

What about Greta?

AK

Greta too.

Then a smile lifts his jolly cheeks and he exclaims:

CLAUS

Now I need never fear being parted from my wife or my Forest family!

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

At once he begins making a remarkable assortment of pretty and amusing playthings, and with the help of his team of immortals, in larger quantities than ever before.

Claus steps to his map, and with a chubby finger he gently traces the original map when the population was small.

The four cats sit in various places grooming or watching Claus. Several little kittens play under the table.

MONTAGE - POPULATION SPREADING

-- The world was new in the days when Claus first began toy-making.

-- But every year more and more children are born into the world. - When they grow up, they begin spreading slowly over all the face of the earth, seeking new homes (shown using graphics overlaying the map)

-- Santa Claus finds each year that his journeys must extend farther and farther from the Laughing Valley,

-- and the packs of toys must be made larger and ever larger.

-- The map on the wall is expanded and filled in by Claus. He looks at it, perplexed.

END MONTAGE

EXT. NECILE'S HOME - DAY

Finally Claus is forced to seek the advice of his fellow immortals. He walks into the forest to Necile's tree house.

CLAUS

Hello Mother. I've come for advice.

He bends to place an affectionate kiss on her rosy cheek.

NECILE

I hope I can help, my son.

She pats the log next to her. Claus sits down and begins:

CLAUS

You have never been away from Burzee, except to my Laughing Valley, so you may not know that the world has many, many more children now.

(MORE)

CLAUS (cont'd)

The whole Earth is covered with children and they are growing up and building new homes and having more children!

NECILE

Is this a bad thing?

CLAUS

Oh no! No, it a very good thing, because I love children. The problem is I can't make enough toys for them all. I don't want any of the little ones to be neglected.

NECILE

I'm sure we can help. Let's question Ak. He is with Queen Zurline now.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Necile and Claus walk through the enchanted woods together. The animals shyly nod hello to Claus. He stops to rub a bear's ear.

They arrive to find Ak sitting with a group of Nymphs at his feet. Queen Zurline is at his side.

AK

Hello Claus. Hello my dear Necile.

Necile drops a pretty curtsy and Claus shakes his hand warmly.

NECILE

Great Woodsman, we need help. Claus can no longer make enough toys for all the children in the world... there are too many of them. Can we help him make toys?

Ak looks thoughtful for a moment. Nodding his head, he says:

AK

Yes, of course. I give you my man Kilter, the silent and swift.

KILTER suddenly appears. He's a small fellow with hair like moss.

AK (cont'd)

And the Knook named Peter.

Peter appears suddenly, whom has already helped Claus.

AK (cont'd)
And Nutter, a Green Ryl, the sweetest
tempered Ryl ever known.

NUTTER appears and smiles at everyone. He is delicate and handsome with his green tunic and green hat tipped to one side.

AK (cont'd)
And of the Fairies I call on Wisk,
that tiny, mischievous but lovable
Fairy.

WISK suddenly appears and quickly flits about. She's barely as tall as Claus' elbow.

AK (cont'd)
Necile, your sister Sasha shall help
also.

SASHA looks surprised as she suddenly appears. She looks similar to Necile, with up-tilted eyes but is slightly darker complected, with distinct freckles across her cheek bones.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

His home is bigger again... a small castle now. Windows glisten and workers are busily moving about inside.

INT. GIANT WORKSHOP - DAY

After a few generations his worries are renewed, for it is remarkable how the number of people continued to grow (as shown on the ever expanding map now covering half the wall) and how many more children there are every year to be served.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Ak and Claus are seated on the sunny porch of Claus' castle, enjoying a cup of hot chocolate.

CLAUS
I'm amazed at how much the world is
growing... Man uses a lot of wood
from your trees to build homes,
bridges, and ships with.
(MORE)

CLAUS (cont'd)

(beat)

Does that bother you?

The Master Woodsman gazes wisely across the Valley to Burzee:

AK

The world was made for men, and I have but guarded the forests until men needed them for their use. I'm glad my strong trees can furnish shelter for men's weak bodies, and warm them through the cold winters. But I hope they will not cut down all the trees, for mankind needs the shelter of the woods in summer as much as the warmth of blazing logs in winter.

EXT. SLED - DAY

His reindeer speed over the waters as swiftly as over land, and his sled heads from east to west and follows in the wake of the sun. As the earth rolls slowly over Santa Claus has all of twenty-four hours to encircle it each Winter Solstice, and the speedy reindeer enjoy these wonderful journeys.

EXT. BETHLEHEM - NIGHT

One glorious-clear night Claus stops his sled at a small stone village in the arid land of Israel called Bethlehem. He sees a Light Elf holding a brilliant light over a cluster of shepherds gathered around the opening of a manger.

Claus, being a curious fellow, approaches the men and peeks over their shoulders to behold a wee babe. Claus is awestruck by the beauty of the baby nestled in its mother's arms.

CLAUS

(whispers)

Who is this beautiful baby?

The nearest shepherd whispers in equally awestruck tones,

SHEPHERD #1

He's God.

CLAUS

God? God is a poor little baby?

SHEPHERD #2

(nodding)

An angel came to us and told us about
him.

The little bundle wrapped in a blanket wiggles and lets out
a lusty cry.

CLAUS

What's His name?

The young mother looks up and says;

MARY

Jesus.

SHEPHERD #1

(reverently)

The Christ.

Claus is overcome by the sight and finally comes away when
Flossie nudges him gently.

FLOSSIE

Santa Claus, we must go if we are to
get home in time.

EXT. SLED - CONTINUOUS

Claus is unusually quiet as they race across the desert.

CLAUS

(to the reindeer)

I will dedicate this day of giving
gifts to the Christ... for the little
baby Jesus is a gift to us all... We
will call this day Christmas.

It is his first Christmas.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Now the map covers three-quarters of the large wall.
Generation after generation the world grows older, and the
people became more numerous and the labors of Santa Claus
steadily increase.

EXT. AWGWA COUNTRY - DAY

But the anger and vengeance of the Awgwas hadn't been satisfied. Finally the Awgwas can stand no more of the interfering fairies. They declare war.

NEW KING AWGWA

Ak the Great Woodsman! Come to me.

Ak appears and calmly looks about him at the Awgwas.

NEW KING AWGWA (cont'd)

We will take no more of this Santa Claus. We will destroy him and his workshop.

AK

But Claus is immortal, and you are not. You cannot destroy him!

The king's rage boils over. He stomps his heavy feet and flings down a stone with such force it shatters.

NEW KING AWGWA

But Claus isn't all-powerful. We can destroy him, his home and all of his work.

King Awgwa waves his arm and thousands of Awgwas appear.

NEW KING AWGWA (cont'd)

We declare war!

AK

Then war it is!

EXT. AWGWA COUNTRY - DAY

And on the day after the declaration of war, a mighty army is at the command of the New King Awgwa. There are four hundred Dragons, breathing fire that consumes everything it touches. They have thick scales across their chests which gleam like abalone shells. Massive tails swish back and forth as they shift their weight from side to side in excitement for the coming battle.

And there are the three-eyed Giants, a host in themselves, who like nothing better than to fight. Their disproportionately long arms and bodies look odd compared to their shorter legs. A crop of bristly hair stands straight up on top of their huge heads.

And next comes the Black Demons, with great spreading wings like those of a bat, which sweep terror and misery through the world as they beat upon the air. They have feet to snatch up their prey and are big enough to easily steal a child.

And added to these are the Goblins, with long talons as sharp as swords, with which they claw the flesh from their foes. They're not large creatures -- smaller than the average man. They are furry and look like a cross between a tiger and a human.

Finally, every mountain Awgwa in the world has come to participate in the great battle with the immortals. Their army looks like living boulders.

King Awgwa looks around upon this vast army and his heart beats high with wicked pride, for he believes he will surely triumph over his gentle enemies.

EXT. FOREST (BURZEE) - DAY

But the Master Woodsman has not been idle. None of his people are used to warfare, yet now when they are called upon to face the hosts of evil, they willingly prepare for the fray.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

Ak commands them to assemble in the Laughing Valley. They line up in front of Santa's castle... hundreds deep.

INT. GIANT WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Claus, ignorant of the terrible battle that is to be waged on his account, is quietly making his toys.

He notices his immortal helpers are not in the castle, but as the two opposing forces are invisible at the moment, the valley appears placid and calm to him. So he just shrugs and keeps working.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Soon the entire Valley, from hill to hill, is filled with the little immortals.

The Master Woodsman stands first, bearing a gleaming AX that shines like burnished silver.

Next comes the Ryls, armed with sharp THORNS from bramble bushes.

Then the Knooks, bearing their SPEARS.

The Fairies, dressed in white gauze with rainbow-hued wings, bear golden WANDS.

And the Wood-nymphs, in their uniforms of oak-leaf green, carry SWITCHES from ash trees as weapons.

Loud laughs the Awgwa King when he beholds the size and the weapons of his foes. To be sure the mighty ax of the Woodsman is to be dreaded, but the sweet-faced Nymphs and pretty Fairies, the gentle Ryls and crooked Knooks are such harmless folk that King Awgwa looks almost embarrassed at having called such a terrible host to oppose them.

King Awgwa turns to the leader of the Giants.

NEW KING AWGWA

Since these fools dare fight, I will
overwhelm them with our powers and
quickly finish them!

To begin the battle he poises a great stone in his left hand and casts it full against the sturdy form of the Master Woodsman, who turns it aside with his ax.

Then rush the three-eyed Giants upon the Knooks.

And the Goblins turn upon the Ryls,

And the fire-breathing Dragons upon the sweet Fairies.

All hell breaks loose.

Because the Nymphs are Ak's own people, the band of Awgwas seek them out, thinking to overcome them with ease.

The Giants are astonished when the spears of the little Knooks pierce their thick walls of flesh and send them reeling to the ground with howls of agony.

The new King Awgwa's ignorance costs him his existence, for one flash of the ax borne by Ak cleaves the wicked King in half and rids the earth of the vilest creature it contained... but the war wages on.

INT - WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

The ground shakes from the invisible-to-human-eye battle raging outside Claus' home.

He looks out the window in front of him, but sees nothing. A thud is heard, and a mound of dirt inexplicably appears in the valley. One bushy white brow goes up questioningly.

Greta walks over and peers out the window. Another mound of dirt appears.

GRETA
What in the world?

EXT - LAUGHING VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Woe comes upon the sharp-taloned Goblins when the thorns of the Ryls reach their savage hearts and their life-blood sprinkles across the valley.

The Dragons pause astonished before the Fairy wands, from whence rush a power that causes their fiery breaths to flow back on themselves, so they shrivel away and die.

As for the Awgwas, they have scant time to realize how they are destroyed, for the ash switches of the Nymphs bear a charm unknown to any Awgwa, and turns their foes into clods of earth at the slightest touch!

INT. WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Another quiver shakes the table like a small earthquake.

Claus looks up again, but still sees nothing. He looks to SNOWBALL (from Blinkie's line), who is on her hind legs looking out the window watching the battle that she can see.

CLAUS
Did you feel that too? The Earth is
quaking my little friend.

Snowball looks at Claus and meows a loud-strong meow. Then she jumps down off the table and hides in a corner.

Claus looks curiously at her cowering in the shadows with several other cats and kittens.

In the window behind him a dragon breaths out a giant flame that is redirected back into it's mouth by a dainty fairy waving her wand. The dragon looks momentarily astonished and before it turns to cinders and crumbles.

CLAUS (cont'd)
It's okay kitties, I won't let
anything hurt you.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Then Ak leans upon his gleaming ax and turns to look over the field of battle where he sees the few Giants who are able to run disappearing over the distant hills.

The biggest surprise is to the flying Demons. As they swoop down to make their kill, gnome's hands shoot up out of the earth and snatches them below the ground one after another.

The Goblins have perished every one, as have the terrible Dragons, while all that remain of the wicked Awgwas is a great number of earthen hillocks dotting the plain.

And now the immortals melt from the Valley like dew at sunrise, to resume their duties in the Forest, while Ak walks slowly and thoughtfully to the castle of Claus and enters.

INT. WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

AK

You have many toys ready for the children, and now you may carry them around the world, and to the nearby dwellings and villages without fear.

Claus swivels to Ak in surprise.

CLAUS

Without fear? Will not the Awgwas try to rob me and harass me as they have for centuries?

AK

The Awgwas have perished. I gladly have destroyed those wicked spirits who fight and shed blood.

The map in the workshop, behind Ak, covers the entire wall in front of the vast workbench. The giant windows show the now peaceful Laughing Valley with mounds of dirt.

EXT. SLED - NIGHT

It's Christmas Eve, and Claus is hurtling through the night on his sled; his reindeer leap to the top of a NEW building. Santa Claus is surprised to find the chimney has been built MUCH SMALLER than usual. But he has no time to think about it just then, so he draws in his breath and makes himself as small as possible and slides down the chimney.

INT. FURNACE PIPE - CONTINUOUS

Claus mumbles quietly as he wriggles down the tight space.

CLAUS

I ought to be at the bottom by this time.

INT. CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

There is no fireplace. When he reaches the bottom of the chimney he's in the cellar.

CLAUS

This is odd! If there is no fireplace, what on earth is the chimney good for?

Then he begins to climb up again, and finds it hard work, the space being so small.

EXT. ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Finally he reaches the roof and says to the reindeer:

CLAUS

There was no need of my going down that chimney, for I could find no fireplace through which to enter the house. I fear the children who live there must go without playthings this Christmas.

EXT. SLED - CONTINUOUS

Then Claus drives on, but soon comes to another new house with a small chimney-pipe.

EXT. ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

This causes Santa Claus to shake his head doubtfully, but;

INT. FURNACE PIPE - CONTINUOUS

He tries the chimney, nevertheless, and finds it exactly like the other.

Moreover, he nearly gets stuck fast in the narrow flue and tears his jacket trying to get out again; So, although he comes to several such chimneys that night, he does not venture to descend any more of them.

EXT. SLED - CONTINUOUS

CLAUS

(to deer)

What in the world are people thinking of, to build such useless chimneys? In all the years I have traveled with you I have never seen the like before.

INT. NEW HOME - DAY

The poor children of those homes wake up the next morning to grief and disappointment.

EXT. ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

Several years later, so numerous have the narrow chimney pipes become, he even has a few toys left in his sled that he was unable to give away, because he cannot not get to the children.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

The matter has now become so serious that it worries the good Claus greatly, and he decides to talk it over with Kilter, Peter, Sasha, Nutter and Wisk. They stand looking at the toys remaining in the sack sitting on the sled floorboards.

CLAUS

I'm really worried. This year there were many, many homes I couldn't deliver gifts to because they don't have chimneys. I can't imagine how they stay warm.

PETER

(frustrated tone)

Those people act as if they do not wish their children to be made happy! The idea of shutting out such a generous friend to their little ones!

CLAUS

But it is my intention to make children happy whether their parents wish it or not.

NUTTER

You are right, my master, many children would lack a friend if you did not love them, and try to make them happy.

Wisk is dancing and skipping playfully around her friends.

WISK

(with a laugh)

Then we must abandon any thought of using these new-fashioned chimneys, but become burglars, and break into the houses some other way.

Claus laughs at Wisk.

CLAUS

What way?

WISK

Why, walls of brick and wood and plaster are nothing to Fairies. I can easily pass through them whenever I wish, and so can Peter, Nutter, Kilter and Sasha too. Is it not so, friends?

Kilter nods thoughtfully and joins the discussion.

KILTER

I often pass through the walls when I gather up the letters to you.

CLAUS

I'd completely forgotten about that! You come through my walls all the time.

Sasha hops onto the sled and sits on the floorboard. She picks up a Nymph dolly from the bag and fingers its gown.

SASHA

Therefore, you may as well take us with you on your next journey, and when we come to one of those houses with stoves instead of fireplaces we will distribute the toys to the children without the need of using a chimney.

CLAUS

That seems to me a good plan. We will try it next year.

EXT. SLED - NIGHT

That is how the five helpers all ride in the sled with their master the following Christmas Eve and ever after.

EXT./INT. NEW HOUSES -CONTINUOUS

They have no trouble at all in entering the new-fashioned houses and leaving toys for the children who live in them.

EXT. OLDER ROOFTOPS - CONTINUOUS

This enables him to complete his own work, of going down the chimney to leave gifts, more quickly than usual.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

So the merry party find themselves at home with an empty sled while it is still dark.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

And often, when parents are kind and good-natured, Santa Claus will simply fling down his package of gifts and let the parents set them under a tree with lights.

EXT. SLED - NIGHT

Claus is swiftly descending in his sled from a high mountain community to a sprawling flat desert city.

NARRATOR

For Santa Claus decided that no child, if he could help it, should long for toys in vain.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)

Perhaps you will now understand how, in spite of the bigness of the world, Santa Claus is able to supply all the children with beautiful gifts.

Old Santa begins to send great heaps of toys to the toy shops.

NARRATOR (cont'd)

To be sure, the old gentleman is rarely seen in these days; but it is not because he tries to keep out of sight, I assure you.

EXT. LOADING DOCK - DAY

A semi-truck with "Santa's Workshop" on its side is backing up to the loading dock of a toy store.

NARRATOR

Santa Claus is the same loving friend of children who in the old days used to play and romp with them by the hour; and I know he would love to do the same now, if he had the time.

INT. DEPT STORE - CONTINUOUS

Employees are arranging the toys on the modern-day shelves.

NARRATOR

But, you see, he is so busy all the year making toys, and so hurried on that one night when he visits our homes with his packages, that he comes and goes amongst us like a flash; and it is almost impossible to catch a glimpse of him.

Parents are shopping with their children at the toy-shops.

NARRATOR (cont'd)

And, although there are millions and millions more children in the world than there used to be, Santa Claus has never been known to complain of their increasing numbers.

EXT. SLED - NIGHT

Claus is in his sled on the mountain rim surrounding a vast city (such as Los Angeles).

CLAUS
(calls out)
The more children, the merrier!

NARRATOR
The only difference to him is the fact that he has more little workmen who have to make their busy fingers fly faster every year to satisfy the demands of so many little ones.

Claus looks over the side of his sled as they swoop into the crowded city.

CLAUS
In all this world there is nothing so beautiful as a happy child.

FADE OUT