

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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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 smooth coating of bark and strange gracious limbs and branches intertwine above. The world is young.

NARRATOR

Have you heard of the enchanted Forest of Burzee? For thousands of years it's 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.

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 shadows over the mosses, lichens, and drifts of dried leaves.

NARRATOR (cont'd)

Yet Burzee has its inhabitants. In the beginning were the 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 from one moss-covered patch to another; radiant, lovely, straight and slim. Her hair is chestnut brown; her up-tilted eyes are as dark as olives; her cheeks bloom a vibrant coral over her olive complexion; her lips are full, red, pouting, and sweet.

All nymphs are female and similar in appearance. For costume she wears a green flowing tunic.

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 darts from tree to tree checking her precious buds. She pulls weeds growing near her little trees. She carries water from the brook to moisten the roots.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Now, centuries later, the trees are older and sturdy, so Necile's duties have lessened. She wanders from tree to tree in the dense forest, but there are no weeds now. Bored, she flicks a leaf in passing.

Necile walks to the edge of the forest, 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.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

The great AK, THE MASTER WOODSMAN suddenly appears in a small clearing. The nymphs coming running.

Ak welcomes them as they gather at his feet. Ak is a tall and powerful man. His ebony skin is a startling contrast to his grey beard and long wavy grey hair.

Sitting next to Ak is QUEEN ZURLINE, a nymph. Necile sits at his feet and stares up at him adoringly.

Ak, stroking his grizzled beard thoughtfully with his knobby hand, speaks with an 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're not of our kind, it's true, yet compassion is important. Often as I pass by the dwelling of some suffering mortal I'm 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's not our place to interfere with the laws of Nature.

Queen Zurline nods her crowned head at the Master Woodsman.

QUEEN ZURLINE
 Nevertheless, it wouldn't be an improbable guess that Ak has assisted these helpless mortals.

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

AK
 Sometimes, when they are very young I've stopped to rescue them from misery. The adults I dare not interfere with, 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'm justified in assisting them.

The Queen beams upon the Master Woodsman.

QUEEN ZURLINE
 I'm glad you do 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.

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 found, close to the forest, a helpless babe, lying quite naked upon the grasses and wailing piteously.

(MORE)

AK (V.O.) (cont'd)
 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)
 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 - CONTINUE VISUAL FLASHBACK

AK (V.O.)
 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)
 I told her to send word throughout
 the forest, to all creatures, that
 the child shall not be harmed.

EXT. FOREST - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

QUEEN ZURLINE
 That was kind.

But this time Necile does not echo the Queen's words, for
 she is sneaking 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.

Necile sees the chubby pink newborn lying about ten feet away. But now it's 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 face expresses curiosity and surprise, but, most of all, womanly pity. The babe is 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 up 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.

The Queen and her Nymphs turn and see Necile with the infant clasped tightly in her arms and a defiant look.

For a moment they all remain stunned and silent.

Ak gazes intently upon Necile. To the wonder of all, Ak lays his hand softly on Necile's head 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's your desire, Necile?

She 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's
my home, and I'm weary for lack of
occupation. Let me care for the babe!
See how weak and helpless it is?
Surely it can't 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.

QUEEN ZURLINE

(smiling)

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

The Woodsman strokes his sculpted beard slowly.

AK

Necile shall keep the babe, and I'll
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 shelter with her new-found
treasure.

EXT. NECILE'S HOME - DAY

The next day Necile's bower is the most popular place in the Forest. The Nymphs cluster around her, as the child sleeps in her lap.

Even the Queen comes to peer into the baby's face and to hold a helpless, chubby fist in her own slender 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.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Necile gathers moss for Claus to lie upon, and she makes his bed in her own little bedroom.

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.

Shiegra, the lioness, creeps stealthily into Necile's bower and growls softly as she lays beside the babe.

EXT. NECILE'S HOME - DAY

MANY curious immortals come to visit Claus; The RYLS (males) come to admire him. They are similar 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. (important later)

Next come the KNOOKS (males) to shoulder the other immortals out of their way. The Knooks' duty it is to watch over the beasts of the world, both gentle and wild. They look old and worn and crooked.

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

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

Little Claus flourishes and grows bigger and sturdier day by day. He is sweet and gentle as he stoops to set aright a turtle who's fallen on its back. He toddles fearlessly throughout the forest, visiting the lion's den and sitting amongst them.

MONTAGE - CLAUS MATURES

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

-- The Fairies bestow little outfits for 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. 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.

-- Claus begins 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 deep into Burzee, where he gathers supplies of nuts and berries, as well as roots.

-- Necile follows him 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 tall as Necile. 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 Ak gives a sigh.

As Ak sits beside Queen Zurline, 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.

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

Claus smiles happily. But Necile weeps and clings to Claus.

Ak watches the two clinging together and again he strokes his beard. He takes Claus to a small clearing in the forest.

AK (cont'd)
Hold tightly to my belt while we
journey; for now we shall circle the
world and look upon the gathering
places 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 brings 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 the youth's wonder grows. He finds the city 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.

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

CLAUS (O.S.)
Tell me, why don't these children
fare alike?

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 don't
stop to think. As they become adults
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 surveys 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. Over
time, when you grow old and gray, she
will seem like a daughter.

(MORE)

AK (cont'd)
 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 descend to the Forest of Burzee, to the circle of Nymphs.

The brow of the great Ak is now calm and peaceful, but the brow of Claus has become lined with deep thought as he sits next to Necile.

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

Ak 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.
 (MORE)

CLAUS (cont'd)
 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 blinks rapidly
 and looks upward.

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.

The teen 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 joy and
 strength, it's just and right that I
 devote my life to the happiness of
 the little children.

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, 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.
 (scowling)

FAIRY QUEEN
 We are here for you, dear Claus!

Necile says nothing. She only hugs Claus and goes up on tiptoe to kiss his cheek 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 bravely.

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 with a brook midway between them to 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 become brighter as he stands silent, looking out upon the Laughing Valley. Then all of a sudden his eyes crinkle with a smile.

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

The bees buzz 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 Ak.

Silent Nelko carries an axe, 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 logs, which he begins to clear of their branches.

The magical axe 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 axe 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.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - NIGHT

While the moon rises over the hilltop and highlights the body of the sleeping Claus, 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 Claus.

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

CLAUS

I must thank the Knooks for this.

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! I must thank the good Knooks again for their knowledge of man's needs.

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 ripples as they push one another against rocks and the tiny fish dashing about. And as the stream races by 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, pots, dishes, pans, and all the tools necessary to prepare food. 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. 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.
(MORE)

CLAUS (cont'd)
 This means I must plow the earth and
 plant food so when winter comes I
 shall have saved plenty of food.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

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 colors the buttercups, answers:

YELLOW RYL
 Don't worry, Claus. The great Ak has
 spoken to us about you. We're glad to
 favor the one the Master Woodsman
 loves. Therefore, do the good work
 you're resolved to undertake.

(MORE)

YELLOW RYL (cont'd)
We, the Field Ryls, will take care of
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 closet.

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 faces 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 tell you something about the
Awgwas... they are terrible creatures
who will create a lot of trouble for
our good Claus.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)

They nearly succeed in robbing the children in the world of their earliest and best friend.

A little boy is playing around a poisonous berry plant. He looks bored. An invisible Awgwa pushes fruit into his path. The boy picks up the berries with a glance towards his home. He takes a bite...

NARRATOR (cont'd)

I do not like to mention the Awgwas, but they're a part of 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 morals whatsoever 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 a fellow Awgwa at the little mud-thrower's misfortune.

EXT. VALLEY/PLAINS - DAY

MONTAGE - CLAUS VISITS VILLAGES

-- Seen from far away, Claus walks through his Valley to the plain to reach the scattered homes.

NARRATOR

Now, when Claus began to make children happy he kept them out of the power of the Awgwas; for happy children with such a loving friend had no need to obey the evil thoughts the Awgwas tried to thrust into their little minds.

-- These homes stand singly or in villages and in nearly all the houses Claus finds children underfoot.

-- Closer view - The youngsters run to him to see his merry, laughing face and bright eyes.

-- The parents shake their heads scornfully at the young man, 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 goes, the sounds of childish laughter follow him.

-- The crippled children smile despite their misfortune as Claus carries them about.

-- The ailing ones hush their moans as he sits with them.

-- 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 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 wall!

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 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.

Necile beckons Shiegra into the forest and gently hugs her giant neck.

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 quiet.

As Claus walks across the valley, he pulls his coat closer around his neck as a cold breeze ruffles his hair.

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 and
cover 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.
(crestfallen)
Well, I will not pinch a child this
night... 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 laughs as he comes back 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 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.

Claus sighs. He stirs the fire. He looks around the room...
bored.

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.

Claus glances between the cat and the stick he is whittling. Soon 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 where it rests upon a neck.

Blinkie sits up stiffly, as if watching with some suspicion of 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 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 cautiously to the wooden image to eye it closely and smell it. 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 from the chimney.

The sky is heavy with dark clouds. 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 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.

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

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

Helllp!

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

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

Hellp!

Quickly Claus draws on his coat, and pulling his cap on, opens the door. The wind 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 steps outside and quickly closes the door, peering anxiously into the darkness.

The wind buffets against him, but Claus stands firm. The snowflakes fall 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 boot.

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 removes Weekum's wet cap and wraps a warm blanket around him, then 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 Weekum curls up in Claus' arms with a sigh and falls asleep. Claus holds him closely under his coat while he slumbers.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

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

WEEKUM

Is 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. Weekum cuddles it and kisses the tip of its wooden ear.

CLAUS

Why were you out in this 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, 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)

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 Weekum falls asleep with the wooden toy in his arms.

INT. CABIN - DAY

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

He straps his snowshoes to his feet, and puts on a thick 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 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 with a happy smile.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

That evening he says to Blinkie:

CLAUS

I think 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.

She blinks 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, BLACK, GREEN, and BLUE RYLS join the Yellow Ryl 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'll bring you some of the red dye I color my roses and tulips with, and you can make the cat's tongue red.

GREEN RYL

I can bring some of the green I use to color my leaves with, so you can color the cat's eyes green.

YELLOW RYL

The eyes'll 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 I use to paint the bluebells with, and then you can carve a ribbon on the toy cat's neck and paint it blue.

The Ryls disappear, and by the time Claus has finished carving out the form of the cat they're 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. She stalks to the corner of the hearth and sits down with her back to them with a dignified air.

EXT. VALLEY TO THE VILLAGES - DAY

As soon as morning comes, Claus 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'd hidden it, and places it in her arms.

The little girl's eyes grow bright with pleasure. She hugs the carving tight and falls 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 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 (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 are very attractive, yet I can't see why you make cats, which are very unimportant animals. Suppose, now that I'm 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'm indeed terrible to all who're not my friends.

Claus now carves out the body. The image of the crouching lioness is very life-like.

SHIEGRA (cont'd)

It pleases me.

Shiegra yawns and stretches her body gracefully with her butt up in the air.

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.

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 hisses fearfully--

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Shiegra struts 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 to 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, 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're very welcome here, and you've
come just in time to share my dinner.
What are your names?

MAYRIE
May-ree, 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.

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've 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.

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 cabin.

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. 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 with their aunt 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 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'll 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 have been because he has no model before him.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

The children in the villages run out to meet him. He carries his gifts to the sick or disabled 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.

EXT. VALLEY - DAY

Most of the children walk to the cabin to ask for toys. A little path is soon worn from the plain to the toy-maker's door.

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, holding his paintbrush aloft asks:

CLAUS

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

KNOOK 3

(shrugs)

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

(gruffly)

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'll 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 hip and watches her sister with a smile. Ruarc comes up behind her and she leans against him. They look at each other and give a happy little kiss.

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

Seen from a distance, 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. LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

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

Claus scoops Greta up in his arms and marches through the crowd toward his cabin. The mortals follow with cheering. The immortals hug 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, 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 horse and says:

BESSIE

Please, Mr. Claus, I'd like a toy.

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

CLAUS

But you're a rich lord's daughter,
Miss Bessie and have all that you
desire.

Bessie politely shakes her head.

BESSIE

Except toys. There're 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 too want toys... If I can't
have one, I shall be very sad.

Claus is troubled. His usual smile is replaced with a
thoughtful expression. He steps to her side.

CLAUS

(gently)

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'm 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's wise, my dear.

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

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

He walks into the 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.

CLAUS

Mother, I have a dilemma. This morning I had a visit from the daughter of Lord Lerd...

(MORE)

CLAUS (cont'd)
Bessie Blithesome. She's 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. 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.

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 with her
wings slowing rising and falling.

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're little
they're 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.

(MORE)

FAIRY QUEEN (cont'd)
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're as just as
they are wise. Hereafter all children
may claim my services.

Then he bows before the gracious Fairy Queen, kisses
Necile's rosy cheek, and 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 little 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 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 green, and when the paint is dry, Claus smiles.

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 soft wool bed Greta had 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 grow round as she examines the pretty image. She holds it close to her chest as a mother does to her child.

BESSIE
What's it called, Mr. 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'll tend it and care for it just
as Nanny cares for me.
(MORE)

BESSIE (cont'd)
Thank you very much. Your gift has
made me happier than I've 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 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. She gives a gasp of surprise.

GRETA
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)

Can 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.

AWGWA 1

We grow weaker every day!

They shake their heads and mutter fiercely.

KING AWGWA

It's true. 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're losing our
power! 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 isn't afraid.

CLAUS
Come to me, ye Knooks of the Forest!

Claus gives the low peculiar whistle the Knooks know.

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

The panther, which was 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.

KNOOK 1
(gruffly)
Who're you to call on us?

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

KNOOK 1
This looks like the work of the
Agwas.

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'll
conduct you to your home. Where shall
we seek it?

CLAUS
Tis in the Laughing Valley.

Light fades out to darkness when Claus closes his eyes.

ANCIENT KNOOK (V.O.)
(fading)
There's but one Laughing Valley in
the known world, so we can't go
astray.

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

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

EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

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

King Awgwa and his fierce band are furious 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.

CLAUS

But why am I their enemy?

QUEEN ZURLINE

Because friend Claus you bring joy to the children and the Awgwas survive on the children's misery.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF CLAUS' HOME - NIGHT

Queen Zurline comes with the Fairy Queen, the Knook King, and the King of the Rylys, to Claus' cabin 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 - CONTINUOUS

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's 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's 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 CAVE - CONTINUOUS

There they thrust him within a deep cavern and roll huge rocks against the entrance.

Deprived of light and food, and with little air to breathe, Claus is in a danger. 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

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 mothers have cookies and fresh milk for Claus.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

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

CLAUS

When I was a teen, I went on a journey with the Master Woodsman, Ak.
(MORE)

CLAUS (cont'd)
He took me to see the world. 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's 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.

Greta 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 knapsack so he can carry it more easily.

Greta kisses him and stands on the porch waving goodbye.

EXT. PLAINS AND VILLAGES - CONTINUOUS

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

The children swarm about him, following his footsteps wherever he goes. The women thank him gratefully, grasping his hand. The men look upon him curiously, but everyone smiles upon him.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

When the sack is empty he goes back to the 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 sister's 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 gone.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Without delay Claus starts making a fresh supply of dolls of all sizes with brightly-colored outfits. He makes toy drums with tiny sticks to beat them with, whistles from the willow trees, 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 comes 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 can't 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's 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 solid 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 scares them and puts up a hand.

CLAUS

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

The deer stop and step timidly back to the porch.

CLAUS (cont'd)

Yes, it's a long journey... it'll 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 help you.

CLAUS

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

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Flossie and Glossie race over the frozen snow to the forest.

EXT. FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

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

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're 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 collar of each deer, one on the right side 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 tucks his beard into his coat and pulls on the leather gloves.

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 sled flies 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

They cross the Valley and glide over the broad plain beyond.

It is dusk by the time they start, 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. He goes down the carved-out path to the door. But a new difficulty now presents itself when Claus tries the door and finds it's locked.

Claus retraces his steps to the sled in disappointment.

CLAUS

I'm afraid, my friends, we've made our journey for nothing. We'll have to carry my playthings back home again without giving them to the children of this village.

FLOSSIE

Why? What's 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 is 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's plenty of soot on the bricks, but he doesn't 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 tiptoes silently for fear of waking the mother. Then he slips a wooden 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 other, their father snoring next to them.

Claus gazes at the little boys 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'll never get back to the Forest by daybreak.

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

INT. ROOM TO ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MONTAGE - GOING FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE

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

-- 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. He sets to work at once.
 -- his beautiful steeds carry him rapidly from one roof to
 another, except the highest beyond the leaps of the deer.
 -- At last the supply of toys are gone 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's 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 on 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.
 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.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

And, afterward, a boy is throwing a tantrum in the yard. His mother picks up the squirming child.

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 toys.

Claus overhears the 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 in the spring, 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.

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.

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.

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, but the wicked Awgwas race around them and cause their steps to go astray, so never can a child 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.

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, 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

At last he trudges 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've approved the work you're 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've attacked you. We've always avoided them, and they, in turn, have taken care not to cross our paths.

(MORE)

AK (cont'd)

But in this matter I find they've interfered with one of our friends, and I'll ask them to abandon their persecutions, since you're under our protection.

CLAUS

Thank you Master Woodsman.

AK

Worry not my child. We'll solve this problem in time. Be patient.

Claus bows and goes back to the Laughing Valley.

Ak leaves at once...

EXT - AWGWA BOULDERS - CONTINUOUS

And travels to the mountains of the Awgwas. 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, perched 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've 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 leans threateningly towards Ak.

KING AWGWA

(shouting)

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

AK

You shall not harm our friend in any
way.

KING AWGWA

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

AK

It's 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 the king 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. The forest royalty 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've no conscience, and try to
 make all mortals as bad as
 themselves. We must destroy them.

Queen Zurline rises to her feet majestically.

QUEEN ZURLINE
 They've defied the great Master
 Woodsman and threaten the life of our
 adopted son. We must destroy them.

Ak 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 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...

(pause)

Even if it is an Awgwa. First we'll protect Claus from the thieving Awgwas. But if that doesn't work... then prepare for battle, which is coming... maybe not now, but it will come. Let's 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 as he hurries down a path.

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've 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. Claus looks frustrated with the irate Knook. Greta stares in awe.

CLAUS

It was an accident... and it couldn't have been very long after daybreak.

WILL KNOOK

It was one minute after, and that's as bad as one hour. And now they're begging to go again. I'll 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

I'm surprised you could see him... maybe it's because your mind is becoming more open like a child's.

(looks toward Will)

That's 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. Will 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

Will, the knook, has threatened two innocent deer with stinging gnats because I was one minute late last year when we were delivering gifts to the children. I've asked that the punishment be mine instead.

Then Ak addresses the Prince of the Knooks:

AK

The good work that Claus is doing among mankind deserves the support of every 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's 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 as most Knooks are, looks only upon the dead leaves at his feet.

PRINCE OF KNOOKS

(mutters)

You're the Master Woodsman of the World.

Ak rolls his eyes, but continues...

AK

(softly)

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 doesn't reply, but taps the curled point of his shoe with the tip of his spear, as if in thought.

FAIRY QUEEN

(gently)

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

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

PRINCE OF RYLS

For my part, I'll 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 down next to the Prince of Knooks and places a gentle hand on his stiff shoulder.

QUEEN ZURLINE

The deer who draw the sled of Claus will be permitted to bathe in the Forest pool of Nares, which will give them thick 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're free, wild creatures, owing no service of any sort to mankind. It would degrade my deer to labor for Claus, who's only a man in spite of the friendship lavished on him by the immortals.

PRINCE OF KNOOKS

You've 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 we were 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 doesn't happen again!

CLAUS
So you'll 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 watching with one brow
raised. The Prince stands up and addresses the company:

PRINCE OF KNOOKS
Since you all urge me to grant the
favor, I'll 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.
(MORE)

PRINCE OF KNOOKS (cont'd)
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; 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 dash away into the forest.

CLAUS
(to Ak)
When is Winter Solstice?

AK
In about five days.

CLAUS
It'll be hard to use the deer this year, for I shan't have time to fill my sled with 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. 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 and go this year.

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 of the Awgwas and begin a search for the toys amongst the caves.

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 time to carve out and shape each toy and to paint it properly, so only 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 over the rocks, beginning at the topmost peak and working downward, so that no spot could be missed.

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

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

CLAUS

Let's take these toys --
(indicates a small
bag)
to some children who haven't received
any toys in their little lives.

FLOSSIE

You're 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. They each seize as many bags of toys as they can carry.

INT. WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

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

EXT. ABOVE EARTH - CONTINUOUS

The fairies 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'll be back soon.

GRETA
 This is going to take some getting used to!

CLAUS
 (to the fairy)
 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'll be back.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

The fairies flit away to talk to some Knooks in Burzee. We can't make out what's 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 cocoa 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's holding a gleaming axe. Karl the Knook stands and announces;

KARL
It's time to build you a bigger
workshop. We'll wait while you and
Nelko cut some wood.

Claus immediately sets his cup down and rolls up his sleeves and fetches his magical axe.

He and Nelko cut logs from the dead trees in the forest for the rest of the day.

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's being done there.

INT. NEW WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

A giant work bench is before a large window opening.

The Fairies, flapping their delicate wings, place thick opaque sheets of glass into the window frames.

Claus taps one in awe.

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 on a project that Claus can't see.

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

CLAUS

What's 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 make bread in this.

Claus walks to the other side of the room.

CLAUS

What's 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'll 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 new 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, and they both have dainty antlers.

FLOSSIE
Did you notice our antlers? Aren't
they magnificent?

Flossie steps close to show him. He touches them.

CLAUS
I've never seen a female deer with
antlers.

GLOSSIE
We're not deer, we're reindeer!

Claus grins.

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

The pair dash off to the forest.

He pulls new harnesses from a peg and carries it to 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 (cont'd)
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 snow and makes it 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,
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's Claus he laughs and turns away.

EXT/INT. VARIOUS ROOFTOPS AND HOMES - CONTINUOUS

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.

Claus stops at some 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.

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 flushed red by the wind climbs into a chimney.

EXT. SLED - CONTINUOUS

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 harnesses 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.

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 from a lean-to.

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 attaches the slender steel runners.

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 (bigger antlers) 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 lightning and leap to the highest rooftops 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 team, 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'll 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.

-- A blue 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.

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'll 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'll 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's a giant load of toys 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.

CLAUS (cont'd)
Don't take offense... you're still beautiful.

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 Poppa, 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 toys into every corner of the sled-box.

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, velvety dark eyes, and smooth coats of fawn color.

CLAUS

(lecture tone)

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.

FLOSSIE

And have antlers like our bucks!

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

Claus places his hands upon his hips.

CLAUS

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're 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.

GRETA
 (to Claus)
 I have a gift for you.

She unfolds a thick red wool coat and fur hat with button-down earflaps. She helps him into the coat and sets the cap on his bushy blonde head. Claus picks her up in a hug.

Claus now seats himself in the sled, draws a warm blanket over his knees and pulls his fur cap over his ears.

CLAUS
 Now remember, Flossie and Glossie...
 You mustn't go too fast because our
 new friends aren't as fast as you
 two.

And he 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 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
 On our wild night ride
 O'er the crisp and sparkling snow!

EXT. ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

At one home he reappears on the roof through the chimney so suddenly the reindeer are startled. While driving to the next chimney, Claus says to the deer;

CLAUS
 That was easy! Those children had
 their stockings hanging in front of
 the fireplace, so I filled them with
 toys.

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 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 - NIGHT

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 silver-haired 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. Don't worry, 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's 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's 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, and some under it. Santa Claus works quickly, and when all is ready he 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 toys shining brilliantly in the gray night (Longer nights on this side of the planet).

They join hands and dance around the tree, shouting and laughing. Their parents 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 guards and, dismounting from his charger, bares his head humbly before Claus and Greta.

BARON BRAUN
Hello Claus, I'm Baron Braun. My
father didn't know your goodness and
worth, and therefore threatened to
hang you from the castle walls.
(MORE)

BARON BRAUN (cont'd)
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 into 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 with Greta 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'd 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's my duty to relate the most remarkable thing that's happened since the world began or mankind was created. We've 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 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's 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, strong, and beautiful as she 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're so 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 axe, stroking his beard thoughtfully for many minutes. Then suddenly he stands up straight, and lifts 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're gone he turns to the anxious Necile and comforts her.

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 royal 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, where the night shines with fireflies. 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 seat 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's not often that the King of the Wind Demons comes into the heart of the Forest.

After the Fairy Queen, sits 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've named are the King of the Knooks, and the King of the Ryls.

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 Horticulturist 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. He is Asian.

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. He is Caucasian.

When all have assembled Ak stands up to address them.

The forest creatures look down from the trees branches. Ak speaks inaudibly for some time while everyone listens.

The rulers watch him carefully.

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've inhabited the earth none other so well deserves immortality.

(MORE)

AK (cont'd)

Such a life as his cannot be lost 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 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's but one Mantle of Immortality.

KING OF LIGHT ELVES

It's 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 them 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's clear none other can ever claim it, so let's 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's in our power to bestow!

KING OF SLEEP FAYS

Let us fetch it at once.

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:

ALL IMMORTAL ROYALTY

(in unison)

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 vanishes.

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. Ak grins and they drop upon Claus the precious Mantle, and it closes about them both.

It sinks into the outlines of their two bodies and disappears from view.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

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. 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 a new toy.

Then Ak arrives. Claus hurries to let him in.

CLAUS
O Master Woodsman of the World, see
me as a new man! Though I'm 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've 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
(smiles)
Greta too... she was so close by your
side we couldn't separate you.

Then a smile lifts Claus' 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
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.

Several 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. They begin migrating 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 around the globe,

-- 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 home.

CLAUS

Hello Mother. I've come for advice.

He places 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. 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 behind 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.

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).

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Ak and Claus are seated on the sunny porch of Claus' massive workshop, 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.

(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 with his speedy reindeer.

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, his valley 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 hundreds of fire-breathing DRAGONS. 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, an army in themselves, who look ready 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 giant bat. They have clawed 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.

King Awgwa looks around upon this vast army and he smiles with wicked pride.

EXT. FOREST (BURZEE) - DAY

But the Master Woodsman hasn't been idle. None of his people are used to warfare, yet now when they're called upon to face the hosts of evil, they willingly arrive for the fray.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - DAY

They assemble in the Laughing Valley and 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 workshop, but as the two opposing armies are on the other side at the moment, the valley seen through HIS window appears empty. So he just shrugs and keeps working.

EXT. LAUGHING VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Soon the entire upper Laughing Valley, from hill to hill, is filled with the little immortals with Claus' home behind them.

The Master Woodsman stands first, bearing a gleaming AXE that shines like burnished silver.

Next comes the multicolored Ryls, armed with sharp THORNS from bramble bushes.

Then the Knooks, bearing their SPEARS.

The Fairies with their rainbow-hued wings, bear golden WANDS.

And the Wood-nymphs, in their uniforms of 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 axe 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, we'll
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 effortlessly turns it aside with his axe.

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 as the demons fly over it all.

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 axe borne by Ak cleaves the wicked King in half, but the war wages on.

INT - WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

The ground shakes from the battle raging outside Claus' home. He looks out the window in front of him, but sees nothing. A thud is heard, and one bushy white brow goes up questioningly.

Greta walks over and peers out the window.

GRETA
What in the world?

She points to a demon zipping past with a fairy in hot pursuit.

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.

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 OTHER 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.

He goes with Greta to that window and sees a dragon breath out a giant flame that is redirected back into it's mouth by a dainty fairy waving her wand. The dragon looks momentarily astonished 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 axe and turns to look over the field of battle where he sees the few Giants who're 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 to snatch 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 odd rock piles 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 other
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. They will
no longer whisper wicked ideas to
children.

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.

He nearly gets stuck in the narrow flue and tears his jacket trying to get out again. So, although he comes to several such chimneys that night, he doesn't try any more of them.

EXT. SLED - CONTINUOUS

CLAUS

(to the reindeer)

What in the world are people thinking of, to build such useless chimneys? In all the years I've traveled with you I've never seen the like before.

INT. NEW HOME - DAY

The children of those homes wake up the next morning and run to the family room to find no presents.

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 don't wish their children to be happy! The idea of shutting out such a generous friend to their little ones!

CLAUS

But it's my intention to make children happy whether their parents wish it or not.

NUTTER

You're right, Mr. Claus, many children would lack a friend if you didn't 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 written 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 why 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's 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 Christmas 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's 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. It's 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