



# **Barely in Time for Christmas**

A temporal holiday comedy in two acts

By

**Nathan Pralle**

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 F/3 M/13 Any)

ANNIE	A physicist-in-training, highly analytical
SOPHIE	Annie's best friend; utterly non-scientific
CRINK	Elf; program manager, perpetually stressed.
PERI	Elf; old and seasoned, sarcastic, grumpy
LUMI	Elf; young, eager, bubbly, cloying.
MRS CLAUS	Grandmotherly; bakes a mean cookie.
HIMA	Junior Elf; always fighting with SNEG
SNEG	Junior Elf; always fighting with HIMA
SANTA CLAUS	The jolly old elf himself
FATHER TIME	Old timeless man whose beard has seen things
EASTER BUNNY	Hoppy-boppy egg-laying rabbit
TOOTH FAIRY	Loves teeth TOO much. Dental work, anyone?
PUCK	Shakespearean master of chaos and rhyme
SPRITE 1	Little messenger of the dream world
SPRITE 2	See SPRITE 1
SANDMAN	Wants to be eerie. Is not eerie enough.

### *THE MOIRAI:*

CLOTHO	Obsessively perfectionist weaver of thread
LACHESIS	Apathetic, keeper of the cloth
ATROPOS	Manic-depressive life-snipping scissors

Runtime: ~82 minutes

## **SCENES**

### **ACT I**

SCENE 1	The Experiment	Annie's Laboratory
SCENE 2	Never Late	North Pole
SCENE 3	Froyo	Ice Cream Stand
VIGNETTE #1	Delivering the Bad News	Living Room
SCENE 4	Hop to It	North Pole
SCENE 5	Noting the Time	Annie's Laboratory
VIGNETTE #2	Becoming	Unknown Location
SCENE 6	Nothing but the Tooth	North Pole
SCENE 7	The Ornament	Annie's Laboratory
SCENE 8	A Matter of Time	North Pole

### **INTERMISSION**

### **ACT II**

SCENE 1	Destination Cold	North Pole
VIGNETTE #3	Chuck a Beachy	Australian Beach
SCENE 2	Sandy Fairies	North Pole
SCENE 3	Two Sides of a Spoon	North Pole
SCENE 4	A Fatal Situation	North Pole
SCENE 5	Unraveling the Mistake	North Pole
SCENE 6	The Pull Back	North Pole
VIGNETTE #4	Graduation Nightmare	Graduation Stage
SCENE 7	Deep in the Presents	North Pole

## **Production Notes**

### **Casting/Double Casting**

Some roles are set to gender (MRS CLAUS, etc.) but most others could be cast to another gender by changing some names and pronouns. Permission is automatically given to adjust pronouns and names accordingly to accommodate casting.

Few roles can be double-cast due to the nature of appearance on stage; it is probably best not to try.

### **Sets**

This production supports sets of both complex and simplistic design; furniture is going to be your greatest concern, followed by lighting and sound, then possibly scenery. The debut performance was on a small stage, so this production is geared towards all sizes and technical levels of theatre.

### **Costumes**

Concern should be taken with costumes to make them as distinct as possible, especially with the different fairy tale/mythical characters. This will ensure a memorable performance.

### **Vignettes**

Each vignette should start with The Sound. The Sound is a sound effect that happens each time the Time Vignette occurs. This might be the sound of tinkling chimes, ice breaking, or jingle bells, etc. Something that fits the nature of the play and theme and is publicly available.

Time Vignettes happen throughout the production and are when Santa is thrown backwards in time. They should occur on stage at the same time as the currently running scene and cause the actors in that scene to be startled by them. The actors cannot interact with Santa during these vignettes (except near the end). Each time he is embedded within the time shift until he realizes what is happening.

Special-effects-wise, these scenes can be accomplished by lighting only half the stage for the “normal” timeline of the scene and then

alternatively lighting the dark side of the stage for the vignette, or having Santa step out from behind a curtain into the scene, or other such representation. They should not be overly propertied – a few props or simple sets to interact with is more than enough and the rest should be left to the imagination. A dreamlike / nightmare-like state is even better.

The Sound should be played to start each vignette, accompanied by a change in lighting. Even when dialog starts to intrude from the “normal” timeline, the lighting there should remain dim to allow for the attention to be on the vignette.

Additional sound effects may be necessary to carry out the various transitions and special effects of the feature. This is left to the discretion of the director.



# Original Production Cast

December 9 and 10, 2023

performed at the historic Windsor Theatre in Hampton, IA, as part of the Franklin County Arts Council's annual holiday theatre series.

Directed by Nathan Pralle

Assistant Director Yolanda Pralle

Associate Director Madonna Weiland

## Cast of Characters:

Jaliyah Ivey	ANNIE
Natalie Birdsell	SOPHIE
Macaean Pralle	CRINK
Jack Hindin	PERI
Sofia Gonzalez	LUMI
Meg Dunwald	MRS CLAUS
Miyah Arana	HIMA
Sophie Flores	SNEG
Keston Pralle	SANTA CLAUS
Jason Cady	FATHER TIME
Elian Trevino	EASTER BUNNY
Lillian Foreshoe	TOOTH FAIRY
Will Vosburg	PUCK
Liberty Varrelman	SPRITE 1
Adi Jorgensen	SPRITE 2
Alivia Jorgensen	SPRITE 3
Anto Santhosh	SANDMAN
Genevieve Foreshoe	CLOTHO
Tammy Schirmer	LACHESIS
Charleigh Schirmer	ATROPOS

# ACT 1

## SCENE 1: The Experiment

*(Interior of laboratory in some high school or university. ANNIE is in a lab coat and bent over a complex contraption of wires, tubes, and other paraphernalia. She is adjusting something that can only be described as a horizontal telescope or lens. There is a platter in front of the tube at a short distance which is holding a banana.)*

*SOPHIE is sitting at a table nearby, idly browsing her phone, scrolling through things, and utterly bored and frustrated.)*

**SOPHIE:** Ugh, are you about done yet??

**ANNIE:** Perfection takes time. I must have all of this perfect and I'm running out of time!

**SOPHIE:** Does perfection also require you to ignore fashion?

**ANNIE:** I have fashion! It's just...unique. Even so, concentrating on something like that takes far, far too long.

**SOPHIE:** Oh yes – unique, nerdy, and guaranteed to turn away every man from here to the Mississippi.

**ANNIE:** The last thing I need in my life is a man, or a relationship, or anything like that distracting me from my career goals. I mean, look at me, I'm not even head researcher here yet and I'm sooooo far behind compared to my colleagues!

**SOPHIE:** So, what? You're young, you'll catch up easily enough!

**ANNIE:** No, you don't *get it*. Temporal physics is a *huge* field filled with...math that's mind-bending, science that takes years just to learn, and experiments that take forever to set up for tiny bits of information. I must spend every moment if I'm going to make an impact.

**SOPHIE:** You can't continue to work at this pace, though! You'll grind yourself into a pulp.

**ANNIE:** A pulp with a doctor's degree.

**SOPHIE:** You're hopeless. What are you working on again!?

**ANNIE:** *(sighs and turns into professor mode)* It's a quantum-resonating crystalline laser which emits a high-frequency time dilation beam.

**SOPHIE:** In English, please!? The kind of English *I* understand?

**ANNIE:** *(pantomiming and singsong)* You put something HERE, point machine at it, press GO button, machine goes pew pew, banana gets older.

**SOPHIE:** *(scrunches up cheeks in her hands)* So you can shoot it at my face and make this splotchy skin clear up?

**ANNIE:** It should make the banana go black-spotted, so if that's your preferred complexion, then yes. *(Sticks out her tongue)* But at the moment, it's not working well at all, so nothing would happen to your face other than maybe bursting into flame or something equally spectacular.

**SOPHIE:** Oh, gosh no, I burn too easily as it is. *(Gets out of chair and whirls behind ANNIE)* C'mon, you've been working on that for absolutely ages and the mall is already closed. It's two days till Christmas – aren't you going to take a break?

**ANNIE:** NO! This is critical and I *must* finish this!

**SOPHIE:** *(backs off)* Ok, ok, sorry. *(Takes a pause)* Look, you don't think well if you're hungry. You need sugar. *(hopeful)* If we hurry, we can still grab some ice cream at the Cone Zone! You know you always work more efficiently with strawberry cheesecake froyo in you.

*(Annie sighs and grabs her notebook.)*

**SOPHIE:** Then you can come RIGHT back here and keep working! Please!?

**ANNIE:** Just .... let me write a quick note here and do one more test run before we head out, ok? I want to test these parameters quickly before I mainline sugar and the insulin spike throws off my ability to do calculus.

*(ANNIE jots down some notes and then turns back towards the apparatus. SOPHIE holds her hands up in a "fair enough" move and settles back down in her chair.)*

**SOPHIE:** Great! But if you're not done in 10 minutes, I'm leaving without you and recruiting a new nerdy friend.

*(ANNIE rolls her eyes and then crouches to look at her equipment, and then abruptly stands up.)*

**ANNIE:** Gold! I need gold. What do we have that is gold!?? *(Looks around)*

**SOPHIE:** *(not looking up)* I have my heart-shaped locket?

**ANNIE:** *(frowning)* No, not like that. I need something...round.

**SOPHIE:** *(looking up)* Like...earrings? Class ring?

**ANNIE:** No, a ball...

**SOPHIE:** OH! I got it! *(She leaps up and heads for a Christmas tree in the corner)* This, right here! *(She grabs a shiny gold ball from the tree near the top)* Gold and round!

**ANNIE:** OH NO, no, that's my baby ball!

**SOPHIE:** Baby ball? Like a miniature dance?

**ANNIE:** No, silly, like that was my Christmas ornament from when I was a baby – the first one my parents got for me. It's always been on every Christmas tree that I've had since then.

**SOPHIE:** So why in the heck is it on the tree in the laboratory?

**ANNIE:** Where do you think I spend most of my time these days?  
*(a pause)*

**SOPHIE:** Fair point. But - it IS gold and round like you wanted, right?

**ANNIE:** *(contemplating)* Hrm...you are right. I only really need the spherical gold surface to act as a beam splitter and the atomic matrix is even so it shouldn't alter its nature... *(drifts off as she sees SOPHIE's eyes cross)* I mean – uh, it will probably be ok.

*(She takes the gold ball from SOPHIE's hand and gingerly places it between the tube of the device and the ill-fated banana.)*

**ANNIE:** There. Now, a quick power adjustment to compensate for the gravitational metric of the gold... *(fiddles something on the instrument)* ...and we are ready to give it a shot!

**SOPHIE:** Do you want a drumroll?

**ANNIE:** Nah, but you might want to step back a tad. I make no warranty for your complexion.

*(SOPHIE cautiously takes a few steps backwards as ANNIE backs up, her finger on a button on the apparatus.)*

**ANNIE:** Testing setting Alpha 5 in three...two...one...MARK!

*(A bright flash of light and a crack or pop or blam emits from the machine and everything goes pitch dark.)*

**ANNIE:** *(from the dark)* ARGH!!!

*(There is a click as the lights return on stage. The machine is in some sort of ruins, the gold ball has rolled away from the machine (seemingly unharmed), and the banana is neatly split in two. SOPHIE is wide-eyed and frozen in her spot. ANNIE is distraught.)*

**ANNIE:** *(throwing her hands up as she gazes at the destruction)* Fifty days of setup, GONE! What went wrong!?? *(She wails)*

**SOPHIE:** *(walking over to comfort her)* There...there. *(Awkwardly pats)* It'll be ok, I'm sure you can find another banana...

*(ANNIE groans.)*

**SOPHIE:** I'm sorry. I really am. I know how hard you've been working on this but...Annie, it's the 23rd. You were about due for Christmas break anyway.

**ANNIE:** A break? I can't take a break now! Now I have to set all this back up, re-calibrate the settings, and find new parts to replace the broken ones – it'll take days if I'm lucky! I just....I just feel like I'm running out of time, lately. I can't get a break, I can't get a spare moment, and everything takes so long. Einstein was 26 when he first published  $E = mc^2$ ! I can't even make a geriatric banana!

**SOPHIE:** LISTEN TO YOURSELF! Are you crazy? You're so young and have so much ahead of you, and besides – you're not thinking

straight anymore tonight. You need to get something inside of you, when was your last meal? Don't make me call your mother!

*(Annie stops and ponders for a minute. She sighs.)*

I guess I could make an infomercial for an amazing new banana split machine.

**SOPHIE:** *(clapping her on the back)* That's the spirit! *(Marches over and grabs a couple coats from the table, and hands one to ANNIE)* Now, what do you say about drowning your sorrows in obscene amounts of ice cream?

**ANNIE:** *(small smile)* That's a very scientifically-sound notion.

*(They both exit.)*

## SCENE 2: Never Late

*(Morning at the North Pole in the workshop. Toys and parts are strewn about on workbenches. A Christmas tree is decorated in one corner and near the top of the tree is a gold ball that is a twin to the one we just saw in ANNIE's lab. CRINK the elf, holding a clipboard behind his back with several papers attached, is pacing back and forth in front of a row of chairs set in a semicircle – three small wood chairs and one large, comfy armchair. The armchair is empty; two of the wooden chairs hold LUMI and PARI. LUMI is a young, eager elf on the edge of her seat, ready to help at a moment's notice. PARI is well-seasoned, relaxed, and currently laid back, chin on chest, snoring.)*

**CRINK:** He's late! He's *never* late! This is most, most unusual.

**LUMI:** Maybe he's sleeping in!

**CRINK:** *(whirls on her)* Sleeping in? The boss? I mean, yes, the week AFTER Christmas, of course, but now? Mere days before The Day?? Unheard of!

*(a snore erupts from PARI)*

**LUMI:** *(ignoring it)* Oh, stuff snow in your britches, Crink. You're always so wound up about everything!

**CRINK:** And WHO exactly is supposed to keep this production schedule on task, I ask you? This place is a chaotic nightmare without guidance, without task lists! Why, the last time we let a department choose their own pace, Packaging took a three-day vacation to Bermuda on December 10th!

**LUMI:** They still delivered on time! They were ahead as far as I remember.

**CRINK:** *(exasperated)* Barely! They came back to a pile of deliveries to wrap and had to work double shifts to get back in line. Nobody appreciates what I go through to make this all happen on time. *(Kicks at PARI's feet)* Wake up, rumble strips!

**PERI:** *(snorting awake)* What are you going on about now, Crinkle-cut?

**CRINK:** The mere fact that you're sawing logs on December 23rd instead of ensuring your sleigh-boys are ready to go is telling.

**PERI:** We've been ready for weeks! I don't see what the fuss is about. It's not like Christmas hasn't been coming around for centuries upon centuries. You'd think you were new here. I deserve a few winks for having to deal with the likes of Comet and his never-ending bellyaches about how his harness fits.

**LUMI:** I told him to cut back on the candy canes; it was going to come back around to bite him in the end.

**PERI:** That's exactly where his harness doesn't fit anymore, too! His end! *(They laugh and CRINK sighs)* Hey, where is the boss, anyway?

**CRINK:** That's EXACTLY what I'm worried about! He's never late to this meeting.

*(At this a door opens upstage and MRS CLAUS enters in her pajamas, yawning.)*

**MRS CLAUS:** Good morning, CRINK – PERI – LUMI. *(Each nod at her, and then CRINK marches over to her)*

**CRINK:** Good morning, madam. Is the Master all right?

**MRS CLAUS:** *(confused)* Why, whatever do you mean, Crinky-dear?

**CRINK:** *(stumbling)* I mean, uh, where...exactly...is Santa??

**MRS CLAUS:** You mean — he isn't here?

**LUMI:** *(standing up)* Uh, no, ma'am — that's why Crink here has his jingle bells in a knot. The boss is late for our morning production meeting.

**MRS CLAUS:** *(thinking)* Why...I don't know where he would be. Have you checked the stables? He does like to say good morning to the crew.

**PERI:** *(shakes his head)* No, he wasn't in the stables, and I just came from there. Haven't seen him since yesterday when he came by to check on the improvements being made to the sleigh.



**LUMI:** (*lightbulb moment*) OH! I know! He wanted to go out and see the new polar bear cubs!

**CRINK:** Hmmm...I'm fairly certain nobody has seen him headed that way, but I can definitely send someone out to the caves to see.  
Hima! Sneg!

(*HIMA and SNEG appear at the doorway.*)

**CRINK:** Hima, go check and see if Santa is in the stables, and Sneg, take a sled out to the western caves and see if he is out there checking on the new polar bear cubs.

**HIMA:** Awww, I want to go see the cubs! They're ADORABLE!

**SNEG:** You got to go see them just the other day! My turn!

**HIMA:** You always get to do the fun things!

**SNEG:** Says the elf who got to ride a reindeer on Tuesday!

**CRINK:** No fighting, you two; this is important! If you see him, send him here right away.

**SNEG:** Yes sir!

**HIMA:** Pet the little one for me!

(*HIMA and SNEG exit.*)

**CRINK:** He didn't sleep in or anything, did he?

**MRS CLAUS:** No, when I awoke this morning at 7 his side of the bed was already empty, my dear.

**CRINK:** All right. Lumi, would you please organize a few skiers to head for the slopes to see if Santa went for a walk, and Peri, can you please walk the factory floor and see if anyone has seen him? I'll head towards the kitchen and the bakeries. Goodness knows he's gotten lost in the donut buffet once or twice. Meet back here in an hour.

(*Everyone nods and heads off in different directions as MRS CLAUS comes to stage center, frowning, and wringing her apron.*)

(*Lights down, end scene.*)

### SCENE 3: Froyo

*(Exterior; ANNIE and SOPHIE are sitting on a park bench devouring cups of frozen yogurt and giggling between each other. Annie no longer has her lab coat on but is still dressed in something very subdued and serious; SOPHIE is dressed brightly and fun and is practically bouncing out of her seat.)*

**SOPHIE:** See, I told you that you needed some sugar!

**ANNIE:** *(laughs)* Yeah, I guess I should let myself go occasionally, especially after all the work I've been putting in lately.

**SOPHIE:** *(nodding sagely)* Yes, exactly - Rome wasn't lasered to the ground in a day, you know.

**ANNIE:** *(sighs)* Oh, I know, I just had so many hopes for this experiment to actually work. I've been working on this theory for years and it just feels so close I can almost taste it.

**SOPHIE:** *(taking a spoonful of her cup)* All I taste is cheesecake swirl. Although there is a hint of laser-cut banana in here. *(smirks)*

**ANNIE:** *(splits a wry grin)* Touche, dear friend. Let's be glad we aren't wearing that banana. *(They both laugh.)*

**SOPHIE:** So why exactly DO you want to make a banana older?

**ANNIE:** *(shaking her head)* Aged bananas aren't exactly the point; the flow of time is something that has really puzzled physicists for a long time. So many have come close to understanding it, but almost none have been able to control it. This beam is revolutionary; if it works, I'll be published on everything from Scientific American to the back of your cereal box.

**SOPHIE:** And to think, nobody will ever have to wait for their bananas to turn from green to yellow!

**ANNIE:** *(smiles)* I do suppose that's a nice side effect.

**SOPHIE:** But what do you think it will take to – *(she is interrupted by the vignette)*

## VIGNETTE #1

*(A room appears with a Christmas tree and several wrapped gifts underneath it. SANTA appears in full suit, placing presents under a tree, his back turned to the audience, muttering to himself.)*

**SANTA:** ...and to Josh, a new baseball glove. What's next? Ah yes, to little Annie, a chemistry set! What a clever girl!

*(SANTA stands up and turns around, pulling his bag shut by the string. He heads over to a small table with a plate, some cookies, and a Christmas card. He grabs a cookie and takes a bite as he picks up the card and reads it.)*

**SANTA:** Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 1996 from The Robinsons! Aw, how nice is that?

*(He stops mid-chew)*

Wait. Nineteen ninety-six!? *(He flips the card back and forth a couple times)* NINETY-SIX!? *(He looks around in a panic)* Where am I???

*(End vignette)*

*(ANNIE and SOPHIE are still sitting on the park bench. This entire time they have been staring, wide-eyed, at what has taken place. The vignette ends and leaves them both staring into space.)*

**SOPHIE:** *(croaks out)* What...was....that!??

**ANNIE:** I can't believe my eyes. *(She looks intently at the ice cream cup)* What flavor did you say this was?

**SOPHIE:** *(still in awe)* Strawberry....Santa. I mean, cheesecake. I think.

**ANNIE:** Whatever it is, it's trippy.

**SOPHIE:** Do you think....

**ANNIE:** ...that that was Santa? Oh, COME ON.

**SOPHIE:** And 1996? He seemed confused. Thirty years ago?

**ANNIE:** I... don't know. We both saw it, right?

**SOPHIE:** Right. *(They ponder for a minute of silence)*

**ANNIE:** (*worried; shakes her head*) Let's...let's go. It's been a long day. (*They get up and leave*)

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## **SCENE 4: Hop to It**

*(Chaos at the North Pole; everyone is running around back and forth. LUMI, PERI, CRINK, HIMA, SNEG are upset and MRS CLAUS is trying desperately to rein them in.)*

**LUMI:** It doesn't make sense; Santa just doesn't disappear! I mean, he DOES disappear but not, like, HERE. You know what I mean!

**PERI:** I still maintain that he's had enough of this headache and took off for somewhere sunny. Bermuda, Bahama, Margaritaville...

**CRINK:** Have we looked at the security footage?? Have we checked under the ice? WHAT ABOUT THE RUSSIANS!??

**MRS CLAUS:** *(shouting)* ALL RIGHT LITTLE ONES!

*(Everyone is silent and stops.)*

**MRS CLAUS:** This is getting us nowhere. We know Santa is missing. The question is – where and what do we do about it. We need help.

**PERI:** You're right; let's bring in some experts at hidden things.

**HIMA:** Don't ask Sneg, she can never find anything!

**SNEG:** Who lost their favorite mug last week?

**HIMA:** I hope you get coal!

**SNEG:** I hope you get stuck in a chimney!

**CRINK:** Sit, both of you. We are trying to THINK. *(HIMA and SNEG sit down.)*

**LUMI:** Oh, I have a colorful thought!

**CRINK:** Are you thinking about rodents? I'm thinking about rodents.

**PERI:** I was pondering an omelet but it's along the same lines. Mmmm...omelet.

**MRS CLAUS:** Oh yes! That's the right creature for hidden things. I think I have his ornament right here... *(walks over to the tree)*. Oh yes, the pearlescent egg. *(Pulls an egg ornament off the tree and gently whirls it around on its string)*

*(EASTER BUNNY appears upstage, yawning and rubbing his eyes.)*

**BUNNY:** What in the tar and feathering nation of all things holy and filled with chocolate is going on?

**LUMI:** BUNNY!!! *(jumphugs EASTER BUNNY who stumbles around, half awake and disoriented)* I missed you so much!

**BUNNY:** What the...oh HI, Lumi. BRRR! Why is it so cold??

**CRINK:** Sorry for getting you out of your hibernation early, my fuzzy friend, but we have a Situation.

**MRS CLAUS:** It's so good to see you, E.B. I promise we will be as quick as we can and let you get back to your nest.

**BUNNY:** Oh, pardon me, ma'am, I didn't see you were here. I wouldn't have used such strong language. *(Smiles sweetly)*

**PERI:** She's used to having me around, you have nothing to worry about.

**MRS CLAUS:** *(worried)* Bunny, Santa is missing. We need your help; you are our expert in hidden things.

**BUNNY:** Eggshells! Kringle is missing!? That's a terrible turn of events. And I suppose it's almost The Day, too?

**MRS CLAUS:** Almost, it's the 23rd. You can imagine the panic.

**BUNNY:** *(gasps and looks over at Crink, crossing his paws over his heart)* Oh my ears. How are you holding up?

**CRINK:** *(struggling)* Sheer sugar 24/7 at this point.

**BUNNY:** I understand. *(Shakes himself)* Wake up, Rabbit. We have a job to do. Time to try to find the old bell-shaker! *(He thrusts his arms out wide, and everyone backs up in silence. He closes his eyes and slowly brings his paws together while humming. He opens one eye, looks around, then closes it. The other eye, around, and closes. Both eyes blink three times. He inhales.)*

**BUNNY:** Nope, nothing. *(Exhales, defeated)*

**LUMI:** WHAT!?

**BUNNY:** Well, first of all, I'm usually the one HIDING things, not LOOKING for things. It's a different skillset. Or maybe I'm rusty.

You DID just wake me up and it's not like he's in a basket behind a sofa or under the coffee table. You probably would have found that by now and can you imagine the size of the basket??

**PERI:** Well, so much for that. Maybe if Santa was made of chocolate and wrapped in foil?

**SNEG:** A chocolate Santa? I'd eat that!

**LUMI:** C'mon, Bunny! Surely you can try again.

**BUNNY:** *(does a few jumps)* Just need to get a little jumped up. Anyone have a spare bag of circus peanuts?

**CRINK:** What?

**BUNNY:** Never mind. Let's try this again! *(He concentrates once more, closes his eyes, brings his paws together in a "choir fist," inhales deeply, peeks with one eye, shuts it, squats down, jumps up into the air, lands in a "ninja" pose, eyes staring into the unknown distance. He peers. Frowns. Frowns deeper. Looks confused. Then slowly stand up.)*

**LUMI:** *(anticipating)*...well!?

**BUNNY:** I....I may...have found him?

**ALL:** REALLY??

**BUNNY:** You're...not going to like...well, I can hardly believe the answer myself.

**PERI:** He must be in a VERY fancy basket!

**BUNNY:** Uhm, really more strange than anything.

**CRINK:** Just tell us!

**MRS CLAUS:** Please, Bunny.

**BUNNY:** Ok, ok...it's not WHERE Santa is, but WHEN Santa is...

*(They all look confused at each other)*

**LUMI:** Uh, come again, Rabbit?

**CRINK:** When? What do you mean, “When”?

**BUNNY:** *(takes a deep breath)* He’s not hidden someWHERE but someWHEN.

**PERI:** Yup, this rabbit is broken. Never wake a bunny mid-winter.

**BUNNY:** *(whirls on him)* I’m perfectly intact, thank you very much. I just missed him the first time because I wasn’t looking far enough.

**PERI:** So, he’s just a LONG way away. I told you – Bermuda. Sand. Beaches. Drinks with little umbrellas.

**LUMI:** *(rolling eyes)* I don’t think that’s what Bunny means.

**BUNNY:** Not at all. It’s not that he’s far away. He’s rather close. It’s WHEN he is – as in time. He’s not here – in this time. ♦ He’s in a WAS.

**MRS CLAUS:** A WAS?

**HIMA:** Fuzzy wuzzy WAS a bear?

**BUNNY:** THE PAST, ok? He’s in the past.

**LUMI:** How...does that even *happen??*

**BUNNY:** *(shrugs)* I have no idea. Time isn’t really my area, I deal with a complex game of hide-and-seek for eggs and candy, not doing the time warp.

**PERI:** It’s just a jump to the left.

**MRS CLAUS:** Hush, Peri. Bunny, thank you so much for your help. Do you need to go back to sleep now?

**BUNNY:** I do, but I also want to help any way I can. Wake me if you need me.

**MRS CLAUS:** Of course, my dear. Happy dreaming for now. *(BUNNY yawns and heads off stage. MRS CLAUS turns back to the group.)* Now what?



**CRINK:** *(deep in thought)* If Santa is lost in the past, how did he get there?

**PERI:** And how do we get him out?

**LUMI:** And in less than a day?

**HIMA and SNEG:** What about Christmas!??

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## SCENE 5: Noting the Time

*(Interior, ANNIE's laboratory, later that evening. ANNIE is looking over her failed experiment, observing the equipment, poking, and prodding at things, and eventually her gaze falls onto the Christmas gold bauble. She picks it up and turns it around in her hand.)*

**ANNIE:** What went wrong? All that time – all that time. UGH! There's so little time...

*(She sighs and stares at the ball for a minute and then places it down as she goes over and starts to write in her notebook.)*

**ANNIE:** *(speaking as she writes)* "Activated Project Shift at approximately 9:32pm with the time dilation laser set to 300 kilovolts and approximately 30 degrees of shift relative to the azimuth. Startup and arc formation proceeded normally, energy flux was normal across all ranges for approximately...*(checks the equipment)* ...30 microseconds...until range suddenly shifted so high system was unable to compensate...gonna have to get new sensors anyway, I guess...*(writes)*

### VIGNETTE #2

*(Lights come up on SANTA and FATHER TIME are standing together. SANTA is not dressed in his normal suit; he's actually dressed in normal clothes – old fashioned ones, to be sure, but normal clothes for a man in the 1700s or so. FATHER TIME is an incredibly old man with a long beard and dressed in a black robe. He is speaking to SANTA. During this vignette ANNIE stands up from her desk, mouth agape, watching the entire scene with rapt attention and disbelief.)*

**SANTA:** But I don't understand, what do you need ME for?

**FATHER TIME:** *(smiles)* You, Kris, are to be our messenger, our advocate, our ambassador of joy. The world is a harsh, cruel place at times. Wars, disease, life, death – all a part of life, it is true, but joy – true joy – is what brings happiness to life and makes it worth living.

**SANTA:** That's true – I can tell you I live for the glowing sparkle of a young child's eyes when they see wonder, when they are loved, when they are happy and content.

**FATHER TIME:** And it is with this unique gift, Kris Kringle, that you were given at birth to see and promote the joy in children everywhere you encounter them. Thus, you will be given this task not only for your village, but the entire world.

**SANTA:** But I don't understand – how will I manage to make all the children of the world happy? I am only one man, and I am not young.

**FATHER TIME:** I am the Father and controller of Time and I ensure it flows through the ages, minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day. And for mere men, mortality must follow the line. But for you, Kris, I will give the gift of Timelessness so you will never age and Time Control so you can give gifts to all the children of the world, once a year, on a single night.

**SANTA:** All in a single night! I never thought....that's incredible. I can hardly believe it.

**FATHER TIME:** The elves make the toys – you deliver them. And then you start all over for the next year. Year after year, you will labor as such, until the end of time, and all the joy of the world's children will be yours.

*(SANTA bows low in front of FATHER TIME. FATHER TIME reaches behind him to retrieve Santa's signature jacket and hat. He places the jacket around his shoulders and the hat on his head.)*

**FATHER TIME:** *(reverently)* Arise --- Santa Claus!

**ANNIE:** *(broken out of her reverie)* Wait....WAIT. Santa Claus!?

**FATHER TIME:** *(cannot hear her)* Take this jacket and hat with which you will be known worldwide...

**ANNIE:** Hey! Hey, uh, Santa! Can you hear me??

**FATHER TIME:** *(continuing)*...you will move to the realm of the elves at the North Pole...

**ANNIE:** What is going on? You can't hear me? HELLO!??

**FATHER TIME:** ...and take up a sleigh pulled by flying reindeer...

**ANNIE:** *(throws up hands)* Ok, ok, so this is a vision of some sort? I knew I shouldn't have had that much sugar...

**SANTA:** Wait!

**ANNIE:** *(whirls around)* Wha – what?? Did you just say something?

**SANTA:** *(looking around, confused. FATHER TIME has stopped talking mid-sentence)* Where....where am I?

**ANNIE:** You're in my laboratory! In Virginia!

**SANTA:** I don't....Father Time? What are you doing here? Why am I dressed in these clothes?

**FATHER TIME:** I... erm...I was just saying, you are now Santa Claus...and you'll move...

**SANTA:** NO! No, this isn't right, why am I in the past?? *(shouts)* WHY AM I HERE!??

*(End Vignette)*

*(There is a long beat as ANNIE peers into the dark void left by the disappearance of the scene before her)*

**ANNIE:** This... *(helpless move)* ...This...Again!?? Santa? Here? What is going ON?

*(She pauses for a minute, shaking her head, trying to make sense)*

All I know is...if this is real...something very strange is happening to him. And it's probably not good.

## SCENE 6: Nothing but the Tooth

*(Interior, North Pole workshop. PERI is asleep again, this time in Santa's chair, laid back, arms wide, snoring. CRINK is pacing again and randomly checking his phone. LUMI is perched, kneeling on a chair, watching CRINK walk back and forth. MRS CLAUS enters with a pan of cookies between her hands.)*

**MRS CLAUS:** Here, my dears, you must keep up your energy.

**CRINK:** *(looking up)* Oh, yes, thank you. *(Goes back to his phone and pacing)*

**LUMI:** *(sighs and shakes her head)* Don't mind him, he's watching to see if any reports are coming in from anyone else who might have seen or heard anything from Santa.

**MRS CLAUS:** Not likely if he's stuck in a completely different Time.

**LUMI:** *(nods)* Yes, but it's worth a shot. *(thinks)* You know, I have an idea for someone who MIGHT be able to help us. Someone who gets things out of tight spaces.

**PERI:** *(without opening his eyes)* A miner?

**LUMI:** The Tooth Fairy, you dusty old bookshelf.

**PERI:** *(eyes still closed)* Ah, yes. Well, a miner wouldn't be legal anyway.

**MRS CLAUS:** Dentella? You're right, she might have some good ideas! Now, how to find her? Her job is a year-round one. She has an ornament, but you never know if she can answer it or if she's stuck in someone's house. One moment.

*(MRS CLAUS goes over to the Christmas tree and looks for a minute before finding a gilded toothbrush. She picks it carefully off the tree and wields it like a magician's wand.)*

**MRS CLAUS:** ENCHANTACISOR ENAMELDRA MOLARION!

*(Nothing happens.)*

**MRS CLAUS:** Ahem. Maybe I didn't hold my tongue correctly.

*(She sticks out her tongue and holds it with two fingers on one hand and waves the toothbrush with the other.)*

**MRS CLAUS:** ENTHANTATHOR ENAMELTHA MOLARION!

*(A flash of light and the TOOTH FAIRY jumps up from behind the armchair (or another piece of furniture).)*

**CRINK:** Whoa! Hello there, I say.

**TOOTH FAIRY:** Brace yourselves, my little friends! I've decided to grace you all with my presence today because... well, let's be honest, I couldn't resist this opportunity to showcase my impeccable style! *(preens)*

**PERI:** *(sitting up)* You're the Tooth Fairy?

**TOOTH FAIRY:** *(sighing dramatically)* Dentella's my name but yes, that's my title! I am the Collector of Canines, the Gatherer of Gumfruit, the Magpie of Molars, the Taker of Tusks! I've been hard at work collecting those smooth, precious, glossy pearls of enamored enamel... *(gets a little lost in thought)* ...I mean, uh, teeth.

I had just scored a triple play molar/incisor/bicuspid when I heard my call and came as quickly as I could deposit the money. *(curtsies)* Alas, I am due shortly in Istanbul for a first timer, so what can I do for you all right now before I jet off to pilfer a pillow stash?

**LUMI:** I thought you would be discreet, silent, and sneaky?

**TOOTH FAIRY:** *(waves a hand dismissively)* Oh, darling, darling! That's old news! In this day and age, a little sparkle and pizzazz goes a long way. You have to wow and pow-pow! Besides, who can resist a fairy with a taste for *haute couture*?

**PERI:** *(to CRINK)* She's... unique.

**TOOTH FAIRY:** *(overhearing and winking)* Unique is my middle name, honey! Now, if anyone has any dental treasures to present, don't be shy! I'm happy to take them off your hands.... I mean, your jaw! *(giggles)*

**MRS CLAUS:** Dentella, Mr. Claus is missing. We were wondering if maybe you would be able to retrieve him since you're so good at getting hidden things.

**TOOTH FAIRY:** Oh no! That's terrible! He's a bit larger than my normal finders-keepers but I would be happy to help if I can. Where is he stuck?

**CRINK:** In the past.

**TOOTH FAIRY:** Past what? Your eyes? Past your eyes is only for milk.

**PERI:** The past! Bygone eras! Days of yore! Auld lang syne!

**TOOTH FAIRY:** *(jumping back a bit in surprise)* Oh! THAT past. Hmm.

**LUMI:** What is it?

**TOOTH FAIRY:** Well, it's just that.... Finding things that are hidden around the house is one thing; tapping into the timeline isn't something I really have to do. After all, I just handle things that happened to find their way underneath a pillow or into a glass or whatever.

**MRS CLAUS:** Well, my dear, we were hoping something in your work would need a little time manipulation.

*(TOOTH FAIRY shakes her head slowly while pondering.)*

**TOOTH FAIRY:** No, not really. Even when I miss a pickup, it's usually explained away, or I manage to still deliver the coins, just at a later time. I'm sorry, I can't think of any way to tap back into the past to get Santa back.

**LUMI:** Aww. That stinks. We were hoping but didn't know. Thank you for at least trying.

**TOOTH FAIRY:** Of course, I'm always happy to help my fantastical friends. But I have a thought - have you called on Father Time?

*(They all stop and then universally clap their hands to their heads)*

**CRINK:** OMIGOSH! That would have been an obvious one!

**LUMI:** Why didn't we think of that before?

**PERI:** You were too busy running around with your head cut off?

**MRS CLAUS:** PERI! She's just trying to help like all of us. Thank you, Dentella, for that suggestion, we will set about calling him right away. He can take some time to arrive given his age.

**TOOTH FAIRY:** *(smiling)* I'm glad I could help! And now, my delicious dears, if you don't mind, a Tiny Turkish Tot with a Tooth wants to Trade for some Tin Treasure! Toodaloo! *(She whirls away)*

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## SCENE 7: The Ornament

*(Interior: Annie's Laboratory. She is sitting at her table, bits of her experiment around here, most noticeably the golden ornament on the table to her side. She has a notebook open in front of her but is idly playing with her pen. SOPHIE is aghast as she hears ANNIE's story about what just happened with her second vision of SANTA.)*

**SOPHIE:** *(incredulous)* You're kidding – you mean he was RIGHT THERE, and you couldn't talk to him again? Like it was a dream?

**ANNIE:** Yes! Right there *(waves)* and I tried, I really tried. Nothing.

**SOPHIE:** You sure it wasn't a dream? I mean, you've been spending A LOT of time in the laboratory lately and it's not like ramen noodles are fantastic in the nutrition department...

**ANNIE:** No, no, no, it's not that. I know my dreams and even my daydreams and this was NOTHING like those. Plus, I can usually control it and this...this was something else. Other-worldly, almost.

**SOPHIE:** Well, maybe it was. Santa is from Mars; Uncle Sam is from Venus.

**ANNIE:** Hah, maybe true. He's a bit of an old-fashioned idea anyway, right?

**SOPHIE:** Like "A Christmas Carol" – The Santa of Christmases Past

**ANNIE:** *(pausing, suddenly thinking)* What?

**SOPHIE:** Huh, what?

**ANNIE:** *(suddenly sitting up)* What did you just say?

**SOPHIE:** *(taken aback)* Uh, I just said --- "Santa of Christmases Past"

**ANNIE:** Maybe...maybe that's it! *(Scrambles and starts to fiddle with equipment)*

**SOPHIE:** Uhm, maybe that's what?

**ANNIE:** Past. Time. Maybe it has something to do with my experiment.

**SOPHIE:** *(brightening)* You really think so!? Wow! That'd be kinda...creepy? But why Santa of all people?

**ANNIE:** I don't know – it's so WEIRD. Maybe he loves bananas?

**SOPHIE:** He's not a monkey. And he didn't get sliced in two, thankfully. At least, as far as we know.

**ANNIE:** I wonder if it's due to the offset... *(she glances over to the golden ornament)* ...oh. OH.

**SOPHIE:** Oh. Pee. Kew. Ess. Tee. You keep making noises I don't understand!

**ANNIE:** *(grabbing the ornament)* Maybe this is it! I don't know how...it's just a gold ornament, my baby ornament, but it's Christmas-related?

**SOPHIE:** *(humming)* What was this for? Splitting the beam of time?

**ANNIE:** *(smiling)* You WERE listening to me!

**SOPHIE:** Kind of hard to miss, to be honest, when you're prattling on about your things all day long.

**ANNIE:** *(turning the ornament over in her hand)* Well, yes, it was to help split the beam, see the gold matrix has a... *(Looks up)* I mean, uh, yeah. Splitting.

**SOPHIE:** Splitting a banana you mean.

**ANNIE:** *(still looking at the ball)* I just don't see why this should...

**SOPHIE:** Hey, let me see it, I know good style when I see it... *(grabs at the ball and there is a loud CLICK)*

**ANNIE:** What....was that??

**SOPHIE:** It clicked.

**ANNIE:** It *turned*.

**SOPHIE:** Oh neat, it's a Pokéball!

**ANNIE:** I wonder. If I just... *(she grabs the top and turns and it clicks once more)*. Yep.

**SOPHIE:** Let's open it!

**ANNIE:** Okay. Here goes! (*Grabs and turns and there is another CLICK and then WHOOSH, and everything goes BLACK*)

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## SCENE 8: The Father Figure

*(Interior: North Pole. LUMI is sitting on the floor playing with HIMA and SNEG and some toy trains or trucks or similar. CRINK pokes his head in from offstage.)*

**CRINK:** Is he here yet?

**LUMI:** *(gestures around)* Do you see him?

**CRINK:** *(sighing)* I didn't know if he came in randomly while I was out.

**LUMI:** I promise if I see him, I'll sound the alarm! *(CRINK nods and disappears again.)*

**HIMA:** Why is Crink always upset?

**LUMI:** Crink drinks too much coffee and not enough hot chocolate.

**SNEG:** I could sure use some hot chocolate!

*(PERI comes huffing in.)*

**PERI:** Oof! *(Flops down on the easy chair)* That was the hardest load I've had to pack this season!

**LUMI:** Sled stacking again?

**PERI:** Yeah, this time it was the unusually large-sized things, like basketball hoops, kayaks, and skis.

**LUMI:** Well, skis are kind of flat, right?

**PERI:** They stack ok but are super long, so you have to be careful where you're swinging them. Boray swung one and almost took out Comet's antlers.

*(LUMI cringes. Just then MRS CLAUS comes walking in with a tray of mugs and cookies.)*

**MRS CLAUS:** Hot chocolate for the nerves! That's the recipe to help. Here you go, Lumi. *(Hands her one)*

**LUMI:** Oh, thank you!

**SNEG:** She reads minds!

**HIMA:** I want marshmallows!

*(they both rush and get a mug)*

**PERI:** Uh, not to be rude, ma'am, but...

**MRS CLAUS:** Oh, don't worry, Peri, I remembered exactly what you like...here is a very bitter dark hot chocolate.

*(PERI practically glows and then catches himself and harrumphs and takes the mug. MRS CLAUS grins to herself. She sets down the tray of mugs and then sits down on a chair with a mug in her own hand.)*

**MRS CLAUS:** Why, I was just telling the wrapping crew that...

*(offstage)*

**FATHER TIME:** *(booming)* BEHOLD FOR I COME IN TIME!

*(FATHER TIME steps into the room. He is an older man dressed in a long, black robe with a hood covering his face. He has an exceedingly long, knee-length gray beard, wire-rimmed glasses, and carries an hourglass in one hand.)*

**PERI:** Actually, you're late, you old rascal. Where ya been?

**FATHER TIME:** *(normal voice)* I arrived exactly when I wanted to! *(PERI peers at him.)* Okay, I've appeared as soon as I could reasonably get here. I'm OLD. I should be allowed a little leeway.

**LUMI:** It's so nice to see you, Father! How have you been?

**FATHER TIME:** Well, time keeps on ticking, ticking, ticking into the future. *(He holds up the hourglass)* As you can see, it's just flowing through here like the wind.

**LUMI:** OH! I just remembered I was supposed to sound the alarm! *(Puts her hands around her mouth)* CRIIIIIIIINK!

*(CRINK comes sprinting into the room.)*

**CRINK:** WHAT!? WHAT!? ...OH! FATHER TIME! WELCOME! *(He collapses into a heap on the floor in front of him, passing out. FATHER TIME looks from him to the others.)*

**LUMI:** You'll have to forgive him, he's excitable. *(She bends down and shakes him awake and he slowly stumbles to his feet, and she leads him to a chair, and he flops in)*

**PERI:** *(snorts)* You mean he's an anxiety-filled mess.

**MRS CLAUS:** Oh, Father, it's so wonderful you could come. I hope you can help us out!

**FATHER TIME:** *(bowing)* Madam, I want nothing more than to serve. How may I assist?

**CRINK:** *(croaking)* It's Santa, he's missing in time.

**FATHER TIME:** He's missing...in time?

**LUMI:** In time.

**FATHER TIME:** In time?

**PERI:** Is there an echo? Holy moly – isn't this your *area*?

**FATHER TIME:** Well, yes, but I don't usually have to mess around with people getting stuck in it, although I do have to deal with folks beating the clock, killing time, racing against it, biding it, crunching it, and wasting it.

**MRS CLAUS:** Ah, yes, but now I wonder if this isn't a little bit more about what time is doing TO HIM rather than...

**FATHER TIME:** *(interrupting)* Oh, well, yes, time tends to fly, crunch, be on your hands, and heal all wounds.

**MRS CLAUS:** That's...not quite what I was thinking, but we're still trying to figure it out. Bunny was able to figure out that he was stuck in time in the past but couldn't really do anything about it. He tried, bless him.

**LUMI:** And we asked the Tooth Fairy if she could pull him back like she does with pulling teeth from under pillows...but it wasn't quite the same thing.

**PERI:** And Crink tried wearing a groove in the floor of this room with his feet but that didn't help either.

**FATHER TIME:** Hrm...that IS a curious problem. Do you have any idea why this happened in the first place?

**CRINK:** *(sighs)* Unfortunately, not a clue. We just know that one day he was here, and the next he was missing from the production planning meeting.

**FATHER TIME:** *(starting off with a speech)* In all of my time wandering to and fro in the world, I have seen many things – many things that have been, many things that are, and many things that are yet... *(A HUGE BOOM SOUNDS)*

**LUMI:** *(scared)* What was THAT!??

*(Another BOOM and everyone hits the dirt)*

**HIMA and SNEG:** AHHHHH!

**CRINK:** THE HOUSE IS GOING TO EXPLODE!

**PERI:** Oh great, I get to die here with all of you! Fantastic.

*(Suddenly there's one more loud BOOM and a flash of light and ANNIE and SOPHIE appear in the middle of the stage (or as near as can be contrived), looking very shocked and together holding the golden ornament. They look around in shock and amazement.)*

**SOPHIE:** You've GOT to be kidding me! Elves!??

**INTERMISSION**

## ACT II

### SCENE 1: Destination Cold

*(Interior North Pole, we start exactly where we left off, same people, same positions.)*

**ANNIE:** *(looking around)* I... don't think this is the laboratory.

**PERI:** What gave you the first clue?

**CRINK:** HUSH! You don't know who they are! They could be dangerous!

**PERI:** Ah yes, assault with an ornament, my favorite crime.

**CRINK:** Sigh. *(Everyone gets up from the floor and brushes themselves off.)*

**LUMI:** They don't look dangerous! I mean, it's a couple of girls. But how did they get here? We are NOT on Google Maps!

**ANNIE:** This ISN'T the lab, right?

**PERI:** Oh, it's a lab all right.

**SOPHIE:** It is?

**LUMI:** *(holding up a toy)* For toys, yes!

**PERI:** And for wrapping and shipping nightmares. And tripping on toys left in the middle of the room. *(he gives a look)*

**LUMI:** *(to SNEG and HIMA)* Go put the toys away. We'll play more later when Peri is asleep. *(he rolls his eyes. SNEG and HIMA grab the toys and exit.)*

**SOPHIE:** Listen – we don't want any trouble. In fact, we don't want anything. Uh, can you...take us...to your leader?

**LUMI:** I'd love to if we could FIND him.

**ANNIE:** And who is your leader?

**LUMI:** Why, Santa, of course! Where do you think you are?

**ANNIE:** Purgatory? Wormhole? Kansas? Dyson sphere?

**SOPHIE:** What does a vacuum have to do with it?



**LUMI:** No, silly, you're at the North Pole!

**ANNIE:** The North Pole. Uh huh. More than likely, I shouldn't have eaten that ice cream last night. Look, all I know is we figured out that this ornament twisted and made some clicks and...

**CRINK:** Ooooooh, you twisted it?? That explains a lot!

**SOPHIE:** What do you mean?

**CRINK:** It's a Destination Decoration.

**ANNIE:** A what-y what?

**CRINK:** A Destination Decoration. A travel device that was invented by some elves a long time ago. Really popular around here but turned out to be very problematic with the human world; people were always disappearing and reappearing in the middle of a fire, at the bottom of an ocean, et cetera. Caused a lot of issues so we stopped making them.

**ANNIE:** Hold on – you really ARE elves?

**PERI:** She *can* be taught! (*ANNIE scowls at him.*)

**LUMI:** So how did you get this ball?

**ANNIE:** This is my baby ball.

**PERI:** Looks normal sized to me.

**ANNIE:** No, I mean it's my baby ball, you know, like baby's first Christmas? The decoration your parents get for you to celebrate your first holiday season.

**MRS CLAUS:** Oh, yes dear. I know the tradition.

**SOPHIE:** Waaaaaaaait. Wait one moment. Are you....are you Mrs. Claus? (*gasps*)

**MRS CLAUS:** (*chuckling*) I am, lovely! Nice to meet you! Care for a mug of hot cocoa?

**SOPHIE:** Wow! Just...wow. I can't even. (*Looks.*) Hot cocoa? Don't mind if I do! (*She takes a mug from MRS CLAUS and flops down in a chair*)

**ANNIE:** *(through her teeth)* SOPHIE! We can't just make ourselves at home here, we don't know where "here" even is! And Mrs. Claus?? Really??

**PERI:** North Pole, kid. Read 'em and weep.

**ANNIE:** So, you're telling me that this...thing... *(holds up the ornament at arm's length)* ...got me here...to a mythical location in the center of an ocean on a theoretical landmass surrounded by mythical beings? Can it also... send me back? Preferably before my mind dissolves? *(She takes it and tries twisting it, nothing happens)*

**CRINK:** *(shaking his head)* No, that's not how that works. They work in pairs, you see. Wherever the twin of this ball is, that's where it gets pulled back to. So, you have to leave one at your destination, you can't just flit around anywhere. Hence the bottom-of-the-ocean problem.

**PERI:** Shipwrecks.

**SOPHIE:** Shipwrecks?

**PERI:** Boat loads up with cargo, including some decorations to take to the destination. Boat sinks. The twin decoration gets in the wrong hands. Johnny twists and then appears at the bottom of the ocean and goes *squish*. Very messy.

**SOPHIE:** You can't mess around in deep water.

**ANNIE:** So, where's the twin to my ball?

**LUMI:** Probably very close!

**MRS CLAUS:** A golden ball ornament? Why, I think we have one on our bedroom tree! Wait here one moment. *(She goes offstage.)*

**FATHER TIME:** *(holding up his hourglass)* I would like to point out that we are wasting time...

**SOPHIE:** Whoa, get a load of grandpa! Who are you?

**FATHER TIME:** *(booming again)* I AM FATHER TIME!

**MRS CLAUS:** *(re-entering)* Yes, here it is! *(Holds up a matching gold ball, unadorned)* It makes sense why you appeared here when you activated yours.

**FATHER TIME:** *(clears his throat)* I AM.... FATHER TIME!!

*(Mrs. Claus hangs the ornament on the tree and goes offstage again.)*

**SOPHIE:** Time? As in hickory-dickory-dock and all that?

**FATHER TIME:** Yes. Behold. *(Holds up his hourglass)*

**SOPHIE:** Cool fidget toy.

**ANNIE:** Really, Father Time? Like, the guy that controls the flow of time?

**FATHER TIME:** The very same.

**PERI:** And here I thought he was a spice.

**FATHER TIME:** I have long studied time, child, and understand many things about how it flows and acts, including some of your “physics” theories.

**ANNIE:** Oh, good! A fellow physicist. Maybe we can discuss something for a bit? I have a theory of my own: I’VE GONE INSANE.

**CRINK:** And I have a headache!

**LUMI:** We are really here! You’re not just imagining it! How could you? These cookies are so incredible! *(Takes a bite)*

**ANNIE:** I find this all ridiculously hard to grasp, with my brain or my teeth.

**SOPHIE:** Says the girl playing with time in a laboratory? *(She thinks for a minute)* This is just trans....uh....trans....that diddly-boop you were discussing the other day.

**ANNIE:** Trans-dimensional?

**SOPHIE:** YEAH! That.

**FATHER TIME:** Come, child, and let us talk. I think I can explain – and maybe we can figure out what happened to bring you here.

*(FATHER TIME and ANNIE exit.)*

**PERI:** She’s wound up a bit tight.

**SOPHIE:** Oh, yeah. All she does is spend time in that laboratory. She would be there on Christmas if I didn't come get her. She says she's running out of time. I suppose that's why she spends so much...time...studying it. Time, that is. I just said 'time' a lot.

**LUMI:** I just don't see how she can....

### **VIGNETTE #3**

*(Exterior: A beach in Australia. Santa is dressed in beachwear and is lounging on a chair. Mrs. Claus is sunning on a chair next to him in a swimsuit of some sort, maybe covered with a towel. Sunglasses, etc.)*

**SANTA:** This is the life, isn't it?

**MRS CLAUS:** It sure is! This is a wonderful place for our honeymoon, sweetheart! Australia! Sun, ocean, tasty food...

**SANTA:** ...crazy animals, weird accents, and poisonous insects that want to kill you...

**MRS CLAUS:** ...and super-friendly people! Ahhhh. *(sighs)*

*(Suddenly, he sits up in the beach chair and looks around. Slowly, SANTA removes his sunglasses.)*

**SANTA:** My dear...where...are we?

**MRS CLAUS:** Uhm, Australia! You know that!

**SANTA:** I don't know why I am here.

**MRS CLAUS:** What do you MEAN!? We're on our honeymoon, babe!

**SANTA:** Honeymoon! Honeymoon...that means...backwards...

**MRS CLAUS:** *(chuckling)* You sure are backwards, Nick. Maybe you had too many of those drinks with the little umbrellas in them.

**SANTA:** *(turning to her)* No, you don't get it. I'm going BACKWARDS. Everything is happening again that has already happened. BUT WHY?

**MRS CLAUS:** Backwards? I don't know what you're saying. Are you feeling ok?

**SANTA:** No, I most definitely am not. This feels very, very bad.

*End Vignette.*

*End Scene.*

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## SCENE 2: Sandy Fairies

*(Interior, North Pole. PERI and CRINK are arguing.)*

**PERI:** Sandman, I say!

**CRINK:** No, the more logical choice is Puck!

**PERI:** I don't know why you would say that. The Sandman literally controls your *dreams*. What more could you want for power?

**CRINK:** And a fairy that manipulates an entire night in a garden for a crowd of people is, what, hogwash?

*(MRS CLAUS enters SR, wringing her hands in worry.)*

**PERI:** Oh, yes, let's get the mischievous little sod here; there is nothing this situation needs more than a little bit of CHAOS.

**CRINK:** You're impossible!

**MRS CLAUS:** Boys! Boys! Let's not fight, please. This is hard enough without you two causing a ruckus.

**CRINK:** He's under the impression that inviting the Sandman to look at this problem is useful.

**PERI:** And he's arguing for Puck. That whirlwind will tear this place apart!

**MRS CLAUS:** Why not both? At this point, we can hardly be picky. We need everyone to help if they can!

**CRINK:** A good point, madam.

**PERI:** I suppose. But don't say I didn't warn you ahead of time.

**CRINK:** Shall we find their ornaments?

**MRS CLAUS:** Of course. *(Moves over to the tree)* Let's see...Sandman's is a little bag, of course. His bag of sand. *(Searches and then plucks a bag ornament off the tree)* And as for Puck...hmm...it should be here on the tree somewhere...ah yes, a set of wings *(takes them off the tree)*. Now — we simply tip over the bag and sprinkle out a bit of sand... *(does so)* ...and flap the wings up and down *(does so)* ...and then...

**PUCK:** *(offstage)* Lord, what fools these mortals be!

**PERI:** Ohhhhhhhh boy.

*(On stage leaps PUCK. He is limber and nimble and seems to never stop moving if he has any chance to move at all. PUCK should take the liberty of literally jumping onto, around, over absolutely anything on stage including major incursions into personal spaces and running back and forth between, during, and around lines. He should do so in a way that looks effortless.)*

**PUCK:** Puck is here so never fear! I traveled far and happened near; so, I may hear a tale of plight; you need not spend a night of fright!

**CRINK:** Uh....hello?

**PUCK:** Crink, Peri, the missus, too! Where's the others? It's always a zoo! A rapturous fray of wood and clay and shouting elves and reindeer hay; oh, calloo callay! *(Here he practically shakes with happiness)*

**PERI:** See? This was a bad idea from the start.

**LUMI:** *(entering from the side)* What was a bad idea?

**PERI:** You are.

**LUMI:** Be nice! Oh, hello, Puck. What brings you by?

**PUCK:** The Missus of Claus called me here with wings of glass, though she knows I deal best in wine and sass.

**CRINK:** I thought it best if we ask him about our problem; he has a lot of experience with these sorts of oddities.

**SANDMAN:** *(stepping on stage)* I prefer to be the one dealing in oddities, frankly.

**LUMI:** SANDY!

**SANDMAN:** *(groans and breaks his mood)* Lumi, I told you not to call me that! I prefer to be dark and moody!

**LUMI:** Oh, Sandy; we know beneath that spiky black heart surrounded by the whispers of nightmares and filled with fragments of souls you're just a cuddle bug at heart – I mean, you carry part of a beach in your pocket!

**SANDMAN:** *(sighs)* Who called me here anyway? I don't see anyone sleeping or even getting slightly drowsy.

**MRS CLAUS:** Sandman, dearie, I called you here. And Puck as well. We have a huge problem and need all the help we can get. Santa himself is somehow lost in time.

**PUCK:** *(leaping about as he does)* Old Santa's gone and slipped away! In a temporal twist he's lost his way. But fret not, fair lady, I have a plan, to help you find Santa, across time's span!

**SANDMAN:** Does he always speak in rhyme?

**CRINK:** Usually.

**PERI:** Unfortunately.

**SANDMAN:** Oh boy. And I thought I had nightmares.

**MRS CLAUS:** *(to Puck)* Do you have an idea then, my dear?

**PUCK:** With tricks and magic, I'll weave my art. To mend the rifts, and with joyous heart, we'll seek the man with merry cheer, and bring him back to spread Yuletide cheer!

**SANDMAN:** That...doesn't exactly explain how you're going to manage this.

**PUCK:** So, gather close dear lady, trust me! With laughter and magic, we'll set Santa free!

*(PUCK encourages everyone to gather close and hold hands. They gingerly do so, completely unsure about this entire scheme, but willing to try anything at this point. LUMI has to practically drag PERI out of his chair with a HARUMPH. PUCK holds onto the hands of the people next to him, closes his eyes, and raises them up high. Then he starts to laugh – and it's a bit of a crazy laugh. He gets louder and louder and everyone else somewhat joins in with him but looking exceptionally uncomfortable. At the end of his major crescendo, he ends with a huge shout.)*

**PUCK:** HA!! HA!! HA!!

*(He stands, triumphant, silent, eyes closed. Everyone else somewhat mimics but looks around in anticipation.)*



**CRINK:** Uh, Puck?

**PERI:** I think we frightened off any clowns that may have been hiding in the shadows.

**LUMI:** Santa? Are you there? (silence)

**CRINK:** Puck! *(Pokes him; Puck opens his eyes and looks around.)*

**MRS CLAUS:** I don't think that has helped, my dear, I'm sorry.

**PUCK:** *(looking a bit defeated)* Oh dear, oh my, the time trap did defy my efforts at bringing him promptly back and all his toys upon his back. Forgive me, dear lady, for this misstep slight; I'll keep working my magic throughout the night.

**MRS CLAUS:** There, there, it's ok. This is a difficult problem even for a fairy. Would you like a cookie?

*(PUCK nods and takes a cookie and folds up akimbo on the coffee table.)*

**CRINK:** Well, now that we've tried that – Sandman, any ideas?

**SANDMAN:** *(thinking)* Stuck in time? Future or past?

**LUMI:** Past.

**SANDMAN:** What was he doing before? Sleeping, by chance?

**MRS CLAUS:** Yes, he was missing from bed this morning.

**SANDMAN:** AH! That helps. Let me contact the dream world and ask if they saw him wandering and where he was. They may have guided him and have more information.

Little SPRITES! Come forth and do my bidding!

*(SPRITE 1 and 2 come onto stage. They are dressed all in black and should have black highlights and accessories but have childish and genuine faces.)*

**SPRITE 1:** *(bowing low to SANDMAN)* What is my master's bidding?

**SPRITE 2:** More sand?

**SPRITE 1:** More sleep?

**SPRITE 2:** More sheep? *(They burst into giggles)*

**SANDMAN:** *(crouching down to get to their level)* No, little ones, I have enough of all those things for now. I need your quick feet!

Search all the dream lands for Santa; he may be lost, especially in any sort of nightmare involving time. Be quick about it!

*(They bow and run off stage. SANDMAN taps his foot in anticipation, there are several beats, and they reappear.)*

**PERI:** That was quick!

**SPRITE 1:** Master, we have searched everywhere for Santa.

**SPRITE 2:** We even asked the scary nightmares.

**SPRITE 1:** I love horsies, even if they are scary!

**SPRITE 2:** They were grazing in the Fields of Darkness under a purple moon.

**SANDMAN:** Had they seen Santa though?

**SPRITE 1:** No, he has not been there for a long time.

**SPRITE 2:** But they said to tell you, "HAY!" *(they both giggle again and Sandman groans)*

**SANDMAN:** Thank you, little ones. You may return for now. *(They both curtsy and then run off, giggling.)*

Alas, it does not appear that Santa is lost within my realm.

**LUMI:** So where IS he?

**CRINK:** I think we need to find Father Time and Annie, see if they've come up with any ideas.

**MRS CLAUS:** Yes, let's hope they have a notion. Cookie, anyone?

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### **SCENE 3: Two Sides of a Spoon**

*(CRINK, ANNIE, LUMI, FATHER TIME, PERI, MRS CLAUS, SANDMAN are all sitting around, discussing the problem.)*

**CRINK:** So, that is what we know right now.

**ANNIE:** That makes sense, and it matches with our theory.

**LUMI:** You have a theory?

**ANNIE:** Well, we have a theory about how this happened, which might help us figure out how to fix it.

**FATHER TIME:** Yes; this girl's knowledge of time is impressive, even for one like me. We have conferred a lot. She has taught me much.

**CRINK:** Well, let's hear it!

**ANNIE:** Sure! Does anyone have a spoon?

**PERI:** Are you hungry?

**MRS CLAUS:** I have one, dear, but why?

**ANNIE:** I'll explain, but it will help if I have something to demonstrate.

*(MRS CLAUS hands her a spoon off the tray of mugs and cookies.)*

**ANNIE:** *(Holding it up)* If a spoon is shiny, you can see your reflection in it, right?

**CRINK:** Right, if there's no cake on it.

**LUMI:** And there's always cake on it! *(laughs)*

**ANNIE:** But a spoon is also *curved*, right? So, what happens to your reflection?

**PERI:** It gets covered in cake.

**LUMI:** No, silly, it depends on which side of the spoon you are looking at!

**ANNIE:** EXACTLY! It depends on which side you look at. If you look at the side that curves away from you, your reflection is right-side up. But if you flip the spoon around, your picture is upside down.

**SANDMAN:** Forgive me, but what does this have to do with Santa?

**ANNIE:** Right, right...sorry, but you had to understand that part. Now, think about my baby ball ornament. This ball is a twin to the one that was on Santa's tree.

**LUMI:** Destination Decorations.

**ANNIE:** When I shot my experiment at the ornament, the outside reflected some of the beam. But some of it went *through* the wall of the ornament and reflected BACK off the curved inside and, because the two ornaments are linked, the beam ended up coming out of its twin and striking Santa right in his bed!

**SOPHIE:** Uhm, ok, but why is he going backwards? Your time beam is supposed to make things OLDER.

**FATHER TIME:** Remember what happens to your image when you look at the front of a spoon?

**SOPHIE:** It...turns upside down, right?

**ANNIE:** Yes. What is the reverse of getting older?

**MRS CLAUS:** Getting younger!

**LUMI:** Oh no!

**FATHER TIME:** Yes, that is what we fear is happening to Santa – he is not only stuck in the past but he is sliding backwards. The problem is – at some point -- he will cease to exist entirely!

*(Everyone suddenly talks at once saying things like, "oh no!" and "no, it can't be!" and "poor Santa!" and similar.)*

**MRS CLAUS:** Hush, children --- HUSH! *(They all quiet down)* This is not the time to panic. We need to figure out how we get Santa back fast, and we are going to have to work together.

**CRINK:** The Missus is right; we need to concentrate. Now – how do we fix this? Annie?

**ANNIE:** It's one thing to have a theory about what happened; it's another to have a fix. We don't know that yet.

**CRINK:** Why does Santa keep appearing randomly from time to time? And why can't he hear us call him?

**FATHER TIME:** He is appearing during major events in his life, times that really changed who he was and how his life was going to go. These are special points in his timeline.

**ANNIE:** These are bubbles of time; they aren't part of the present, so we can't break into them. We can only watch.

**LUMI:** There just MUST be a way to get him back!

**PERI:** A room full of magical folks and we can't put together one rescue mission.

**FATHER TIME:** We are missing a piece in this puzzle, I think. The threads of life are woven together into a cloth. That cloth is the plan of people and events in the timeline that I control. For Santa, something must have gone wrong with the way this works.

**CRINK:** Threads? Cloth? And who, exactly, is responsible for weaving those threads together?

**FATHER TIME:** The Moirai.

**PERI:** The who?

**SANDMAN:** What humans call The Fates. They are named Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos. I should have thought of them.

**SOPHIE:** Fate? You mean what happens to you?

**SANDMAN:** They create, weave, and cut the threads that make up the cloth of life.

**MRS CLAUS:** They are not wonderful to deal with. They can be...difficult...at times.

**SANDMAN:** That's putting it lightly.

**CRINK:** How do we call them?

**MRS CLAUS:** String.

**LUMI:** String?

**MRS CLAUS:** Well, yarn. Their ornament is a ball of yarn.

**LUMI:** *(walks over, looks, and pulls a ball of yarn off the tree)* You mean this one?

**MRS CLAUS:** That's the one.

**CRINK:** Do I want to know why it's yarn, exactly?

**PERI:** Like most things going on here, I suspect you do NOT want to know.

**SANDMAN:** You shall see soon enough.

## SCENE 4: A Fatal Situation

**MRS CLAUS:** *(takes the ornament from LUMI and walks to the center of the stage, holding it in her outstretched palm)* We call upon the Moirai! May fate fondly foster fortune for the fearless and foolish!

*(Nothing happens for a few beats, then we hear offstage)*

**LACHESIS:** Ugh, why even BOTHER!?

**CLOTHO:** They called us! We must go!

**ATROPOS:** Snip-snip! Snip-snip!

*(They enter; CLOTHO has both a spindle and a distaff with various colored "threads" (yarn) hung around her neck, person, etc. She is obsessive/compulsive. LACHESIS is apathetic and while she has a fabric tape measure slung around her neck, she spends the bulk of the time moping about and otherwise being generally bored or disinterested. ATROPOS is manic-depressive and has wild mood swings; she also carries a long set of scissors/shears. There should be a partially woven scarf or something similar with the threads on CLOTHO, the cloth on LACHESIS and ATROPOS.)*

**SANDMAN:** Greetings to you, architects of fate.

**CLOTHO:** *(Fiddling with the "threads")* Oh, hello everyone! Look at these lovely threads! I am Clotho, the spinner of the threads of life. Perfection is key, you know.

**CRINK:** I have been telling our shop that for YEARS. Nobody seems to listen to me.

**LACHESIS:** *(Nonchalantly)* I'm Lachesis. I measure threads, but does it really matter how long they are? Life's so... mundane, isn't it?

**CLOTHO:** *(Huffily to Lachesis)* Can you TRY to show some enthusiasm for once? We're weaving the destinies of mortals!

**ATROPOS:** *(Cheerful)* And I'm Atropos, snip-snap! I cut and trim the threads! Life is like a rollercoaster, up and down, snip-snap, up and down! *(Suddenly somber and very dark)* And then, all of a sudden, it can be so... *(clacks the shears together)* ... final.



*(They start to infight)*

**LACHESIS:** *(Indifferent)* You and your perfectionism. It's all so tedious.

**ATROPOS:** *(Sad and worried)* But, Lachesis, what if we make a mistake? What if we snip-snap too soon or too late? *(Happily)* It could be a disaster!

**PERI:** *(to the others)* Anyone else worried about her having easy access to something sharp or is it just me?

**CLOTHO:** *(Anxiously)* Disaster! That's right, Atropos! We must ensure everything is exactly right. Threads must be spun, measured, and cut with the utmost care.

**LACHESIS:** *(Yawning)* Oh, please, Clotho. Why fret about it? It's all a matter of fate, anyway. *(Stifles another yawn and covers her head with the tapestry of life.)*

**MRS CLAUS:** If I could just interrupt for a minute, ladies?

**ATROPOS:** *(Giggling)* Fate is like a big game of musical chairs, isn't it? When the music stops, *snip*, and someone's out!

**SANDMAN:** *(clearing throat)* AHM.

**ATROPOS:** *(Singing)* Snip-snap, snip-snap! WHEE!

*(They suddenly stop and look around. Everyone is giving them a very wild-eyed look at this point.)*

**CLOTHO:** For what have we been summoned here?

**ATROPOS:** A trim, perhaps? *(Snick-snicks the scissors)*

**ANNIE:** Uh, no, thank you all the same.

**SANDMAN:** We had hoped you could help us out a bit with Santa...

**CLOTHO:** Father Christmas? Pere Noel? Sinterklaus? Weihnachtsmann?

**ANNIE:** Y...yes. That one. You see, I was conducting a science experiment and I'm afraid it went horribly wrong and now Santa is...

**ATROPOS:** *(excitedly)* Dead!??

**ANNIE:** ...traveling backwards in time.

**ATROPOS:** *(suddenly despair)* OH NO! That's horrible!

**LACHESIS:** Lucky him, I'll bet that's far more interesting.

**CLOTHO:** LACHESIS! They're worried! *(Turning to ANNIE)* But how do you think we can help?

**FATHER TIME:** *(stepping forward)* My fellow architects – I thought you and I might be able to work together.

**ATROPOS:** Father! It has been many years since we've talked.

**CLOTHO:** My sisters! Father Time! Gather around and let us find Santa's thread and see what we can do!

*(The MOIRAI and FATHER TIME crowd around each other and the tapestry of life and inspect it closely and chatter excitedly)*

**ATROPOS:** *(triumphantly)* I have it!

**FATHER TIME:** *(pondering)* Yes, most curious!

**CLOTHO:** *(worried)* Don't cut it!

**LACHESIS:** *(annoyed)* She always pulls on it too hard!

*(They turn back towards the group with the tapestry held in their hands and pointing out a particular thread. This does not have to be visible to the audience, it can be pantomimed.)*

**CLOTHO:** This is Santa's specific life thread; as you can see, it's quite long.

**LACHESIS:** Of course, recently it acts strange – it doubles back on itself.

**MRS CLAUS:** Doubles back?

**ATROPOS:** Yes! See right there? It turns around and heads backwards down the timeline and it's growing in the wrong direction!

**SOPHIE:** Well, you're the Fates; can't you just pull it out and thread it back into the fabric the right way?

*(The MOIRAI gasp in unison.)*

**CLOTHO:** No! Oh, no, child that would be horrid.

**ATROPOS:** A good way of going snip-snap if you wanted on that thread! But much, much more violent. *(shudders)*

**LACHESIS:** *(shrugging)* We could give it a shot...maybe it matters...maybe it doesn't...

**CLOTHO:** No, this is the problem, it's never happened before. And we only know what to do in theory.

**ANNIE:** Will that get Santa back in this time, this place?

**ATROPOS:** We believe so, but it is not without its risks. We are going to have to re-thread it back through the tapestry and get it back in its rightful place without damaging it – or we risk destroying him entirely.

*(there's a moment of silence in the group as they ponder this)*

**ANNIE:** *(suddenly)* This is all my fault! I knew there were risks messing around with time, but not like this! How was I even supposed to know that there WAS a Santa, and my experiment would throw him into such danger?

**ATROPOS:** And we are going to need help. A lot of help.

**CLOTHO:** *(turning to MRS CLAUS)* We need everyone here. Now.

## SCENE 5: Unraveling the Mistake

*(EASTER BUNNY, TOOTH FAIRY, HIMA, SNEG, and SPRITE 1 & 2 have rejoined the group.)*

**TOOTH FAIRY:** So, we are here now. You need us?

**BUNNY:** *(yawns and stretches)* I'd like to point out that we tried to help, and it didn't work. I mean, apart from me finding him.

**SOPHIE:** I'm still trying to get over the fact that the Easter Bunny is right in front of me!

**BUNNY:** Aww, little Sophie. You were much younger when I last hid a basket for you to find!

**SOPHIE:** *(to the TOOTH FAIRY)* And I love your dress! So chic!

**TOOTH FAIRY:** *(curtsies)* Thank you, I got it on sale! *(They both gush)*

**SPRITE 1:** *(to BUNNY)* We want candy!

**SPRITE 2:** Or eggs!

**HIMA:** Or chocolate!

**SNEG:** Or a huge basket of all of those things!

*(all four of them giggle together and then join hands and circle BUNNY, surrounding him, and then begin to chant)*

**HIMA, SNEG, SPRITE 1 & 2:** Baskets! Baskets! We all fall down!  
*(they all fall over, giggling)*

**ANNIE:** Ok, ok! Can we save the party hats for later please?

**TOOTH FAIRY:** But what exactly ARE we doing here?

**FATHER TIME:** The Fates have an idea of how to get Santa back.

**PUCK:** My perked-up ears want to hear the plan to free Saint Nick from Time's sticky span.

**SANDMAN:** Get on with it before he breaks out in a poetry contest, please!

**CLOTHO:** Very well. Lachesis?

**LACHESIS:** Must I? Really?

**ATROPOS:** Lachey!

**LACHESIS:** *(sighs)* All right. We need to get Santa's life thread untangled. To do that, we're going to need everyone to lend their powers: Father Time will slow down time, Easter Bunny will find and keep track of Santa's thread, Tooth Fairy will get it into tight spaces, Sandman will stretch time, and Puck will oversee Santa himself and keep him distracted.

**SANDMAN:** And how exactly are we supposed to reach him with these powers?

**CLOTHO:** That – is the key to this entire operation. We will use our own life threads.

**TOOTH FAIRY:** What? Our own threads? How?

**ATROPOS:** Everyone has one, mortal or immortal. You just can't see or touch it usually.

**LACHESIS:** The danger of that would boggle your mind. Can you imagine the knots?

**CLOTHO:** This is where my powers come in. Reach into your pockets.

*(Everyone in the group slowly reaches into their pocket as they feel something suddenly appear there. They slowly each pull out their own life thread. This should be made of yarn but all in different colors and matching characters – white and fluffy for Bunny, black for Sandman, etc. Each thread should be roughly ~3-4 meters long for best effect.)*

**SOPHIE:** Ooooh! Look at mine! Look at mine! *(She pulls out a bright pink thread.)* I love it! *(She hugs it)*

**ANNIE:** *(pulling out her aqua blue thread)* I did not.... expect that.

**CLOTHO:** *(smiling at her)* You are more colorful than you think.

**SPRITE 1:** Mine is black!

**SPRITE 2:** Mine is purple!

**HIMA:** Mine is prettier!

**SNEG:** So, mine is longer!

**BUNNY:** So, what do we do with these?

**LACHESIS:** Weave them.

**PUCK:** My nimble fingers cause chaos and strife, but I cannot weave the threads of life.

**LACHESIS:** *(smiling slightly)* That is my power – to help you weave them together into a strong rope.

**FATHER TIME:** We must wait for the next appearance of Santa in his time bubble and then launch. Timing is critical.

**CRINK:** I just hope my thread will hold in the rope.

**LUMI:** ROPE! A rope to do...what?

**MRS CLAUS:** To pull him back.

*(They all stop and turn to her. She is very quiet.)*

**MRS CLAUS:** That is what you will do --- pull him back to me, right?

**ATROPOS:** *(nods slowly)* Yes. If we can.

*(there's a moment)*

**PERI:** *(brashly)* Well! Let's not sit around thinking about it. Let's get it done.

## **SCENE 6: The Pull Back**

*(For this scene, the stage is split – 2/3 to the group, 1/3 to the vignette or there needs to be another designated space for the vignette pieces to work, preferably lit differently. As we are “pulling” Santa back, the lighting needs to come up and down on the vignette scenery as Santa is “yanked” back into place and finally into our current scene.*

*The scene opens in this arrangement. The North Pole-ians are reassembled and a solid, multicolored ~5-8m rope has now appeared. Everyone admires it. It should be large and thick enough to be well-seen by the audience and it should have a loop tied on one end big enough to put a foot through.*

*The vignette side of the stage is still dark.)*

**LUMI:** Oh, Bunny, I love your fuzzy white thread!

**BUNNY:** It matches my fur! Your bright blue one really calls out your eyes.

**SOPHIE:** And Mrs. Claus has red, brown, green, and white, just like her outfit.

**MRS CLAUS:** All of your life threads mixed together makes for a very pretty rope. Now, let's just hope we can use it.

**FATHER TIME:** If my predictions are correct, Santa should appear shortly in another time slip. He's nearing another critical junction.

**CRINK:** And then what?

**CLOTHO:** We have to toss him the rope. If it works, it will break through the time bubble and let him grab on to be pulled back.

**ATROPOS:** So, everyone, get in a line and get ready! Magical creatures, ready your skills; everyone else, get ready to pull. Tooth Fairy, you're in front because your magic will get into the impossible spaces.

*(Everyone lines up in a line across the stage, Tooth Fairy nearest the vignette side, rope in hand. MRS CLAUS as an older lady stays out of it.*

*There is a tinkling of a sound indicating that the Vignette is about to happen.)*

**LACHESIS:** Oh dear, here we go, I guess!

#### **VIGNETTE #4**

*(This is the darkest vignette so far. We simply see 4 chairs in a line. All four chairs are occupied by figures in graduation gowns and mortars; one of these people is Santa. The others can be actual people or can simply be mannequins or cardboard figures – they do not speak. Up to the director to see how creepy or not creepy to make this.*

*Santa immediately knows where he is and that it's not right, unlike previous times; he's caught on to the fact that he's going backwards and it's not correct.)*

**SANTA:** Wha.... what? I'm here, but where is here?

*(He gets up out of his chair and looks around, then slides his hands over his robe and hat)*

**SANTA:** A robe.... graduation. GRADUATION! Hundreds and hundreds of years ago, long before.....*(scared)*...before I became Santa. I'm continuing to go backwards, the next step will be, what? Teenager? Toddler? Baby?

*(Out to the outside/crowd/ether)* Helloooooooooo out there!? Anyone? Help! Can someone hear me!? I need help!

**LUMI:** We're coming, Santa! Hang on!

**CLOTHO:** He can't hear you, not yet.

**CRINK:** Let's get him! What do we do?

**ATROPOS:** Tooth Fairy! Use your powers to find a hole in that wall and toss in the rope!

**TOOTH FAIRY:** Uh, ok, I'll try my best. I never was good at playing cowgirl! *(Takes up the rope and whirls the end around her head like a lasso)* HeeeeeeeeYAH! *(Tosses the looped end at SANTA which flies through the air and lands at SANTA'S feet.)*



**SANTA:** A rope! A rope? What's a rope doing here?

*(He bends down and peers along the length of the rope)*

There's a light! A light at the end of that rope. And it's getting brighter!

**FATHER TIME:** A hole is opening in the time continuum!

**ANNIE:** No way! I've been trying to get something like that to happen for years!

**SOPHIE:** Apparently all you need is colorful rope and a Tooth Fairy.  
*(ANNIE looks at her.)* Which.... might be hard to come by?

**LUMI:** Santa! Santa, can you hear us??

**SANTA:** Lumi?? Is that you?? Yes! Yes, I can hear you!

**CRINK:** Grab on, sir! We're going to pull you through!

*(SANTA grabs onto the rope tightly. The rest of the characters spread the rope out along the line and grab onto it tightly, ready to pull.)*

**CLOTHO:** This is going to be a tight fit, the hole isn't very big!

**ATROPOS:** We have to try! C'mon everyone, PULL!

*(They all start pulling and Santa is pulled to the border of the vignette but is stopped by an invisible border. The actors continue to try to pull harder and harder, saying things like, "C'mon, pull!" and "You can do it!" or just simply grunting, throughout this dialogue. This resembles a tug-of-war match.)*

**SANTA:** I can barely fit my arm through the hole! I'm up to my shoulder and then I'm stuck!

**HIMA:** Hold on Santa!

**SNEG:** Pull harder, Hima!

**HIMA:** YOU pull harder!

**PERI:** Put your backs into it, lads and ladies! We have the master to save!

*(They manage to pull him a little further into the hole, but he is now stuck half-crouched down and sideways.)*

**SANTA:** The hole just won't get any larger! Oh, now I regret those extra dozen cookies last week!

**LUMI:** Never give up, never regret a cookie!

**SANDMAN:** *(struggling)* I'm trying to stretch time out, but it's so difficult. It's taking everything I have just to keep it open!

**MRS CLAUS:** *(not a part of the line but fretting)* Bring him back, oh, you just have to bring him back!

**PUCK:** Santa Claus is starting to turn pale; I fear much more will cause him to fail!

*(The rope slips between fingers)*

**PERI:** We're losing him! Hold on and pull everyone!

**SOPHIE:** Oh no, Christmas won't be the same without Santa!

**ANNIE:** *(to SOPHIE, next to her)* Soph, I have an idea! Here, hold onto the rope and pull for me! *(She steps away from the rope and SOPHIE grabs it and tries to pull for the two of them while giving her an "are you crazy?" look.)*

*ANNIE runs over to the table where both golden balls are laying – her baby ball and the one from the North Pole.)*

**ANNIE:** *(to herself)* Mine has been used, but the other one hasn't. Let's see if it still works!

*(She runs over to the head of the line where BUNNY is still pulling madly at the rope.)*

**ANNIE:** Hey Santa! Catch!! *(She bowls the ornament through the "hole" at Santa. He grabs it as it comes through and releases the rope, sending everyone on the other side of the rope falling. He holds it up to the light.)*

**SANTA:** A Destination Decoration! I only know one place I want to go....

*(He grabs it with both hands. Everyone falls completely silent.)*

**SANTA:** HOME! *(He twists it, there's a huge BOOM, and the entire stage collapses to dark)*

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## **SCENE 7: Deep in the Presents**

*(Scene opens up much like it closed – a pile of everyone on the floor where they fell. The time vignette has collapsed. The rope lays useless on the floor. Everyone slowly gets up.)*

**LUMI:** Ugh, my head!

**BUNNY:** Ugh, my ears!

**PERI:** *(from the floor)* You haven't seen my backside yet!

**SNEG:** Get off me!

**HIMA:** You get off me!

**CRINK:** What.... What happened? Annie? What did you do?

**ANNIE:** *(slowly sitting up)* Shipwrecks.

**CRINK:** Shipwrecks?

**ANNIE:** Remember? One ball in one location, one in another? But they'll come back together? The hole was collapsing, so I had to do *something*. I had used my decoration, but the one here, on this tree? Nobody had used it yet. And since the ornaments were quantum entangled....

**FATHER TIME:** That was very clever! But did it work?

*(Suddenly there is a massive snoring noise from beneath a blanket covering a figure on the chair. LUMI rushes over and whips off the blanket, revealing – SANTA, fast asleep.)*

**LUMI:** SANTA!!! *(He wakes up at the sound)*

**SANTA:** Whoa!!! What – well, hello, Lumi! How wonderful to see you! *(He leaps up)*

**MRS CLAUS:** NICK!! *(She runs and hugs him)*

*(EVERYONE bursts out into cheers and 'Welcome back, Santa', and other phrases. He stands up, brushes himself off, and silences them with a gesture.)*

**SANTA:** My friends --- my *family* – it is so good to be home.

**CRINK:** And just in time, too! It just struck midnight, it's Christmas Eve!

*(EVERYONE says things like 'Merry Christmas!' or 'Happy Holidays!' or just 'Yay!')*

**CRINK:** No time to waste, we have a busy schedule to make! *(He starts to usher SANTA off, but SANTA stops him)*

**SANTA:** Whoa, whoa, Crinky! I think I need to take a minute or two and properly thank my friends for rescuing me. After all, it's not really Christmas without gifts, and all of you are *definitely* on my "nice" list this year! Now – where is my sack?

**HIMA:** I'll get it! *(She runs offstage)*

**SNEG:** She'll never find it! *(Runs offstage)*

*(HIMA and SNEG come back in, dragging a huge brown sack full of... something.)*

**SANTA:** Thank you, my dears! Now.... *(Rummaging around in his sack)...what do we have here?*

*(He hands out gifts to each of his friends. They should come forward to him as he does so to receive. For those not naturally at the North Pole, they can leave the stage after he gives the gift.)*

**SANTA:** To the Easter Bunny – a sleep mask and pillow! I am so sorry, my friend, that you had to wake up so early this year. Please – get sleep before Spring.

**BUNNY:** My honor, sir! *(bows)* Christmas wouldn't be the same without you. And thank you! *(Huge yawn)* My ears are about to fall off! *(He exits)*

**SANTA:** For Robin Goodfellow, otherwise known as, "Puck" – a book: Modern Shakespearean Insults.

**PUCK:** This gift, thou knowest, pleases me right; A tome of jests and jibes for day and night; Insults sharp, a merry sport, will bring me joy, and quick retort!

*(He opens the book and reads.)*

'Thy wit is like a broken smartphone screen! Shattered, useless, and painful to witness!'

'Thou art like GPS with a lack of direction – lost and leading others astray!'

What fun! *(He dances away with the book but not before jumping all over furniture and around people)*

**SANTA:** To Dentella, my ivory-inclined imp, a bedazzled toothbrush!

**TOOTH FAIRY:** Ooooooh! It's so pretty! It's so pink! It's so glittery! Thank you, Santa!

**SANTA:** And to Miss Sophie, the same gift, as I think the two of you are partners in fashion.

**SOPHIE:** Hey, that's awesome! Thank you! *(curtsies)*

**TOOTH FAIRY:** I'll come visit sometime, Sophie, and we can GO SHOPPING! For now, I'm off to gather more gumfruit! *(She dances offstage)*

**SANTA:** To the maker and keeper of sleep, the one in charge of both our dreams and our very nightmares – a bag of black sand from Iceland, so you may always be moody when you work.

**SANDMAN:** I.... *(He shakes his head, too embarrassed to say anything; he just accepts the gift, bows very low, and takes his sprites with him as he exits.)*

**SANTA:** Father --- Father of Time, of my legacy – how do I thank you for all you have done for me, both in the past and now?

**FATHER TIME:** Kris – you were special from the day I met you. You owe me nothing; I am happy to have you restored and in charge of the joy of the season.

**SANTA:** Nonetheless, I wish to give you a gift. *(Reaches into his sack)* A daily calendar of 'Timeless Wisdom'. Rather appropriate, I thought.

**FATHER TIME:** *(laughs)* Very appropriate. Thank you, Kris. *(He bows and leaves)*

**SANTA:** Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos – to you, I have a singular gift – a Magic 8 ball.

**LACHESIS:** Seriously? Why?

**CLOTHO:** LACHY! Be nice.

**SANTA:** *(chuckling)* It's ok – just think of it as the Ball of Destiny. The next time you are bored or just don't know which direction to turn, why not ask the Magic 8 ball?

**ATROPOS:** *(shakes the ball and turns it over)* 'Outlook Uncertain'. Yeah, that sounds about right for most of life.

**CLOTHO:** Thank you, Father Christmas. We are glad we could help restore you to full service.

**SANTA:** And to Annie...

**ANNIE:** Oh, gosh, I don't need anything. I was the cause of you getting stuck in the first place!

**SANTA:** In the pursuit of science for the good of all – that's a very noble cause.

**ANNIE:** I'm hardly noble; I didn't even think you existed!

**SANTA:** *(laughs)* Many people don't; but their true self shows in what they do for others. You were key to me coming back. That's the true meaning of the season – sacrificing so that others may have happiness.

**ANNIE:** Well, I'm glad it all worked out. Now I can go back and figure out what's going on with my experiment.... but I promise I'll be much more careful!

**SANTA:** Oh, yes.... about that....

**ANNIE:** You have some ideas?

**SANTA:** No, your gift from me. Clotho?

*(CLOTHO comes forward. She pulls from her bag a large skein of the aqua blue yarn that ANNIE had earlier.)*

**CLOTHO:** Santa asked me to show you your life thread. This is a great honor; few other humans get to see their threads.

**ANNIE:** Why show me this?

**SANTA:** I know when you've been sleeping, and I know when you're awake. And I know you feel like you are running out of time.

**ANNIE:** *(bows her head)* Everything just goes so quickly; too much to do, too little time. I have such large dreams for myself.

**SANTA:** So this is why this is your gift; Clotho is showing you the thread she has yet to weave, that Lachesis has yet to measure with tasks, deeds, events, and days. You have more time than you think.

**CLOTHO:** Nothing is predetermined until I unwind your thread and weave it into the tapestry of life; there are no guarantees, and Atropos could get snip-happy at any point. But you have a lot of time to explore this life and become what you want.

**ANNIE:** *(quiet for a moment, then she nods)* I see – I truly see. *(She turns and hugs SANTA)* Thank you, Santa, for everything.

**MRS CLAUS:** And one more gift.... *(She hands a bright red ball to each ANNIE and SOPHIE).* Destination Decorations. Their twin is here on our great hall tree. Please come and visit sometime.

**SOPHIE:** Oh, you mean it? That'd be great!

**CRINK:** Santa? Everything is ready. Everything is packed. I think it's time.

**SANTA:** Oh, yes. I think it is, indeed, time. Time for Christmas. *(Turns to the audience)* A very Merry Christmas to all –

**EVERYONE:** And to all a good night!



## RESOURCES

### LINE COUNTS

SOPHIE	78
ANNIE	110
CRINK	67
PERI	63
LUMI	67
MRS CLAUS	65
SANTA CLAUS	46
FATHER TIME	40
EASTER BUNNY	26
TOOTH FAIRY	18
PUCK	13
SPRITE 1	10
SPRITE 2	9
SPRITE 3	9
SANDMAN	24
CLOTHO	24
LACHESIS	15
ATROPOS	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>705</b>

## **COSTUMES AND PROPERTIES**

- SOPHIE
  - Fashionable clothing akin of her age (teenager, young college)
  - Cellphone
  - Accessories as desired (gum, purse, etc.)
- ANNIE
  - Dull clothing (plain shirt, jeans, shoes, etc.)
  - Laboratory jacket
  - Lab notebook and pen
- CRINK
  - Elf costume but it can be more formal (maybe a tie?)
  - Clipboard with papers
- PERI
  - Elf costume, casual, older
- LUMI
  - Elf costume, younger, neater, snappier
- MRS CLAUS
  - Mrs Claus outfit, red/white/brown, pretty
  - Tray with mugs of hot cocoa
  - Tray with cookies
- SANTA CLAUS
  - Santa Claus outfit
  - Australian beachwear outfit with sunglasses
  - Older (1700s) peasant clothing
  - Graduation gown and cap
  - Sack with presents from A2:S7
- FATHER TIME
  - Long beard
  - Black robe
  - Sandals
  - Hourglass
  - Cane optional
- EASTER BUNNY
  - Bunny costume
- TOOTH FAIRY
  - Tooth Fairy costume
  - Fashionable accessories
- PUCK
  - Male fairy costume; think “Peter Pan”
- SPRITE 1
  - All black costume, black hair, black makeup
- SPRITE 2
  - All black costume, black hair, black makeup

- SANDMAN
  - Emo black costume, leather
  - Boots
  - Chains, etc. as accessories
  - Black hair, white makeup, black circles
  - Bag of sand at waist
- CLOTHO
  - Neat and tidy
  - Wood spindle and distaff with threads
- LACHESIS
  - Lazy and unkempt
  - Fabric measuring tape around neck
  - Woven cloth (scarf?) or similar object for fabric of life
- ATROPOS
  - Dark and mysterious
  - Extra large scissors, comically large, preferably metal

# **SETS**

## **ACT I**

- Annie's Laboratory
  - o A few tables and chairs in a haphazard line
  - o Experiment setup on one or more tables
  - o Notepads, books, and other accessories
  - o At least one tubular part to the experiment
  - o A platter with a banana on it
  - o A split banana to swap or other similar trick
  - o A Christmas tree, decorated, with a gold ball on it
- North Pole
  - o A comfy chair, some other chairs, couch, seating arrangements
  - o A decorated Christmas tree (can be same from Lab but needs to change slightly between scenes)
  - o A rug
  - o A coffee table on the rug
- Ice Cream Stand
  - o A park bench in the middle of a black background, no other items in the scene
- Living Room
  - o A decorated Christmas tree with presents beneath it
  - o Fireplace?
- Unknown Location
  - o Nothing required except actors on a black drop

## **ACT II**

- North Pole
  - o Same as Act I
- Australian Beach
  - o Beach chairs against drop black background
  - o Beach umbrella would be a nice touch.
  - o Also coolers, balls, beach toys, etc. strewn about
- Graduation Stage
  - o 3-4 chairs
  - o All but one chair occupied by dummy or cutout with grad robe and hat
  - o Black background

# HISTORY AND BACKGROUND of

## **Barely in Time for Christmas**

*Barely in Time for Christmas* was written for the Franklin County Arts Council's (Hampton, IA) annual children's Christmas play in 2023. It is difficult to find quality plays written for Christmas that featured large casts, clever dialog, cute and simple holiday messages, and aren't a rehashing of so many common Christmas formats and genres (*A Christmas Carol, anyone? This time in Greek? With lobsters?*)

Many of the names, quips, and references made here are from my own experience and memories or multicultural experiences; most notably, the names of several characters harken to languages around the world. "LUMI" (loo-me) is the Finnish word for "snow", "HIMA" (hee-mah) is the Thai word, and "SNEG" is a phonetic pronunciation of it in North Macedonian. "PERI" (pear-ee) is a take on the Persian word for "fairy". However, the name "CRINK" means exactly nothing in particular; aren't you glad you wondered?

"CLOTHO" (*cloh-tho*), "LACHESIS" (*la-keh-sis*), AND "ATROPOS" (*ah-tro-pos*) are the classic Greek names for the Fates, the Moirai (*my-rye*), although we only really know of their appearance in history and sculpture, not so much their natures. Giving them stark attitudes seemed appropriate given their roles in life – and fun.

The other characters should be generally recognizable by most although I've taken liberties to try to present them in a unique and refreshing way. I do hope they will forgive me for the creative license.

Other references and sources are generally from the fact that I am, indeed, a child of the 1980s, and a lover of pop culture, quotes, and all things snarky, so if you find a line or two that harkens to something you recognize? You're probably right. Where, exactly, each of these are hidden and what they come from I will leave to the reader's – or audience member's – acute observation.

## NOTES

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Barely in Time for Christmas – Pralle

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