

# Santa's Visitors

*(Editor's Note: The following Christmas play will be performed tonight at Mountain Village under the direction of its author, Mrs. Robert L. Henry.)*

By MRS. ROBERT L. HENRY  
Mountain Village, Alaska

Time: Afternoon before Christmas

Place: A home in the United States (Act I)

Santa's home (Act II)

Cast: Dad; Mom; Diane; Janet; Spirit of Christmas; Santa Claus; Ten Eskimo Helpers; Five helpers; Three Billy Goats Gruff; Troll; Three Little Kittens; Mama Kitty; and Angels;

Chorus:

Ten Little Eskimos (in Eskimo) Twelve Days of Christmas  
Silent Night (in Eskimo)

ACT I. Scene is a home in the United States. This can be performed before the closed curtains. Mom, Dad, and the kids enter and hang their Christmas stockings.

DAD: Well, Mom, what do you plan to leave out for the Old Boy to eat tonight? I guess most people leave a little grub for Old Whiskers to snack on, and I suppose we ought to try to get in good with him and make a few points, too.

MOM: I'm not just sure. I was going to ask you—you're a man. What would YOU like if you were taking a break in the middle

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# A Play at Mountain Village...

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of the night?

DAD: Well, personally, I like a can of beer and some peanuts. But I doubt that his union would allow nipping on the job. Maybe you ought to leave some soup on the back of the stove and some crackers and peanut butter on the table for him.

MOM: Oh, no I won't! That old boy is a man, and he's probably just like any other man—wouldn't even think of cleaning up after himself. I'm not about to get up Christmas morning to spilled soup and cracker crumbs. What can we leave him that won't take any dishes to be washed?

DIANE: (the older sister): Gee, Mom, why don't you just fix him a sack lunch? That way he can take it home and mess up his own house.

JANET: Yeah! You can give him a sack of peanuts, an apple, and a baloney sandwich.

MOM: Roger! Good idea! I'll go fix it right now. Pretty soon we'll have supper, and then you kids plan to hit the sack early. He won't come if you're sitting around awake, you know. (Exit)

DAD: I think it's about sandwich time, myself. (Calls) Hey, Mom, make two of whatever you've got. (Exits)

JANET: Gee, I wonder if he'll come. Every year he comes to our place. Gee whiz, I wish we could go see him for a change.

DIANE: Yeah, I wonder what his house is like. I wonder what Mrs. Claus looks like. I wonder what he eats, and stuff like that. And what I'd really like to know is, how can a man make all those millions of toys in a year's time.

ENTER SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS: Merry Christmas, Girls. I couldn't help overhearing you. I am Spirit of Christmas. (Shakes hands with girls. They introduce themselves.) It is my job to hear and observe all things being said and done about Christmas. It is my job to report those who hold Christmas irreverently or scornfully.

JANET (excitedly): Boy, you sound just like a spy! What happens to persons you report?

SPIRIT: Lots of times we punish them by withholding their NYC checks. Or sometimes NCA doesn't bring their mail in. Or the barge offloads their goods at the other end of town. But—How would you like to have me answer your questions with a quick little trip to the North Pole? You can see for yourself how Santa really lives and works.

DIANE: I think you're pulling our leg. How could we get that far so fast? The North Pole is thousands of miles away.

SPIRIT: No problem at all in this day and age, my dears. Since I'm hired by OEO, I can charter a jet any time. Takes us anywhere we want, if the weather is good, the plane isn't broken down, and if the pilot is willing and able to fly. Oh, once in a while there's a hitch. Like last year. I had some real nice kids from Montana, Milton and Dagmar were their names, all set to take the trip North, and then the old crate of a plane got stuck for a whole day in Aniak—mechanical. But I think we're all set to fly now. You want to?

JANET: Oh, boy! Do I want to!

DIANE: Is there something we need to take? I mean, we are going a long way. How long will we be gone? Shall I pack very much?

SPIRIT: Oh, no, this is just a quick trip. We'll plan to have you back by morning. You'll wear your warmest wraps, of course. And don't forget the important necessities for traveling in the Northland: you'll need an ax, a flashlight, some matches, dry socks, and candy bars. And maybe a sleeping bag. I mean—well—sometimes you do have to—sort of—wait mpw and then. Okay? Hustle. I'll wait.

(GIRLS scurry to collect gear as curtain closes.)

ACT II. Santa's place. It is very dark, as befits a Northern night. Suggested scenery: Behind the front curtain is a second curtain, which will open into Santa's house. There can be a replica of the Northern sky: Dipper, North Star, other stars. Affixed to the curtain is a drawn door, which will lead into Santa's house.

SOUND EFFECT OFFSTAGE: Snow machine stopping.

Enter DIANE, JANET, SPIRIT.

SPIRIT: Sorry that was such a bumpy Ski-Doo ride down from the airstrip, girls. Rural Development has been promising funds for a new road for three years now, and maybe by next construction season the money will be here.

JANET: I thought it was exciting! Gee, is this really the North Pole?

(Girls are carrying axes, sleeping bag, etc. SPIRIT takes them from the girls and sets them down carefully.)

SPIRIT: No, I don't know why everyone calls Santa's place the North Pole. The real North Pole is just an iceflow on the open sea, you know. Not even BIA would put buildings on that place. This is just a few dozen miles from Barrow.—Santa thought that this would be an out-of-the-way enough place.

DIANE: Why would anyone want to be out-of-the-way? I should think Santa would want to live close to stores and an airport and timber and things.

SPIRIT: Everyone thinks Santa is a jolly, Ho-ho-ho sort. But he really likes to be left alone. A few years back. He set up Headquarters at Little Diomedé, but after he was weathered in for four years in a row, he decided he was being left alone too much. So he moved to this spot on the tundra.

Go ahead and knock.

KNOCK

VOICE INSIDE: Come in!

(The three enter as the inner curtain parts, revealing the interior of Santa's home. Santa himself is seated by a small table near the rear and to one side. Props: Wall map of Alaska; radio; assorted implements such as spears, etc. Furnished to resemble the quarters of a successful Eskimo

hunter. Forward are ten various dolls, dressed in Eskimo garb, who help Santa.)

JANET: Amazed): Holy cow! They're Eskimos!!

SPIRIT: Well, certainly, of course, nearly everyone in this part of the world is Eskimo.

(TEN ESKIMOS step forward. They bow and twirl as chorus sings "One little, two little, three little Eskimos" in Eskimo.) (As dolls finish song, they step aside, exiting.)

ONE DOLL (in Eskimo): Excuse us, we are still busy. Good-bye. (Exit)

SANTA has been sipping from a cup, as he is seated at the table. On the table is a plate of dry fish and a kettle (his brew pot).

ENTER MRS. CLAUS. She is dressed in akuspuk and boots. Throughout, she speaks only in Eskimo.

MRS. CLAUS: Old Man, you had better stay out of the brew pot. It is almost time for you to take your trip to see the school children.

SANTA (Throughout, he speaks only in Eskimo): I was just taking a little sip. I need a little bit before I see those noisy school kids. So how about a little grub, Mama? What do we have to eat today?

MRS. C: The boys just brought in some eels. There's some dry fish, right there. I made some aguduk for you, too. Do you have all the packages mailed out?

SANTA: Yep, Mama, The NYC boys have them all out, but some are still waiting at St. Marys. But the people who ordered early have their mail by now. Not my fault if people put things off until the last minute.

DIANE: I can't understand a word he's saying.

JANET: Does Santa Claus really make all the Christmas gifts?

SPIRIT: Let's see what he says about that. (Turns to Santa, speaks in Eskimo): Santa, these little girls have come to visit you from the Lower 48. They are Diane and Janet. They want to know where you get your Christmas presents.

SANTA (steps forward and says to girls): Wha-kah. I get my things from the same place everything these days comes: Made in Japan and Hong Kong.

SPIRIT: Santa says his toys are made in Japan, everything else in Hong Kong. Most things you see these days come from Japan, haven't you noticed? One man can't possibly make all the things all the kids get.

DIANE: When we write to Santa Claus, does he really read all our letters? If he doesn't speak English, how does he know what we want?

SPIRIT: (to Santa, in Eskimo) What do you do with letters the kids write you?

SANTA: Well, I just send them to Sears.

SPIRIT: Santa says he sends your letters to Sears. Then Sears sends your daddy the bill.

JANET: Holy cow, doesn't Santa have any toys here at all?

SPIRIT: Most of the gifts are mailed early to avoid the rush. But Santa keeps the ones he likes the best so that he has something for the NYC kids to play with these long winter nights.

(To Santa): Why don't you show the girls some of your best toys?

SANTA (to Mrs. C.): Mama, go get those little billy goats.

(DIANE, JANET, SPIRIT seat themselves with Santa's hosting.)

(THE THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF and TROLL enter. Playlet.)

MRS. CLAUS: Let the gusaks see the little kittens.

SANTA: Oh, sure, Mama, let's see the kittens.

(MRS. C. exits; the THREE KITTENS and MAMA PUSSAK enter.) Playlet; Three Little Kittens.

DIANE: I always thought Santa had lots of helpers to do his work.

SPIRIT: I'll ask him if he still has helpers around. (To Santa, in Eskimo): Santa, where are those kids you had around here for your helpers?

SANTA: Let me see if they are asleep. They sleep more than they work. Easier for me to do it myself. (Calls) Helpers! HELPERS enter. They wear NYC placards. They line up and sing, in English:

*We live at Santa's palace at the cold North Pole,  
Where aurora Borealis across the sky doth roll,  
We are Santa's helpers, busy all year long,  
Making toys for Santa with a song.*

*Fristy, frosty snowflakes and icicles,  
We make dolls and we make bicycles.  
And we come each Christmas to deliver  
Fristy, frosty, fristy, frosty shiver.*

JANET: What do the helpers do?

HELPER 1: I mop the floors.

HELPER 2: I wash the pans.

HELPER 3: I check out library books.

HELPER 4: I monitor the radio.

HELPER 5: I take the mail to the post office.

ALL HELPERS: That's about all you can do in thirty hours a week. (HELPERS exit)

DIANE: Since Santa is in charge, I expect that his wife gets some pretty wonderful presents. Did you ever see what he gives her?

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS (to Mrs. Santa, in Eskimo): Would you like to tell the girls what you got for Christmas, Mrs. Claus?

STAGING AND CHORUS: "Twelve Days of Christmas."  
*On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me  
A piarmigan in a willow tree.*

*On the second day of Christmas, my true love gave to me  
Two fur seal skins.*

*On the third day of Christmas, my true love gave to me*

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Three strips of dry fish.  
On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me  
Four Arctic hares.  
On the fifth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me  
Five Husky sled dogs.  
On the sixth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me  
Six fur parkas.  
On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me  
Seven bits of moose meat.  
On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me  
Eight shiny oolooks.  
On the ninth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me  
Nine blue kuspuks.  
On the tenth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me  
Ten pairs of mukluks  
On the eleventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me  
'Leven new fish nets.  
On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me  
Twelve melting igloos.

SANTA (after song): And I always give Mama a big Eskimo kiss! (He rubs noses.)

DIANE: If Santa buys toys from Japan, and the NYC helpers mail them out, what does he do?

SPIRIT (to Santa): The girls want to know what you do, since most of your business is done by mail these days.

SANTA (proudly): Well, I sort of boss things around here. Have to keep the NYC kids busy, keep the light plants up, forward the mail to Sears. Always have ACS to answer, lots to do even if I don't make all the toys nowadays.

SPIRIT: Santa says he is mostly an administrator now. He has to be postmaster, light plant maintenanceman, answer the radio. He gives weather and calls the hospital, too. Had six weeks training as medical aide.

SANTA: You tell them that there are always politicians in here telling me what they'll do for this village. Then they never come back.

SPIRIT: (To girls) Santa has to put up a lot of company, too. Politicians coming in with big ideas for village improvement.

SANTA (heatedly): I'm going to run for Legislature and go to Juneau, myself. Then we'll get a decent airstrip in here!

JANET: Say, find out what my mom and dad can leave for Santa to eat on Christmas Eve.

SPIRIT (to S. C.): She said, what would you like for them to leave for you to eat?

SANTA: They always want to leave some stuff out. Bah! I get tired of that gusak food! Half the time the eat has already eaten off it. Ug — forget the food. I'll take some fish strips with me.

SPIRIT (wanting not to embarrass them): Well, uh, Santa said that he really just likes some dry fish and pilot bread, and usually he takes a pocketful with him. So it's really okay, don't worry about trying to please him.

MRS. CLAUS: Old Man, I don't want to hurry you up, but you do have that school to visit, and you had better be getting ready. You still have to call KXA — 69 for weather.

SANTA: Roger! Roger! (Gets up and exits.)

SPIRIT: Santa is leaving soon to visit the school kids at a Yukon River village.

DIANE: Does he really keep warm in that red suit?

SPIRIT: Oh, my, no. The Sanga togs are just for show, because that's what's expected. When he travels, he wears thermal knits underneath and an Eddie Bauer parka over.

(SANTA returns, wearing an Eddie Bauer. He carries no

pack.)

JANET: Say, where's Santa's pack?

MRS. CLAUS (to Santa): Are you sure the candy was delivered to the store?

(SANTA nods.)

MRS. C.: Now be sure to stop in at church before you leave. Be careful, See you. (SANTA nods again; waves; exits.)

MRS. C. (to Spirit): Santa found out that he could buy the candy from the local traders easier than he could order it himself. So he just has it waiting at the store. No pack sack anymore, even.

SPIRIT (to girls): She just told me that Santa is buying candy for the kids from the traders in the villages. That way it's fresher. Saves on freight.

(Offstage, a Ski-Doo is heard starting up.)

JANET: (Surprised) What's that!

DIANE: Where are the reindeer?

SPIRIT: Santa has been using a Mustang for years now. Saves on feed bills, you know. He takes the snowmobile to the airstrip and off he goes.

DIANE (repeating): But the reindeer!?

SPIRIT: Oh, a few years back a BIA man took them to Nunivak Island as part of the reindeer-raising project.

And now, little friends, we had better be starting back south. We are on different time, you know, and it will be morning in your part of the country by the time we return.

(Turns to Mrs. C.) I must get the girls home by morning, Mrs. Claus. So we shall have to be leaving now. Thank you very much for letting us into your home. Hope you aren't too tired by all the rush.

MRS. CLAUS: These last few years it has been much easier on us, and we are much more relaxed all year. Christmas is better when people realize that Santa Claus isn't all there is to Christmas.

But don't go yet. It is almost time for the Christmas angels to come by. Let the little girls stay and listen before they go away.

SPIRIT: (to girls) Mrs. Claus reminded me that the Christmas angels are about due. Every Christmas Eve, as they travel around the globe singing Christmas carols and reminding people of the true Christmas spirit, they stop here at Santa's house to sing a carol. Mrs. Claus would like for you to stay and hear them.

DIANE: Oh, thank you very much. I would love to hear them.

JANET: You mean, really real angels?

(Offstage the beginning of Silent Night, sung in Eskimo, is heard. As chorus sings the carol, two or three angels enter the Claus house and remain until the curtain.)

(During song, members of Santa's household reenter.)

CHORUS: "Silent Night"

ANGEL (in Eskimo) Christmas blessings to you, Mrs. Claus, and to all those about you.

ANGEL (in English): Christmas blessings to you, children, and to all those about you.

MRS. CLAUS: Thank you; Merry Christmas to you.

GIRLS: Merry Christmas.

SPIRIT: And now, girls, we must fly home. Gather your things and we shall be off. (In Eskimo, to Mrs. Claus, helpers, toys, and angels) Good-bye, Eskimos, and thank you.

MRS. CLAUS: Thank you. Good-bye. Merry Christmas.

GIRLS: (In Eskimo) Thank you. Good-bye. Merry Christmas.

(JANET, DIANE, SPIRIT leave the door of Santa's home as the inner curtain falls; leave stage as outer curtain closes.)