

Mrs. Claus Gets Menopause

Daniel Guyton





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MRS. CLAUS GETS MENOPAUSE

By

Daniel Guyton

Mrs. Clause Gets Menopause premiered at Onstage Atlanta (Barbara Cole Uterhardt, Artistic Company Manager) in Atlanta, GA, as part of their Merry Little Holiday Shorts Festival in December. It was directed by Barry West, sound design by Kel Kyle, lighting design by Tom Gillespie, and the stage manager was Bill Byrne. The cast was as follows:

MRS. CLAUS – Lory Cox

SANTA CLAUS – Nat Martin

Mrs. Clause Gets Menopause was subsequently produced at ACME Theatre (Dave Sheppard, Executive Director) in Maynard, MA, as part of their New Works Winter Festival in January. It was directed by Nancy Gahagan, the technical director was Dave Sheppard, and the stage manager was Paul Zak. The cast was as follows:

MRS. CLAUS – Lisa Burdick

SANTA CLAUS – Jim Porter

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CAST

SANTA CLAUS: The jolly old elf himself. Normally in good spirits, but tonight is no ordinary night.

MRS. CLAUS: Santa's wife. Normally very sweet and loving, but today she is a bit on edge.

Place

Santa's Workshop at the North Pole.

Time

Christmas Eve.

Setting: A cozy office in the North Pole. It looks Victorian, but colorful.

At Rise: MRS. CLAUS enters in a huff.

MRS. CLAUS: *(entering)* Don't talk to me. *(SANTA enters close behind)* Don't touch me!

SANTA: *(following close behind)* But, sugar plum, what's wrong?

MRS. CLAUS: Nothing, Santa. You know what's wrong!

SANTA: No, I don't. I...

MRS. CLAUS: Well, if you don't know what's wrong, then I'm not going to tell you.

SANTA: Please, darling. I don't have much time now. Tell me what's wrong.

MRS. CLAUS: Nothing's wrong, all right! Nothing's wrong. *(She sits and begins to cry)* Oh, god, I wanna die!

SANTA: Sweetheart, please. It's Christmas Eve. I have to fly around the world tonight. What on earth could be bothering you?

MRS. CLAUS: That's what's bothering me! Ok? THAT'S what's bothering me. You do the same thing every Christmas Eve. You fly away all high and mighty on your stupid sleigh, and you leave me all alone here with these stupid elves. Who don't care! They don't care about anything I say. All they wanna do is spread gossip, and build – and... and that one elf wants to be a dentist. A DENTIST, Santa! As if mangy polar bears could ever get tooth decay. How on earth can he manage a practice out HERE of all places?

SANTA: So that's what you're upset about? Hermey? The Elf? I'll go speak with—

MRS. CLAUS: No, no, I don't care about Hermey the Elf! *(pause)* Well, I mean... he's nice and all, I just... that's not what I'm upset about.

SANTA: Then what are you upset about?

MRS. CLAUS: You. *(pause)* You big galoot. *(She fixes his coat.)* You always leave me alone on Christmas Eve. The one night of the year no one should ever be left alone.

SANTA: *(putting his arm around her)* Well then, why don't you come with me tonight? We'll go together, honey, it will be our magical Christmas Eve.

MRS. CLAUS: *(pulling away)* No. No, it's too cold outside.

SANTA: Well then, what would you have me do?

MRS. CLAUS: Stay home tonight, Santa. Comfort me. I need you. Especially tonight of all nights.

SANTA: But what about the children?

MRS. CLAUS: *(She turns away angrily)* Oh, don't talk to me about children!

SANTA: But why not? I—

MRS. CLAUS: *(crying)* You spend all of your time with children that we can never have! Never even tried to have.

SANTA: Are you blaming *me* for—?

MRS. CLAUS: Well? Is it my fault we haven't done the Christmas Kringle in almost twenty years? Haven't I done everything you've asked me to? I've tried behaving like those girls on your naughty list. I've even tried the reindeer position, like you told me to!

SANTA: But muffin, we live in the North Pole. It's cold outside! I... Sometimes it's difficult to... *(He points to his 'South Pole')*

MRS. CLAUS: *(icily)* It's not cold in our bedroom. In fact, it's very warm in there Nicholas. Not that you'd ever know.

SANTA: I am sorry I've neglected you, Greta. I truly didn't realize you felt this way. I promise, I will make it up to you tomorrow evening. After my sleigh ride.

MRS. CLAUS: No. It's too late now.

SANTA: What do you mean? Why?

MRS. CLAUS: I've... I've already been to the doctor.

SANTA: What doctor?

MRS. CLAUS: Hermey's brother Hymie. He's training to be a gynecologist. He gave me some estrogen pills to take, but it's... far too late, Nicholas. *(pause)* It's simply far too late.

SANTA: What do you mean? Are you...

MRS. CLAUS: Yes. *(suddenly very serious)* I have menopause. *(She looks at him)* Do you remember all those hot flashes I've been having lately? Those...sudden bouts of depression? The urge to rip off the heads of teddy bears, that I've had for the last six months!! *(She looks at SANTA)* I've had it all.

SANTA: *(frightened)* Oh...I...was wondering where all of those teddy bear heads were coming from.

MRS. CLAUS: Yes, well, Dr. Hymie poked and prodded, and pricked and blotted, and he gave me all sorts of examinations, and treatments, and he said... I'll never be a woman again.

SANTA: He said what?

MRS. CLAUS: Well, not in those words exactly, but I could read between the lines. When I was 11 years old, my grandmama Mushka told me that I was a woman now, because of...my monthly visitation. And now that I'm...unable to, I... What kind of woman does that make me?

(She weeps as SANTA tries to comfort her)

SANTA: Why, you're the kindest woman I know, Greta. So... gentle. So...caring.

(She pulls away, angrily)

MRS. CLAUS: Oh, go eat some fudge! Don't patronize me.

SANTA: Greta! I have never heard you talk like that.

MRS. CLAUS: Oh, right! Like you're such a saint, aren't you?

SANTA: *(shrugging, confused)* Well...yes. Yes, I am.

MRS. CLAUS: Oh shut up! Just leave me alone!

SANTA: Where are you going?

MRS. CLAUS: To the library. Where it's quiet.

SANTA: What are you going to do?

MRS. CLAUS: What do you mean, do? I'm going to suffer in silence, just like I always do.

SANTA: Come with me.

MRS. CLAUS: No.

(She starts to exit)

SANTA: Well, please darling, can't we discuss this tomorrow night? I have a very long ride ahead of me and...

MRS. CLAUS: I might not be here when you get back.

SANTA: But...why?

MRS. CLAUS: I don't know why.

SANTA: But this doesn't make sense. Where will you go?

MRS. CLAUS: I don't know where.

SANTA: Darling, we're in the frozen tundra of the North Pole. If...you leave here tonight, why there's...there's no telling what might happen to you.

MRS. CLAUS: It can't be worse than the way I feel right now.

(SANTA tries to comfort her)

SANTA: Oh, Greta, please don't...

MRS. CLAUS: What's the worst thing that can happen to me out there, huh, Santa? What, I might get eaten by a toothless polar bear? I might get hypothermia and freeze to death?

SANTA: *(with gravity)* Well, yes. Among other things.

MRS. CLAUS: Well, I know about your little secret, Santa. I know all about you. And your...little dalliances.

SANTA: My... dalliances? What on earth are you talking about?

MRS. CLAUS: Oh, you think that I don't know about you, Nicholas, and your little 'tinsel' on the side. But I know. I mean, look at you. Even now. You have lipstick on your collar.

(SANTA looks down at his collar)

SANTA: What? No, that's candy cane! *(He quickly tries to brush it off)* I was hungry!

MRS. CLAUS: Yeah, I'll bet you were. Hungry for someone younger and prettier than me! And you know what else I heard, Santa? You think I don't pay attention around here, but I listen! And I overheard Applethorpe and Gingerbell gossiping this morning. About that new vixen you've been seeing. They said she's a loose harlot, who's dear to you, and apparently far more stable than I could ever be! Oh, god! *(She puts her head in her hands and starts to weep)*

SANTA: What? No! That...That WAS Vixen! The reindeer! She was...Her harness was loose, and so I fixed it! In her stable! There's no...

MRS. CLAUS: *(stops crying)* Oh. *(Pause)* Oh, you mean her harness?

SANTA: Yes!

MRS. CLAUS: The reindeer's harness?

SANTA: Yes!

MRS. CLAUS: Vixen the reindeer's harness. Oh. See, I thought...

SANTA: Oh, so you thought you were gonna get eaten by some vicious polar bears because you overheard some elf gossip?!

MRS. CLAUS: Yes. I...I guess I did. I'm sorry.

SANTA: You're sorry? *(He stares at her)*

MRS. CLAUS: What? I have menopause!

SANTA: I am going to be late for Christmas because you overheard some stupid, silly, unfounded, unwarranted elf gossip about some stupid, silly, unfounded, gross misinformation?

(pause)

MRS. CLAUS: Well, there's no need to yell about it.

SANTA: No need? My dear, I have been planning this evening for 364 days now! It is my only reason for being. The entire reason I exist.

MRS. CLAUS: The entire reason...? Well, what about me, Santa Claus? What about...me? Well, fine. Go travel the world then. Go visit Europe. I'm not standing in your way.

SANTA: Not standing in...? Greta, I should have left ten minutes ago!

MRS. CLAUS: So, go!

SANTA: Fine!

MRS. CLAUS: Fine! (*He opens the door*) I could have sworn it was Grizelda.

(*He closes the door*)

SANTA: What?

MRS. CLAUS: That new elfling you just hired. In accounting. I would have bet frankincense that that's who you were seeing.

SANTA: Grizelda? But...but why?

MRS. CLAUS: Well, because she's young and... fertile, I assume.

SANTA: Darling...

MRS. CLAUS: No, I've seen the way you look at her. Like she's a piece of gingerbread. It's disgusting.

SANTA: No, I...

MRS. CLAUS: Please. I've seen you flirt with her. The way you bounce her on your knee, and...ask her what she'd like for Christmas.

SANTA: But I do that for all the elves...

MRS. CLAUS: Well, I don't think you should. It gives them ideas. Besides, she's like a *third* your age. What is she, one hundred and twenty? I bet she can't even buy her own eggnog yet!

SANTA: Darling, I married you, all right? I only have eyes for you. When I delivered toys to you and your family on that Christmas Eve, in Basel, Switzerland, and you alone were waiting up for me in the kitchen...with a batch of the most amazing gingerbread cookies I have ever eaten... I knew then that I was in love with you. I was only a young Kris Kringle then. Hadn't yet added the Nicholas to my name.

MRS. CLAUS: And I was just a young Greta von Spienkelhauser then.

SANTA: And you had whipped up the most magnificent batter of cookie dough I'd ever eaten. I asked you to become immortal with me then, and you agreed. And I swear to you, Greta, I have never been unfaithful to you since.

MRS. CLAUS: Oh, Nicholas...

SANTA; You're my soul-mate. My wife. My angel.

MRS. CLAUS: You're not just saying that?

SANTA: Sweetie, I love you. Regardless of...whatever this is that's going on right now.

MRS. CLAUS: You love me, regardless of the fact that I am not a woman anymore?

SANTA: But, you are a woman. My woman. And, yes, I love you very much.

MRS. CLAUS: Even though I'm as barren as the frozen Arctic tundra that surrounds us?

SANTA: (*He wraps his arms around her*) I love you despite, because of, and everything in between. You are my sunshine, my grandeur, my everlasting light. Why, if you keep making me those gingerbread cookies, I can probably even...

MRS. CLAUS: (*looking down*) Oh! Santa! Is that...?

SANTA: (*blushing and smiling*) Why, yes, I...Yes, it is.

(*She throws her arms around him*)

MRS. CLAUS: Oh, Santa! Take me with you tonight!

SANTA: But you...I thought you said it was too cold outside?

MRS. CLAUS: Well, I'm having hot flashes now, remember?

SANTA: (*smiling*) Yes. Yes, I do.

MRS. CLAUS: And besides, I'm sure you can keep me warm. I just read about this one girl on your naughty list, who...well...have you heard about the Mile-High Club, Santa?

SANTA: Why no, gumdrop, I haven't. What is it?

MRS. CLAUS: Well, you see, darling, it's like this...

(*They exit, as MRS. CLAUS whispers in his ear*)

SANTA: Ho-ho-ho! My goodness! That sounds quite wonderful indeed.

BLACKOUT

CURTAIN