

SANTA'S COMING TO TOWN

written by

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INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A WOMAN, 30s, chops vegetables, tears up a bit.

She's surrounded by '70s decor and Christmas decorations -- some tinsel, lights in the windows, a small potted fir on the sill.

Light CHITCHAT emanating from a nearby room, it's not English and we're not in America.

The PITTER-PATTER of playful footsteps behind the Woman as she's glued to a small wooden TELEVISION on the kitchen table.

White light hits her face from the TV topped with long rabbit ear antennas, large knobs on its front panel.

ON THE TV SCREEN

A film like "MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET" -- black and white, grainy, volume turned down.

A GIRL, 7, sits on the lap of a New York City DEPARTMENT STORE SANTA, 60s, as SHOPPERS peruse behind them.

He sports a bushy white beard, classic hat and Santa suit, bespectacled. And he's big, jolly and belly-laughing.

The Girl talks and SUBTITLES play on the monochrome TV screen over the action (in the Woman's native language).

The Girl gives Santa a big bear hug.

Both are happy.

BACK ON THE WOMAN

She's wiping tears away with a sleeve, trying to concentrate on her slicing.

Her SON, 5, wearing a Santa hat, peeks his head in a doorway, stares at the Woman.

She notices. Gives him a wide smile through the tears.

He merrily smiles back.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

It's Christmas again, decor fills the dining room -- but so does '80s furniture.

A dozen gathered FAMILY MEMBERS, young and old, nosh around a dining table. Among them:

The Woman, over a decade older, and her Son, now in his late-teens and wearing that Santa hat again.

The guests engage in light banter, but the Woman is distracted by a beefy color television set on mute across the room.

ON THE TV SCREEN

Same film, but colorized -- Department Store Santa (or maybe it's the real Santa) chats on a sidewalk with the Girl.

He carries a large sack, presumably with lots of presents, over his shoulder. A sleigh is parked on the street beside them outside the store.

Foreign language subtitles displayed on the screen again.

BACK ON THE WOMAN

Overcome with emotion once more and on the verge of crying when her HUSBAND, 50s, nudges her back to reality.

She comes to, shakes it off, gives him a cheerful kiss.

She grabs herself some food as her Son stares at his mom again, grins.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Woman, now nearly 60 years old, sits on a couch. The Christmas decorations are minimal, but a small tree with lights is perched behind her.

The house's decor is still trapped in the '80s, but the fully-grown Son sitting beside her dresses for the early-2000s -- with the addition of his Santa hat of course. The red dye's fading a bit.

In a neighboring armchair, her now-worn Husband sits lethargically, an oxygen tank by his side.

The three are glued to the tube, a bulky plasma TV.

ON THE TV SCREEN

Her favorite Christmas film plays, sound on now.

In front of the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree, Department Store Santa looks at his empty sack set on the sidewalk. Sad.

He looks up, as the Girl now appears in front of him. She gives him the widest of smiles, runs into his arms.

An old CHRISTMAS SONG plays as Santa gives her the biggest bear hug of all bear hugs.

The words "THE END" fill the screen as it fades to black.

BACK ON THE WOMAN

She's crying, tears streaming down. Her Son consoles her, a hand across her back.

Her Husband COUGHS, she gives him a pat on his back.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

The wrinkled Woman, propped up in bed. The room is dark, but illuminating blue light from a TV bounces off her enchanted face.

The sound is on. Loudly too -- she's nearly in her 80s.

GIRL (O.S.)  
 (from the TV)  
 You don't believe in Santa Claus?  
 Why... why... he's right here?  
 (beat)  
 You just hafta believe, you have  
 to!

The Son, middle-aged and dressed in today's fashions, peeks his head in through a doorway. He's got that goofy, now-droopy Santa hat on again.

He watches his mother's revelry, smiles just a touch. Thinks to himself. Nods his head.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

One year later.

The Woman, showing a bit of nerves, stands outside a gate entrance -- an airport in her native country. Christmas wreaths cover the entryway.

The Son, surrounded by his own FAMILY now, carries a suitcase for her, passes it to an AIRLINE EMPLOYEE.

He pats his mother on the shoulder, nods with a smile. She takes a deep breath.

She turns toward the entrance, takes a couple light steps toward the entryway -- when the Son runs over, holds a finger in front of her face to wait...

And places his old Santa hat on her head.

Her eyes light up. A tear and a smile.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

The Woman walks out of her Midtown hotel revolving door, onto the New York City sidewalk.

Some honking from yellow cabs as they pass.

Smoke from a halal cart down the block.

Air from the subway vents below her blow some papers, napkins, empty Christmas-themed coffee cups in the air.

She's wearing that Santa hat, stops to open a paper map of Manhattan.

Clogged sidewalks as SHOPPERS, FAMILIES, CITY FOLK narrowly avoid taking her out.

She points to a spot on the map with her trembling finger, looks up.

Directly in front of her: an intoxicated PASSERBY, 25, wearing a full Santa suit and hat, tags still attached to its fuzzy ball -- gawking very close in her face.

The Woman's taken aback.

The Passerby rips the map out of her hands, vomits all over it. Slowly balls up the vomit within the map, tosses it to the cement.

Stumbles off.

PASSERBY

(to nobody in particular)

The hell outta here with that shit!  
Google Map it!

THE TERROR IN THE WOMAN'S EYES.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

The Woman continues walking down the congested holiday streets. There are more than a few contingents of aggressive, semi-lucid SantaCon revelers lining the sidewalks.

They push and squeeze past the heavy-footed Woman.

One TWENTYSOMETHING SANTA in particular, stops, dabs.

Super-cool.

TWENTYSOMETHING SANTA  
(to the Woman)  
You gotta move, lady. Santa's  
gettin' fucked up tonightttttttt.

Twentysomething Santa takes a quick hit on a vape, darts away. The Woman is frightened, has no idea what was just said.

EXT. ROCKEFELLER CENTER CHRISTMAS TREE - DAY

The Woman approaches an intersection, absolutely packed with various recent post-graduate STATEN ISLAND SANTAS, JERSEY SANTAS, WESTCHESTER SANTAS.

Mini liquor bottles, tossed gray beards and hulking black Santa belts line the gutters below. So do passed-out drunk Santas, with their Santa friends tending to them.

The famous Rockefeller Center Christmas tree in the distance:

The Woman can barely cross the street to get a glimpse of the majestic tree through this sea of red and white outfits.

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Intricate department store holiday windows, with animatronic elves, snowmen, various claymation characters come to life.

The disappointed Woman stands outside, still in that Santa hat, looking at her favorite store come to life.

No sleigh parked outside, no wondrous black and white child, no sack of gifts, no real Santa.

But more inebriated SantaCon celebrants roll by.

Within this wave of people, she spots a SIXTYSOMETHING SANTA -- who looks an awful lot like her movie Santa.

He's peeking out a service door from the department store, quietly watching the sidewalk pandemonium.

He's about to head back in when the Woman approaches, as quickly as she can.

She looks lost, confused -- and he can see it.

So he waves her inside. And heads back in.

She follows, passes through the doorway as the door SLAMS closed.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS

The Woman enters.

It's a Christmas feast. The most magically-decorated holiday meal imaginable, the longest dining table conceivable.

DEPARTMENT STORE SANTAS as far as the eye can see. Dozens noshing, grabbing turkey legs, jolly. Some seated, some moving around the room, ho-ho-ho'ing.

One notices her, drops his plate immediately to the floor.

Others begin to notice, immediately cease eating. Everyone's frozen, staring at her.

The Sixtysomething Santa stands with the Woman by the entrance, a bit tepid.

One elder COSTUMED SANTA warily approaches the Woman. Looks her straight in the eye, skeptical.

COSTUMED SANTA

Are you... are you... one of...  
them?

His eyes are filled with the same terror she had.

She doesn't answer, no idea what he's saying.

Another older, graying Costumed Santa approaches, careful as well.

COSTUMED SANTA #2

Where are... where are... where are  
you from?

He touches her old hat lightly, scans her from head-to-toe.

COSTUMED SANTA #2 (CONT'D)  
Is it... Long Island?

She's awed by the scene. Still doesn't know what he's said.

A beat.

The Woman finally speaks...

... with a heavy accent...

... she recites the line:

WOMAN  
You just hafta believe...  
(beat)  
... You have to!

The stone-faced Costumed Santa #2 stares back...

... and his heart melts, a warm smile emerges.

"Ho-ho-ho's" from around the room and the Santas unfreeze, become merry ole fat men again, feast.

A LITTLE LATER

The Woman sits in the middle of the table, the center of attention. A heaping plate of food, but she doesn't eat. Just stares at the store Santas all around her, wonderstruck.

Her eyes water. Sixtysomething Santa beside her sees. Opens his arms.

She falls into the biggest bear hug of all bear hugs.

She lays her head on his shoulder, closes her eyes and smiles.

THE END