

CURSE OF CLAUS
A HO HO HORROR STORY!

Written by
Jesson Kinder

INT. THE NORTH POLE - NIGHT

SANTA CLAUS, in a chair made of human skin, writes a letter at a desk made of bones.

Roaches and rats p-a-r-t-y in cookie crumb covered plates.

Dead flies float in glasses of long spoiled milk.

This isn't the jolly ol' Saint Nick we all know and love.

His eyes are tired, bloodshot...

Fingernails, long, dirty, chipped...

Hair unruly, unkempt, unwashed...

Then there's the unmistakable aura of sadness he exudes.

Santa reviews the letter so far, gazes at a mountain of others, sighs.

SANTA CLAUS (V.O.)

It starts earlier every year. It's hard to believe how much I used to love Christmas and all the silly little traditions. I remember staying up late when I was a kid trying to catch just a glimpse of him. But everything changed the one night that I finally did. That night I met the man face to face and learned the truth.

He stretches and for the first time we see that Saint Nick's waist and leg are attached to long chains...

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

DAKOTA (30s, uptight, fun loving as long as it fits into her carefully detailed schedule, wearing an ugly Christmas sweater she wishes she wasn't) stands by the car, holds a chain.

ANDY (20s, upbeat, rocking a Santa hat and sweater) heaves a Christmas tree onto the roof of the world's tiniest car.

Andy cocks a "Hey, girl" smile at Dakota.

Dakota's not having it.

DAKOTA

Easy, Hercules! I just paid it off.

ANDY
Should've bought a go-kart. Bigger
and less expensive.

Andy laughs. Dakota does not.

DAKOTA
Just tie it down.

ANDY
As you wish, my queen.

Andy bows, chains the tree on the roof.

INT. ~~STARTER CLOWN CAR~~ DAKOTA'S CAR - DAY

Andy squeezes into the passenger seat. With the back stacked with wrapped presents, it's no easy feat. Andy waves like a princess at Christmas Tree Farm Workers as Dakota peels out.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Dakota's car speeds ahead through the rural countryside.

INT. DAKOTA'S CAR - NIGHT

Dakota's tired and annoyed. Andy's singing "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town."

ANDY
(singing)
*HE'S MAKING A LIST! HE'S CHECKING
IT TWICE! HE'S GONNA FIND OUT WHO'S
NAUGHTY OR NICE! SANTA CLAUS --*

DAKOTA
-- Andy, I swear, I will push in
front of a moving truck.

ANDY
Come on, Dakota. It's Christmas!

DAKOTA
Technically, it's Christmas Eve Eve
and you sound like a Charlie Brown
character.

ANDY
What's wrong with that?

Andy busts out the Snoopy dance. Dakota finally cracks a smile. They burst into laughter.

DAKOTA
We don't have to do this.

ANDY
We have to celebrate Christmas.
It's the law!

DAKOTA
You know what I mean. My family can
be... difficult.

ANDY
If they're anything like you, I'll
love them. Of course they'll love
me more.

DAKOTA
Yeah?

ANDY
Oh yeah.

They share a kiss full of love and desire. Andy kisses Dakota's neck, whispers sweet nothings in her ear.

ANDY (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Pull over.

Dakota grins mischievously.

ANDY (CONT'D)
I have to pee.

Ew. What?

DAKOTA
I hate you.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

Andy whistles, pisses behind the long abandoned barn.

VOICE
Father, please!

SECOND VOICE
I'm not your father!

Andy zips up lightning quick, peers around the corner,

SEES

SANTA CLAUS, black, impale a CREEPY ELF on a shelf with a pitchfork! The Elf winces in pain.

IMPALED ELF ON A SHELF
You must... return to the North
Pole... You're... Santa --

TRAVIS!CLAUS
-- My name's Travis!

Travis!Claus forces the pitchfork in deeper, kills the Elf, turns to Andy.

Deer in the headlights, anyone?

Eep...

INT. DAKOTA'S CAR / EXT. BARN - NIGHT

Dakota's singing along to "All I Want For Christmas Is You" by the sensational Mariah Carey.

Too bad she doesn't hear Andy screaming for help nor see him running for his life in the background from the pitchfork wielding Santa Claus.

ANDY

Hits hits the ground, stumbles to his feet, falls again.

ANDY
Hey! Hey! Buddy, wait!

TRAVIS!CLAUS
I'm never going back!

Travis!Claus stabs at Andy.

Andy dodges the strike at the last minute, grabs the pitchfork. Gives it a twist.

Travis!Claus hits the ground, tumbles headfirst into a rock.

He groans, blood dripping from the wound under his hat.

Andy crawls over to him.

ANDY
S-Santa? Buddy?

TRAVIS!CLAUS
I'm free. S... S...

ANDY
I'll get you some help.

TRAVIS!CLAUS
Sorry, man. You... got... next...

Andy gets out his phone.

Travis!Claus body CRUMBLES into snowflake-like ASHES, FLOW into Andy. He coughs --

ANDY
(coughing)
Ho! Ho! Ho!

WTF just happened?

DAKOTA (O.S.)
Andy?

Dakota rubs Andy's back.

DAKOTA (CONT'D)
You okay?

ANDY
I killed Santa.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dakota's on her smart phone.

DAKOTA
(into phone)
Mom, I -- I know what I said, Mom,
but -- Mom -- MOM! I'm fine. Andy's
just feeling a little under the
weather.

Andy, still in shock, watches snow fall outside the window.

DAKOTA (CONT'D)
(into phone)
See you in the morning. I love you
more. Bye.

Dakota ends the call, mimes strangling someone.

DAKOTA (CONT'D)
Feeling better?

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Andy vomits breakfast/lunch/dinner into a toilet.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Andy paces like the Energizer Bunny waiting for his dealer.

ANDY
I've been cursed.

DAKOTA
You might get the chair. Like the
Grinch's brother.

ANDY
This isn't a joke, Dakota.
Murdering Santa puts you on the
naughty list for life.

DAKOTA
Stop.

Andy ceases pacing.

DAKOTA (CONT'D)
If you don't want to meet my
family, just say so. You don't have
to...

ANDY
Lie? You think I'd lie about
something like this?! He was there.
And the elf.

DAKOTA
Then where did they go? Corpses
don't disappear into thin air.

ANDY
I don't know, but -- You believe
me? Don't you?

Dakota studies Andy, squeezes his hand.

DAKOTA
Get some rest.

ANDY
How did I get so lucky?

DAKOTA
Easy. You met me.

They kiss, fall onto the bed into each other's arms.

LATER

Dakota stirs awake, gropes the bed. Finds herself alone.

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Dakota, an ANNOYED STORE MANAGER, and an AMUSED COP approach.

Andy's sitting in the middle of an aisle, devouring cookies. Chasing them down with a jug of milk.

Andy burps, looks up at them.

ANDY
Hey, guys.

INT. DAKOTA'S CAR / EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

Dakota's gripping the wheel, about to explode. Andy fogs up the window. Finger paints a smiley face. He cocks a grin at Dakota. She ignores him. Keeps driving.

ANDY
I'm sorry. I just... Got a hankering for some cookies and milk, you know? Major munchies. I was gonna pay for it. Next thing I knew -- Stop the car!

Dakota slams on the brakes.

DAKOTA
What now?

ELVES stand by the roadside, point accusingly at Andy.

ANDY
Believe me now?

Dakota looks out the window, sees nothing.

DAKOTA
Enough bullshit, Andy!

Andy gets out of the car. The Elves run into a park.

ANDY
I'll prove it.

Andy gets out his phone, gives chase.

DAKOTA
Andy! Wait.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Andy loses sight of the Elves, has another ho ho ho coughing fit. Spits up blood.

Tiny footsteps...

Behind him...

Getting closer...

Closer...

And closer...

ANDY

turns around, finds a dozen dead-eyed ELVES watching his every move. Andy's hands tremble as he attempts to take their picture with his phone.

ANDY
Say cheese.

The Elves smile. Seconds later Andy's phone EXPLODES.

Andy bolts down the road. The Elves chase him down.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Help! Andy alert! Andy alert!

INT. PARK BATHROOM - NIGHT

Andy bolts inside. Slams the door shut. Turns the lock.

He stumbles backwards, stops to catch his breath.

An unexpected moment of relief.

Until he spots his reflection.

Snow white hair...

Matching beard...

Andy shakes his head in disbelief.

The Elves sing "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" in the creepiest way possible.

Andy grabs his noggin.

Images of random PEOPLE and their naughty deeds beam into his brain.

JOHN DOE? Tax evasion.

JANE DOE? Parking in a handicap space.

JILL DOE? John Doe.

Andy screams his head off, looks down.

His shirt POPS OPEN as his chiseled chest ENLARGES into a beer belly. *Holy shit! It's a boy!*

Andy tears the remaining bits of his shirt off.

His hair grows even longer.

Here comes the full beard!

Andy never stops screaming during his painful transformation.

Finally, he AGES fifty plus years, collapses in a sweaty heap. Then the door unlocks...

Andy!Claus looks up.

The door swings open. Elves poke their heads in, creating an unsettling illusion of a living totem pole, smile.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Dakota searches for Andy, finds what remains of his phone.

DAKOTA

ANDY!

INT. HELL-ADJACENT THE NORTH POLE - NIGHT

Andy!Claus, nude (presumably) chained to a table.

DOCTOR ELF (older than any of the elves we've seen and no, you can't see his credentials, silly) examines Andy!Claus.

ANDY!CLAUS

Please... Let me go.

DOCTOR ELF
Go? This is your home, Santa.

ANDY!CLAUS
My name's Andy! Andrew Martin. I'm
not supposed to be here! I-It was
an accident.

Doctor Elf studies Andy!Claus, nods sympathetically.

DOCTOR ELF
That's what they all say. You're
not the first, Andrew Martin. Long
ago, before my creation, Saint
Nicholas made a pact ensuring that
there would always be a Santa
Claus. And so the legend lives and
will endure long after we perish.

If Andy wasn't horrified before, he is now. The door creaks
open and Doctor Elf kneels. QUEEN CLAUS (ancient, pointed elf
ears, red robe, strides in) flanked by ELF SERVANTS.

QUEEN
I require more workers. Is he
ready?

DOCTOR ELF
Yes, my Queen.

QUEEN
Then leave us.

Doctor Elf and the Servants exit, shut the door.

ANDY!CLAUS
Please...

The Queen shushes Andy!Claus, disrobes. *Wait, what?*

We don't see what Andy!Claus does, but his reaction lets us
know that's a good thing.

LATER

Andy!Claus screams bloody murder as the Queen writhes atop
him, forcibly extracting his seed.

INT. NURSERY ROOM - NIGHT

The Queen shrieks as she violently gives birth to fully adult
ELVES.

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Damp, dark, depressing. Andy!Claus, naked, freezing, fetal position. A Clothes rack with the classic Santa outfit stands in the corner. Andy eyes it in disgust. But he's so freaking cold... He puts on the clothes, tears streaming.

ELF (O.S.)
Ready, Santa?

Andy!Claus dries his eyes, puts on a happy face.

ANDY!CLAUS
Ho! Ho! Ho! Merry Christmas!

INT. HOME - DAY

A FAMILY gathered around a Christmas tree, admiring presents. The Kids find another present, cheer.. The Parents exchange looks, just as shocked.

ANDY!CLAUS (V.O.)
Ever get an unaddressed present you really liked? That's from Santa's workshop. Congratulations. Means you were good that year.

The Kids unwrap the gifts, revealing old school toys, hug their confused Parents.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A Christmas CURMUDGEON crushes a beer can, finds a present on his desk. Was it there a second ago?

ANDY!CLAUS (V.O.)
Ever get a present you despised? Came from the same place. That smell? Reindeer shit soaked in reindeer piss. Next year try not to be so naughty.

Christmas Curmudgeon unwraps the gift, sniffs it. Vomits.

INT. MALL - DAY

Andy!Claus delivers presents to EMPLOYEES and SHOPPERS.

ANDY!CLAUS (V.O.)

Christmas Eve is when it hits. No matter how hard I fight it, I become Santa Claus. The day is an endless blur of malls, greetings, presents, and faces. As jolly as I look, there's a sadness inside that gnaws at my heart. That flicker of love for you that no magic can ever extinguish.

Dakota walks by, gift under her arm. She collides with Andy!Claus. They sort out the presents.

DAKOTA

My bad. My family's so hard to shop for and --

ANDY!CLAUS

-- It's ho ho hokay. If they're anything like you, I'm sure they're lovely.

Dakota does a double take. Andy? Couldn't be. Could it?

DAKOTA

What did you --

ANDY!CLAUS

Merry Christmas!

Andy!Claus hands Dakota a small gift, walks away. He smiles wide, but we see he's in tears.

Dakota unwraps the gift. It's a ringbox. She opens it, takes out a beautiful engagement ring.

DAKOTA

Andy...

Dakota looks up, runs to a MALL SANTA...

Not Andy!Claus.

She moves to ANOTHER.

Nope.

DAKOTA (CONT'D)

ANDY!

Dakota whirls around, searching for the man she loved and lost for a second time among a sea of Santas...

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Andy!Claus, nails broken and long, hair unkempt (Who cares before Christmas, right?) writes a letter to Dakota.

ANDY!CLAUS (V.O.)
Every year my memories of life as
Andrew Martin get dimmer and
dimmer. One day I'll blow this snow
globe and get back to you. I don't
care how long it takes. That's a
promise. I love you, Dakota. Yours
forever, Andy.

Andy!Claus puts the letter in an envelope, puts it in a stack with others.

ELVES with scissors, hair brushes and clean clothes open the cell.

ELVES
Ready, Santa?

Andy!Claus sighs, plays along.

ANDY!CLAUS
Ho! Ho! Ho! Merry Christmas!

The Elves smile, unlock the cell. Loose his chains, take him away. We hold on the letter to Dakota.

INT. THE QUEEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Architecture straight out of a Lovecraftian nightmare. *Should curtains have eyes? Thought so.*

The Queen tosses Dakota's letter into a crackling fire, coldly watches the flames consume it. She crosses to hundreds of other letters -- all addressed to Dakota...

CUT TO BLACK.