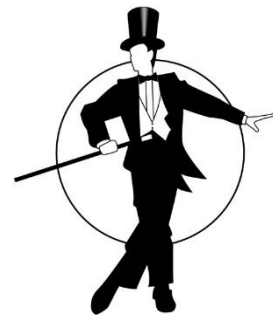


Sad Sack Santa

Paul DiLella



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ArtAge Publications

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SAD SACK SANTA

by

Paul DiLella

CAST

CHRISTINE (CHRIS) EVERS: Retired librarian in her 60s, wife to Jayson, easy-going, fun-loving, sensible, voice of reason.

JAYSON EVERS: Retired math teacher in his 60s, a part-time store Santa, husband to Christine, more emotional than his wife.

Place

Dining room of the EVERS' home.

Time

The present. Four days before Christmas.

Setting: Present day. Four days before Christmas. The dining room of CHRIS and JAYSON EVERS. Table and chairs. A Christmas type of center-piece in the middle of the table (snowman, angel, reindeer, a Santa-figure, etc.) on a seasonal tablecloth. Christmas stockings hang on chairs. (Optional: Christmas tree in a corner. Mistletoe suspended from a fixture above the table.)

At Rise: We hear Christmas music playing (on a CD player, mp3 player, or some other device, which is on the table). CHRIS enters with a tray with mugs of coffee and Danish (or toast or donuts). She sets the plate on the table and the coffee by two place settings. With tray in hand, she calls her husband.

CHRIS: Jay! Jay! Coffee's ready! Jayson! *(She disappears into the kitchen—offstage)*

JAYSON: *(offstage)* Did you call me? Chris?

(CHRIS enters with plates of breakfast food--bacon and eggs or pancakes, etc. Sets them down.)

CHRIS: Coffee's getting cold. Hurry up! The weather's bad and you'll be late for work. *(she disappears into the kitchen again)*

JAYSON: *(offstage)* What time is it?

(CHRIS re-enters. She carries a Santa coat. On her shoulder are the pants of the Santa suit. She drapes the coat, then the pants over a chair. Yells again.)

CHRIS: J-a-y! J-a-y-s-o-n!

(Before she finishes yelling his name, JAYSON EVERS appears. He is wearing pajama bottoms and a T-shirt. One arm is bruised and his lip is split. He needs a shave.)

CHRIS: 'Bout time, sad sack Santa.

(JAYSON goes to the table and turns off the CD/mp3 player. He sits, reaches for his coffee mug, and sets the mug down without drinking.)

JAYSON: Why is there mistletoe hanging in the bathroom?

CHRIS: Tradition.

JAYSON: Tradition? It's over the toilet.

CHRIS: My, what a grumpy old sad sack.

JAYSON: Sad for them, not for me. I'm calling in sick.

CHRIS: You're not sick.

JAYSON: I am sick. Some kid coughed in my face for ten minutes until I called security. The mother wrestled with the guard and had to be hauled away. I am sick.

CHRIS: No, you're not. Stop faking.

JAYSON: Then I'm sick and tired of this Santa gig. Sick and tired.

CHRIS: Four days to go. Hang in there.

JAYSON: I'd like to hang some of those little rug rats. They're killing me. The walking wounded, that's me.

CHRIS: Okay. You had a bad day. Today will be different.

JAYSON: Yeah, if I quit, it will be different.

CHRIS: Oh, stop. I washed your coat and pants. I got the vomit out.

JAYSON: The kid's mother warned me, said he gets nervous. His nickname is 'Vomit the Comet.'

CHRIS: You'll feel better once you've had coffee.

JAYSON: I can't drink coffee. A kid punched me in the face, split my lip. All because I couldn't promise him he'd get an Xbox [*or some other current fad toy*].

CHRIS: Yeah, that looks bad. Nothing a little makeup can't fix.

JAYSON: Another cretin punched me in the arm. Look at that bruise.

CHRIS: Big, all right. Kinda artistic. Blue and brown and black and a little red against your skin. Looks like a sunset.

JAYSON: Take a picture of it and post it on the refrigerator. If it's that good, send it to National Geographic.

CHRIS: An ice pack will make it heal quicker.

JAYSON: The kid was so happy I was going to bring him a Nintendo he thought socking me was a way to seal the deal.

CHRIS: There. You see. He meant to do good.

JAYSON: No good deed goes unpunished.

CHRIS: You're a good sport for putting up with this crap. You're doing this for the greater good. Remember that. Only four days to go.

JAYSON: I've been kicked in the legs, punched in the stomach and face, bitten, peed and vomited on. Tykes are so mean these days. Parents aren't any better. Always pestering. (*mocking*) "Keep your hands where I can see them, or I'll sue you." Funny, that's what my lawyer says, too. "Do you have a criminal record?" I will if I hit you. "Do you have any ID?" Do I look like Ronald McDonald? "Why did you give that girl ten minutes and my Luis only five?" Luis wouldn't stop pulling my beard.

CHRIS: Surely, you've had good days.

JAYSON: Not days. A few good moments. There was a special-needs child in a wheelchair parked next to my chair. She handed me a hand-drawn card that read, "Dear Santa, my name is Christine. I love you. I'm eight, and I have asthma. I want a puppy for Christmas. Love, Chrissy." In crayon, there was a brown puppy standing on two legs, smiling and waving. On its giant head was a Santa hat. Underneath were the words, "Merry Christmas." I choked up. Afterwards, I spoke with her mother. She said Chrissy can't have a dog because she is allergic to animals.

CHRIS: That should erase a whole week of bad days.

JAYSON: It's just that when something good happens, the department manager spoils it. He keeps harping on signing up parents for keepsake pictures. He's got a quota to make. Which means I have a quota, too. I don't blame the parents. How can I ask them to spend \$29.95 plus tax and shipping for a set of 3 x 5s and one 8 x 10? I'm supposed to get five picture orders per hour. That's a lot of stress.

CHRIS: Why are we doing this?

JAYSON: Why? You know why.

CHRIS: For the new kitchen.

JAYSON: For the vacation.

CHRIS: For the vacation and the new kitchen.

JAYSON: For the vacation and the new kitchen.

CHRIS: Is it worth it?

JAYSON: Is that a rhetorical question?

CHRIS: Does it need an answer?

JAYSON: Vegas? Finally, Vegas?

CHRIS: Treasure Island? MGM Grand? Penn and Teller [*or some other headliner*]?

JAYSON: Smart stove, self-cleaning washer, laminated cabinets, island counter.

CHRIS: Is it worth it? Let me hear you say it. Is it worth it?

JAYSON: Yeah, it's worth it.

CHRIS: Yeah.

JAYSON: Yeah.

CHRIS: Then suck it up and get dressed, you...you Santa hunk. You don't want to be late.

(JAYSON stands, then changes his mind and sits again)

JAYSON: Nah.

CHRIS: Nah?

JAYSON: Nah.

CHRIS: Nah? A minute ago you were gung ho. What happened to your "Ho, ho, ho?"

JAYSON: It went "No, no, no."

CHRIS: Why?

JAYSON: I'm not believable. That's why the kids yell at me, mock me, threaten me, and hit me. I don't have that Christmas charisma. That Santa Sheen. Inside, I'm Jay Evers, retired math teacher. Outside, I'm Kris Kringle, plastic man. Kids know that.

CHRIS: What did you expect? This is your first gig. You've been Santa six weeks, not six years. You haven't hit your stride.

JAYSON: I've hit something all right. Me, I've been hit.

CHRIS: You can't quit now.

JAYSON: Don't care what my boss thinks.

CHRIS: Your paycheck—

JAYSON: Don't care---

CHRIS: The kids---

JAYSON: Don't care---

CHRIS: Your self-esteem---

JAYSON: Melted like snow.

CHRIS: You'll hate yourself for quitting and be impossible to live with.

JAYSON: I'll hide out in the guest room.

CHRIS: What if your sister visits?

JAYSON: She can bunk with you.

CHRIS: What if your brother visits?

JAYSON: He can bunk with---I'll sleep in the garage.

CHRIS: Jay, don't do this. You'll regret it. Mark my words.

JAYSON: Marked and parked. Gonna make the call.

CHRIS: Jay, don't do this. Jay, do this and you're on my naughty list.

END OF FREEREAD

You can tell it's quite a wonderful show!