

CHRISTMAS 'CRACKER

(a New York Holiday Musical)

BY
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In 1847, almost by accident, Tom Smith invented the cracker. It was a simple idea which became an integral part of British holiday celebration and tradition which still continues today, 150 years on. In it's simple form a cracker is a small cardboard tube covered in a brightly coloured twist of paper.

When the cracker is 'pulled' by two people, each holding one end of the twisted paper, the friction creates a small explosive 'pop' produced by a narrow strip of chemically impregnated paper. The cardboard tube tumbles a bright paper hat, a small gift, a balloon and a motto or joke.

Stage Directions

Tenant #1

Tenant #2

Rat #1/Melchior

Santa

Party Guest #1

Party Guest #2

Rat #2/Balthasar

Rat #3/Gaspar

Drosselmeyer

Clara

Mom

Voice from Above

Roaches

George Bush

Mister Lenny

Tenant #3

Television

Donald Trump

Melania

George (Trump's assit.)

The Halleluja Choir

Man in a ratty Bear Suit

the virgin mary

Arnold Schwarzeneger

Apartment hallway lobby and trash room of a tenement building. Someone has already disposed of their tree which too big for the trash room, peaks out dripping moldy looking tinsel. The hallway is decorated for ChristmasChanukahKwanza. It is sometime after 3am.

TENANT #1

With garbage bag.

I can't stand for anyone to see me bringing groceries or supplies in.
Nor can I stand to be caught taking garbage to the curb.
If people see what I bring in, consume, and discard,
They will assume that I'm spendthrift, selfish, wasteful.
I know that one bag of trash a week isn't all that much,
But I'm still petrified of being seen with it.
As though I hadn't made full use of the things I purchased.

I have to sneak the trash out of my apartment after all my neighbors are asleep...
I try to wait up until 3AM.
If I don't manage to stay up until 3AM, the trash bag just sits there.
At times, this has resulted in as many as ten trash bags
Awaiting disposal at an "inconspicuous" time.

Nor can I stand to have identifying information
Addresses from junk mail, for example, in my garbage.

What if the bag were to break?
I'd be associated with it.

Which results in large amounts of paper standing around
Until I can go through and remove anything that might implicate me.
It's not so bad if I can get the trash out in reasonably short order,
But once it builds up, it becomes a horrible problem.
I can't just take six bags to the trash.
Instead, I sneak them out one at a time,
Two or three days apart,
So no one will know that it's me.

Sometimes I use different colored trash bags.

TENANT #2

Hey.

TENANT #1

Hey.

TENANT #2

You're up late. *Pause.* What you got there?
Trash?

No answer is proffered.

Did you see any rats?

TENANT #1

No.

TENANT #2

On ABC news it just said these rats escaped from a lab.
The rats were infected with Bubonic plague.

TENANT #1

Oh my God.

TENANT #2

Oh well. They said the rats'll probably die soon anyways.

(pause)

Goodnight.

Um.

Happy Holidays.

The tenants each disappear. Each back to their own apartments. Crappy Christmas lights which were dim before surge to life. The building electrical wiring is magical – or broken. No, magical. This is the land of the magical. Where apartments are still \$400 a month, therefore everything is magical – the electrical surges, the water leakages, the way everyone mysteriously hears and smells everyone else like magic. But at Christmas especially so.

Three rats enter under the blinking party glow of the holiday hallway décor. The rats sing and dance. This is New York. This is a New York musical.

THREE BLIND MICE COULDN'T HAVE MORE FUN
THAN THREE SICK RATS ON THE RUN
LIKE SAILORS ON SHORE LEAVE
OUR TIME IS SHORT
BUT AWAY FROM THE LAB
AT LEAST WE CAN SPORT!

PLAY PLAY !
JUST FOR TODAY
MINUTES AND SECONDS
TICKING AWAY!

IF WE CAN'T GET TO VEGAS
THE CITY WILL DO
THE APARTMENTS ARE TOASTY
THE TRAPS ARE FEW!

SO PLAY PLAY!
JUST FOR TODAY
WITH MINUTES AND SECONDS
TICKING AWAY!

Rats hide as they hear someone stumbling down the stairs. It is Santa. Or someone wearing Santa's clothes. He stumbles into the trash room and pukes. One of the rats calls out to him.

RAT#1 (MELCHIOR)

Dude! Where's the party?

SANTA
4RE!

The rats scurry off gleefully. Lights surge. Something holiday hisses and pops.

HIP HOP HOLIDAY HOUSE PARTY

*Party floor. Music pumps from cruddy speakers.
Chat and smoking.*

PARTY GUEST #1

So I was like...

Hold up

-- you know?

Jesus was a virgin?

He went from 12 to 35 with nothing?

That's insane.

I mean.

Fuck that shit.

He definitely got his dick sucked

Or butt-fucked some bitches.

PARTY GUEST #2

Yeah...

The rats enter. Somehow they have obtained casual clothes.

PARTY GUEST #1

You looking for the party?

RAT#2 (aka BALTHASAR)

Yeah.

PARTY GUEST #1

Right there.

You Clara's friends?

RAT #3 (aka GASPAR)

Yeah. Yeah. Clara invited us.

BALTHASAR

Sweet!

MELCHIOR

Later!

The rats enter. The party guests go back inside. They crush out their smokes on the floor. A man in a lab coat comes down the hall. He is Clara's father – esteemed scientist Dr. Hans Drosselmeyer, head of the Public Health Research Institute where the experiments were done on the 3 rats. He is working for the government and experimenting on animals which is morally wrong, but he loves his daughter.

DROSSELMEYER

LIFE SEEMS HARDER EVERY DAY

NOW THE RATS HAVE GOT AWAY

THIS CHRISTMAS!

HOW CAN I FACE ANOTHER?

OR TELL CLARA

I'M DIVORCING HER MOTHER!

Clara runs out into the hallway, into her father's arms

CLARA
I'VE BEEN WAITING UP ALL NIGHT!
SURPRISE SURPRISE!

DROSSELMEYER
AND I SUDDENLY REALIZE...
I FORGOT YOUR PRESENT!

CLARA
You forgot my present?

DROSSELMEYER
OR NO –
RATHER IT'S BACK AT MY LAB
ON THE SLAB
IT'S A HEART
FOR YOU!
MY DEAR HEART!

CLARA
A HEART?

DROSSELMEYER
I PROMISE YOU – A MAGICAL HEART
A WONDERFUL HEART...
(OH HOW AM I GOING TO FAKE THIS PART?)
DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT THE FABULOUS DOCTOR CARREL?
HE WAS FRENCH!
HE WAS A SCIENTIST, TOO
LIKE ME.
BUT FROM FRANCE!
HE PUT A CHICKEN HEART IN A TRANCE...

CLARA
OH DADDY
I WORRY ABOUT YOU.

DROSSELMEYER
A FABULOUS CHICKEN HEART!
IT'S BEEN BEATING FOR YEARS!
WITHOUT ANY GEARS!

CLARA
BUT YOU'RE NEVER HERE...
(OH HOW CAN I HIDE THESE TEARS?)

DROSSELMEYER
THIS ENCHANTED CHICKEN HEART!
(FROM FRANCE!)

Mom suddenly appears out in the hallway. Pissed.

MOM
SO YOU'RE GIVING HER A CHICKEN HEART?
DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S A LITTLE STRANGE?
EVEN POSSIBLY – DERANGED?

DROSSELMEYER
OH GREAT!
JUST WHAT I NEEDED!

MOM
WELL, OUR CHRISTMAS IS COMPLETED!

CLARA
TELL ME:
DOES THIS HEART MAKE WISHES COME TRUE?

DROSSELMEYER
ONLY FOR YOU...

MOM
WHATEVER!
I'VE DECIDED!
WE'RE THROUGH!

CLARA
OH GOD!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S TRUE!
I HATE BOTH OF YOU!

She runs back inside.

DROSSELMEYER
Well!
Merry Christmas!

MOM
Merry Christmas!

TOGETHER
(Clara peeks out. A family trio.)
YOU'VE RUINED EVERYTHING!
AGAIN!

Clara slams the door, leaving the parents staring at each other. Drosselmeyer leaves.

MELLOW CHRISTMAS VOICEOVER FROM ABOVE
Magic is real.
As real as anything.

Clara opens the door again.

CLARA
If you and Daddy get a divorce.
I am not going with you
And I am not going with Daddy.
I am going back to nature!

VOICEOVER

After the sun has burned out
After the world has been wrecked
After the last light in heaven.
We will still have this house and our memories.

Family is forever.

Music boxes and choirs.

Everyone looks up in the direction of the voice and then they dismiss it.

The party guests stumble home.

A rat (a different rat...there are so many...) cuddles up to the radiator in the hallway. Fat with leftovers.

* * *

CLARA'S APARTMENT. SHE IS ALONE. EXCEPT FOR THE THREE RATS WHO ARE HIDING.
AND ALL THE ROACHES.

CLARA

Sings

I SPEND MY TIME.
THINKING ABOUT GUYS.
GUYS LIKE JESUS AND SPIDERMAN
WHO COULD SAVE ME

SO SURE IT'S GONNA COME ONE NIGHT
TSUNAMI
LIKE LAST CHRISTMAS

HOW MANY REAL SURFACES DO WE TOUCH IN A DAY?
GLASS CONTAINER OF A LIFE
I'M SURE IS HALF EMPTY ANYWAY

FULL OF DARES I WOULD TAKE IF ONLY I HAD THE GUTS
YEAH, YOU KNOW WHAT?

WHY DO I FEEL SO...
I DON'T KNOW...

MELCHIOR

(unseen, behind a large piece of furniture)
KEEP YOUR CHIN UP!

CLARA

ROACHES CAN SURVIVE
NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST!
THEY ARE JUST THAT GOOD.

ROACHES

MAYBE 'CAUSE THEIR BODIES ARE
ALMOST HARD AS WOOD

CLARA
WHY OH WHY?
I'M GONNA CRY!
IF ONE MORE CHRISTMAS GOES BY
WITHOUT MY DADDY!

ALL THREE RATS AND ROACHES
(With feeling)
WITHOUT HER DADDY!

CLARA
(To the rats)
Hey! Where'd you guys come from?

BALTHAZAR
We escaped your Dad's lab!

GASPAR
Yeah. We've come to tell you that he loves you.

CLARA
He does?
Gee, guys.
He works so hard!
Mom's gonna divorce him because he cares about all his animal parts and viruses more than us.

MELCHIOR
No! That's not true! He loves you Clara!
He sent us to find you!

GASPAR
Your mom is such a whore, though Clara.
She spends all your Dad's money, and she's sleeping with Lenny, the super.

BALTHAZAR
What are you trying to do Gaspar?

MELCHIOR
Do you have no heart at all?
Jesus.
He coughs.

CLARA
Are you okay?

GASPAR
No, Dude. We're dying of Bubonic Plague.
How's your Christmas?

CLARA
Oh no.
Is that my Dad's fault?

BALTHAZAR
No. Quite frankly it's the government. Your Dad sucks, but he's just collecting a paycheck.

He coughs.

GASPAR
Fuck George Bush!

CLARA
Oh well. What are you going to do?

MELCHIOR
We only have a few days left.

BALTHASAR
Yeah.
Maybe we wont even last until Christmas.

MELCHIOR
We'll do what damage we can.
You?

CLARA
Me?

MELCHIOR
Yeah. Well, you have plague too.
We licked your cookie.

GASPAR
We licked everyone's cookie.
We're smart rats.

CLARA
Oh, well...
I don't know.
Maybe I should...save Christmas,
For you, the rats, and for rats everywhere all over the world!

GASPAR
Sounds like a plan.

MELCHIOR
Groovy!

CLARA
ONE OF THESE DAYS MY TIME WILL COME
IF IT'S GONNA END I'LL SAY

BLATHAZAR
SURE
PIZZA IS LESS HEALTHY,

GASPAR
BUT YOUR HEALTH CONCERNS ARE GAY

MELCHIOR

spoken

Ooh that's nice...that rhymes good. This will make a good musical!
Little girl saves Christmas...lots of rhymey songs....talking animals...

CLARA

OH I'M GONNA CRY IF ONE MORE CHRISTMAS GOES BY
WITHOUT MY DADDY!

VOICE

Remember the heart Clara...
Your enchanted heart will help you save Christmas!

MELCHIOR

Who is that? The upstairs neighbor?

CLARA

I don't really know.
It sort of comments on the action.

Rats look up at the ether, at the neighbor – at the stars in the heavens. Lights surge and flicker. Electrical hum of something wrong wrong wrong in the building. The rats go to bed with Clara. Tucked in tight the room spins in the night.

* * *

TELEVISIONS GLOW SO SLOWLY.

OVER THE SLEEPING PEOPLE A MESSAGE GOES OUT: A WARNING.

GEORGE BUSH

Rats are dangerous
They can ruin food
Destroy things in your home
And start electrical fires
Rats and their fleas carry disease.
(Heh heh...that rhymes!)
Rats and their fleas carry disease.

The rats are ripping the apartment up. Dancing and enjoying themselves. Eating the Christmas tree lights. Rubbing their furry heinies on the cheese..

We must control them with vigilance, poisons and good hygiene.

The rats sing.

RATS

IXNAY ON THE ATSRAY
HATSHAY WHAT YOU AYSAY
BUT THE ATSRAY ARE HERE TO TAYSAY:
BOOM CHUGGA LUGGA LUGGA BOOM!

GEORGE BUSH

An average of 10-15 cases per year of Bubonic Plague have been reported in the continental United states. Unlike Smallpox, the plague never will be eradicated. It lives in millions of animals and on billions of fleas that reside on them. It is a disease of the desert, the steppes, the mountains and the forest.

RATS

IXNAY ON THE ATSRAY

HATSHAY WHAT YOU AYSAY

BUT THE ATSRAY ARE HERE TO TAYSAY:

BOOM CHUGGA LUGGA LUGGA BOOM!

GEORGE BUSH

Although the plague has been considered a disease of the Middle Ages, recent interest has been spurred by concerns over its use as a potential biological weapon. *Y Pests* has been recognized by bioterrorism experts as having one of the highest potentials for adverse public health impacts. More than two hundred different rodents and species can serve as hosts. These include even domestic cats, dogs, squirrels, chipmonks, marmots, deer mice, rabbits, camels, sheep and rats.

RATS

IXNAY ON THE ATSRAY?

HA!

WE TAKE BATHS

HEY!

IN YOUR ASHTRAY!

BOOM CHUGGA LYGGA LUGGA BOOM

GEORGE BUSH

Despite the uh...concern...within the community over the recent escape, lab officials at the Public Health Research Institute on the campus of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey have assured us that though the rats are still unaccounted for at this time, that the rats were so sick that in all probability they have already died in the facility somewhere in the vents or some such and are unable to spread infection. Thank you Ladies and Gentlemen and we wish you a Happy Holiday season.

A Christmas song surges merrily out of the record player, drowning out the bad news. I'd like it to be Jose Feliciano's "Feliz Navidad" – something with a lot of brass.

Clara is up watching television. The rats scurry and hide as Mom and Lenny make plans for the holiday.

Lights on. Lights off again. The rats have shorted out the holiday tree.

MOM

The lights Mister Lenny.

They're out again.

Can you fix em?

MISTER LENNY

Sure. No problem.

A loud boom as Mister Lenny is blown ten feet back. Smoke and a small fireball. The lights return. Something mechanical starts again. Mister Lenny is dazed, but, gets up and shakes himself off.

MISTER LENNY

What are you doing for Christmas, Linda?

MOM

I'm hurting myself, Baby.

LENNY

Woah.

What kind of turkey is that?

MOM:

It's not a turkey. It's a chicken. I think.

LENNY

That has to be at least 25 pounds!

Wow.

Is it, like, injected with stuff?

MOM

I don't know. I hope

(looking inside for potential stuff)

Clara's father sent it. Peace offering.

(Pause)

Schmuck.

He said it's from some project they're doing. They're working on ways to grow meat in the lab, based on these French experiments. Says it's going to feed the world, no more starvation, etc. etc. His usual nonsense.

LENNY

Unbelievable.

Like Chia –Chicken.

Heh!

Chi Chi Chi – Chicken!

That's so funny!

Hey.

The Pope's nose on that thing is scary.

That is one big chicken.

Woo!

We gonna eat good!

MOM

You're telling me.

* * *

MEANWHILE...OUTSIDE IN THE HALLWAY

TENANT #2

Talking to another tenant.

I've had this ominous feeling lately.

That the world is taking a turn for the worse.

TENANT #3

(Mutters dazed concern.)

Mnnnn?

TENANT #2

Like for instance on the subway yesterday.

I saw this lady reading an article

On Avian Flu

And I thought

This Thing Will Come

I know it.
If it does, we should stay inside
But we would need to have enough food.
Maybe I could stock up on food
For when it comes
But can you shut yourself in completely?
We would probably still get sick.
Germs are everywhere
Germs come in through cracks in the windows.
Even if we stayed inside until it was over
When we came outside again
The germs would still be there.
So then what if we get sick?
Who would feed the cats?
No one would want to come over if we were sick
We couldn't go out.
We could call 911 to take us to the hospital
But who would take the cats?
Maybe the best thing would be to let them escape
Through a window
Or maybe we'd have to kill them in some humane way.
Maybe if we didn't call 911
And just stayed at home and died
Maybe they could survive like in the wild
By eating our dead bodies
After we die.
They could survive long enough
But who would give them water?
Or we could just leave the sink running.

But then, that seemed insane to waste all that water.
And I was sort of amazed by how far I had gone
In my mind with this.
I thought it's just not right.

Probably you could just drown the cats in the bathtub
Which would be pretty humane.

I don't know if I could do it.
Me, personally,
It would break my heart
Even if it was for their own good
Preventing them from a more prolonged death by starvation and such.

TENANT #3
Mmmn.
You'll do it if you have to.

Just then the hallway lights flicker. A mysterious Bear appears in the hallway. Actually a man in a bear suit. A bad bear suit. Really just a man in too small brown sweatpants and shirt with a sort of repugnant ratty bear head on top. He is wearing dancing clogs. The lights go out.

TENANT #3
Oh goodness!

MISTER LENNY

Comes out of the apartment into the hallway

I got it ladies.

Just something wrong with the writing.

Uh. Wiring.

He fiddles in the dark. The lights surge back on, but the bear man is gone.

TENANT #3

Thank you.

TENANT #2

Thank you.

MOM

You shovel that snow, baby?

MISTER LENNY

Yeah.

MOM

Come on.

I'll have a smoke.

Keep ya company.

* * *

THE SNOW BLOWS IN

Icicles hang from the banister. Ballet of snowflakes or something as Clara wraps herself tighter in her quilt by the television.

TELEVISION

Orange County sheriff's deputies were sent to guard children at a San Clemente school after a mountain lion was spotted today near the campus, a sheriff's department spokesperson said. The animal was seen about 1 p.m., about 50 yards from Our Lady of Fatima pre-school and kindergarten in the 100 block of La Esperanza, said Jim Amormino of the sheriff's department.

The mountain lion was last seen going "back up into the hillside," Amormino said. "There's a lot of cover, a lot of brush back there." Deputies were "guarding the kids" while parents were en route to pick up the youngsters, he said.

In other news, it may be the oddest tale to emerge from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Armed dolphins, trained by the US military to shoot terrorists and pinpoint spies underwater, may be missing in the Gulf of Mexico.

Experts who have studied the US navy's cetacean training exercises claim the 36 mammals could be carrying 'toxic dart' guns. Divers and surfers risk attack, they claim, from a species considered to be among the planet's smartest. The US navy admits it has been training dolphins for military purposes, but has refused to confirm that any are missing.

Dolphins have been trained in attack-and-kill missions since the Cold War. The US Atlantic bottlenose dolphins have apparently been taught to shoot terrorists attacking military vessels. Their coastal compound was breached during the storm, sweeping them out to sea.

MELCHIOR
How do you feel Clara?

CLARA
It hurts.
I'm so cold.

BALTHAZAR
Clara, buck up.
It's Christmas.
You've got to get it together.

GASPAR
Yeah.
We need to find Santa and save the baby Jesus.

CLARA
Oh yeah. I forgot.

GASPAR
Yeah. Well, don't forget.

CLARA
Okay.
*She gets up, weakly. Follows the rats out into the frozen hall.
She passes out.*

* * *

HEARK THE TRUMP ANGELS SING

*The hallway. Clara is still passed out.
Donald Trump enters with Melania and a host of other well-dressed and monied individuals. He is dressed as one of the Heavenly Host. He is potentially only our hallucination. Or Clara's. Or one, or the other.*

Is this show working?
Always have a plan B
Plan Bs are good.
Keep your options open
Use your advantages as leverage

Be optimistic, but always be prepared for the worst.

In the best case scenario – you got sequels.

Sequels to this play could include (but are not limited to):

Santa's Revenge
Santa gets a Blowjob
Santa and Satan
Santa and Nuclear Power
Santa goes "Back to the Future"
Santa at Santa Anita
Fuck you Santa!
Bad Santa

(someone comes in and whispers that Bad Santa is already taken)

okay
Bad Santa 2
No, no Santa!
Beach Blanket Santa
Santa's European Vacation
Santa and Chucky: First Blood

If this goes well
We could win a Tony
Or a Pulitzer
Or it could be made into a movie
And the movie could be on Broadway
Christ – it could be a television series
And it could win Emmys.

How do you spell “a big multi-million dollar film”?
Or something even more commercial
“Broadway musical spectacular made into a film”?

One word: SEX

Sex is the gravitational bonding agent in social space working against magnetic electrocution and hanging with the point of no return and life imprisonment.

The Point of No Return is Magnetic Electrocution and Hanging only Buffered By Life Imprisonment.

Question:
It's a free country, but where's the free cunt, Clara?

Cunt crushes Communism!

(Pause for dramatic effect.)

I love you people.
Ask for anything!
A house
A check
A car
A boat on the ocean
Love
Perfection
Genius
Immortality

Is everyone happy yet?

I like Christmas
I like the way it makes me care about something other than myself.

MELANIA
Christmas is like ice cream.
You have to eat it fast or it melts.

She pets Clara's head.

Poor little one.
Eet is so cold in zis building.

TRUMP
It's nothing like Russia.

MELANIA
No. I guess not.

TRUMP
George, you been to St. Petersburg?

Pause not long enough for anyone to answer.

I have been to St. Petersburg
And I'll tell you
They really like Americans.
Maybe they just like American dollars.
Ha ha!
They all try very hard to speak English
And impress us Americans.
Especially the ladies...
Have you been to Russia, George?

GEORGE
I have flown over Moscow one time,
But I've been to Czechoslovakia,
So.

TRUMP
That's a pathetic answer George.

He makes The Face.

You're fired.

Enough of this. Can we get some music? Is this a musical?
And something up-tempo, Goddamn it. It's the holidays. Something for the kids.

* * *

THE HALLELUJA CHOIR SINGS "THE SAFE SEX SONG"
*With plenty of synchronized dance moves,
Something about all this reminds one of the old Sonny & Cher show*

WHEN YOU'RE IN LOVE
IT'S NOT OKAY
TO FOLLOW YOUR HEART AND THROW YOUR HEAD AWAY
BECAUSE SEX IS
NOT JUST FOR TODAY
BABIES
OH BABIES ARE OUR FUTURE!

MOST PEOPLE THINK OF ROBOTIC SLAVES
UFO'S AND UNDERGROUND CAVES
THE FUTURE IS FANCY
WE JET PACK TO WORK
IT'S HYGIENIC CLEANING
AND CAPTAIN KIRK
BUT BABIES
OH BABIES ARE OUR FUTURE
THERE WILL BE BABIES
BABIES IN THE FUTURE!

BEFORE YOU GET BUSY
YOU SHOULD KNOW
YOUR CHANCES OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE
IS NOT LOW
THERE'S SYPHILIS, AIDS
AND SCABIES!
RABIES TOO!
SO WHAT'S A YOUNG GIRL LIKE YOU TO DO?

STAY SAFE!
CROSS YOUR LEGS!
YOU HAVE TO PROTECT YOUR EGGS!
THINK SAFETY ALWAYS!
FUTURE FIRST!

DID ANYONE TELL YOU – THE FIRST TIME HURTS?

TRUMP
Wait wait wait...hold on.
This is Christmas. Where's the Santa?
You people have no business sense.
Give me the mic.

*He dons a Santa hat.
He sings.*

WHO ARE YOU?

He zeros in on Clara. Holds the mic to her lips.

Come on, Babe, sing with me: WHO ARE YOU?

She parrots his vocal.

CLARA
Singing.
WHO ARE YOU?

TRUMP
I'M JUST SANTA.

Clara gets gradually more sure of herself, in that easy musical way musicals have with children near death.

CLARA
IS IT TRUE?

TRUMP
YEAH JUST SANTA

CLARA
I'VE BEEN WAITING UP ALL YEAR
I'M A GOOD GIRL

TRUMP
HAVE NO FEAR

CLARA
BUT YOU'RE STILL SANTA

TRUMP
WELL SANTA GETS A LITTLE LONELY
DID YOU EVER GET THE PONY
THAT I LEFT YOU?

CLARA
THAT YOU LEFT ME?

TRUMP
(under breath) Those fucking elves!
They're fired!
Resumes song
OH SHIT... I'M SORRY
SANTA'S LIFE'S A LITTLE MUCH
I NEED A KISS
I NEED A TOUCH

CLARA
MY GOD YOU'RE SANTA!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...

TRUMP
DON'T GET ATTACHED GIRL, THIS IS ONLY ONCE A YEAR.

CLARA
BUT YOU'RE MUCH OLDER

TRUMP
NOT SO MUCH OLDER
(Ahem)
AT THE NORTH POLE WEATHER'S COLDER
IT KEEPS YOU HEALTHY
MAKES YOU BOLDER

CLARA
MY GOODNESS SANTA...
(is that candy?)
YOU GOT SOMETHING IN YOUR PANTS-AH!

TRUMP
A LITTLE SONG, A LITTLE DANCE

CLARA
I'M NOT THAT EASY...

TRUMP
GIVE US JUST A LITTLE SQUEEZY
I AM JUST THE MAN YOU NEEDZY
KNOW THE STONES SONG "GIMME SHELTER"?

CLARA
No.

TRUMP
DO I LOOK SO HELTER SKELTER?
I'M JUST SANTA...
GIVE ME A CHANCE-AH!

Musical interlude, they dance.

TRUMP
SIT ON MY LAP!

CLARA
COME DOWN MY CHIMNEY!

TRUMP
THIS IS NOT SOME CHRISTMAS GIMME

TRUMP/CLARA and the RATS together
LET'S FIND SOME PEACE ON EARTH
GOODWILL TO MEN
TONIGHT
TONIGHT
TONIGHT...

TRUMP
In falsetto over the sleighbell ending
YOU CAN BE MY HO HO HO... THIS CHRISTMAS!
Yells
(Melania! Baby, I love ya!)

Big musical finish. Mom comes home. She cannot see Trump and the angels as they are invisible.

MOM
What are you doing out here Clara?

CLARA
I don't know. Me and the 3 wise rats were just looking for Jesus.

MOM
Well, stop it and come inside.
Look!
I got us Beef Jerkey in the shape of candy canes!
Can you believe it?

TRUMP
Now that is a brilliant marketing idea.

They go inside. Trump and his angels of the apocalypse disburse for drinks at the Algonquin. Glitter falls from the ceiling. Or is it snow? Or asbestos? Anyway...it's very very pretty.

* * *

STILL SNOWING

In the hallway, tenants convene.

TENANT #2

Did you hear about the Dolphins?

TENANT #1

I thought it was the rats.

TENANT #2

It's both of them.

All kinds of animals, I'm telling you.

I heard this lady. The –

What's her name?

From the San Diego Zoo -- on Letterman last night.

(She has put on so much weight! I couldn't believe how big she'd gotten.)

Anyway she had this huge Burmese python with her on the show.

24 foot long.

(Maybe she thought it would make her look more petite...you know what I'm saying.)

She says these things are being discovered all over North America now.

They have to rehabilitate them to zoos.

They start out as kids' pets. Because kids get these snakes from pet store and they are small, but the thing is they keep growing and they will escape or the kid gets tired of them or something and they just leave them wherever and they keep getting bigger and bigger in the wild until finally they are in your average suburban paradise eating your dog, your cat...your small toddler!

TENANT #1

Oooh.

TENANT #2

Seriously!

They have these jaws which they showed on TV which can unhinge.

They can devour anything.

TENANT #1

Wow.

TENANT #2

When they get too big they shed their skin and get even bigger.

It's really horrible.

And they are taking over everywhere.

TENANT #1

That is some story.

Pause. Tenant #3 enters.

TENANT #1

(To Tenant #3)

Hey, you finished shopping yet?

TENANT #3

Oh, I can only do online now.

TENANT #2

Why?

TENANT #3

I don't know. I just have this problem buying things out in the stores.

Like I buy kind of defective items in the supermarket or department stores – and you know at the mall.

I just have these feelings for them.

When I see a dented can or a new shirt missing a button...

And I just feel really really sad

And I think no one will want to buy it.

I think how sad it is that that thing will not get to serve the purpose for which it was created

Just because it has a small defect.

So I buy it.

You know...like people who adopt lots of homeless pets or children...

TENANT #2

Like Mia Farrow.

TENANT #3

Sure. Exactly like that. She probably has the same problem.

Me – if I pass the thing up or if I just cannot buy the thing for financial reasons, I feel so guilty.

For like -- days.

Sometimes I think I only buy things just to avoid feeling guilty that I abandoned them or rejected them.

So I made these rules for myself that I can only buy online or mail order.

So I don't have to see the broken things or feel guilty.

TENANT #1

Oh. That's so smart of you.

TENANT #3

I think my hoarding is mainly due to being an only child raised by an ambivalent single parent who abandoned me in many ways. I suspect I'm attempting to "rescue" the child I once was by projecting – you know – my unresolved feelings and issues onto items that would be deemed by society as "imperfect" and thus "unwanted".

TENANT #2

That's really good.

TENANT #1

Yeah. You could be on Doctor Phil!

TENANT #3

I know.

TENANT #1

You know, maybe I have kinda the same problem.

I just keep a lot of things.

I don't know why I keep all these things. I just need them.

I feel safer or something

Knowing I have 5,000 feet of multicolor ribbon.

12 BOZO PHONES

11 CANS OF YAMS

10 COFFEE MUGS

9 STAR WARS FIGURES

8 RUBICS CUBES

7 LAVA LAMPS

6 MUPPET GLASSES

5 CERAMIC SWANS

4 DANCING SANTAS

3 BIRTHSTONE UNICORNS

2 COOKIE JARS

AND THE LAST REMAINING STOCK

OF A CERTAIN LONG GONE COLOR OF LIPSTICK

TENANT #2

Mmm hmmm.

TENANT #1

What if it never comes again in that color?

What if this is the last ever.

I just like what I like.

TENANT #2

I hear ya.

Mister Lenny arrives.

TENANT #1

Mister Lenny! When are we gonna get some heat in this place?

Mister Lenny goes off shaking his head. He gives one word answers.

MISTER LENNY

Boiler.

Working.

TENANT #2

You know, I saw a 200 pound baby on Maury yesterday.

He ate a whole pizza, spaghetti dinner and a desert!

I'm glad my child is not like that.

My child is not fat.

Thank God.

TENANT #1

I hear ya.

They disperse.

The big man in the tiny bear costume comes out again. He looks around.

Clara peeks her head out.

CLARA

Dad? Is that you?

BEAR
Yes sweetie.
I'm in disguise.

CLARA
Where is that chicken heart?
I need it to save Christmas

BEAR
I sent it to your Mom.
I sent you chicken from the lab.
Everything you need is in this chicken, plus all the protein and vitamins.

CLARA
I'll find it.

BEAR
I know you will.
Pause.
And Clara?

CLARA
Yes Daddy?

A certain distant swell of cheesy music.

BEAR
I love you, sweetie.
Merry Christmas.

CLARA
Merry Christmas Daddy.

They sing.

BEAR
MIRACLES CAN HAPPEN
JUST YOU WAIT AND SEE
CHICKEN HEARTS ARE MAGIC
ALMOST BY DECREE...

CLARA
OH I'M GONNA DIE
IF ONE MORE CHRISTMAS GOES BY
WITHOUT MY DADDY!

Bear leaves mournfully as Clara wistfully looks after him.

VOICE FROM ABOVE

This is the narrative edge
Occom's Razor
To either side,
You simply fall over into something else.

(sung)

IS THIS GETTING TOO COMPLEX?

ENTIA NON SUNT MULTIPLICANDA PRAETER NECESSITATEM.
THE SIMPLEST EXPLANATION IS ALWAYS THE BEST.

* * *

SCENE FROM THE NATIVITY

The door opens into the apartment where in a sort half glow of failing electrics, Mom, dressed as the Virgin Mary and Dad in his sad Bear suit standing in for Joseph, pray over an uncooked never frozen 24 pound genetically engineered chicken. The rats stand in for the three,...you know. Clara is nowhere..

BEAR/DAD

Say there is such a thing
As two people saying things to each other
And hearing it
Words entering into the ear like insects
We understand each other

MARY

I'm going to eat your brain.

BEAR/DAD

Which brings me to the question
Is madness transmissible?
Is this a disease I can acquire?
Do I catch your drift and lose my moorings?
How many boats on the water have already drifted away?
Am I drifting away?

MARY

Some shut up
Others grow up
I look at you and I throw up.

BEAR/DAD

I know you're a slut, but what am I?
What am I?
What am I?
He cries like a baby

MARY

About this marriage
I can't make it real,
But I can get it to look real-ish or
More realistic at least
You can't touch it, but it will look
Like you could touch it.
You might almost believe you could touch it.
It's all about illusion.
It's a man-made atmosphere.
A totally created atmosphere
Infiltrated by large insects.
The only things which can survive.

* * *

ONE LAST HALLWAY CONVERSATION

Tenant #2 stands in the hallway talking to Arnold Schwarzeneger. Possibly he is dying slowly of hypothermia. He should look on the edge of exhaustion as if he has carried on this conversation long after it was still prudent to do so...

ARNOLD SCHWARTZENEGER

I mean all I am saying is
What are we doing?
Suffering all for some pre-conceived vision of a future life?
All of us commuting to work with a helicopter backpack?
Our lunches packed by sex robots?
Is that what you want?

You know -- is someone just giving us a hand job
To allay our suspicions that this will never be?

I used to be a professional body builder
Until one day:
I stood there on the podium and I thought why am I here in my posing trunks all oiled up trying to be the most muscular man in the world?
Why?

I think essentially I'm an optimist.
I always think I can do better
Be better
Run California better
My life will get better
You can't let yourself get down
Or you end up like a sad fat person
Depression is really hard to escape when you are like that

TENANT #1

Mmmnn.

ARNOLD

I believe in self-improvement
There is no problem that can't be fixed

Of course everyone ages
Eventually
I am in touch with that.
But you can still be firm.

Go to the gym once in a while.
It's only human.
That's all I'm saying.

TENANT #1
I think I understand what you are saying.
I think it's a good point.

They see Mister Lenny.

ARNOLD
And this is why...
(Pause.)
This is why
If I cannot be the new President, I say
We should make a new President.
Using parts from the old.
Something "Space Age" – but totally new -- totally, genetically, everything.
He would have the looks of John F. Kennedy
The charisma of Regan
The childlike wonder of George W Bush
The stature and vision of Abraham Lincoln
And he would get the sweet ass pussy like Clinton.
And it would be a better day for our country.

TENANT #1
Lenny! Lenny! How much longer?

MISTER LENNY
I told you guys, it's the boiler.

TENANT #1
I haven't seen any of the other tenants today. I think they're dead.

ARNOLD
Lenny, you shouldn't treat people this way.
People should have dignity.
They should withhold rent or something until you fix this place.
In Austria we would never have this.
Democracy is not working if we have people freezing to death
And the rats taking over and having beers in the hallway.
This is not American freedom.
This is animals in a cage.
Have you ever been to Russia, Lenny?

MISTER LENNY
No.

ARNOLD
I have been to St. Petersburg
And I'll tell you

They really like Americans.
Maybe they just like American dollars.
Ha ha!
They all try very hard to speak English
And impress us Americans.
Especially the ladies...

To Tenant #1
Have you been to Russia?

TENANT #1
I have flown over Moscow one time,
But I've been to Czechoslovakia,
So.

ARNOLD
Exactly.
So you know what I'm talking about.
It's really really cold there.

* * *

ANOTHER NATIVITY. RATS EAT THE BABY JESUS CHICKEN. MARY TALKS TOO MUCH.

The lights are smoldering. Wind whistles and howls.

MARY
You know they said if I didn't stop smoking
There might not be a heartbeat next week.
So I quit.
For the baby.
I think it's a boy, but it's too early to tell.

Pause.

Lately I've been thinking about this boyfriend.
Ex-boyfriend.
I used to have these daydreams, you know, where I'd be walking two pit bulls
And I'd see him, and I'd let go of the leashes and watch while the dogs ripped him apart.
Ha ha!
I also used to fantasize about setting him on fire and just listening to him scream while he burned up.

I don't know how I got pregnant.

I used to believe I had control over these things.

I used to believe I had control over these things.
I used to believe I could make things happen by thinking hard enough.
I used to believe I could fly.
I used to believe I could avert disaster:
Car crashes
Atomic bombs
Rape
Kidnapping
Etc.

By imagining the devastation while holding my breath.

Pause.

I'm totally talking too much.
Now you see why I used to smoke so hard.
Once the baby's born I can do it again.
Just not like as much as I used to
That's all.

* * *

THE MAN IN THE BEAR SUIT GIVES AN IMPROMPTU LECTURE ON ANIMAL LIFE

(Excerpts from the French scientist Julien Offray de La Mettrie's MAN A MACHINE)

Take a tiny chicken still in the egg, cut out the heart and you will observe the warmth of the breath alone reanimates an animal about to perish.

The same experiments, which we owe to Boyle and to Stenon, are made on pigeons, dogs, and rabbits.

In disease the soul is sometimes hidden, showing no sign of life; sometimes it is so inflamed by fury that it seems to be doubled.

Sometimes, imbecility vanishes and the convalescence of an idiot produces a wise man.
Sometimes, again, the greatest genius becomes imbecile and loses the sense of self.
Adieu then to all that fine knowledge, acquired at so high a price, and with so much trouble!

Let us lay bare the organs of man and of animals. How can human nature be known?

Fish have large heads, but these are void of sense, like the heads of many men.

Among animals, some learn to speak and sing; they remember tunes,
And strike the notes as exactly as a musician.
Others, for instance the ape, show more intelligence, and yet cannot learn music.

What is the reason for this?

Why should the education of monkeys be impossible?

Let us observe a dog and a child who have lost their master on a highway:
The child cries and does not know to what saint to pray,
While the dog, better helped by his sense of smell than the child by his reason, soon finds his master.

Words, languages, laws, sciences, and the fine arts have come, and by them finally the rough diamond of our mind has been polished. Man has been trained in the same way as animals. He has become an author, as they have become beasts of burden. A geometrician has learned to perform the most difficult demonstrations and calculations, as a monkey has learned to take his little hat off and on, and to mount his tame dog...

Let us observe the ape, the beaver, the elephant, etc., in their operations. If it is clear that these activities cannot be performed without intelligence, why refuse intelligence to these animals? And yet if you grant them a soul ours are lost, you fanatics!

Let us not say that every machine or every animal perishes altogether or assumes another form after death, for we know absolutely nothing about the subject. On the other hand, to assert that an immortal machine is a chimera or a logical fiction, is to reason as absurdly as caterpillars would reason if, seeing the cast-off skins of their fellow caterpillars, they should bitterly deplore the fate of their species, which to them would seem to come to nothing. The soul of these insects (for each animal has its own) is too limited to comprehend the metamorphoses of nature. Never one of the most skillful among them could have imagined that it was destined to become a butterfly. It is the same way with us.

What more do we know of our destiny than of our origin?
Let us then submit to an invincible ignorance on which our happiness depends.

Pause. Lights for a moment come back up. All seems to be fixed. Mister Lenny enters.

MISTER LENNY

My brother and me with the 12 gage one time
We were just walking through the woods.
Saw a little Tweety birds flying by.
Little bird about this big, full choke.
I had a full shoulder and he goes
BOOM!
Bird drops off starts losing altitude.
He go BOOM BOOM BOOM!
Finally nailed him.
So after that we couldn't help it.
We just blew away everything that flew.

The lights cut out again.

Shit.

Lenny walks in the dark to the Chirstmas tree.

* * *

O TANENBAUM, MY TANENBAUM

The Chirstmas tree is suddenly and violently lit. Sparks fly. Mister Lenny stiffens. Everyone runs to help. They all suffer a massive electrical shock.

MISTER LENNY

I felt a very, very hot "Spark-Plug" type feeling inside my head,
and tasted "Metal" in my mouth.

MOM

I was tossed about 10-15 feet back to the wall.

CLARA

I don't remember anything.

DAD

I was taken to the hospital,
the ER Doctor saw blood coming out of my left ear.

SANTA

When they reached me, my hair and eyebrows were burnt,

my zipper blown open,
my shoes had been blown off,

CLARA

a hole in the ground marking the spot.

ARNOLD

It was so strange because I was conscious,
sitting down and then suddenly I noticed something was wrong
but I couldn't figure out what it was, and then I thought
"Oh my god, I'm not breathing."

CLARA

I could count how high it climbed.
Stuck inside me white while all around
This dumb sound of fire
Flat against backdrops felt
Felled apart.

MOM

I'd think "inhale" but nothing happened,
then suddenly I'd be breathing normally again, and then it would stop.

DAD

The times it stopped seemed like forever.

LENNY

I noticed things were not right.

SANTA

I lost some hearing in my left ear, and was dizzy most of the time,
forcing me to take more time off from my dearly loved job.
Then the Memory part.

MOM

First it was forgetting what I was saying in the middle of a sentence,
then forgetting what people were saying to me.

DAD

After more time, I forgot my Mother who died in 1991,
and most of my Military and Childhood memories.

LENNY

Now I'm just dealing with the fear.

* * *

FA LA LA LA LA or DONALD TRUMP: DEUS EX MACHINA

Trump enters, again in golden attire. Perhaps this time he should descend from above. He speaks to the people.

DONALD TRUMP

Endless eternity is neither round nor square
It has absolutely no limits

I have traveled in the infinite spaces of creation
By the most manifold means of transport:
Luxury transport,
Birds,
Island Motherships,
Lightning serpents
Omnipotence moths,
Etc., etc.

I saw during every star-bright night a chaos of stars of the most manifold kinds
(unable to describe or explain)

Yes, I saw with my own eyes;
By his powerful wonder word:
Let There Be
The creation of things which would
Quite energetically deign to defy description

The blue birds,
The green birds
The orange birds,
The red birds,
The black birds
They have many colors
Ha ha ha ha
Alright!

I will start with the explanation
Of the many different flyers
In the high southern zones
And eternal snow regions
In the southern and south-easter part of our globe
Luxury and cage birds:
The Gold Cock
The Sickel
The Dolphin
The Pheasant
The Pelican
Ha ha ha
After everything
Holy Cow

Gigantic Scintillating Albatross
Ditto, Kormorants
Ditto, Karantoos

Supposedly I squashed
The North Pole
And cut Europe in two
What Rubbish!
Lick the Sandstone Wall!
Farewell, oh vale of tears!

The blood is pink
Tomorrow we are all dead

I don't know how to help myself anymore
I was never mentally and physically
As stupid as now.
Nowhere is peace to be had.
Cheers.
Happy New Year.

Such color in the face,
Are you well?

If everything all
Falls to pieces
It will still be
Mostly musical compositions
And dance songs
With text

So what are we waiting for?

ALL sing:

HEARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING
FA LA LA LA LA
CHICKEN A LA KING!

PEACE ON EARTH
AND MARS AS WELL
WHAT THIS MEANS NO ONE CAN TELL

JOYFULL ALL NEIGHBORS TONIGHT
THAT IN THEIR BEDS ARE TUCKED IN TIGHT

WITH BENIGN REMEMBERINGS
WHEN THE LAST FAT LADY SINGS!

WITH BENIGN REMEMBERINGS
WHEN THE LAST FAT LADY SINGS!

Many bells ring. Many angels get their wings.

End.