

**Dot and the (Amazing Technicolor) Quest
for the Real Santa Clause**

A play by

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CAST

MOTHER (JENNY)...Dot's mother

AUNT DORIS...Dot's aunt and Jenny's younger sister

DOT...a young woman or older teenager

CATTYWAMPUS BONAPARTE...a stuffed cat, come to life

BO RAGGLEY...an old ragdoll, come to life

ROBOT...a rusty metal vintage robot toy, come to life

CHRISTMAS FAIRY...has an English accent

(can be doubled with AUNT DORIS)

SANTA CLAUSE...a traditional Santa

MRS. CLAUSE (can be doubled with AUNT DORIS)

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Time: The present. About a week before Christmas.

Soft instrumental Christmas music plays.
Lights come up on Dot's Mother and AUNT DORIS.
They are trimming the tree in a middle class,
traditional living room. The room is packed with
modern Christmas decorations; there are no
traditional decorations in sight. Everything is
decorated in black and purple. A wreath above the
fireplace is green with black and purple ornaments
with a big purple bow, a string of garland has black and
purple balls on it, etc.

DOT peeks her head in, then walks in the front door
with a suitcase.

DOT

Knock, knock! Anybody home?

MOTHER

Dot! We didn't expect you for a few days.

(They stop what they're doing, go and hug her warmly.)

AUNT DORIS

Hello, sweetheart! It's so good to see you.

DOT

I got off work early and thought I'd surprise you. You know how I love Christmas. I couldn't wait to get back home and help you with all the decorations and shopping. I really missed you guys.

(Looking around)

Wow, looks like you've already done it all. (disappointed) It looks so....modern.

MOTHER

We started decorating the day after Halloween, transitioned right through Falloween and onto Christmas.

DOT

I'm sorry I wasn't able to get away for Thanksgiving. But I'm here now!

MOTHER

Oh that's all right. Nobody pays attention to Thanksgiving anymore. It's just a big ol' meal in between Halloween and Christmas with lots of football and people stuffing themselves with food.

AUNT DORIS

Your mother and I wanted to get most of the decorating done before you got here. Do you like it?

DOT

(Walking around, taking it all in)

Well, it's....different. Very modern. Not old-fashioned at all.

MOTHER

Exactly! Out with the old, I say.

AUNT DORIS

And in with the new!

DOT

Where's Daddy?

MOTHER

He's down the road somewhere. Our inflatable helicopter with Santa inside got loose in the wind storm last night and he's out trying to find it.

DOT

You have an inflatable Santa? Wow. I didn't think you liked Christmas yard decorations.

MOTHER

Well, everybody has them now. I didn't want the neighbors to think we weren't making an effort. (beat) Your father should be back by now.

AUNT DORIS

I TOLD him and TOLD him to tether that thing down! But he never listens to me! I hope it didn't land in old Mr. Bate's backyard. He'll poke holes in it with his pitchfork for spite if it lands in his garden.

MOTHER

(to AUNT DORIS)

Well, your brother never listens to me, either, and I'm his wife!

DOT

When are y'all going Christmas shopping? I waited to do all of mine because it's always such an adventure going with you two! I waited until now to take my vacation so I could spend it all with you. We're gonna have such fun this week!

AUNT DORIS

Sorry, honey...my shopping's done!

MOTHER

So is mine! I got tired of all that mess and hassle. Last year I shopped online, but I saved a lot of time this year by getting the cute little plastic gift cards for everybody. I sent Sister a Target gift card, and sent Mama a Wal-marts gift card. I just slipped them in with my annual Christmas newsletter. It was so easy and I didn't have to stand in line at the post office.

AUNT DORIS

What did Sister and Mama give you last year? I can't remember.

MOTHER

Sister sent me a Wal-Mart gift card, and Mama sent me an Office Depot gift card.

AUNT DORIS

What did you buy with those?

MOTHER

I saved them and bought some house shoes for Mama's birthday with the gift card Sister sent me, and I bought some stationery for Sister's birthday with the gift card Mama sent me.

DOT

Mother! Honestly! Gift cards for everybody? That's so...boring!

MOTHER

Sure I did. Besides, it's *green* to give gift cards. You save on wrapping paper, and boxes and all sorts of stuff. AND they are easy to mail!

AUNT DORIS

What do you want for Christmas this year, Dot?

DOT

Really? Let's see, world peace, an end to global warming, equity for family farmers. I'm pretty sure there aren't gift cards for those, though.

(They laugh)

MOTHER

You are such a cut-up! No, what do you really want? I can get you a gift card if you want to pick out something for yourself. They have them everywhere now. How about a Starbucks card? That would save me a lot of time since there's one on every street corner around here.

DOT

You don't have to buy me anything, Mama. I don't need anything else. I can't keep up with dusting all the stuff I have now.

AUNT DORIS

Now, Dot! You have to let us buy you something for Christmas. It wouldn't be right if we didn't.

MOTHER

It would be anti-American if we didn't.

DOT

I don't want you to spend your hard earned money on me. I have all the stuff I need.

AUNT DORIS

Oh, that's all right, I'll just put it on the credit cards. I haven't maxed them ALL out yet. And they keep sending me new ones! Your Uncle hides them from me, but then I open the mail and there's another one! It's like magic.

DOT

(changing the subject)

How come I don't smell food cooking? I thought y'all would be busy as little elves. Are you going to make your famous Date Nut Cake? I love that cake! I save up my calories all year just so I can eat your Date Nut cake at Christmas time. That caramel icing should be illegal it's so good!

MOTHER

We decided not to bother with cooking this year. We're all going out to the Downtown Café for their turkey dinner, then come home and veg out.

DOT

Have I been plopped down in Oz, or something? I don't know who any of you are anymore. Where is my real mother? I don't belong here. Maybe I'd better go back outside and check the address on the door.

MOTHER

(laughs)

Nonsense! You're just tired from that long drive. (beat) The long drive that you had to make by *yourself*.

DOT

Mother! Don't start.

AUNT DORIS

Oh, leave her alone, Jenny. She'll settle down when she's ready. Come on, let's get this tree decorated.

(MOTHER hops back up on the ladder as AUNT DORIS hands ornaments to her.)

AUNT DORIS

(pointing)

It needs more of those black balls on the right hand side there. No, higher, no, lower....No! More in between. Down a little....there, you got it.

MOTHER

Do you see my Elvis ornament there in that box anywhere? I cannot have Christmas without my Elvis ornament. Uncle Willie gave that to me when I was just a young bride. It's genuine hand-blown glass. Luckily, Elvis is wearing a purple and black pantsuit, so it matches.

AUNT DORIS

I didn't know they had glass way back then.

MOTHER

Very funny. (beat) Yes, and we had things like fire, too.

AUNT DORIS

(finds the ornament in the box and hands it to her)

Here he is! In all his glory, and his purple and black jumpsuit. I like these new glass ornaments myself. You can certainly carry out a theme more easily these days. I love themed trees, don't you? I saw some cute coyote ornaments down at Wal-Marts the other day. I guess those would be for a Southwestern theme tree.

MOTHER

I wonder if I could find some more Elvis ornaments? Perhaps we could do an all Elvis tree. We could fill in with little tiny vinyl records. They'd be black, so that would work.

AUNT DORIS

No way---remember? We decided to do a purple and black tree. Period. We do not want to divert from that, because it would look all disjointed and out of whack. And...very un-THEME-like.

DOT

(poking around in the box, helping to sort the ornaments.
There is another box beside it.)

(Holds up a traditional Santa ornament.)

So, I guess Santa is out, huh? What's in this other box?

(Opens it up...it's dusty and old)

DOT

Ooof! Look at all this dust.

MOTHER

Oh, it's some old toys of yours I found up in the attic stored with the decorations. I was going to pitch them out. They are so dusty!

DOT

(digging through the box)

Oh look! Here's my little stuffed cat I made out of a black sock. He's got button eyes. I called him "Cattywampus". And my "Bo Raggley" doll! I made these when I was a kid. They were my first sewing projects. I loved this doll! And look...here's brother's little metal robot! It's all rusted now, though. (sadly)

MOTHER

(picking up the doll)

Eww, she's a mess....looks like the silverfish done made a nest in her hair. I remember when you made those. Your daddy was quite put out with you when he discovered you'd been into his sock drawer looking for sewing supplies.

AUNT DORIS

(picking up stuffed cat)

Stuffed cat? Is this a cat? Hmmm, I sort of see the resemblance. Ah, yes, here's a tail. UNstuffed cat is more like it. He looks like he needs a few stitches here and there.

DOT

(laughing)

Don't make fun of my creations! I thought these were long gone.

MOTHER

Yes, well. I kept them for a while, but now I'm in a big decluttering frenzy and it's time to get rid of a lot of this old stuff.

DOT

(digging in the box)

Oh, and look! Here's grandma's old manger scene. I love the little rubber sheep and the camels. They don't make things the same anymore. Now they're all plastic or resin. And look at these little chalkware angels!

MOTHER

(fondly)

You used to play with those when you were a kid. I remember you swallowed Baby Jesus one year and we had to turn you upside down to get him to come back out.

DOT

(still pulling things from the box)

Oh, look! My little Christmas fairy! I remember we had an argument about whether it was appropriate to use a fairy on a Christmas tree. I had read a book in school about the English tradition of using fairies instead of angels. You finally gave in and we sat up all night making her. Remember that?

AUNT DORIS

I do! I had to sacrifice one of my old net petticoats for her dress. And we had to make an emergency run to the dime store to buy glitter. That was a fun time...

DOT

Can't we put her at the top of the tree? Please, mama?

MOTHER

Sorry. I already bought a purple pointy thing for the top. It was very expensive. AND it matches the balls.

DOT

(referring to the manager scene)

Can we at least put this out someplace?

(she looks around, the place is decorated to the hilt)

MOTHER

I don't know. I just don't see where we'd put it.

AUNT DORIS

Here, let me have it. I'll find a place for it. After all, it was mother's. We probably should make an effort. Maybe I can sit it on the shelf in the bathroom above the toilet. Or in the kitchen.

DOT

(gathering up the toys)

Thanks, Aunt Doris. I think I'll take these to my room, then decide what to do with them later. Maybe I can repair this stuffed cat. Do you have a needle and thread here somewhere?

MOTHER

If I do, I don't know where they'd be. I haven't sewn anything in years. Anyway, I think that old thing needs to be pitched out in the trash. Remember your dust mite allergies! Those things are absolutely packed with dust mites by now! Ugh, filthy things!

DOT

Oh, I'll be fine, mother. Stop fussing over me. I'm 32-years old. I'm not a little kid anymore

MOTHER

(fondly)

Well, sometimes I do wonder. You live in a dream world, Dot. You always were the dreamer in the family, though. I thought that would change a bit as you got older. You need to come into the real world. Wake up and smell the coffee beans!

DOT

I'm not sure I want to live in the real world. Sometimes it seems like it's all changed just a little bit too much.

(She kisses them goodnight and exits, taking the toys with her. We hear several loud SNEEZES.)

Lights down

SCENE TWO

Time: a few hours later

Setting: a strange, fantasy outdoor setting. VERY colorful. These are traditional Christmas colors...reds, greens, silvers, whites, etc.

Lights Up

(CATTYWAMPUS the toy cat is real now, turned into a human-sized cat. He and DOT are laying entwined outside in a place that looks like a winter wonderland. Giant lollipops grow beside the road, wrapped gifts are strewn about, candy canes...and a green and red path winds through it all. It can be as elaborate or simple as desired. The main idea is to make it **colorful**. Way off in the distance, we can see some vague castle-like buildings.)

CATTYWAMPUS

(Waking and squirming to get untangled from Dot's arms.)

Let go of me! You're squishing too hard! Quit squeezing me! You're smothering me! Ffft! Ffft!

(CATTYWAMPUS starts hissing and spitting, struggling. He finally untangles himself from her, gets on all fours, Shakes, stretches, arches his back like a real cat would. He yawns, mouth wide open, showing teeth. He finally rises to his feet.)

DOT

Whhh....what the....???

(Dot jumps up and takes in the scenery. She's now wearing an elf suit.)

Where the heck am I? And where on earth did I get these clothes?

CATTYWAMPUS

(He continued to stretch)

Don't ask me! I just woke up and here I was, wrapped in the arms of a HUMAN. (shudders)

DOT

(Taking him in)

Oh. My. You're....real. And you seem to have gotten larger.

CATTYWAMPUS

What are you trying to imply, that I've gained weight? How dare you!

(Starts licking his paws, grooming.)

DOT

No, I meant...well, never mind. (beat) Look at this place! It's a wonderland. It's so pretty! It's so colorful! Look at all the giant candy!

CATTYWAMPUS

And look at all the presents!

(He starts running around, checking the tags.)

I don't see any for me. Well, there's still time. We have a whole week before Christmas. I LOVE Christmas! (sings) It's such a wonderful time of the year! (speaks) A time for WANTING. A time to tell everybody what I WANT, a time to BEG them for what I WANT and demand that they get it for ME. And if they don't get ME what I WANT, well then, I'LL have to

make life very difficult for them! No matter what! Because what I WANT is what I must HAVE! Woohoo!

DOT

I'm not so much into the wanting thing.

CATTYWAMPUS

I am a cat. It's what I do. (shrugs)

(All of a sudden, they notice the ROBOT who has been sitting quietly all this time.)

ROBOT

(has come alive and is testing his joints. He's rusty)
(in a stilted robotic monotone, or perhaps a Dalek-type voice)

I am mod-el num-ber five four nine sev-en dash three. I have been programmed to pro-vide a-ssis-tance. Would you like to play? Would you like to play? There is noth-ing that you want?

(they react to him)

CATTYWAMPUS

Ay chi-hua-hua mama! This rusty bucket of bolts TALKS!

DOT

(to ROBOT)

You're talking, too!

ROBOT

Yes. I do talk. I have lim-i-ted a-bil-i-ty to speak. And on-ly in a ro-bot-ic mon-o-tone.

BO RAGGLEY

(in a soft voice)

Could someone please help me up? I'm having a very hard time with these shoes.

(They all help her up.)

DOT

Oh my goodness. You're all talking! Where am I? Is this a dream? If so, I want to wake up! Like, NOW!

(she starts jumping up and down and slapping her own face)

Wake up, wake up, wake up!

CATTYWAMPUS

See! There is something you want! Here, let me try. This is one of my special-i-ties!

(He proceeds to tug at her hair, peer into her face, sticks his tail into her nose and ears, while he's meowing loudly, etc.)

CATTYWAMPUS

Rawwrhhh, meeeeeow, meeeowwww, rawwrhhh....Wake up, get up, I need food, I need to go to the bathroom! Rawwrhhh.

DOT

OK! Never mind.

CATTYWAMPUS

You cannot make me believe there's nothing you want.

DOT

Well, sure, I want things I can't do a whole lot about. I want world peace, an end to world hunger, equity for family farmers...that sort of thing.

CATTYWAMPUS

But you don't want STUFF? I'll bet you want a new car!

DOT

Not so much. The old one I have is perfectly fine.

CATTYWAMPUS

Wow. Are you really a human being?

DOT

Of course I am!

BO RAGGLEY

(she's finding her voice)

I wish I was a human being. I really WANT to be a human being. Then I could wear different clothes everyday. Do you know how boring it gets to wear the same outfit day after day after day after year after year after year after...

CATTYWAMPUS

OK! We get the picture! Personally, I think you're much better off as a doll. I would think being a doll would be infinitely preferable. You wouldn't have to do common labor, people would do things for you and carry you around where you want to go. Perhaps they'd even put you in a little carriage and take you out into the sunshine and you could have elegant tea parties with little bone china cups and cake! That's why I want to be a REAL CAT!

DOT

So you can have tea parties?

CATTYWAMPUS

No, of course not! So people will do all sorts of things for me! They'll put me in a sweet little basket and carry me around, and they'll buy emerald-studded collars for me and feed me fancy foods on crystal dishes! (beat) I saw it all on television!

BO RAGGLEY

That sounds quite selfish of you.

CATTYWAMPUS

And your point is???? Hey, look at me. I'm a cat. It's what I do.

DOT

Guys! Actually, there is something I want. I want you all to be quiet so I can think. I wish I knew where we are, and how we got here.

(She looks around.)

Wherever we are, this place is gorgeous! It's just like one of those vintage Christmas cards. It's like an old-fashioned Christmas! And...to tell the truth, I want an old-fashioned Christmas. A Christmas with handmade cat toys made out of old socks with button eyes and stuffed dolls made from sewing scraps and little bits of rick-rack and metal robots and trucks for little boys to play with. I want a Christmas where people don't decorate their trees with purple and black Elvis ornaments! (beat) What does Elvis have to do with Christmas, anyway?

CATTYWAMPUS

Didn't he do some Christmas albums? I seem to remember some. There was that really cool song.

(He strikes a pose and starts to gyrate and sing badly....I'll have a blue blue Christmas....)

(SUDDENLY, CHRISTMAS FAIRY swoops in from offstage. She is dressed in an old 1950's prom dress with a net skirt. Perhaps she wears vintage "cats eye glasses" and has her hair up in a beehive.)

(Bonks CAT on the head with a wand)

CHRISTMAS FAIRY

(in an English/Cockney accent)

Stop! No singing of copyrighted songs!

CATTYWAMPUS

(rubbing his head)

Awwwww, that hurt! And who are you to tell me that I can't sing?

CHRISTMAS FAIRY

Isn't it obvious? I'm the Christmas Fairy, and I'm here to keep you out of trouble, and to fulfill your wishes and give you what you want. Well, not really. I'm mostly here to tell you where to go. Not really. Oh bother! I'm not doing this right. Let me start again. I'm here to give you some guidance. Right, that's better! There's only one person who can fulfill all your wishes! The Giver of All Good Things, the Maestro of Mistletoe, the Grand Hoo-Hah of Holidays....Jolly old Saint Nick himself!

DOT/CATTYWAMPUS/ROBOT/BO

Santa Clause?

CHRISTMAS FAIRY

Yes! The one, the only, the REAL Santa Clause! He can do anything. (beat) Well, almost anything.

CATTYWAMPUS

I don't believe in Santa Clause. There's no such thing as Santa Clause. He's one of those myths made up by humans, right? To keep bad little children from doing stupid things like pulling cat tails? Right?

BO RAGGLEY

(Sweetly)

I've always believed that Santa Clause was real. I thought I was born at the North Pole then dropped down someone's chimney on Christmas Eve. Isn't that how all of you were born?

CATTYWAMPUS

Ahahahahaha! That's funny! Face it, Patchwork Girl, you came out of somebody's rag bag. You're made up of scraps!

BO RAGGLEY

(Starts crying)

I don't believe you! You're such a horrid thing!

(DOT goes over to comfort her.)

CHRISTMAS FAIRY

Technically, there is a real Santa Clause. But he's in a transition state right now and is, well, having a slight difficulty. But, never mind that. If anyone can help you, he can! You must go see him. (aside) Otherwise, we don't have much of a play.

DOT

I just want to go home! Or to wake up! Or something! This is all crazy!

CHRISTMAS FAIRY

Sorry, now that we've started this story, you cannot wake up until you've visited him and told him your wishes!

DOT

Are you friggin' kidding me?

CHRISTMAS FAIRY

Nope, sorry. No kidding allowed. This is *totally* serious business.

ROBOT

How do we find San-ta Clause? Please e-lab-o-rate and I will set de-sired co-or-din-ates and nav-i-gate to the place of his res-i-dence.

CHRISTMAS FAIRY

Oh, it's a lot easier than that. All you have to do is snap your fingers three times, and say "Follow the red and green brick road." Say it over and over. That will lead you to the North Pole. Well, not actually the North Pole. Santa had to move the Pole farther south a few years ago. But still, it's in the same general direction. Global warming, you know.

DOT

Oh dear! I do so worry about that!

CHRISTMAS FAIRY

Yes, well. He's working on that one. Give him time!

DOT

All right. (starts snapping her fingers) Follow the red and green brick road. Follow... That sounds so familiar!

CATTYWAMPUS

I don't have fingers! How am I supposed to snap?

BO RAGGLEY

(starts crying again)

Me neither!

ROBOT

I do not have dig-its like hu-man be-ings. This does not com-pute. This does not com-pute. Warn-ing warn-ing!

CHRISTMAS FAIRY

Oh, bother! Very well! Forget the snapping! Just say “follow the red and green brick road, follow the...” etcetera. etcetera.

DOT

Any other advice for us?

CHRISTMAS FAIRY

No, not really. That should do it. (beat) Wait! Yes! I forgot! Beware of the invisible flying monkeys!

CATTYWAMPUS

There’s no such thing as invisible flying monkeys! I *know* those are a myth!

DOT

Weren’t there some sort of flying monkeys in the Wiz.....

(All of a sudden, there is the loud sound of wings flapping, squawks, monkeys making monkey noises, etc.)

ROBOT

Warn-ing, warn-ing. Must run. Now.

CATTYWAMPUS

(ducking, fighting off invisible monkeys through the remainder of the scene.)

Quick, Robot! Shoot them with a ray gun, or e-lim-in-ate them, or something, for pete’s sake!

ROBOT

I do not un-der-stand.

CATTYWAMPUS

Can’t you kill them?

ROBOT

Neg-a-tive. I am mod-el num-ber five four nine sev-en dash three. I do not have ca-pa-bil-i-ties for shoo-ting.

CATTYWAMPUS

Oh great!

Lights down