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Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

Date

Mrs. Claus's Rocking Chair

I will never forget what happened to me during my senior year at Cutter-Morning Star High School. Christmas time was drawing near, and my Spanish III class was performing in a bilingual Christmas play. The part of Mrs. Claus, one of the lead roles, had been assigned to me. The role required a considerable amount of speaking, and I was afraid that I would forget some of my lines, even though I had been practicing for months. As I waited for my cue to go on stage, my heartbeat was so loud that I could hear its echoes pounding in my ears. We had performed the play twice for the children in the elementary school, but I was still nervous because today we would act in front of the entire high school. The fact that the play was intended for a younger audience added to my restlessness; I didn't want to make a fool of myself in front of my friends and peers.

As the curtain opened and the play began, I was backstage pacing back and forth like a father waiting outside the delivery room for the announcement of his newborn child. I could hear the bells on the elves' shoes jingling as they hopped, skipped, and jumped across the stage. Suddenly, the audience roared with laughter as the elves fell to the floor with a loud crash. This was my cue to go on stage.

To my surprise, I was relatively calm once I stepped into the house of Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus. I delivered my lines with no problem at all. As I sat in Mrs. Claus's old rocking chair, I could relax and enjoy the rest of the play because I had said the majority of my lines. Now I was

an audience member, watching the rest of my classmates perform.

Even though I didn't have very many lines left, I still had a lot of acting to do in the form of correcting the mischievous elves. It was my job to make sure that the elves didn't disrupt Santa's big interview with the reporter from *Time Magazine*. Soon the play came to my favorite part; Santa told the reporter why he chose reindeer to pull his sleigh, while the elves and I made faces and acted silly. Santa talked about his trials with different animals pulling the sleigh; some of these animals were elephants.

"I found that I couldn't use elephants because they were too messy," Santa explained as all the elves and I held our noses. "And when they landed on the rooftops, BOOM; they fell down," said Santa from underneath his snowy white beard. At this statement, the elves fell down, and I was supposed to act startled at the commotion behind me.

"Ooohh!" I gasped as I jumped and turned toward the noise. I barely came off my seat in doing this, but that movement was enough to cause the old rocking chair to break with a snap. Before I realized what had happened, my ankles were above my head, and the audience, as well as my fellow actors, cried with laughter. I tried to hide my bright red cheeks underneath the blanket that was thrown over the chair for decoration, but it was stuck in the collapsed rocker.

I forced myself to finish the play, but afterwards the tears I had fought came rolling down my face like a leaky faucet. I had never been so embarrassed in all of my life.

As a joke, my Spanish teacher gave me a rocking chair ornament for graduation. "Now you will have something to remember our play by," Ms. Glaze teased. Ornament or no ornament, I will remember that embarrassing moment for the rest of my life.