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Wedding Song

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on stage. Meanwhile old Ancient Molar was giving it all he had.

"Oh, faithful squire of every stalwart tooth,

Brave Brush, you do not deign to stand aloof,

But help avert life's sad decaying end.

You are, in truth, brave Brush—a tooth's best friend," he said.

Sister Rose Anita did a perfectly executed slow burn and a ping. Then, infected by the general lunacy of the moment, she snatched the Santa Claus mask from Nell Lacey, held it over her face with one hand and raced across the stage.

"Merry Christmas, elves! Merry Christmas, toys! Merry Christmas, children!" she said. When she reached stage left, she pulled the curtain and leaned heavily against the wall. The mask had dropped to the floor; she shook her head slowly from side to side and her eyes were filled with tears.

"What a turkey. What a flopperoo," she said dispiritedly.

A few members of the cast muttered some semi-articulate words of commiseration but most of us stood glumly silent, envisioning God knows what dark reprisals that were

bound to follow the afternoon's performance.

The only sounds from the auditorium were the slow, threatening footsteps of Monsignor Blake as he approached the stage to give his annual Christmas speech. He was an old man with a tired, dour face (I had only seen him at Entertainment time) and he had a reputation as a stern disciplinarian. Our only hope was that he wouldn't expel us publicly.

"My dear children," he began and his voice had a strange, choked quality. "I'm sure we're all greatly edified by the amount of time and energy put into today's performance. I suggest we show our appreciation by applause."

The house went wild. There were cheers, whistles, shouts, and long sustained clapping.

"What the hell," my brother said, "we're a hit!"

Sister Rose Anita glared at him but as the applause mounted her eyes became soft and dreamy and she threw her head back proudly.

"You see, boys and girls, you never can tell," she said. "That's show biz. It most certainly is show biz."

We took five curtain calls.

Wedding Song

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With this ring
Upon this hand
Everything
Men understand
By love, affection,
Honor, I
In full perfection
Signify.

May this priest,
Though our words falter,
Bless this feast
Which on this altar
Makes this daughter
Wifely mine
And turns all water
Into wine.