

# SCENE # 1

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KRIS. But it happens to be true!

PIERCE. But the Board doesn't believe in Santa Claus. So... you're out.

KRIS (*considers a moment*). What happens next?

PIERCE. Maplewood has an arrangement with the Mt. Hope Sanitarium.

KRIS. The "rubber room," huh?

PIERCE. For a public hospital, Mt. Hope is a comfortable and charming place... There's entertainment, radio, and... Kris, do you have any money?

KRIS. Sure. I've got \$53.

PIERCE. That won't get you very far. You're not a young man anymore. It won't be easy for you to earn a living. If you can't support yourself, you'll become a ward of the state, and end up at Mt. Hope anyway. Why not avoid the disagreeable experience of living on the street?

KRIS. There's nothing wrong with me. I'll be *hanged* if I'll go to the funny farm!

PIERCE. What choice do you have?

KRIS. We'll... The Central Park zookeeper is a friend of mine. Maybe I'll stay with him. The reindeer don't doubt my sanity.

PIERCE (*derogatory*). Oh, Kris, please!

*(The focus shifts to parade preparations.)*

SHELLHAMMER. Well, Doris, after five years we have this parade business working pretty well, don't you think?

DORIS. Just as long as Mr. Macy is happy.

*(SUSAN and FRED enter.)*

SUSAN. I think the Mickey Mouse float is better this year, Mother.

DORIS. Yes, Susan, we fixed his eyes so they roll, which makes him look more alive.

FRED. You watch your mother, Susan. You'll be able to handle this parade yourself by the time you're ten.

SHELLHAMMER. Would you believe eight?

**START →** DORIS. Miss Adams, the first band should be on their marks, we're about to begin.

MISS ADAMS. Yes, Mrs. Walker.

SHELLHAMMER. Where did the Lion and Tin Man run off to?

MISS ADAMS. Oh dear, I don't know! You can't expect me to know everything!

*(DRUNKEN SANTA CLAUS stumbles in, trips and falls.)*

DRUNKEN SANTA CLAUS. Berry Dristmas! (*KRIS helps him up. DRUNKEN SANTA tries to crack his whip, but it flops.*)

KRIS. Allow me, sir. (*Cracks the whip smartly.*) You see, it's all in the wrist.

DRUNKEN SANTA CLAUS (*takes a swig from a bottle*). Never works 'less you oil it zchuss a little. (*He chuckles at his joke.*)

KRIS. You should be ashamed of yourself! And in front of all these children. You're a disgrace to the uniform. Where's your Christmas spirit?

DRUNKEN SANTA CLAUS (*holding up bottle*). Here! Right here... Gotta keep warm. (*He crosses his arms and slaps them. Drops bottle as he does so.*) Mmmmm warm.

SHELLHAMMER (*hasn't noticed what was happening*). There's our Santa over there, Doris. (*As she looks in his direction, she realizes that he is drunk.*) Oh, my goodness! What do we do now?

DORIS (*following her gaze*). How did we manage to get *him*?... Shelly, see if you can get him into the sleigh.

SHELLHAMMER. How?

DORIS. Get Miss Adams to help you shove, and tie him in, if you have to.

DRUNKEN SANTA CLAUS. I shink I'm going to be shleigh-shick. (*He passes out cold.*)

SUSAN (*staring at the prostrate SANTA*). Mother, I don't think the people are going to like a Santa who's asleep.

DORIS. He's not his twinkling self, that's for sure.

MISS ADAMS. Oh no, now what do we do without a Santa? The parade's about to start. -END

PIERCE. This looks like a golden opportunity to solve both your problems, Kris. I think they need a replacement on the sleigh. You could spread the Christmas spirit and pay the rent at the same time.

KRIS. They haven't asked me.

PIERCE. *You* have to ask *them*. How can you sit and watch this? These children will be disappointed if there's no Santa.

KRIS. Doctor, you surprise me. Is that genuine Christmas spirit I hear, or are you pretending for my sake?

PIERCE. No, I've been thinking about what you said — giving and sharing. Whether you are the real Santa or not, you could certainly make those children believe you are.

KRIS. That's what it's all about, isn't it, Doctor? (*He goes to DORIS.*) Excuse me. Is there anything I can do to help?

(*DORIS, SHELLHAMMER and MISS ADAMS realize they are looking at a picture-perfect Santa.*)

DORIS. Oh, my word!