

SCENE # 2

11

DORIS (*stares at him*). Well... You are welcome to whatever delusions you choose to live with... but... we cannot have a Santa who refers our customers to other stores. Miss Adams will help you pick up your final check at the Personnel Department. I'm sorry it didn't work out.

KRIS. It strikes me as a bit ironic, Mrs. Walker, that you are firing Santa Claus for being Santa Claus! I was just making sure the children would get what they really want.

DORIS. Macy's is in business, Mr. Kringle, and we have to compete with other stores... Ooohhhh, I don't want to argue... I'll authorize a week's severance pay for you, Mr. Kringle. Now, Merry Christmas, and good-bye.

KRIS. Merry Christmas to you, Mrs. Walker. And don't worry. I won't hold this against you on Christmas Eve. (*Exits with MISS ADAMS.*)

(*MR. MACY and SHELLHAMMER approach DORIS.*)

SHELLHAMMER. Uh... Doris... Mr. Macy would like to...

MACY. I'm perfectly capable of speaking for myself, Mrs. Shellhammer.

DORIS. Is there a problem, Mr. Macy?

MACY. I will listen with great interest while you tell me who is responsible for our Santa sending customers to other stores. (*Pause. SHELLHAMMER stammers. DORIS winces.*)

DORIS. I take complete responsibility, Mr. Macy.

SHELLHAMMER. I instructed him to push our backlog stock, Mr. Macy, but he...

MACY. Well, then, *who* told him to send somebody to Gimble's to get something we didn't have?

DORIS. Uh... We don't know, sir.

MACY. My office has been flooded with phone calls...

DORIS. I'm really sorry, Mr. Macy, but I've taken care of it.

MACY. ...All messages of grateful appreciation from shoppers. This is the greatest goodwill advertising gimmick in years! It's positively revolutionary! I can see the headline: THE STORE WITH THE REAL CHRISTMAS SPIRIT! MACY'S SANTA RECOMMENDS GIMBLE'S! It's a breakthrough in advertising initiative, Mrs. Walker. The newspapers will love it and Macy's will reap a harvest of publicity and goodwill.

DORIS (*dumbfounded*). I'm so glad you're pleased.

MACY. This is the best Santa Claus we have ever had. (*As he starts away.*) And there'll be an extra bonus in both your Christmas stockings this year, ladies. (*Exits as MISS ADAMS comes on.*)

START → SHELLHAMMER. This must not be Tuesday after all. I'm still asleep and dreaming.

DORIS. It's Armageddon.

SHELLHAMMER. Huh?

DORIS. I just fired him.

SHELLHAMMER. You did *what*?

DORIS. You should see his personnel form. He's crazy. He really thinks he *is* Santa Claus.

SHELLHAMMER. Evidently so does Mr. Macy.

DORIS. I don't know what we'll do now.

SHELLHAMMER. Do you think Mr. Macy will fire us?

DORIS. Maybe it's not too late! *(To MISS ADAMS.)* Miss Adams, see if you can find Mr. Kringle, will you? *(MISS ADAMS exits.)*

(Enter a few ELVES.)

ELF 1. Mrs. Walker, where is Santa? The line is stretching all the way to the perfume counter.

ELF 2. And we're almost out of candy canes!

SHELLHAMMER. She fired him.

ELF 3. She fired Santa? In the middle of Christmas rush? What about the children?

ELF 2. Mrs. Walker. As the shop steward of Elves Local No. 10, I must lodge a formal grievance against management's capricious disrespect for the Christmas spirit.

DORIS. All right. We're trying to straighten the matter out right now.

ALL ELVES. Santa Claus goes, we walk!

DORIS. Oh, my goodness! That's all I need. Striking elves! * END

(KRIS enters with MISS ADAMS.)

KRIS. It wasn't necessary to hunt me down, Mrs. Walker. I was going to bring the suit back to you.

SHELLHAMMER. Put it back on.

DORIS. Mr. Kringle, I owe you an apology. I'm afraid I was a bit hasty.

KRIS. Oh?

DORIS. I was mistaken about your policy of sending shoppers to other stores. As a matter of fact, Mr. Macy likes it.

KRIS. That's not reason enough, Mrs. Walker. Why should I come back just to increase Macy's profits? Pushing toys is not what Christmas is all about. We're so busy trying to make things go faster and look shinier so we can beat our competitor, that we're losing the spirit of giving from our heart. I see no reason why I should contribute to that kind of commercialism.

DORIS. You won't come back?

ELF 2. The union stands solidly behind you, Mr. Kringle.