

SCENE: *Living room in Doris' apartment. That evening.*

DORIS, KRIS and SUSAN are sitting. Glasses of milk and plate of cookies are on coffee table.

KRIS. I enjoyed our dinner very much. Thank you for inviting me. I thought the milk and cookies for dessert was an especially nice touch. And I liked spending the evening with you and Susan.

SUSAN (*obviously delighted with the guest*). Mr. Kringle, could you speak to me in that language you spoke in yesterday?

DORIS. Susan, I think Mr. Kringle is tired.

KRIS. Not at all. I'd love to talk to her.

~~DORIS. Excuse me. I've got to call Mrs. Shellhammer. (She exits to another room.)~~

START → KRIS. Do you have a lot of friends in the building, Susan?

SUSAN. Yes, but I don't see them very much. The games they play are so childish. Today they were playing zoo. All of them were animals. They asked me what kind of animal I wanted to be, but I didn't want to be an animal, so I didn't play.

KRIS. Why didn't you tell them you were a lion or a bear?

SUSAN. Because I'm *not* a lion. I'm a little girl!

KRIS. But the other children weren't animals, either. They were just pretending.

SUSAN. That's what makes the game so silly.

KRIS. I don't feel that way at all. It's really a lot of fun, if you know how to play it. But, of course, you've got to use your imagination. Do you know what imagination is, Susan?

SUSAN. That's when you see things that aren't really there.

KRIS. Well, not exactly. No, to me the imagination is a place all by itself. A very wonderful country. You've heard of the British nation and the French nation?

SUSAN. Yes.

KRIS. Well, this is the ImagiNation. And once you get there you can do almost anything you want. How would you like to make snowballs in the summertime? Or drive a big bus down Fifth Avenue?

SUSAN. Oh, *that* wouldn't be possible.

KRIS. How would you like to be the Statue of Liberty in the morning and fly south with a flock of geese in the afternoon? (*SUSAN smiles and nods in spite of herself.*) Well, it's simple really. All it takes is a little practice. Wouldn't you like to try?

SUSAN. (*Checking to see if her mother is near*) Yes.

KRIS. I thought so. Now then, let's start with something easy. How would you like to be a monkey in the zoo?

SUSAN. I don't know how to do that, Mr. Kringle.

KRIS. Sure you do! Now just bend over a little - that's right - and curl your hands in. Let your arms swing. Good. Can you put your hand up here and tickle yourself? See? Good. Now, put your tongue under your lip. Watch me. (*KRIS moves about. SUSAN copies him.*) Now, tickle yourself and chatter. (*KRIS watches as SUSAN acts like a monkey.*)

SUSAN (*running to him when the experiment is finished*). I did it, Mr. Kringle. ~~That was fun!~~ * END

KRIS (*pause*). Now tell me, if you were to believe that I was really Santa Claus, what would you ask me to bring you for Christmas?

SUSAN. Can you bring *big* presents?

KRIS. Since we are in the land of imagination, it could be any size.

SUSAN. I want a real house for Mother and me... and a real father to live in it with us.

KRIS (*jolted*). You're right. That *is* a tall order, indeed.

SUSAN. Well, if you're really Santa, you can do it. And if you can't, then you're just a nice man with a white beard like Mother said.

KRIS. Susan, not everyone always gets her wish. That doesn't mean there isn't a Santa Claus. Some children wish for things they can never use — like a real locomotive, for example. And little girls sometimes wish for baby brothers or sisters, even though their parents wouldn't be able to care for them properly... Sometimes a person has to learn something, like how to love or how to behave better before Santa can grant the wish.

SUSAN. But I've wished for a father and a house for such a long time, Mr. Kringle.

KRIS. And the more you have wished for it, the more it will mean to you when it comes. If everyone got what he or she wanted right away, life wouldn't be half as much fun. So you see, Susan, there are a lot of reasons why a child's wish can't always come true.

SUSAN. A father and a house are really all I want — not toys.

(*FRED knocks, enters.*)

FRED. Hi there, Susan. How's my favorite girl? (*SUSAN runs to hug him. To KRIS.*) I'm Fred Gailey. I live in the next apartment.

KRIS. It's a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Gailey. I'm Kris Kringle.

FRED. Yes, I know.

(*DORIS enters.*)

DORIS. Susan, it's time for bed... Oh, hi, Fred. Have you two met?

KRIS. Yes, we just introduced ourselves.

DORIS. Mr. Kringle. I've found you a place to stay tonight. (*KRIS nods. Phone is heard ringing.*) Oh, there's my phone. Please wait a minute. (*She exits.*)