

1. Santa's Helpers

(We are in a coffee room. #1 is seated at a table going over some notes. #2 enters and sits next to #1.)

- #1:** How's everything going out there?
- #2:** Terrific. They're just putting the finishing touches on Santa's house now. The whole mall looks really great. This is costing a fortune. How'd you get them to spend all this money?
- #1:** Easy. I waited until the last minute and appealed to all the shop owners' most basic holiday instinct.
- #2:** Greed?
- #1:** You bet. I convinced them that any mall could put up a little chair for Santa, but if they all chipped in and helped create "Santa's Village," statistics showed that their businesses would all increase three-fold by Christmas.
- #2:** Where did you get your statistics?
- #1:** I made them up.
- #2:** You didn't?!
- #1:** No, actually, I didn't. I took this year's buying trends, the GNP figures, the current value of the stock market, the latest interest rates, crunched all the numbers, and interpolated.
- #2:** And you came up with triple business figures?
- #1:** Actually, it came out to one-and-a half.
- #2:** Then why did you say business would triple?
- #1:** I did the calculations twice and got 1^{1/2} both times and...
- #2:** 1^{1/2} plus 1^{1/2} equals three.
- #1:** See how easy?
- #2:** That's not very honest.
- #1:** Come on, no one was hurt. Our company made more by creating "Santa's Village." You said yourself it looked great. A lot of kids will come, and if the store owners do

ten percent more than last year, they'll be happy. Everyone wins.

#2: I'm still not sure.

#1: I am so relaxed. Now, what's the schedule?

#2: They should finish putting everything up in an hour. The reindeer arrive at nine. Nice touch, by the way.

#1: Thanks.

#2: Santa should arrive at nine-forty five, and the mall opens at ten. The radio commercials will jump to every hour and from what I understand, the projections show a big crowd.

#1: That's the news I wanted to hear. So, who's playing Santa?

#2: You tell me and we'll both know.

#1: What do you mean?

#2: What do you mean, "what do you mean?"?

#1: I mean, are you saying you didn't hire a Santa?

#2: No.

#1: This is news I didn't want to hear. Why not?

#2: Because you said that you'd take care of it.

#1: When did I say that?

#2: Yesterday. I was supervising the house building, you came over and asked what I had left to do. I said ordering Santa. You got a call, while you were answering the phone I asked if you wanted me to get the Santa now and you said, "no, I'll take care of it."

#1: I wasn't talking to you. I was telling Sheila back at the office. I was telling her I'd take care of the press people.

#2: How was I supposed to know that?

#1: This is great. Santa's Village with no Santa. Don't you see something fundamentally wrong with that?! Get on the phone and order us a Santa. NOW!

#2: OK, I'll try. *(Takes out a cellular phone and dials.)* Good morning. This is James/Joan with Gateway Entertainment Group. We've created "Santa's Village" at the Coast Mall and we need a Santa. *(Pause)* Stop laughing, I'm serious.

We need a Santa. *(Pause)* I know it's the start of the season, but... *(Pause)* Yes, but... *(Pause)* When? *(Pause)* OK, do that and... *(Pause)* I'll get back to you on that. Good-bye.

#1: What's up?

#2: We've got a Santa.

#1: Great!

#2: By this afternoon... maybe, but definitely by tomorrow.

#1: What about this morning? Call them back.

#2: It's the start of the season. There's not a Santa to be had and that was the best agency in town.

#1: I don't believe this.

#2: They did say they had a Barney who could fill in until we got a Santa.

#1: Why would I want Barney Rubble...

#2: Not Barney Rubble - Barney the dinosaur. You know, that big purple thing that the kids love.

#1: This is Santa's Village not Jurassic Park. These kids want to sit on Santa's lap, not line up to be a hot lunch for some odd-colored T-Rex.

#2: Can we open tomorrow?

#1: No, all the advertising says today. We've got to find someone. *(Pause)* Well, there's only one solution.

#2: What?

#1: You'll do it.

#2: Are you talking to me?

#1: You see anyone else here?

#2: There'd better be because you're out of your mind if you think I'm putting on that suit...

#1: You have to.

#2: Give me one good reason why.

#1: Greed.

#2: How's that?

#1: You like money?

#2: Only when I need to buy something.

#1: Want to continue making any, 'cause we won't if this

2. The Actors

- doesn't open today?
- #2:** Whoa, hold on. This was your baby. I'm just the assistant.
- #1:** But both our names are on this. If it blows up, you think they'll just fire me?
- #2:** I don't even look like Santa.
- #1:** *(Tosses some items to #2.)* We have a fat pad and a big red suit. You'll be great.
- #2:** What would you say if I told you I was Jewish?
- #1:** Happy Chanukah, St. Nick. Get dressed!
- #2:** Do you know how much I hate this?
- #1:** Do you know how much I don't care?! Just think of this as your Christmas present to all these kids.
- #2:** Very funny. Ha, ha, ha.
- #1:** No, it's Ho, Ho, Ho. Remember that.
- #2:** Merry...Christmas. You remember that. *(Takes the suit and exits.)*
- #1:** I forgot. James/Joan, do you know where we can get an elf?... *(Runs off after #2.)*

(We are in the waiting room of a casting office. #1 is sitting quietly, eyes closed preparing for an audition. #2 enters, looks around, signs in, sits next to #1, picks up a magazine and starts to read and hum. After the humming (or singing) gets louder #1 opens his/her eyes and turns to #2.)

- #1:** Excuse me. My contemplative silence isn't bothering you, is it?
- #2:** *(Looks up at #1.)* I'm sorry, are you talking to me?
- #1:** Keen grasp of the obvious you have there. Yes, I'm talking to you.
- #2:** What can I do for you?
- #1:** I am trying to prepare and your singing/humming, at least I assume it's singing/humming, is interrupting me.
- #2:** I'm sorry. I'll be quiet.
- #1:** Thank you.
- #2:** My pleasure. *(#1 closes his/her eyes. Just as he/she gets settled...)* So what are you preparing for?
- #1:** *(Opens his/her eyes.)* Since I'm sitting in a casting office, my first guess would be...an audition.
- #2:** Oh. *(Looks at the script #1 is holding.)* Hey, look at that. We're auditioning for the same part.
- #1:** How nice for us. And I suppose that sparks feelings of kinship for you, hmm?
- #2:** No, I was just making small talk.
- #1:** Please don't. I'd like to prepare. I need to center myself.
- #2:** Please, go right ahead. Forget that I'm here.
- #1:** From your mouth... *(#1 closes his/her eyes and starts to center. #2 turns and watches and slowly moves in very close. After a beat, #1 opens his/her eyes.)* What are you doing?!