

WILL. THEN y'll see!

NECILE. Maybe it'll be YOU who will see!

WILL. And maybe NOT!

AK (*looks up and yells at them*). All right! (*NECILE and WILL look at him.*) Over here, both of you. (*They move to the thrones, mumbling at each other, and stand near the thrones.*) You're very loud.

WILL (*steps forward*). But—

AK (*raises a hand*). Uhp! (*WILL steps back.*) You are disturbing me. You are disturbing the entire woods!

Start > QUEEN. What is causing all the noise?

(*WILL points at NECILE and NECILE points at WILL.*)

NECILE. He is!

WILL (*same time as NECILE*). She is!

AK (*suddenly stands*). Stop it! Why is it like this? You both think the other is in the wrong.

QUEEN. And it's up to someone with a cooler head to solve the problem.

AK. Exactly.

QUEEN (*to AK*). Which is you?

AK. Which is ME? (*He catches himself.*) Indeed! Which is ME! Which is what I was just about to say.

QUEEN. But didn't. (*AK looks as her in exasperation.*)

WILL. That's why we came to you.

NECILE. Right.

AK. I called you, remember?

WILL. After all, you brought th' human child into the Bur-zee Woods.

AK. Gee, I forgot for a moment there. I seem to have so much help these days!

NECILE. Will has been spying on Claus! And now he blames him for his missing Knooks.

QUEEN. You're missing Knooks?

AK. They will turn up.

WILL. Indeed, they have. They turned up missing.

AK (*to QUEEN*). How can they turn up if they're missing?

QUEEN. I thought you were supposed to know all this?

AK. You'd think.

WILL. Not only my Knooks but I believe Claus has been planning something—I don't know what yet—with my deer as well!

NECILE. I will see to my Claus. And Will may mind his own business!

WILL. This IS my business!

AK. Wait! (*He stands between them.*) Okay, here's how it's going to be. Necile, you've gotten your way in the past. Therefore, I must rule with King Will here.

WILL. Ah-HA!

NECILE. But—

AK. Will, you will keep an eye out. You watch all your Knooks, you see to the beasts of the forest. (*WILL starts to speak but AK raises a hand.*) And if Claus is making use of them without your permission... (*He turns to NECILE.*)...I will be forced to take action. It will be by his word.

WILL. Sound judgment on your part, sir. (*AK shoots him a disgusted look.*)

NECILE. And I'll watch over my Claus.

WILL. You warn 'im! I will be watchin'—

AK. No, Necile.

NECILE. What?

AK. You shall not watch over Claus. For a while, anyway.

NECILE. Not watch over him? But—

AK. Will is right in this case. He knows all too well—the beasts of the forest, that when they are young they must be watched over, cared for. But when they grow up, they are then in the hands of one who has more powers than I. And that's the way with the human.

NECILE (*looks out*). Not watch over Claus?

AK. For a while.

WILL. As it should be.

END (*NECILE and WILL again stand nose to nose.*)

NECILE. See what you did!

WILL. See what YOU did!

AK. See what you BOTH did!

(*FRANK enters DL.*)

FRANK. And so, it seemed, Claus would be on his own. And Necile could not interfere. (*AK and QUEEN escort NECILE off L. The LIGHTS dim out save for one on WILL who looks out.*) And King Will would then devote his time to trying to catch Claus. This went on for many years.

(*A LIGHT comes up DR as CLAUS enters, carrying his sack, with three children around him. CLAUS now has much gray in his hair and beard.*)

CHILD #1. Claus, Claus!

CHILD #2. What have you got for us?

CHILD #3. A toy? I want a toy!

CHILD #1. Me, too!

CHILD #2. Me, too!

CLAUS. Well, well, let's see what we have here! (*He puts his bag down and reaches into it.*)

FRANK. Yet through all the years others were watching Claus as well.

(*A solitary LIGHT comes up on the platform where stands two AWGWAS as they watch CLAUS. The AWGWAS nod and rub their hands together as all the LIGHTS dim out.*)

[*If this play is to be done in two acts, Act One ends here. If not, continue to the next scene.*]

SCENE 4

"The Frost Gale, Sleigh Bells and Awgwas"

(*LIGHTS come up on the table where BARLO and LEM are working on new toys. CLAUS enters the scene.*)

CLAUS. You two have been so much help to me. Not as spry as I used to be, as you can tell. And there are so many children, not only here in Laughing Valley but in other villages as well.

BARLO. And King Will is none the wiser.

CLAUS. Still I wish we had his permission.

LEM. He'll come around. He's not a bad guy.

BARLO. Why do you want him to come around. We're sneaking out on him.

LEM. I mean if he'd just listen, he'd understand. That's what I meant by "come around." Not ... (*Notices BARLO*