

CLAUS. Pleased to meet you. My name is NeClaus but most people call me just Claus.

MAYRIE. Just Claus?

CLAUS. I mean most people just call me Claus. I'm new here and you have made me feel most welcome.

WEEKUM. It was my idea!

*(The children move closer as CLAUS pulls up his sack and places it on the table.)*

MAYRIE. What's in your sack?

CLAUS. You're curious? *(He smiles,)* I know that feeling VERY well.

MAYRIE. Oh, it's ALWAYS fun to see someone carrying a sack. You never know what's in it.

WEEKUM. Uh-huh. When you're children they don't tell you anything.

CLAUS. Well, I was just wondering. Would you like to do chores around here and learn some lessons? *(MAYRIE's and WEEKUM's eyes widen in horror.)* Or would you like to play?

WEEKUM & MAYRIE. Play!

CLAUS. Then let's play!

*(The three join hands and dance in a circle.)*

BAUM. And they danced and sang and played until it was time for them to go. But just then, an old friend of Claus's dropped by. *(BAUM exits off L.)*

*(The sound of wind causes the children to stop dancing and hide under the table.)*

CLAUS. Wait, what's wrong? What's the matter?

WEEKUM. We have to go home now but it's cold outside!

MAYRIE. And soon the frost will come!

CLAUS. Frost, eh? *(He stokes his beard. Just then, a knock sounds.)* Somebody else at the door? I think I may know who this one is.

*(JACK FROST jumps onstage from R.)*

Start > JACK. Ha HA! Surprised? Go on, admit it!

CLAUS. Jack Frost, we were just talking about you!

JACK. I figured! *(He holds out his hand to shake but CLAUS laughs and waves his hands as if to say "None of that.")* Thought I'd catch you, my lad. It's always a treat to see you! But who were you just speaking about me with? I don't see anyone here but you.

CLAUS *(confidentially)*. They're hiding.

JACK. Why? They can't see me.

CLAUS. Yes, but they know your touch.

JACK. I DO get around; my handiwork is seen by everyone. With a wink I can ice a pasture, with a yawn I can frost a forest and with a laugh I can lace a lake!

CLAUS *(sits)*. Is that why you dropped by? To do a commercial?

JACK. I came here to welcome you. *(He looks around.)* Any food you want well kept?

CLAUS. I thank you for your welcome.

JACK. So, my welcome is welcome?

CLAUS. Now, I have a favor to ask.

JACK. You have only to ask and I'll give'er a shot, my lad. You'll find I am big in this neighborhood. Especially among the children. I do love to nip the young

ones. (*CLAUS looks hard at him.*) The older ones are tough and hurt my fingers.

CLAUS. Exactly what I'm talking about. Why do you torment them?

JACK. Torment? TORMent! Why, sir, you cut me to the quick! I am their guardian, their hint of things to come, their warning.

CLAUS. Oh ho, you need to explain that one.

JACK. Claus, are you still a baby in the woods? You must look at the world as it is. Listen, my lad, if I were not there to nip them on their ears nor decorate their neighborhood in my white icing, they wouldn't know it was getting cold, that Old Man Winter would soon be here and they must get back to their warm and cozy homes.

CLAUS. I never thought of it that way.

JACK. You were raised in the woods.

CLAUS. And you're going to start on this job of yours now?

JACK. I'm late already. 'S what I get for dropping in on old friends.

CLAUS. Then here's that favor. Can you begin somewhere else? In another village, say, and come back to this one later?

JACK. Oh, I suppose. Little enough favor to ask. (*He starts to exit.*)

CLAUS. One thing I've always wanted to ask you. How can you move so quickly? In the blink of an eye you go from village to village.

JACK. Trade secret.

CLAUS. I don't have anything to trade you.

JACK. Okay, but don't spread this around, my lad. (*Confidentially.*) I am able to fly on the Frost Gale.

CLAUS. The Frost Gale?

JACK. It blows over the whole world and I—(*He holds out a thumb as if hitching a ride.*)—take a ride. Keep warm, Claus. I'll be watching! (*He winks at CLAUS, throws a handful of glitter around the room and exits the way he came.*)

END

(*CLAUS thinks on this as he moves back to the table.*)

CLAUS. You can come out now.

(*WEEKUM and MAYRIE look out.*)

WEEKUM. Who were you talking to?

MAYRIE. We didn't hear anyone but you.

CLAUS. I was talking to Jack Frost himself!

WEEKUM & MAYRIE (*look at each other and then back at CLAUS*). Uh-huh.

(*CLAUS helps the children from beneath the table.*)

CLAUS. Now, you two better be getting home. Else, your mother and father will be worried.

WEEKUM. But the cold?

CLAUS. You may get home in time...If you hurry! (*He rushes them to R.*)

MAYRIE. Okay. But we had a good time playing with you.

WEEKUM. I wish we could play again!

CLAUS. Well, then, you may come again, any time you wish.

MAYRIE. But what do we do until then?