

gnome known as "Black Pete," who carries a spiked rod to punish bad children. If a child is *really* bad, Santa grabs them and takes them with him back to Spain... oh, wow, that's uh... that's not very nice, let's try the next one... Germany... In Germany's Berchtesgaden Province, St. Nicholas is followed by twelve men in Goat's heads and demons with birch switches who drive the young people out into the street and beat them, symbolic punishment for having misbehaved...oh, wow...

(He is clearly distraught, and finds another card.)

Um...Spain...in Spain, if a child has been bad, Santa comes dressed all in black, and carries them off in a sack...back to Holland... *(He is very upset.)* ...Mike! Mike...

(He exits.)

Rudolph/Gustav

JIM. *(Entering, singing like a nightclub entertainer:)* But do you recallllllll, the most famous reindeer of allllllll — Rudol...

MICHAEL. *(Interrupting:)* Jim, JIM...wait a minute...excuse me, Ladies and Gentlemen, but... due to the fact that the venerable and ancient legend of that ninth and most nimble of reindeer, that luminescent Lapland luminary, he of the bright (and biologically improbable) shiny nose was not created until 1939 by an advertising copywriter from the Montgomery Ward company — who still legally controls the copyright and trademark to his name, image and story to this day — we offer the following, similar, culturally valid, yet unindictable version: Gustav, the Green-nosed Reingoat...

JIM. You've got to be kidding...

MICHAEL. Also known as Carl the Copper-nosed Caribou, Oswald the Orange-nosed Otter, and Milton the Mauve-nosed Marmoset. *(To JIM, with a big "thumbs up":)* Good luck!

(MICHAEL exits.)

VOICE-OVER. Brought to you by Norelco, for that Santa-smooth shave...*(Sleigh bells and music.)*

(JOHN enters carrying an electric razor, and wearing a Santa hat. He swoops it across the stage making “bbrrrrrrrrrrmmmmmm” noises, circles JIM, and heads off. JIM just stares.)

Norelco...the Noël—Co.

JIM. (Donning reindeer antlers and clipboard:) All right, listen up now! We’re gonna have trials for the upcoming reindeer...

MICHAEL. (Offstage:) Reingoat!

JIM. ...reingoat games, and a chance to pull Santa’s sleigh. As you may or may not know, the existing team of Dasher, Dancer, Prancer and Vixen, Comet and Cupid and Donner and Phil are due for retirement.

JOHN. (Entering in deer antlers and green nose—not yet lit up—chanting like a soldier:) I don’t know, but I been told, tinsel’s made of silver and gold!

JIM. Now you there, you’re Donner’s boy, right?

JOHN. Yes sir!

JIM. All right, let’s see ya jump...

JOHN. (Very enthusiastic, a new recruit:) HOW HIGH, SIR?!

JIM. Just jump.

(JOHN executes a very unimpressive, if wildly flailing, jump.)

JIM. Okaaaay, I guess those jumping genes skip a generation... (To audience:) whaddya say we give the Donner kid a pass...get it? Donner...pass?...aahhh, what the hell’s eatin’ you? Next!

MICHAEL. (Poking around the corner with “girl antlers,” maybe a bow on his head:) That’s OK, Gustav, I think you’re cute!

JOHN. She thinks I’m cute! She thinks I’m cuuuuuute!!!

(Excited, JOHN executes a massive slow-motion jump—aided by strobe lights and the theme song to the “Six Million Dollar Man,” at the peak of which his nose switches on, glowing bright green.)

JIM. What the hell is that?! Whoa, little fella...I’m afraid we can’t let you join in any more of our reindeer...

MICHAEL. (*Offstage:*) Reingoat!

JIM. ...reingoat games. You're not like the rest of us, you're different. You're just too freakish. We could never accept you for who you really are, unless we really, *really* needed you, and then we might overlook our superficial and surface judgments, and pretend we liked you all along.

JOHN. Oh why, oh why am I such a misfit?

JIM. Well, besides the fact that you jump like a girl, and your nose glows like a radioactive avocado, you tend to tell jokes that have lame punch-lines, you're kinda clingy, your breath smells like stale oats, and...

JOHN. Okay, okay, I get the picture, I'm leaving...I'll run far, far away, where people won't notice my differences, where I'll blend right in because everybody there is a freak, even the governor — I'll go to *California!* (*or insert some local butt-of-jokes*)

(JOHN *exits.*)

MICHAEL. Meanwhile, back in Santa's workshop...

MICHAEL / JIM. (*In elf hats, singing:*)

We are Santa's elves,
filling Santa's shelves,
with a ho, ho, ho, and a hee, hee, hee,
in the merry old Land of Oz...

MICHAEL / HEAD ELF. Now you there, Hermy, you've got to come to elf practice and learn how to wriggle your ears and chuckle warmly, and go hee-hee, and ho-ho, and important stuff like that...

JIM / HERMY. But I don't like to make toys...

MICHAEL / HEAD ELF. Oh, well, if that's all...WHAT?! you don't like to make toys?

JIM / HERMY. No, what I really want to be is a dentist! I've been studying molars and bicuspid and incisors...

MICHAEL / HEAD ELF. Now listen you, you're an elf, and elves make toys...

JOHN. (*Popping in or skipping across:*) Hermy wants to be a dentist!

MICHAEL / HEAD ELF. You'll never fit in!

JIM / HERMY. Why am I such a misfit?

MICHAEL / HEAD ELF. Well, besides the fact that elves are mythical creatures, you're somewhat of a runt, you're kinda clingy, your breath smells like stale oats, and...

JIM / HERMY. Okay, okay, okay...California.

(JIM exits.)

MICHAEL / JOHN. (*Singing, and doing the dance moves:*)

We are Santa's elves,
filling Santa's shelves,
with a ho, ho, ho, and a hee, hee, hee,
heeeeyyyy, Macarena!

MICHAEL. (*Throwing on a Mrs. Claus kerchief or wig:*) Eat, Poppa, eat... you're gonna disappoint the children, no one wants a skinny Santa!

JIM. (*Enters, wearing a Santa hat and beard:*) How can I eat? That friggin' elf song is driving me crazy!

MICHAEL. So, off into the wide, wild, and wintry wastes the unwilling worried and woeful wascals went...

(*He exits.*)

(*The sound of whistling wind, a growing storm. JIM / HERMY and JOHN / GUSTAV enter from opposite sides of the stage, huddled against the weather.*)

JIM / HERMY. Hellooooooooooooo! Anybody out there?

JOHN / GUSTAV. Helllllllooooooooooooo! Nobody here but us chickens...

JIM / HERMY. Hey, what are you doing out here?

JOHN / GUSTAV. Well, all of the other reingoats were starting to laugh and call me names...

JIM / HERMY. Like Green Nose?