

# The Real McClaus - - A Christmas Evening sketch in a department store

(continued from page 31)

to come to work in a good suit of clothes every day. So will you please stop this nonsense and hand over that suit.

SANTA — I know it's difficult for you to understand, sir, but please try

to. You see, I really should be on my way.

MANAGER — Oh no you don't. Just stay where you are. (Goes to phone). Give me security, please... Hello, Mr. Barnes? Gregson here in Toytown. Could you come down, or send one of

your men, I'm having a bit of trouble with our Santa. He refuses to turn in his suit.

MANAGER — (cont'd) — What's that? Yes, don't worry, I can hold him till you get here. Thank you. (Hangs up and turns to Santa). Now, Mr. Claus,

we'll get this matter settled in short order. I'm sorry it had to be like this, but...

SANTA — So am I. One certainly doesn't want to start off Christmas this way. Especially when one has all those calls to make. I hate finishing up when it's

starting to get light.

MANAGER — I'm sure that should be easy enough to arrange. All you have to do is make sure you start out at the spot that's going to get light earliest and keep heading for the places that get lightest latest.

SANTA — I don't like leaving it that close.

MANAGER — Well, I don't think you're going to have to worry about it much till next year at this time. Here comes Barnes from the security office. Here's the man I told you about,

Mr. Barnes.

BARNES — Well, well, if it isn't Santa Claus, himself, or my name isn't Dusty Barnes. And what's this I hear about you not having the spirit of Christmas?

BARNES — Why yes. You know, not wanting to turn in your suit.

SANTA — I think it would be more in the spirit if I kept it, don't you? After all, I'd look pretty funny sliding down the chimney in my underwear.

BARNES — (laughing uproariously) — Ho, ho, ho, that's a good one. Down the chimney in your underwear.

MANAGER — If you don't mind, Mr. Barnes, I wish you'd do your duty. Believe me, you wouldn't find it so funny if you had to put up with it as long as I did.

BARNES — Harrumph — yes. All right, Mr. Claus, come on over here in the light where I can get a better look at you... Hmmm, that suit seems to be just a shade darker than our Santas usually wear. What have you been doing to it? (Jingling of sleigh bells is heard in the distance.)

SANTA — What have I been doing to it? Why, this is light when I first got it. Why it was almost crimson in those days.

MANAGER — When was that, Mr. Claus? Back in the days of the Scarlet Pimpernell, I suppose?

SANTA — Oh long before that. Besides, his coat was hardly crimson.

BARNES — And yours is hardly scarlet... Say... ain't I seen you somewhere before? You look familiar.

SANTA — I guess I should... Boswell. After all, many a Christmas Eve you snuck down from upstairs and waited by the fireplace for me to come around.

BARNES — Boswell! You called me Boswell! Ain't nobody called me that since I was seven years old. Wasn't nobody brave enough. I woulda killed 'em.

SANTA — Yes, you started calling yourself Dusty the next year, as I remember. I heard about it from somebody else, because you weren't around at your usual spot waiting for me. Matter of fact, you were still in bed... Remember?

BARNES — (Slowly) — Yes... yes, I do... now. I wanted to go down, but my big brother, who was 10, said there wasn't any Santa Claus, and I didn't want him to make fun of me.

SANTA — And by the next year you had grown out of it. But you'd always believed up to then. That's why you knew me now. Not like Mr. Gregson here, who never believed, and so never can... Well, I'd better be going.

BARNES — But what about Mr. Gregson? How do I explain to him?

SANTA — You don't have to; he's forgotten already. In fact, as soon as you acknowledged me, I disappeared from his view. You'll notice he's been busy with a customer for the past few minutes.

BARNES — Do you still leave the same way as always? You know, your finger to the side of your nose.

SANTA — Yes, and it still works just as well as ever. Come here, I'll show you. There's a nice, wide fireplace in the president's office; he never believed in me, either. You can watch me from here. (Walks off a few steps and turns around). Goodbye, Boswell, and a very Merry Christmas.

BARNES — So long, Santa. Take care and watch out for any cruising astronauts. And Santa, don't tell anybody my real name. (Santa's Ho, Ho, Ho, is heard in background.)

MANAGER — Well, hello Barnes. What brings you down here? Little late to be dropping off your letter to Santa, isn't it?

BARNES — (Reflectively). I guess that all depends on what you've got to say.

MANAGER — Well, nothing I ever said to him ever seemed to work, as I recall.

BARNES — Maybe you just didn't believe in him hard enough.

MANAGER — When I see him, Barnes, then I'll believe in him.

BARNES — Well, let me know if you ever do.

MANAGER — Don't worry, you'll be the first one I'll call, believe me.

BARNES — I already do. Merry Christmas, Mr. Gregson.

MANAGER — Merry Christmas, Mr. Barnes. (Loud jingling of sleigh bells is heard in background.)

AURORA: The York Potters Guild will have their new kiln installed on one of the former jail cells this month. The guild meets the first Wednesday of each month.

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