

fellow betrayed me. He lost most of the money on a racing track bet.

THE DUTCHMAN: This is not an uncommon situation.

MYRTON: Yes, but then he drank up what was left. I cannot in good conscience have a drunken Santa around impressionable children.

BLONDY: No, this sets a bad example and does harm to the reputation of Santa Claus.

MYRTON: And what is worse, my former friend lost the money while betting on a hunch. A hunch! How could one ever bet on a hunch?

DANCING DAN: I have a hunch he is not the first.

THE DUTCHMAN: Do you have a system for the ponies?

MYRTON: Quite an infallible one, actually. Are you interested in the equestrian arts?

THE DUTCHMAN: I have been known to wager a buck or two in the past, if that's what you mean.

MYRTON: Well, I would be more than delighted to share any and all knowledge about my system with you...*after* the party. Time is of the essence. Please, gentlemen. Mrs Albright knows nothing of all these little difficulties. She is unaware that I slipped out to buy these gifts—and to find a Santa Claus. I have been in and out of every department store in the city *and* the Salvation Army. (*To DANCING DAN*) You, I fear, are my last hope.

THE DUTCHMAN: Give us a minute.

(*THE DUTCHMAN, DANCING DAN, and BLONDY step aside to confer.*)

THE DUTCHMAN: He seems like a right gee.

DANCING DAN: How is it you know about these Albrights and their house?

THE DUTCHMAN: In my younger days I am acquainted with some of the swankier homes on Long Island, on account of I make quite a good thing of knocking off safes in these swanky homes. This Albright guy makes a killing in corsets or something. And his wife is no slouch either. They say her family come over on the Mayflower. She knows many influential citizens. Her friend Judge Thrasher once gives me a year's stretch in the sneezer.

BLONDY: (*To DANCING DAN*) You can make a few good bobs at this brawl.

THE DUTCHMAN: Sure, but money will only give you carfare back to Manhattan, and Manhattan is where you do not want to be back to. What we need right now is a car. We gotta get to P A. We gotta.

(*DANCING DAN considers this and turns back to MYRTON.*)

DANCING DAN: I am your Santa Claus.

MYRTON: Thank goodness!

DANCING DAN: With the following conditions...

MYRTON: Oh.

DANCING DAN: First, Blondy Swanson and The Dutchman here are my elves.

MYRTON: Elves?

DANCING DAN: Santa has elves. This is common knowledge. They are part of the package.

MYRTON: Fine. Bring the elves. The more the merrier, I say.

DANCING DAN: Second, in payment, we want to borrow a car.

MYRTON: A car?

DANCING DAN: Yes, a car. For a day. Maybe three. A week tops. Nothing fancy—any car will do.