

MYRRH

Ha, ha, ha. No wonder your face is a little flushed. You know, I went on a juice cleanse for a month and my face was just as green as yours. More on that later. **(Santa is now next to Myrrh)** Mr. Claus, how are you feeling? Does the load of visiting every house, apartment, condo and co-op every wear you out?

SANTA

You know, sometimes it does. When my team of accounting elves give me the projections for the number of residences I will visit, sometimes I think to myself, I wish there were more children who were naughty, and less who were nice. But then my team of demographic elves remind me of the Great Naughty Epidemic of 1947, when all I had in my bag were lumps of coal.

MYRRH

And tell us, what happened that fateful year? Was that a relaxing Christmas Day for Santa?

SANTA

Not really, I nearly coughed up a lung. Now, I would love nothing more than to answer your very-nearly-pertinent questions, but Santa has many miles to go before he naps. I must vamoose! Merry Christmas, everyone!

DROPO

(Smart mode) Mr. Claus, you are on a spaceship headed to Mars, where you will bring happiness to its children.

(Volmar barfs loudly)

SANTA

But that can't be. Release me, I say, I am needed on Earth, now!

KIMAR

Volmar, take the controls. I can't—**(barfs loudly)**

VOLMAR

I'm just the co-pilot, I never learned to— **(barfs loudly)**

KIMAR

Dropo. Can you steer us home?

DROPO

(Going in and out of smart and dumb mode) Can I? Well, of course...I mean it's like...I shall do my duty in the face of adversity...are you sure? Uh, maybe a cold compress, whatever that is...uh...**(Steps to a microphone onboard, speaking into it)** Passengers, we've encountered a small issue. No reason for alarm. Can anyone on-board pilot a spaceship? **(faints)**

SANTA

I suppose I can. I mean I supervised the elves making enough of 'em. Can't be too tricky, I reckon. **(Sits at Kimar's pilot position)** And I can pilot this craft right back to Earth in time for Christmas! **(Picks up a radio communication device)** Earth, do you read me, it's Santa. I am coming home. Do you read me?

VOICE

(Coming from the radio device) Copy, we read you. This is Uranus. Will you be stopping here on your way back?

SANTA

(Incredulous) No! Absolutely no...ho ho...not this time. Maybe next year. Got to complete my rounds on Earth.

VOICE

Copy, Santa. We look forward to it.

(We hear chaotic noise as the ship starts to malfunction.)

SANTA

What is going on? **(Speaks into radio device)** Rudolph? Come in, Rudolph!

(Noise becomes louder, lights flash, Santa and the sick passengers are shaken by the force of the ship flailing.)

ANOTHER VOICE

(This is the ship's computer system talking) Engine system failed. Attempt emergency landing immediately.

SANTA

Ohh, this is technology for you. My elves would never build—**(noise and turbulence get worse)** Ahhhhuuuhhh! **(As it quiets slightly, he speaks into device)** Uranus, we've got a problem.

VOICE

Yes, you do.

SANTA

You can see us? We've broken down, lost power!

VOICE

It's not breaking down, it's being steered by Mars. You will land there shortly.

SANTA

Mars? But, I turned around...toward Earth.

VOICE

Like most spaceships, this one is ultimately commanded by a remote control.

SANTA

Oh, those dang remote controls! Why can't they just lose the batteries?

(More noise and turbulence ensue and Dropo, Volmar and Kimar begin to awake and recover. Dropo staggers to the microphone.)

DROPO

Welcome to Mars. The current time is Sluvnay-forty-nuguvny. Please retrieve all personal items before exiting the craft.

(Volmar and Kimar shakily escort Santa and the now-awake Elfmanagement off the spaceship. Lights out.)

(Lights up on Myrrh on Earth.)

MYRRH

Troy, it's now been seven hours since Santa Claus was abducted by Martians. Martian officials have confirmed that Mr. Claus is, in fact, on their planet, but they are claiming his landing there was not intentional and not the result of a kidnapping. We will continue our— We have just received word that Mars is providing live video of Santa Claus on Mars and that he will make a statement. Lets' go that that exclusive live feed now.

(Lights up on Mars. A much worse-for-the-wear Santa sits in front of a TV camera. Dropo stands off to the side, holding a ray-gun on Elfmanagment.)

VOLDAR

(To Santa) Just read the statement, but don't look like you're reading.

SANTA

I will do no such thing! These aren't my sentiments. I am being held against my will and that is what I will tell the world.

DROPO

Read the statement, or the elf gets it.

KIMAR

Live in ***(counts three on fingers)*** go!

SANTA

(Stilted, halting) I am in no danger. I am being treated well and the decision to remain here is entirely mink. I will have no—

VOLDAR

(To Kimar) Mink?

MYRRH

(Off-camera, to no one in particular) Did he say "mink?"

KIMAR

(Frantically prompting Santa) Mine! The decision is entirely MINE!

SANTA

It says “mink.”

VOLDAR

(Stepping in front of camera) Mr. Claus is very exhausted and rocket-lagged. He thanks you for your concern. **(Steps out of camera view, signals Kimar to cut the video)**

MYRRH

(Back on-air) We seem to have lost Santa’s signal, but I know the world is breathing a sigh of relief to see that old Saint Nick is happy, healthy and enjoying his new surroundings. Troy, back to you.

SANTA

(To Voldar, Kimar, Droppo) You’ll never get away with this! And you can’t expect me to suddenly create Christmas on a planet where it has never existed! I mean there is planning, materials, infrastructure, elves—

KIMAR

Our industrial capabilities far exceed those on Earth.

SANTA

And how am I supposed to get around on Mars? Does your reindeer population far exceed that of Earth? Ha! Stumped you on that one, didn’t I? **(Kimar and Voldar look at each other perplexed)** Anyone?

DROPO

Uh...Uber?

SANTA

To say nothing of the fact that even if we did make enough toys and did have time to visit every child’s home and figured out what each of them wanted, what, pray tell, do we do about the fact that kids here don’t even know what Christmas is? I say ho ho ho, Merry Christmas, Santa’s got lots of goodies for you. They look at me like, who the dickens are you? I’m not known here, Mars children will think I’m just some schmuck in a red suit!