

WAITING FOR THE CHRISTMAS GUEST

Adapted by Janet Meili
Music and Lyrics by Larry Nestor



CHRISTIANPUBLISHERS

Copyright Notice

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Christian Publishers. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Christian Publishers. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Christian Publishers. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Christian Publishers.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this play is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice: ***Produced by special arrangement with Christian Publishers.***

COPYING: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Christian Publishers.

Waiting for the Christmas Guest

ADAPTED FROM
"HOW THE GREAT GUEST CAME,"
BY EDWIN MARKHAM
ADAPTATION BY JANET MEILI

MUSIC & LYRICS
BY LARRY NESTOR

CAST OF CHARACTERS

CONRAD

MARTHA

HANS

BEGGAR

OLD WOMAN

LOST CHILD

VOICE OF THE LORD

PRODUCTION NOTES

COSTUMES

Costumes may be American or European from mid-eighteenth century.

CONRAD: Knee-length breeches, long-sleeved (bloused sleeves) shirt with string tie, vest. His coat is a shapeless overcoat.

MARTHA: Long, dark-colored dress with high neck and long sleeves. Apron. Also a long, shapeless overcoat.

HANS: Knee-length breeches. Long overcoat. Scarf and/or heavy winter-type hat.

BEGGAR: Tattered, mended clothes. Rags tied around his feet.

OLD WOMAN: Floor-length dress. Overcoat or several shawls.

LOST CHILD: Knee-length pants. Short jacket. Knee socks.

PROPS

Manger scene should have three camels. No food need be on table, set with white china or some pewter. Martha needs a pair of socks, packages of cookies, bread, stollen. The Old Woman carries a large bundle tied in a blanket or shawl. Shoes for the Beggar come from the shop. He also needs a plate of food.

LIGHTS AND SOUND

Nothing special in either lighting or sound effects needed.

1 SETTING: The scene is a cobbler shop attached to a home. There
2 are some shoes and boots on a shelf in the shop, Stage Left.
3 Also a cobbler's bench and a plain bench. A fireplace is Up
4 Center with a rocking chair near. Down Center is a table with
5 a white cloth set for three, with three chairs. A manger scene
6 stands on a small table, right. In the Up Right corner are pegs
7 with CONRAD's jacket and muffler hanging on them. Entrances
8 are Down Right with a curtained window next to it, and Center
9 Left Upstage. There are greens on the fireplace mantle, and on
10 the shelf in the shop.

11 TIME: Christmas Eve.

12 AT RISE: MARTHA is bustling about, putting the finishing touches
13 on the table. CONRAD watches her and occasionally pulls aside
14 the curtain to look out the window. MARTHA is cheerful;
15 CONRAD is anxious.

16

17 MARTHA: Does the table look all right, Conrad?

18 CONRAD: It looks fine, Martha. The white cloth was a good
19 idea. It looks like a table set in one of the big houses on
20 the hill. But I wish our dishes matched.

21 MARTHA: People like us do not often serve this much food at
22 one time. Our guest will understand that we do not have
23 extra dishes.

24 CONRAD: What if he doesn't come?

25 MARTHA: If he said in your dream he was coming, he'll come.
26 (*CONRAD looks out the window.*)

27 CONRAD: I hear footsteps. Quick, Martha, take off your apron.

28 MARTHA: I cannot serve a meal without having my apron on.
29 I wouldn't feel dressed. (*CONRAD throws open the door.*
30 HANS enters.)

31 HANS: Merry Christmas, Conrad. Merry Christmas, Martha.

32 CONRAD: Oh, it's only you. Merry Christmas, Hans.

33 MARTHA: Merry Christmas.

34 HANS: It's only me, you say? Who were you expecting? Ah ha.
35 I see you are expecting company. Such fancy table,

- 1 **Martha.** You must be expecting someone special.
- 2 **MARTHA:** We are expecting someone very special. *(She looks*
 3 *at CONRAD, expecting him to take over, but he is looking out*
 4 *the window.)* Conrad had a dream last night that the Lord
 5 Jesus would come to be our guest this Christmas, so we
 6 have prepared for him.
- 7 **HANS:** That is a special guest, indeed.
- 8 **CONRAD:** Of course, we do not know that he will come.
- 9 **MARTHA:** But if he does, we are ready.
- 10 **HANS:** If he has promised, surely he will keep his promise.
- 11 **MARTHA:** I have cooked all my best dishes for him.
- 12 **HANS:** And Conrad has cleaned up the cobbler shop. I have
 13 never seen it so clean. I thought maybe you had gone out
 14 of business.
- 15 **CONRAD:** Business is not so good, but not so bad that I must
 16 stop.
- 17 **HANS:** And you have set up your manger scene. Why, where
 18 did the third camel come from? You never had more than
 19 two before.
- 20 **CONRAD:** I carved it this morning. Each wise man should
 21 have his own camel.
- 22 **HANS:** You did a beautiful job. I can't tell which is the new one.
- 23 **CONRAD:** Thank you.
- 24 **HANS:** Well, I must go. My family is waiting. But I had to stop
 25 in to exchange greetings with my oldest friends on
 26 Christmas Eve.
- 27 **MARTHA:** And please give our greetings to Louise and the
 28 children.
- 29 **HANS:** Thank you. I will. I would like to stay and greet your
 30 guest, but perhaps you will do so for me?
- 31 **MARTHA:** Of course, Hans. We will be happy to do so.
- 32 **CONRAD:** If he comes.
- 33 **HANS:** He will come. Good night and keep well.
- 34 **CONRAD:** Good night and have a safe journey home.
- 35 **MARTHA:** Good night. *(HANS leaves.)* A good man, Hans. *(She*

- 1 *looks over the table.*) Oh, my. I forgot the pickles.
- 2 **CONRAD:** I am being foolish. Why should the Lord Jesus
- 3 come here?
- 4 **MARTHA:** Hans did not doubt. Why should you?
- 5 **CONRAD:** It is a great honor and I have done nothing to
- 6 deserve it.
- 7 **MARTHA:** We can none of us do anything to deserve the
- 8 grace of God.
- 9 **CONRAD:** Someone comes! *(He opens the door. A BEGGAR*
- 10 *stands without, dressed in rags, with feet bound in rags.)*
- 11 **BEGGAR:** A coin? A copper? Just one copper for Christmas
- 12 Eve?
- 13 **CONRAD:** And what would you do with a coin if I gave it to
- 14 you? All the shops are already closed.
- 15 **BEGGAR:** Pardon, sir. I only hoped — sometimes at Christmas
- 16 — I did not mean to be a bother — *(Turns to leave.)*
- 17 **CONRAD:** Here! Where are you going? Come in, come in. *(He*
- 18 *pulls BEGGAR into the room.)*
- 19 **MARTHA:** Oh, you poor man. You're frozen. Come here to the
- 20 fire. *(Pulls up chair.)*
- 21 **CONRAD:** Have you no shoes?
- 22 **BEGGAR:** No, sir. They fell apart many miles back.
- 23 **CONRAD:** Martha, have you a pair of socks hidden away?
- 24 **MARTHA:** Certainly. I just finished knitting them for you
- 25 last night. *(She exits Upstage and returns with the socks.)*
- 26 **BEGGAR:** You must not give them to me.
- 27 **MARTHA:** It's so easy to knit a pair of socks. I will have a new
- 28 pair for Conrad in two evening's work. *(CONRAD brings*
- 29 *boots from the shelf in the shop.)*
- 30 **CONRAD:** These should fit you all right.
- 31 **BEGGAR:** I cannot take your boots.
- 32 **CONRAD:** They are not my boots. Well, I suppose they are. I
- 33 made them. But I made them for someone who needed a
- 34 pair, which you certainly do.
- 35 **BEGGAR:** I cannot pay you.

- 1 **CONRAD:** Pay me with the coin I didn't give you.
- 2 **MARTHA:** Would you like a bowl of soup? The outside of you
3 will warm better if the inside is warmed, too.
- 4 **BEGGAR:** Thank you. You are so kind.
- 5 **MARTHA:** Nonsense. It is no more than anyone would do.
- 6 **CONRAD:** When did you eat last?
- 7 **BEGGAR:** There is always little to eat each day, enough to
8 keep going even if not enough to satisfy.
- 9 **CONRAD:** You need more than soup. Martha, bring a leg of
10 the fowl and a dish of vegetables.
- 11 **MARTHA:** But if I cut a leg off, it will ruin the looks of the
12 platter.
- 13 **CONRAD:** Yes, yes. The bird looks perfect, but our expected
14 guest will not eat two legs, and our unexpected guest
15 needs a Christmas dinner.
- 16 **MARTHA:** Of course, Conrad. *(She exits Upstage.)*
- 17 **CONRAD:** We will have to find someplace for you to sleep.
18 Let's see . . .
- 19 **BEGGAR:** That is not necessary. I was on my way to a place
20 where many of my kind gather. I wouldn't have stopped,
21 but I saw your light and I was so cold. *(MARTHA returns*
22 *with a plate of food.)*
- 23 **MARTHA:** Here you are. Eat hearty. *(CONRAD pours from*
24 *pitcher on table into mug, and hands it to him.)*
- 25 **BEGGAR:** Thank you. *(CONRAD and MARTHA move away.)*
- 26 **MARTHA:** Should we invite him to stay?
- 27 **CONRAD:** No.
- 28 **MARTHA:** Conrad, it's Christmas.
- 29 **CONRAD:** And he's on his way to join his friends. A man
30 should be with his friends on a holiday. Have you,
31 perhaps, some extra cookies he could take along as a treat?
- 32 **MARTHA:** Of course. *(She exits Upstage and returns with a bag of*
33 *cookies.)*
- 34 **CONRAD:** Well, my friend, will you have more?
- 35 **BEGGAR:** Thank you, sir, but I have eaten enough. You are

- 1 fortunate to have married such an excellent cook. I thank
2 you for the food and the socks and boots. Now I will be
3 on my way to join my friends. I shall be the warmest,
4 most contented man there.
- 5 **CONRAD:** Merry Christmas, and have a safe journey.
- 6 **MARTHA:** *(Handing him the package)* Merry Christmas.
- 7 **BEGGAR:** What is this?
- 8 **MARTHA:** Just a few cookies to share with your friends.
- 9 **BEGGAR:** Thank you. Thank you for everything. Merry
10 Christmas. *(BEGGAR exits.)*
- 11 **CONRAD:** He was a nice man.
- 12 **MARTHA:** Well-spoken and polite.
- 13 **CONRAD:** Appreciative of what we gave him.
- 14 **MARTHA:** But dirty.
- 15 **CONRAD:** Martha!
- 16 **MARTHA:** *(Laughing)* Well, he was.
- 17 **CONRAD:** Does the goose look very bad?
- 18 **MARTHA:** No, not at all. If I carry the platter with the cut
19 side toward me, you will scarcely notice it. *(There is a*
20 *knock at the door.)*
- 21 **CONRAD:** He comes! *(Runs to door and opens it. An old WOMAN*
22 *with a large bundle stands outside.)*
- 23 **WOMAN:** May I come in and rest myself for a moment?
- 24 **CONRAD:** Certainly. Come in and sit by the fire. I'll take care
25 of your bundle.
- 26 **MARTHA:** You poor woman! Why are you on the road tonight?
- 27 **WOMAN:** Oh, my landlord gave me a fine Christmas present,
28 he did. This morning he turned me out of my cottage. He
29 said he was going to fix it up and get twice as much rent
30 for it as I can pay, so he said it would be a good time for
31 me to move out.
- 32 **CONRAD:** Where will you go?
- 33 **WOMAN:** That is no problem. I have a son who lives with his
34 family in the next village. They do not know that their
35 Christmas present this year is that Grandma is coming to

- 1 stay. But they will be happy to have me.
- 2 **MARTHA:** Surely your son could have helped you to move?
- 3 That bundle is much too heavy for you to carry. Oh,
- 4 forgive me. It is really none of my business.
- 5 **WOMAN:** No, no, you're right. My son would have helped me
- 6 move if he had known what happened. But he doesn't.
- 7 And since I was going to spend Christmas at their house
- 8 anyway, I thought I'd just take my things with me. I have
- 9 so little, I had no idea the bundle would get so heavy.
- 10 But I am rested now and will be on my way.
- 11 **CONRAD:** Let Martha give you something to eat before you go.
- 12 **MARTHA:** I have a fine goose and dressing and stewed
- 13 cabbage and —
- 14 **WOMAN:** No, no. My son's wife will have a Christmas dinner
- 15 ready when I get there.
- 16 **MARTHA:** Will you drink a cup of soup at least?
- 17 **WOMAN:** That would be fine, thank you. (*MARTHA exits*
- 18 *Upstage.*) I hope my family isn't worried. They expected
- 19 me hours ago. But it took time to pack. And with the
- 20 bundle I could not walk as fast as usual.
- 21 **MARTHA:** (*Returning with soup*) Conrad, you must go along
- 22 and carry the bundle for her.
- 23 **CONRAD:** Yes, of course. (*He gets heavy jacket and muffler from*
- 24 *peg Up Right and puts them on.*)
- 25 **WOMAN:** No, no. You are expecting company. The table is set
- 26 for three.
- 27 **MARTHA:** We are expecting a guest, yes. But he will under-
- 28 stand Conrad means no disrespect by not being here to
- 29 greet him. (*MARTHA crosses to Upstage exit and returns with*
- 30 *packet of cookies.*)
- 31 **WOMAN:** Thank you for your kindness. You do not have to
- 32 come with me.
- 33 **CONRAD:** I may not have to, but I want to.
- 34 **MARTHA:** (*Handing her the package*) Here are some cookies
- 35 for your grandchildren. Merry Christmas and may you

1 **come safely to your home.**

2 **WOMAN:** Merry Christmas. (*Old WOMAN and CONRAD exit,*
3 *carrying her bundle.*)

4 **MARTHA:** Well, at least this year our Christmas cookies will
5 **not get stale before we get them all eaten.** (*She checks the*
6 *table, straightens a piece of silver, crosses to the manger.*) **Yes,**
7 **Conrad did a fine job on the camel. He is so good with**
8 **his hands. He is such a good man in all ways. You, baby,**
9 (*Picks up crib*) **you said you would come tonight. Please**
10 **come. Conrad would be so honored.** (*Listens.*) **That's a**
11 **child crying!** (*Puts down crib, crosses to door and opens it.*
12 *CONRAD enters carrying the CHILD.*) **Conrad, you're back**
13 **already? And what is wrong with this child?** (*CONRAD*
14 *puts child down and hangs up his coat and muffler. MARTHA*
15 *kneels beside the child, takes off his cap, gives him a*
16 *handkerchief, etc.*)

17 **CONRAD:** We met the old woman's son coming to find her.
18 He had been worried because she was so late. My, but he
19 was furious when he heard what the landlord had done,
20 and on Christmas, too. She will have a good home with
21 him. As to this one, I found him on the way back, but can
22 get nothing out of him except sobs.

23 **MARTHA:** There, there, little one. It is Christmas. You must
24 not cry. Oh, your hands are so cold! Come over to the
25 fire. Now, blow your nose, and take a deep breath and
26 tell me what's wrong.

27 **CHILD:** I'm lost. (*Sobs again.*)

28 **MARTHA:** Oh, that's too bad. But maybe we can help you.
29 What's your name?

30 **CHILD:** Tommy.

31 **MARTHA:** What's your father's name?

32 **CHILD:** Daddy's in heaven.

33 **MARTHA:** Oh. What's your mother's name?

34 **CHILD:** Mom's the Widow Schultz.

35 **CONRAD:** The Widow Schultz? Why, she lives way on the

- 1 other side of town. What are you doing over here, Tommy?
- 2 **CHILD:** Mom sent me to the baker to get some old bread. He
3 sells his old bread cheaper at night. But the baker was
4 closed and I went to look for another one, but all the
5 shops were closed and I got lost and I don't know how
6 to get home. (*CHILD sobs again.*)
- 7 **MARTHA:** Now, now, Tommy, don't cry. We know where your
8 mother lives and we'll get you home all right. You just
9 have some milk and cookies while I get a few things
10 together. (*MARTHA pours a cup from the jug on the table,*
11 *brings cookies from Upstage exit and exits Upstage again.*)
- 12 **CONRAD:** Are there many in your family, Tommy?
- 13 **CHILD:** I've got two sisters. The little one has a cold. That's
14 why Mom didn't go to the baker herself.
- 15 **CONRAD:** You know, the stores are closed because it's
16 Christmas.
- 17 **CHILD:** I heard. I don't know too much about Christmas.
- 18 **CONRAD:** (*Crosses to manger scene.*) Many hundreds of years
19 ago, a baby was born in Bethlehem. The angels sang, and
20 the shepherds and wise men came to worship him. That
21 baby grew up to be the Lord Jesus.
- 22 **CHILD:** You mean Christmas is his birthday?
- 23 **CONRAD:** Yes, and everyone who believes in him celebrates
24 this day. (*MARTHA enters with coat and scarf on and some*
25 *packages in her arms.*)
- 26 **MARTHA:** If you've finished your cookies, Tommy, I'm ready
27 to start out for your house.
- 28 **CONRAD:** Martha, you mustn't go out in the cold. I'll go.
- 29 **MARTHA:** You should stay to greet our guest. I won't be gone
30 long. It really isn't far to the Widow Schultz's house if
31 you go in a straight line instead of down side streets
32 looking for bakeries.
- 33 **CHILD:** But I've got to look for a bakery. I don't have any
34 bread to take home.
- 35 **MARTHA:** Yes, you do. I have here a loaf still warm from the

oven and a Christmas stollen and a bag of Christmas cookies. We had better go. I imagine your mother is already worried that you are so late. Conrad, give my greetings to our guest if he can't stay until I get back. Everything is warming in the oven.

CHILD: Thank you very much. *(They exit. CONRAD walks around. He pokes at the fire, looks out the window, crosses to the manger scene, looks at it, finally kneels and prays.)*

CONRAD: Dear Lord, we wait for you to come. We pray for your forgiveness that we have not spent the evening in prayer. We pray for your forgiveness that we have spent the evening in worldly affairs rather than preparing for your coming. But we wait for you. We trust your promise to come. Amen.

VOICE OF THE LORD: *(Use cassette recording, public address system or voice from the rear of church.)* Conrad, three times I came to you this day. I came as the beggar with frozen feet, as the overburdened woman and as the lost child. Each time you treated me with love and respect. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

(CURTAIN)

NOTE: The numerals running vertically down the left margin of each page of dialog are for the convenience of the director. With these he/she may easily direct attention to a specific passage.

OPTIONAL MUSIC FOR
WAITING FOR
THE CHRISTMAS GUEST

Music and Lyrics
by Larry Nestor

Two new songs are included with this kit. They are:

- 1. He Is Coming**
- 2. The Newborn Babe**

They may be used to heighten the dramatic mood of the story. We suggest the song, "He Is Coming," be inserted in the following places in your playbook:

Page 2, line 35, after Martha says: "Goodnight."

Page 5, line 10, after the Beggar exits.

Page 7, line 2, after the Old Woman and Conrad exit.

Page 9, line 8, when Conrad kneels and prays.

The song, "The Newborn Babe," may be used as an appropriate ending, either as a vocal solo or as a choral number.

The use of these songs is not required but we feel that they may add to the beauty of your presentation.

He Is Coming

Words & Music by Larry Nestor

Moderate **Bb** **Gm7**

He is com - ing, He is com - ing

soon he will be here. He is com - ing, He is

com - ing, soon He will be near,

soon He will be near.

rit.

© Copyright Larry Nestor 1992

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
No performance or photocopy rights are conveyed.*

The Newborn Babe

Words & Music
by Larry Nestor

Moderate with Feeling

G Cm G

He

Bm 5 Em Am7 D7

came in a sim - ple way: wood - en man - ger bed of hay.
star shin - ing oh so bright led three wise men on that night.

GMaj.7 Em7 10 Am7

Shep - herds gath - ered 'round the New - born Babe of
an - gels praised his name, the New - born Babe of

© 1987 Larry Nestor

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
No performance or photocopy rights are conveyed.*



*Thank you for reading this free excerpt from:
WAITING FOR THE CHRISTMAS GUEST.*

*For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script,
please contact us at:*

CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS
P.O. Box 248 - Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406
Toll Free: 1-844-841-6387 - Fax (319) 368-8011
customerservice@christianpub.com