

CHRISTMAS COMES BUT ONCE A YEAR

by Melvin R. White



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BUT ONCE A YEAR**

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PRODUCTION NOTES

This script for the Christmas season combines the old and the modern, the religious and the non-religious; it is thoughtful as well as entertaining — sentimental, at times, as well as humorous.

Soloists or carolers may provide transitions between various portions of the script, and a few are suggested. However, more may be inserted to enhance the production — or to vary its length.

Ten readers are recommended, although fewer or more may be cast. Versatile performers are needed if the cast is limited to ten, as each will be needed to interpret several roles. Those ten should include: Two narrators — effective male and female storytellers; Four male readers — capable of suggesting various mature character men, and capable of suggesting various boys as well as older men; Four female readers — capable of suggesting various mature character women, and capable of suggesting various girls as well as older women.

The playing area is bare except for ten ordinary chairs or stools lined up across the stage, Upstage. From these, the readers move into and out of the scenes as needed.

As the performance starts, the readers enter and seat themselves on the Upstage chairs, alternating a man and a woman. The two narrators each occupy one of the end chairs, Up Right and Up Left, and move Downstage as needed, returning chairs to their original places when no longer in the scene.

* *Compiled by Melvin R. White*

CAST

NARRATOR 1, 2

READERS 2, 4, 7 and 8
female

READERS 1, 3, 5 and 6
male

READERS 9 and 10
male or female

ANGEL GABRIEL

MARY

SHEPHERD

INTERPRETER

1 **NARRATOR 1:** The book of the prophet Isaiah, Chapter 9,
2 Verse 6:

3 **READER 1 or 2:** For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is
4 given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder;
5 and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The
6 Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

7 **NARRATOR 1:** The Gospel according to St. Luke: Chapter 1,
8 Verses 26-35:

9 **NARRATOR 2:** And . . . the angel Gabriel was sent from God
10 unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin
11 espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house
12 of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel
13 came in unto her and said,

14 **ANGEL GABRIEL:** Hail, thou that art highly favored, the
15 Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.

16 **NARRATOR 2:** And when she last saw him, she was troubled
17 at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of
18 salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her,

19 **GABRIEL:** Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with
20 God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and
21 bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall
22 be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and
23 the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father
24 David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever;
25 and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

26 **NARRATOR 2:** Then said Mary unto the angel,

27 **MARY:** How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

28 **NARRATOR 2:** And the angel answered and said unto her,

29 **GABRIEL:** The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the
30 power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore
31 also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be
32 called the Son of God. *(Those who read in this segment return*
33 *to their seats, except NARRATOR 1.)*

34 **NARRATOR 1:** The Gospel according to St. Luke: Chapter 2,
35 Verses 1-20; Tidings of Great Joy.

READER 2: And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them,

GABRIEL: *(Leaving his Upstage seat)* Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you. Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

READER 2: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

ENTIRE CAST: *(Do not enter scene. Simply read from the frozen position.)* Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men. *(ANGEL returns to his Upstage seat as one SHEPHERD comes Down Center.)*

READER 2: And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another,

SHEPHERD: Let us go now even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

READER 2: And they came with haste, and found Mary and

Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. (*Returns to her Upstage seat, as does the SHEPHERD.*)

MUSIC: (*Insert here, if desired, "Joy to the World."*)

READER 1: In the 2,000-odd years since the birth of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whose birthday we celebrate each year in varying degrees and in various ways, or some, not at all, the celebration is sometimes religious, sometimes commercial.

READER 2: I really want to know you.

READER 3: Christ has many faces.

READER 4: A doer of good.

READER 5: A freak.

READER 6: A healer.

READER 7: A radical.

READER 8: An intellectual.

READER 9: A tourist attraction.

READER 10: What do you want for Christmas?

READER 1: Christmas is kid stuff.

READER 2: Christmas? Bah, humbug!

NARRATOR 1: In the year of our Lord, 1660, this statute was passed in the Massachusetts Colony: "Public Notice. The observation of Christmas having been deemed a Sacrilege, the exchanging of Gifts and Greetings, dressing in Fine Clothing, Feasting and similar Satanical Practices are hereby *forbidden* with the Offender liable to a Fine of Five Shillings." But no statute prevailed against the tradition of Christmas. From an old carol we hear:

ENTIRE CAST: (*Unison, reading with deep feeling*)

Angels we have heard on high,

Sweetly singing o'er the plains,

And the mountains in reply

Echoing their joyous strains:

"Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!"

NARRATOR 1: William Shakespeare wrote this about the
season of Christmas:

INTERPRETER: Some say that ever 'gainst that season
comes

Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,

The bird of dawning singeth all night long;

And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad;

The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,

No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,

So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

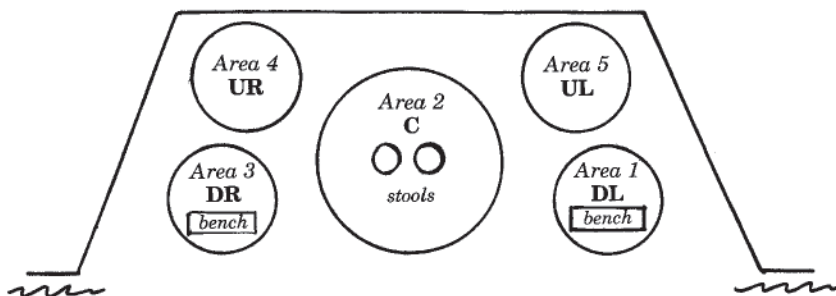
MUSIC: (*Insert choral number here, possibly "O Holy Night."*)

The Rainbow and the Star*

PRODUCTION NOTES

This adaptation of a short story, *A Rainbow and a Star*, uses the well-known characters of the old story of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, but fits them into the story of the birth of Christ, providing a new plot and adding other and different characters.

The cast need not be costumed, but biblical-type garments add to the effectiveness of the production. Lighting, too, is not necessary, but since the staging and acting suggestions made throughout the script call for various scenes to be played in certain areas of the stage or platform, area lighting could be used. Ordinary stools or benches will suffice, but if rustic ones are available that suggest the birth of Christ, they are preferable.



Platform Arrangement for "A Rainbow and a Star"

The playing area, hopefully rather wide, is divided into five parts: Area One, Down Left; Area Two, Center; Area Three, Down Right; Area Four, Up Right; and Area five, Up Left. A rustic bench is positioned Down Left and Down Right; two rustic stools or short benches, Center.

If a rather elaborate production is desired, the Nativity scene can be staged Down Right; if this is not done, Jack will see it in his imagination — as well as imagining the shepherds, the three noblemen, and others. Rosie, the cow, is imagined; Jack will focus on her and talk with her, lead her by her halter rope, and all, but in pantomime. As many or as few townspeople

*by George P. McCallum. Adapted by Melvin R. White

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and shepherds may be included in the cast as wished, or their lines can be read by Offstage voices as Jack "sees them in the mind's eye" on stage. In short, the story may be given with as small a cast or as large a cast as the producing group decides to stage it. In fact, one recent production was successfully staged with a cast of five on five stools and five lecterns lined up across a narrow room, with no movement and with Offstage (in the realm of the audience) placement of all the characters, imagined and real. For "theater of the mind," this script might even be preferable to the suggested procedures indicated in the script.

CAST

NARRATOR

An effective storyteller, man or woman

JACK

An 11-year-old boy, but mature for his age

MOTHER

A typical motherly type, probably a young middle age

OLD MAN

A merry little gentleman about the same height as Jack.

NEIGHBORS 1, 2

OTHER READERS

A few other readers, various ages, both male and female, to serve as the three shepherds, townspeople, and the three kings

AT RISE: As the curtain is drawn, the cast is found on stage: Down Left MOTHER is seated on a bench, JACK standing beside her. The OLD MAN is seated on the stool to the right at Center. Down Right, the Nativity scene, if one is used, with the three SHEPHERDS and NOBLEMEN standing in an interesting grouping Up Right, facing away from the audience. Everyone is frozen in position. If all scenes and characters are to be imagined, only the MOTHER, JACK, and the OLD MAN will be on stage, frozen. If no curtain, the various characters walk in and take their assigned positions. When the tableau is complete, the NARRATOR comes Down Center and talks with the audience.

READER 1: So many of the stories written about Christmas are all cut from the same cloth — the same settings, similar characters. Perhaps realization of this inspired George P. McCallum to create his own folk tale to tell the beautiful story of Christmas. He titled it, *The Rainbow and the Star*.

NARRATOR: Once upon a time a boy named Jack lived with his widowed mother in a miserable hut at the edge of a small village. Both Jack and his mother worked very hard, but they did not make enough money to buy enough to eat — and their clothes were ragged and worn. Work was hard to find, so most of the money they had came from the milk they sold from their cow, Rosie. One day Jack came home to find his mother in tears. (*JACK and MOTHER come to life, Down Left, with JACK at Center of bench.*)

MOTHER: (*Crying*) What're we going to do, Jack? The cow has gone dry, so now we don't even have any milk to sell. I guess the only thing we can do is get rid of Rosie.

JACK: (*Protesting*) But Mother, we can't sell Rosie. She's like one of the family!

MOTHER: (*Wiping her eyes*) Jack, we have to think of Rosie,

1 too. If we keep her, we'll all starve. If we sell her, perhaps
2 she'll have a good home and live a long time. And then
3 you and I will have enough money to at least see us
4 through the winter.

5 **JACK:** I hate to, Mother, but I must agree with you. You are
6 right. Shall I take Rosie to town now and see if I can sell
7 her?

8 **MOTHER:** *(Starting to cry a little again)* Yes, Jack. Oh, I hate
9 to part with Rosie . . . but there's nothing else we can do.
10 *(JACK starts to move Down Center.)* Now be sure you get a
11 good price for her! *(MOTHER may leave the stage, Down Left.*
12 *JACK goes to Rosie Down Center, pantomimes putting on a*
13 *halter, takes the rope and leads the cow toward the*
14 *TOWNSPEOPLE, Up Left, who turn to talk with Jack.)*

15 **JACK:** *(In Down Center position)* Come on, Rosie old girl.

16 **NEIGHBOR 1:** Good morning, Jack.

17 **JACK:** Good morning. How are you?

18 **NEIGHBOR 1:** Just fine. Where are you going with Rosie?

19 **JACK:** To town. We have to sell her.

20 **NEIGHBOR 2:** Sell Rosie! Such a pity!

21 **NEIGHBOR 1:** Why, hers is the richest, sweetest milk I ever
22 tasted. Must you sell her?

23 **JACK:** Yes, she's gone dry, and we need the money for the
24 winter.

25 **NEIGHBOR 2:** If you have no choice . . .

26 **JACK:** No, we must sell her. *(Almost crying, he is so sad.)*

27 **NEIGHBOR 1:** If you must, strike a good bargain, Jack. Get
28 a good price for Rosie. She's the best, you know. I wish
29 I could buy her, but I've no money to spare. Oh dear.
30 *(TOWNSPEOPLE may turn their backs and freeze, may cross*
31 *Up Right to serve in the stable scene, or if not to be used again,*
32 *may leave the playing area Up Left.)*

33 **NARRATOR:** Since the neighbors were all too poor, as poor
34 as Jack and his Mother, he would have to sell Rosie
35 elsewhere. *(Glancing at the skies)* It had been clouding up

1 to rain, and about half an hour later Jack and his cow
 2 left the village and moved out onto a plain beyond the
 3 town. Big wet raindrops began to fall on them. Luckily,
 4 they were near a grove of trees. (*JACK has been leading*
 5 *the imaginary cow across the Upstage area; now he leads Rosie*
 6 *Center toward the old man who unfreezes.*)

7 **JACK:** Come on, Rosie. Stop trying to eat that grass. It's
 8 starting to rain. We can get shelter under those trees.
 9 (*Seeing them, Down Center*) Well, all right! Get wet if you want
 10 to stop here to eat grass. I'm going under that big tree over
 11 there. (*Drops the cow's rope and moves toward Center.*)

12 **OLD MAN:** Well, we have company! Hello, young man.
 13 Welcome to my refuge from the cold and wet. (*Laughing*
 14 *a bit at JACK's surprise, fright and bewilderment*) Here, have
 15 a seat on this bank beside me: good, soft, comfortable
 16 grass here. (*JACK rather diffidently seats himself to the left of*
 17 *the OLD MAN.*) Are you hungry, boy?

18 **JACK:** Uh . . . uh . . . yessir, I am.

19 **OLD MAN:** Here then, have some of this. (*OLD MAN holds out*
 20 *some imaginary bread which JACK takes and pantomimes*
 21 *eating. Then they both freeze as the NARRATOR begins; he, by*
 22 *the way, has moved Up Center and a bit to the right to watch*
 23 *the preceding scenes — as he watches all the various scenes*
 24 *throughout the story, thus helping to focus the audience's*
 25 *attention on each succeeding scene.*)

26 **NARRATOR:** From somewhere the old man with the long
 27 white beard, the merry little gentleman, brought out a
 28 piece of bread and some delicious gold-colored cheese
 29 and gave them to Jack. Rosie, who had found a patch of
 30 green grass on which to munch, seemed to feel better,
 31 too. Then, before they knew it, the clouds started to roll
 32 away, the sun peeked out, and on the horizon appeared
 33 the most beautiful rainbow Jack had ever seen.

34 **JACK:** Mister, look! The rainbow! (*Seeing it out front over the*
 35 *heads of the audience*) **Look!**

- 1 OLD MAN: There's a pot of gold at the end of it. I've seen it.
2 JACK: (*Staring at him in disbelief*) You've seen it? Uh . . . do
3 you come from there?
4 OLD MAN: (*Always twinkling*) Yes, in a way, I come from the
5 end of the rainbow.
6 JACK: Why didn't you take the pot of gold, then?
7 OLD MAN: (*Laughing until he shakes*) Why take what you
8 already have?
9 JACK: I . . . I don't understand what you mean, sir. (*Pause*)
10 How big is the pot?
11 OLD MAN: Big enough to hold enough.
12 JACK: Then how much gold is in it?
13 OLD MAN: More than you'll ever need.
14 JACK: How do I find it?
15 OLD MAN: There are many ways.
16 JACK: Why hasn't anyone taken it?
17 OLD MAN: Oh, they have, many times.
18 JACK: What happens to the gold when there is no rainbow?
19 OLD MAN: It's always there.
20 JACK: Where?
21 OLD MAN: The same place it is when you see the rainbow.
22 JACK: (*Sighing*) I know no more about the pot of gold than
23 I did when I asked my first question.
24 OLD MAN: (*More serious than he has been*) You know as much
25 as anyone does, and that is all that is necessary. You see,
26 Jack, it really doesn't matter which way you take to get
27 there. You'll find the end of the rainbow if you really try.
28 But remember this is a cloud — and you'll never have the
29 one without the other. (*Standing up.*) Now, Jack, be on
30 your way. The rain has stopped. Goodbye, my boy, and
31 good luck! (*The OLD MAN disappears — freezes or walks*
32 *backstage out of sight. JACK goes to the imaginary Rosie, picks*
33 *up her halter rope, and again walks around and about the*
34 *Upstage area.*)
35 NARRATOR: (*Coming down to talk with the audience*) Jack was

more bewildered than ever. Here he was, on his way to sell Rosie and suddenly, because of a very strange and mysterious, but jolly and friendly little old man with a long white beard he found himself thinking, "I've got to get to the end of that rainbow and find the pot of gold! It seems quite near! Maybe if I walk fast, even with Rosie holding me back, I can make it by nightfall! Then Mother and I will be rich the rest of our lives — and we won't have to sell Rosie, either!" (*JACK stops to rest, Down Center, looking out front at the rainbow.*)

JACK: Rosie, we've been walking as fast as we can for half an hour — no, almost an hour! — and we're no closer to the end of the rainbow than we were when we started. But we're going right toward it. I'm getting tired, but it can't be much farther. (*Freezes — or may continue his wanderings about the stage, always leading Rosie behind him.*)

NARRATOR: But no matter how fast they walked, the rainbow never got any closer. In fact, it seemed just that much farther away. Night was coming on, and soon the rainbow would be gone from the sky. Jack wondered what he would do then, a long way from home, and all alone out here on the great plain, no signs of anyone in sight, no houses, nobody. He began to be angry with the little old man who had told him about the rainbow. If he had just not listened, he wouldn't be in this predicament! (*Pause*) Finally darkness filled the sky, and the lovely arch of color disappeared. (*JACK sits at Center.*) Jack sat down to rest and think. He wanted to turn around and take Rosie back home, but he knew he wouldn't dare. His Mother would be furious. (*JACK lies down on the ground.*)

JACK: That's right, Rosie, you lie down and rest, too. We can't go home now. It's too late — and besides, Mother'll be angry that I did not manage to sell you, that I wasted so much time listening to that old man. I'm sorry, Rosie, to get you into this, but I really meant only the best for

1 both of us. I thought if I had found the pot of gold, I could
 2 take you back home — not have to part with you. *(Pauses*
 3 *as he looks up at the stars. May yawn and stretch, too.)* It is
 4 rather pleasant to lie here, gazing at the stars. See, Rosie,
 5 they're just coming out now. They look like . . . like grains
 6 of silver. But look at that big one — over there in the
 7 East! It's so bright, so . . . why, it's moving! *(Stands up)*
 8 Come on, Rosie, let's see where it goes! *(Starts to move)*
 9 Come on! *(Stops)* No, I'm not going to be fooled again.
 10 Look what happened to us when we tried to find the end
 11 of the rainbow *(Sits down again)* Rosie, stop pulling! We're
 12 not going! *(Pantomimes rope pulling on his arm.)* What's
 13 gotten into you, Rosie? You want to follow that star? Well,
 14 all right then. It's still moving. I guess if you're willing
 15 to follow that star, I am, too! *(Looks off toward Down Right.)*
 16 It seems to be stopping over that little town down there.
 17 All right, Rosie, we'll go down there. Come on. *(Again*
 18 *JACK leads the cow in a circuitous route which leads him*
 19 *eventually Up Right where he can be joined by SHEPHERDS*
 20 *and OTHERS, as desired.)*

21 NARRATOR: As they entered the town and began moving
 22 down the narrow, winding streets, Jack and Rosie were
 23 joined by a group of shepherds who seemed to be
 24 following the star, too. Jack thought he heard someone
 25 say the word, "Messiah," but he couldn't be sure. At last
 26 they came to the very place above which the beautiful
 27 moving star had come to rest. *(JACK and the SHEPHERDS,*
 28 *unless it is decided to make them imaginary, are now grouped*
 29 *above and to the left of the Down Right tableau, be it real or*
 30 *imaginary. The SHEPHERDS grumble a bit among themselves.)*
 31 The shepherds seemed disappointed when they saw that
 32 this was the humblest of stables, a mere cave in the side
 33 of a hill. One of them grumbled something to the effect
 34 that it was all a big mistake that they had followed the
 35 star, but the others insisted they enter. Jack followed,

1 and because it was, after all, a stable, he took Rosie in,
 2 too. (*Transition pause*) It is not easy to describe what they
 3 saw. There, in a manger, lay a newborn baby, and at his
 4 side, a young man and woman, obviously his parents.
 5 This was no ordinary couple with their newborn child.
 6 (*SHEPHERDS kneel, and almost at once, JACK follows suit.*)
 7 Something about them caused the shepherds to fall on
 8 their knees in worship, and Jack did so, too. It was the
 9 most beautiful baby Jack had ever seen: evidently the
 10 young mother thought so, too, because she took it in her
 11 arms and smiled down on its little face with such love
 12 that a light seemed to shine from both their faces. (*The*
 13 *following may be omitted if the THREE WISE MEN are not*
 14 *introduced into the story. If they are included, JACK, of course,*
 15 *watches them and reacts to everything.*)

16 As Jack and the shepherds knelt in silence, gazing
 17 at the mother and child, there was a stir at the entrance
 18 of the stable, and in strode three richly-clothed men. They
 19 were obviously noblemen, perhaps even kings, Jack
 20 thought. Each bore a gift which he placed before the
 21 child, then knelt with Jack and the shepherds. (*As always,*
 22 *the action is done as indicated in the narration.*)

23 JACK: I wish I had a gift for the baby. But what can I give?
 24 I have no money, nothing at all. (*Hears Rosie bawling a bit.*)
 25 Rosie, be quiet. Stop that bawling. You're dry; you don't
 26 need to be milked. (*Sees her bag full of milk*) Why, Rosie,
 27 your bag is full! It's . . . it's a miracle. What better gift for
 28 a baby than some of your milk! Everyone says yours is
 29 the sweetest, richest milk in the land! (*If desired, JACK*
 30 *can pantomime milking a bit, in an imaginary basin.*)

31 NARRATOR: Jack found a small basin and hurried to Rosie's
 32 side and began to milk her. It was the richest, sweetest
 33 milk she had ever given. And the supply seemed endless!
 34 When the basin was filled with the creamy, rich liquid,
 35 Jack carried it (*JACK does so*) to where the baby lay and

1 **held the basin out to the child's mother.**

2 **JACK:** *(Shyly, his voice trembling)* Please, ma'am, it's for your
3 baby. I think he'll like it. There's none sweeter anywhere,
4 everyone says. *(Hesitates, then adds)* Ma'am, he's the most
5 beautiful baby I've ever seen. *(JACK retreats to Rosie and*
6 *leads her outside and a bit away from the manger area.)* Come
7 on, Rosie. That's a good girl . . . come on, *(As they walk*
8 *away, JACK says to Rosie, sotto voce)* Rosie, did you see how
9 she smiled at me when I gave her your milk? I'll remember
10 that smile all my life. Now we must get some rest. Let's
11 lie down here and sleep until morning. Then we'll go
12 home. We won't have to sell you, now that you are giving
13 milk again, so we can go back home. *(JACK lies down.*
14 *NEIGHBORS have returned to the Up Left area.)*

15 **NARRATOR:** The next morning when they awakened, the
16 stable was empty. The couple, their baby, the three kings
17 and the shepherds had gone. Jack rubbed his eyes and
18 wondered if he had dreamed it all. If so, it was the most
19 wonderful dream he had ever had. But when he lead
20 Rosie toward home, she bawled impatiently and stopped
21 in her tracks, refusing to budge. She wanted to be milked
22 again! *(JACK leads the cow around and about the playing area,*
23 *and as he approaches the NEIGHBORS in the Up Left area, he*
24 *begins to sell milk once again.)*

25 **JACK:** Milk! *(Calling)* Milk! Milk for sale! The richest milk in
26 the land! Milk for sale. Get your milk here! *(NEIGHBORS*
27 *come out to buy, ad libbing such as: "Jack, I need a pot of Rosie's*
28 *milk today, as I am making a custard for supper." "Don't forget*
29 *to save some for me, Jack." etc. Jack busily pours milk, collects*
30 *pennies, answers the ad libs, and finally is finished.)* That's all
31 the milk for today, neighbors, but there'll be plenty for
32 all of you tomorrow. Right, Rosie? Let's go home: what a
33 surprise it will be for Mother. I wonder if she'll believe
34 what happened in Bethlehem? About the baby, and how
35 you gave milk once again? Well, I have all of these

pennies to show her — and that'll convince her we don't have to sell you, Rosie. *(The cast may freeze in their stage positions at this time as the NARRATOR comes Down Center to finish the story. Some sort of curtain call can be taken, or those left on stage may quietly disappear Backstage. It is impressive to have the cast or a choral group sing a carol such as "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem" or "Silent Night, Holy Night" very softly under the closing narration. And, if desired, as the NARRATOR finishes, the entire cast may come on stage to sing a chorus or two to end the presentation.)*

NARRATOR: Jack thought much about what had happened, especially of the young mother and her child. He felt, somehow, that he would see them again sometime. He thought, too, of the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow and all the things the little man with the white beard had said about it.

JACK: *(To Rosie)* Now I understand, Rosie! I know what he meant by the strange things he said. It's all so clear now. I have found the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow — and much, much more!

MUSIC: *(Choral number here, possibly "Here We Come A Wassailing")*

The Night Before Christmas*

PRODUCTION NOTES

This closing section is a vocal montage depicting the moods and images of Christmas, climaxing with a religious message.

It is written for a group of eight to ten voices though, if necessary, a lesser number can carry the narrative.

The playing area is bare except for the required number of ordinary chairs or stools lined up across the stage, Upstage. From these, the readers may speak, stand, or be spotlighted as their parts appear.

No special costuming is necessary unless one reader chooses to portray St. Nick by adding a white beard or a red hat.

If the group chooses to add *The Little Fir Tree* to this section, some simple props may want to be used.

CAST

NARRATOR 1,2

INTERPRETER

VOICES 1 - 9

READERS 1 - 3

ST. NICK

**by Clement C. Moore. Adapted by Melvin R. White*

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1 **NARRATOR 1:** From "Poor Robin's Almanack," 1700:

2 **INTERPRETER:** Now that the time has come wherein our

3 Saviour Christ was born,

4 The larder's full of beef and pork,

5 The granary's full of corn.

6 As God hath plenty to thee sent,

7 Take comfort of thy labors,

8 And let it never thee repent,

9 To feast thy needy neighbors.

10 **NARRATOR 1:** Definitions. Christmas:

11 **VOICE 2:** Christ's mass.

12 **NARRATOR 1:** Christmas:

13 **VOICE 3:** The annual festival of the Christian church
14 commemorating the birth of Jesus; celebrated on
15 December 25th.

16 **NARRATOR 1:** Definition. Christmas card:

17 **VOICE 6:** A printed and often decorated card for mailing at
18 Christmas to express good wishes.

19 **NARRATOR 1:** Christmas club:

20 **VOICE 7:** A plan or system of non-interest-bearing savings
21 accounts designed to provide for the purchase of
22 Christmas gifts, whereby each member makes regular,
23 usually weekly, deposits throughout the year, receiving
24 a check from the bank for the full amount of his savings
25 shortly before Christmas.

26 **NARRATOR 1:** Christmas seal:

27 **VOICE 8:** In the United States, a decorative adhesive stamp
28 sold by charitable organizations during the Christmas
29 season to obtain money for the cure and treatment of
30 various diseases.

31 **NARRATOR 1:** Christmas stocking:

32 **VOICE 9:** A stocking-shaped bag hung on a fireplace mantel
33 or Christmas tree by children on Christmas Eve, for
34 holding Christmas presents — especially those believed
35 brought by Santa Claus.



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