



Full of Wonders



Jolly Shepherds & Curious Kings

A Merry Nativity Play

Ulrike Schwaiger



234
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Character identities: While some roles are noted as male or female, any identity may be expanded. Almost all roles can be male, female, or non-binary. For reasons of easier readability, gender-specific differentiation is avoided in the play.

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Synopsis

A group of shepherds sits around a campfire at night. Then two heavenly angels appear and announce that the Savior has been born in a nearby stable. But before the five shepherds can set out for the stable, another wondrous encounter happens: three long-traveled kings arrive in the field and immediately create plenty of chaos. At first, the shepherds and the kings are distant and somewhat hostile toward each other, mainly because of the nobles' arrogance. Soon, however, both sides realize that they can reach their goal much better together. Almost at the same time, a group of shepherd children sets out on the night journey to the manger in Bethlehem. When everyone finally arrives, they are warmly welcomed by Mary and Joseph. Together they sing a song for the baby Jesus and present their gifts. United, they aim to carry the message of peace into the world.

List of Songs*

Song 1: O Come, Little Children

Song 2: From a Distant Home

Song 3: Come, Shepherds

Song 4: Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow

Song 5: Silent Night

*Performing the listed songs is optional. Copyright must be observed.

Characters

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Kaspar | 13 appearances |
| Melchior | 10 appearances |
| Balthazar | 9 appearances |
| Angel 1 | 4 appearances |
| Angel 2 | 3 appearances |
| Shepherd Rupert | 7 appearances |
| Shepherd Peter | 11 appearances |
| Shepherdess Hanni | 5 appearances |
| Shepherdess Anna | 5 appearances |
| Shepherd Lois | 7 appearances |
| Shepherd Child Vroni | 3 appearances |
| Shepherd Child Liesi | 2 appearances |
| Shepherd Child Gerti | 2 appearances |
| Shepherd Child Franzi | 2 appearances |
| Mary | 4 appearances |
| Joseph | 3 appearances |
| Star bearer (optional) | no lines |
| Ox (optional) | no lines |
| Donkey (optional) | no lines |

Scene 1

Characters:

Angel 1, Angel 2, Rupert, Hanni, Peter, Anna, Lois

Stage:

In the field

Song 1: O Come, Little Children

The five shepherds are sitting around the campfire when suddenly the two angels appear.

Angel 1: (solemnly)

Shepherds, shepherds, listen! Today in the city of Bethlehem the Savior has been born! As a little child he has come into this world; he lies in a stable, in a manger.

Angel 2: (peacefully)

Do not be afraid, set out for Bethlehem! *(points to the sky)* This bright shining star with its tail will show you the way.

Angel 1:

We will protect you and your sheep along the way.

Both angels exit. The shepherds sit as if turned to stone, mouths open.

Rupert: (speechless)

I am completely lost for words...
Of all people, the angels came to us!

Hanni: (worried)

I'm a little afraid – what do you think, could they be luring us into a... trap?

Peter: (carefree)

Oh come on, Hanni! What nonsense, those were genuine, one-hundred-percent heavenly angels, real and true. They only mean well for us!

Anna: (excited)

Well, I for one am curious to see the Savior.

Lois: (yawning)

Me too, but I hope it's not too far to walk...

Peter: (scolding)

Lois, don't start whining before we've even taken the first step. This journey is going to be really merry!

Lois: (misunderstands)

What? Hairy? Oh no... that sounds terrible!

Peter: (as clearly as possible)

M-E-R-R-Y! Not hairy.

Lois: (delighted)

Ah, merry! Well, that sounds much better!

Rupert:

All right, shepherds! I suggest we set out tomorrow morning, since we still need to gather the sheep first.

Scene 2

Characters:

Rupert, Hanni, Peter, Anna, Lois, Kaspar, Melchior, Balthazar, Star bearer

Stage:

In the field

Song 2: From a Distant Home

The three kings enter the stage, following the star (star bearer). Balthazar follows at some distance.

Kaspar: (impatiently)

Balthazar, what's the matter with you, can't you walk faster?
At this pace we'll never get to Bethlehem – it's really pitiful...

Melchior: (annoyed)

Yes indeed, hurry up for once!

With a loud clatter, Melchior drops the gold. He quickly picks it up so that no one notices the mishap.

Balthazar: (stressed)

Yes, yes, I'm coming, but the way is so hard, the night so dark.
(turns around in confusion) I can't find my bearings anymore...

Melchior: (frustrated)

Kaspar, tell him he must walk faster, otherwise this will never work out... (the gold falls clattering to the ground a second time, Melchior shrugs and picks it up again)

Kaspar: (grabbing his head)

How am I supposed to go on with the two of you? It's hopeless! Melchior keeps losing his gift and Balthazar falls asleep while walking...

Balthazar: (relaxed)

The angel never said we had to run to Bethlehem, so stop stressing me out!

The kings spot the shepherds and stop in surprise.

Kaspar:

Well, who are you then? You look like very simple fellows...

Rupert: (indignant)

Hey, what's wrong with you? First of all, around here we say "God bless you!" or "Good day!" or even "Howdy-howdy-doodle-doo!" – and only after that you can start asking questions!

Anna:

And besides, who are you?

Melchior: (refined)

We are the three wise kings from the East, we have already traveled far. We have left behind our shimmering palaces and now we are searching the skies for signs to find the Prince of Peace.

Peter: (to the other shepherds)

Wow, how stuck-up does he talk?

Balthazar:

Two angels appeared to us – we were told to set out for the Savior and follow this beautiful star. *(turns around in confusion, looking up)* Now, where did it go, that beautiful star?

Peter:

Well, if he can't even see that giant star, then he surely won't find the child either...

Kaspar: (astonished)

You know about the child?

Hanni: (proudly)

Yes, the angels came to us too – we're going to Bethlehem as well!

Lois:

Would you like to come along with us? Because I fear you won't find the way on your own if you can't even see the star in the sky!

Kaspar:

That's impossible! You intend to appear before the Savior in such simple, dirty clothing?

Rupert: (angry)

That's enough! Did you hear how these noble gentlemen talk about us? We just don't have other clothes, and when you work hard – like we do – they can't stay clean.

Peter: (to the kings)

And just because you're wrapped in silk and velvet doesn't mean you're any better than us.

Melchior drops the gold for the third time, quickly picks it up again.

Melchior:

And I can't imagine you simple shepherds have gifts for the baby Jesus. Or do you plan to stand empty-handed at the manger?

Balthazar: (boasting)

We are carrying the most precious gifts!

Kaspar:

Frankincense!

Melchior:

Gold!

Balthazar:

Now I've forgotten what's in my precious little box...

Kaspar: (scolding)

Balthazar, you're carrying myrrh! Myyyyrrh!!! Please, remember it this time!

Anna: (to the other shepherds and the audience)

Honestly, I don't really trust these three fancy gentlemen...

Peter:

One acts like a know-it-all, the other talks so high and mighty I can't understand a word, and the third is a bit confused.

Rupert:

And all three are arrogant...

But they're not completely wrong, we truly don't have any gifts for the baby Jesus. We have nothing ourselves.

Lois: (determined)

Nonsense! The angels told us to follow the star, so come on,
let's go – with or without gifts!

All exit.

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Scene 3

Characters:

Vroni, Liesi, Gerti, Franzi, Angel 1, Angel 2

Stage:

In the field

Song 3: Come, Shepherds

The four shepherd children enter the stage, see the star, and stop in astonishment.

Vroni:

I've never seen this star in the sky before...

The two angels appear.

Angel 1: (astonished)

Shepherd children, why aren't you with the others? We almost missed you, and you would not have heard the good news!

Liesi:

We had to look for a lost baby lamb.

Gerti: (proudly, optional holding a toy lamb)

But luckily we found it!

Franzi: (curiously tugging at Angel 2's dress)

Who are you? Such beautiful clothes you are wearing.

Angel 2: (shooing Franzi away)

Follow this star, and you will find a child, wrapped in swaddling clothes in a manger. He is the Savior. Set out for Bethlehem!

Angels exit.

Vroni: (joyfully)

Come on, we must find the Savior! I'll pack a snack and take a sheepskin as a gift.

Liesi:

I'll bring the child my warm socks!

Gerti:

And I my warm mittens!

Franzi:

And I will tell him a lovely story.

Vroni:

That's a good idea! Best we set out immediately. The star shows us the way!

All exit.

Scene 4

Characters:

Rupert, Hanni, Peter, Anna, Lois, Kaspar, Melchior, Balthazar

Stage:

In the field

Song 4: Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow

The three kings cross the stage. Melchior drops his gold unnoticed and continues. Balthazar lags behind, trips over his own feet, and falls.

Balthazar:

Stop, stop, friends! Stay still!

Kaspar: (speechless)

No! Now our Balthazar has slipped and landed in a cow pat!

Melchior: (annoyed)

I shudder to think what smell we'll bring before the Savior.
What a pity... Wait, Kaspar, stoop! *(looks around frantically)* I think I've lost my gold again!

Kaspar: (frustrated)

My patience with you two is really running out...

The five shepherds enter.

END OF READING SAMPLE



Full of Wonders

