

ASPECTS OF CHRISTMAS
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Cast of Characters:

Narrator

Dad, Boy, and Singer - Scene One

Papa, Son, and Journalist - Scene Two

Narrator 2, Conrad, Two Friends, Beggar, Crone, Small child - Scene Three

Props:

.....The stage is set with a cot in one corner, a table and chairs, and a small Christmas tree with a toy under it. There is an assumed doorway and an assumed window that all players treat as existing... The table is set with plates and cups, a pot of tea, and a bowl of rolls, covered with a towel..... Off to one side is a coat tree with two coats hanging on it and a pair of shoes beneath it.....

*... As the **Narrator** takes his seat off to one side of the stage, lights go off*

Narrator: We are here tonight to celebrate the wonder of Christmas. Like the man whose birth it celebrates, Christmas has come to mean many different things to many different people. For some, it is purely religious. To others, purely commercial. A season of love, of life, and of traditions. At Christmas time, we celebrate God's gift to us of family. More than at any other time, in this season, we hear the words "joy", "love", "peace", and "hope". That last word, hope, is a word that best describes Christmas Eve. A hope that tomorrow, just like on the day the Savior came, we will wake to a better world. A world of promise, redemption from past mistakes, love enjoyed and cherished, and things that make life itself more enjoyable.

*... **Dad** and **Boy** come on stage. The **Boy** lies on the cot; the **Dad** stands beside it ...*

This series of sketches will celebrate some of those aspects of Christmas. We open with the story of a toy, and a tradition, being passed on. We call the man, "Dad", because that's the role he plays. His job is to equip his son with tools and knowledge necessary for life. In the morning, he will pass on the gift of imagination.

Narrator: And like many a child that night, the Dad was sleepless with anticipation.

*..... The lights come up to show **Dad** pacing back and forth beside the bed where his **Boy** sleeps. He smiles, looking at the Christmas tree where the toy rests, then back at his **Boy**. We see him go to the tree, pick up the toy, and smile. He is obviously lost in memory. He sits the toy on the table and leans back with hands clasped around his neck. The song "The Marvelous Toy" begins to play....*

When I was just a wee little boy

Full of health and joy
One Christmas morning I received a marvelous little toy
A wonder to behold it was with many colors bright
and the moment I laid eyes on it, it became my hearts delight

(Dad smiles, then sings along with chorus)

It went zip when it moved
Bop when it stopped
Brrrr when it stood still
I never knew just what it was and I guess I never will

The first time that I picked it up I had a big surprise
For right on side of it were two green buttons that looked like big green eyes
I first pushed one, then the other, then I twisted its lid
And when I set it down again this is what it did

It went zip when it moved
Bop when it stopped
Brrrr when it stood still
I never knew just what it was and I guess I never will

It first marched left, then marched right
then marched under a chair
and when I looked where it had gone it wasn't even there
I started to cry, my daddy laughed he knew that I would find
when I turned around my marvelous toy chugging from behind

It went zip when it moved *(Boy wakes up, yawns, gets out of bed, and comes to table)*
Bop when it stopped
Brrrr when it stood still *(Boy spies toy and reaches for it with hand)*
I never knew just what it was and I guess I never will

... Music pauses here ...

Boy: What is that, Dad?

Dad: Well son, that's for its owner to decide. I think it can be whatever you want

Boy: Well, who owns it?

Dad: You do, Son. It was mine. I want you to have it now

Boy: *(Hugging toy to himself)* Wow! Thanks Dad!

.... Music starts again

Well the years have passed too quickly it seems
I have my own little boy

and yesterday I gave to him my marvelous little toy
his eyes nearly popped right out of his head
he gave a squeal of glee
neither one of us knows just what it is but he loves it just like me

It still goes zip when it moves *(Dad and boy sing along with final chorus)*
Bop when it stops
Brrrr when it stands still
I never knew just what it was and I guess I never will

I never knew just what it was and I guess I never will

Dad: Well, Buddy! Tomorrow's a big day. Get back in bed and get a little more sleep. You can dream. About what else you want to get for Christmas.

Boy: *(Hugging toy)* It doesn't matter. *(The lights go out)* This one can be anything I want it to be. *(The **Boy** and his **Dad** are quickly replaced by the **Son** and his **Papa**. The **Papa** lies in the cot)*

Narrator: And like many a child that night, he was sleepless with anticipation

Narrator: Because in the small town where they lived, no one had ever been interviewed by a foreign journalist...

*.... The lights come up as knocking is heard on the door. A startled **Papa** rises from his cot, scrubs his face, and shuffles to the door. He opens it, squinting as if into sunshine....*

Son: Oh my, Papa! Were you still lying down? *(When father looks puzzled, he repeats the question in Spanish)* Oh my, Papa! Were you still lying down?

Papa: *(Only speaks in Spanish)* No! No! I was just thinking *(touches head)* in a horizontal position *(makes a horizontal motion with hand)* I am ready now for my interview.

Son: *(Turns to the **Journalist**)* He was still in bed. Thinking. In a horizontal position. It is okay. He is ready now. To be interviewed.

Journalist: I am writing a story about Christmas customs around the world, *(**Son** interprets)* and wanted to learn how Christmas is celebrated here. *(**Son** interprets)* ... Since your father is old *(**Son** interprets, and **Papa** nods)* ... and wise *(**Son** speaks, **Papa** beams and preens himself)* ... and is clearly going to die soon, *(**Son** hesitates and changes the words to "and is very wise" and **Papa** swells up even more)* I want to know. What does he believe is the most important thing about Christmas? *(**Son** interprets)*

Papa: *(Instantly)* Santa Claus!

Journalist: *(Blankly)* Santa Claus?

Papa: For many years, *(**Son** interprets)* we have heard of this man in red and white *(**Son** interprets)* that visits homes in America. To bring gifts, for free, to everyone in the house

(Son interprets) It is like magic *(Son interprets)* and just this year, I have heard this. Santa Claus is not just for America, *(Son interprets)* but for everyone.

Journalist: That is true! *(Son interprets)*

Papa: *(Obviously earnest)* How do I tell him? That I want an American Mustang convertible for Christmas? *(Son interprets)*

Journalist: *(Worried)* Tell him Santa Claus. May not be a real person *(Son interprets)*

Papa: *(Impatient)* Of course he is! *(Son interprets)* America is the land of the brave *(Son interprets)* and the true *(Son interprets)* We have all heard this said *(Son interprets)*

Journalist: *(Looking for a way out)* Yes! But Santa only brings gifts to good boys and girls *(Son interprets)* Have you been good, Sir? *(Son interprets)*

Papa: *(Frowns, and speaks after a long pause)* Mostly! *(Son interprets)*

Journalist: *(Amused)* What have you done that was bad? *(Son interprets)*

Papa: I yelled at my wife sometimes. *(Son interprets)*

Journalist: Don't we all? *(Son interprets)*

Papa: I don't always pray like I am supposed to. *(Son interprets, and the Journalist shrugs)* And last year, when my neighbor's chicken came on my property, I ate her. *(Son interprets)*

Journalist: Well, surely you paid your neighbor for the chicken.

Son: *(Shakes his head)* Probably not!

Journalist: Well, tell him it still seems like a pretty good life. *(Son interprets)* Santa will probably still visit him *(Son interprets)* Unless there are more bad things, he has not told me about *(Son interprets)*

Papa: *(Hangs head)* There are a few things *(Son interprets)* I do swear, a lot *(Son interprets)* And whenever I want something, if I can steal it, I do *(Son interprets after a concerned pause)* And sometimes I shoot people who bring disappointing news. *(Son decides not to say anything)*

Journalist: What did he say *(Son shakes his head)* No, tell me! What did he say?

Son: He said he sometimes shoots people. Who bring him disappointing news.

Journalist: *(Shaken)* He doesn't look like he's joking! *(Son shakes head worriedly)*

Papa: *(To Journalist)* So? Do you think I will get free gifts from your Santa Claus this year? *(Son interprets)*

Journalist: *(Feeling trapped, hesitates. He starts to speak, then stops. Then smiles and looks up)* Tell your Papa this. Santa Claus will probably not come this year *(Son interprets, and Papa is visibly upset. The Journalist raises his hand and continues)* But there is a better man of red and white. Who visits people all over the world *(Son interprets)* He covers you with red. So that later, he can cover you with white. *(Son interprets)* He too brings free gifts. Especially for those who are not good. *(Son interprets)* Have you heard of him? His name is Jesus Christ *(Son interprets)* Christmas is named after him *(Son interprets)*

Papa: *(Puzzled)* I heard that name a long time ago. But that man was also killed by people. Who did not like his news. *(Son interprets)*

Journalist: No, he did stay dead. *(Son interprets)* Just had to go away for a while to get presents ready for us *(Son interprets)* In fact, he let them kill him. So he could give us his greatest gift *(Son interprets)* Eternal life *(Son interprets)*

Papa: *(Shocked)* He would give that? To me? *(Son interprets, Journalist smiles and nods)* But I have blood on my hands. *(Son interprets)*

Journalist: A little blood doesn't bother Jesus Christ. *(Son interprets)* He doesn't expect us to be good. Before we get his gifts *(Son interprets)* He gives us gifts to help us be good. *(Son interprets)* I have to go now! *(Son interprets)* But in the next town, I will talk to a man there. *(Son interprets)* He is one of Jesus' little helpers. *(Son interprets)* He will come. Show you how to get these gifts from Jesus *(Son interprets)*

Papa: Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

.... The Son and the Journalist leave off stage. The Papa sits down smiling on the edge of the cot. He rubs his hands together in glee. Then he lays back on the cot, still smiling as the lights go out. Papa gets up and leaves

Narrator: And all that night, he thought about what had been told him. And of the man who would visit him.

Conrad comes on stage and lies down.

Narrator: And like many a child that night, he was sleepless with anticipation

Narrator: You see, his name was Conrad. Like all of us, his life was rather insignificant. Except for some wondrous promises. That served to remind Conrad. He was created, not for this world, but one far grander. His latest was all the more special, because it coincided with Christmas. With the promise he had been given, who could sleep?

.... Lights come on as Conrad rises with nervous energy, bustles around the shop, and then sit. He pours a cup of tea from the kettle on the table. As he is pouring, Narrator 2 begins the reading of the poem.

Narrator 2: It happened one day at the year's white end, *(Friends approach and knock)* Two neighbors called on an old-time friend *(Conrad opens door for them)*

And they found his shop so meager and mean, (*Friends look around the shop in wonder*)
Made gay with a thousand boughs of green, (*Then sit down with him at the table*)

And Conrad was sitting with face a-shine
When he suddenly stopped as he stitched a twine (*Conrad pantomimes this action*)

And said, "Old friends, at dawn today, (*Conrad mouths the words as they are spoken*)
When the cock was crowing the night away, (*Pantomimes actions as appropriate*)

The Lord appeared in a dream to me
And said, 'I am coming your guest to be'.

So I've been busy with feet astir,
Strewing my shop with branches of fir,

The table is spread and the kettle is shined
And over the rafters the holly is twined,

And now I will wait for my Lord to appear
And listen closely so I will hear

His step as He nears my humble place,
And I open the door and look in His face. (*Friends get up as he is saying this*)

So his friends went home and left Conrad alone, (*They shake hands and leave*)
For this was the happiest day he had known, (*Conrad closes door behind him*)

For, long since, his family had passed away (*Conrad sits back down*)
And Conrad has spent a sad Christmas Day.

But he knew with the Lord as his Christmas guest
This Christmas would be the dearest and best,

And he listened with only joy in his heart. (*Head cocked toward the door*)
And with every sound he would rise with a start (*Goes and looks out door*)

And look for the Lord to be standing there
In answer to his earnest prayer

So he ran to the window after hearing a sound, (*Looks out "window"*)
But all that he saw on the snow-covered ground (*Beggar has shuffled up "outside"*)

Was a shabby beggar whose shoes were torn
And all of his clothes were ragged and worn.

So Conrad was touched and went to the door (*Conrad goes to "door" and opens it*)
And he said, "Your feet must be frozen and sore, (*Conrad mouths the words*)

And I have some shoes in my shop for you (*Gets coat and shoes from tree*)
And a coat that will keep you warmer, too. (*Gives them to **beggar** and walks to door*)

So with grateful heart the man went away, (***Beggar** leaves, door is closed*)
But as Conrad noticed the time of day, (*Looks at watch*)

He wondered what made the dear Lord so late, (*Pacing*)
And how much longer he'd have to wait, (***Crone** approaches "door"*)

When he heard a knock and ran to the door, (*Runs to door and opens it*)
But it was only a stranger once more, (*Visibly disappointed*)

A bent, old crone with a shawl of black,
A bundle of twigs piled on her back.

She asked for only a place to rest, (***Crone** kneels, makes pleading sign with hands*)
But that was reserved for Conrad's Great Guest. (***Conrad** frowns and looks at table*)

But her voice seemed to plead, "Don't send me away (***He** looks back at her*)
Let me rest awhile on Christmas day." (***He** lifts her up and brings her in*)

So Conrad brewed her a steaming cup (*Pours a cup of tea and gives her bread*)
And told her to sit at the table and sup. (***She** quickly drinks, then pockets bread*)

But after she left he was filled with dismay (***Conrad** shuts door behind her*)
For he saw that the hours were passing away (*Again looks at watch and the door*)

And the Lord had not come as He said He would, (***Child** approaches door*)
And Conrad felt sure he had misunderstood. (*Scratches head in puzzlement*)

When out of the stillness he heard a cry, (***Child** knocks*)
"Please help me and tell me where am I." (***Child** pantomimes words*)

So again he opened his friendly door (*Opens door*)
And stood disappointed as twice before, (*Shoulders sag*)

It was two children who had wandered away (***Conrad** kneels down to **children***)
And were lost from their family on Christmas Day. (*Appears to be talking to **them***)

Again Conrad's heart was heavy and sad,
But he knew he should make these children glad,

So he called them in and wiped their tears (*Leads **them** in, sits them down*)
And quieted their childish fears. (*Puts on his own coat*)

Then he led them back to their home once more (*Leads them out of door*)
But as he entered his own darkened door, (*Turns and comes back in as **children** leave*)

He knew that the Lord was not coming today (*Puts coat away sadly*)

For the hours of Christmas had passed away. (*Walks to cot, shaking his head*)

So he went to his room and knelt down to pray (*Kneels by bed*)
And he said, "Dear Lord, why did you delay, (*Pantomimes words*)

What kept You from coming to call on me,
For I wanted so much Your face to see, (*Lays head on bed in resignation*)

When soft in the silence a voice he heard,
"Lift up your head for I kept My word, (*Lifts up head in wonder*)

Three times My shadow crossed your floor--
Three times I came to your lonely door--

For I was the beggar with bruised, cold feet,
I was the woman you gave to eat,
And I was the child on the homeless street. (*Conrad nods head with wondrous smile*)

... *Conrad then lies down on bed, and pulls blanket up as the lights go out ...*

Narrator: And Conrad laid thinking of another promise Jesus made to all. To all who are his disciples. How he promised he would come back. And Conrad knew, on that day, he would surely see his friend face to face.

Narrator: And like many a child that night, he was sleepless with anticipation