



1882

## Christmärchen: Schauspiel in zwei Aketen

Hermann Kletke

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sophiedrama>

---

### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Kletke, Hermann, "Christmärchen: Schauspiel in zwei Aketen" (1882). *Drama and Film*. 172.  
<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sophiedrama/172>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Sophie at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Drama and Film by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).

Illustrated Children's and Puppet-Theater

**Second Group**

**12.**

**Christmas Story.**

*A Play in Two Acts.*

*Freely adapted for Children's Theater*  
after  
K. Ksetke

Published by Otto Spamer in Leipzig.

## *Characters*

*Widow.*  
*Brother.* } *Widow's Children*  
*Sister.* }  
*Knecht Ruprecht.*<sup>1</sup>  
*Two Angels.*

## *Setting*

*Act I:* in the widow's living room, later in the woods

*Act II:* in the widow's living room

## **Hints and Suggestions for the Performance**

The story requires only five people, when one person plays the role of the mother and one of the angels.

To portray the woods, many big and small pine trees should be used. Their branches should be covered with loose pieces of cotton wool. Below, close to the trunk one can also put some cotton wool, and cover the whole floor with pieces of white fabric. All the other scenes take place in the widow's very poorly furnished apartment. Knecht Ruprecht has a long bushy beard; he is wearing a long dark fur that reaches to his feet, as well as, a big fur hat and thick boots. He has a small bag hanging over his shoulder, and in the scene in the woods he drags another big sack behind him.

Both angels appear in long white robes and with big wings.

## *Props*

Two little figures of angels made from sugar or porcelain  
Christmas tree

---

<sup>1</sup> today known as Robert Ruprecht or Ruppert; a folktale figure, who accompanies the coming of Christ child – not Jesus the Christ, but, according to the German tradition, the folk character who brings children gifts on Christmas Eve; Ruprecht is usually dressed in a scary outfit with a rod or a stick; he scares children, making sure that they behave well enough to receive the presents

## Act One.

*In the widow's living room.*

### **Widow, Brother, Sister**

*(The Widow sits working at the table, at her side sit both children on the ground.)*

**Widow** *(dropping her work).*

Today is Christmas Eve. Oh, I cannot give any presents to my little children. Oh, what shall I, the poor one, do!

*(quietly weeps)*

**Sister.**

Can you see our mother crying?

**Brother.**

Yes, our poor mother seems to grieve because she can't give us Christmas gifts nor Christmas lights this evening.

**Sister** *(stands up and approaches the mother).*

Dear mother, listen to me. Don't cry; it makes us sad. Just think, it is Christmas time! We want to be joyful about it.

**Brother** *(with eagerness).*

Oh, dear mother, let us go to the woods, where I have been before. Oh, I know about one little tree out there, which is the prettiest you've ever seen! Let us bring it here.

**Sister** *(embraces the mother).*

Oh, let us do it, we beg you!

**Widow** *(sighs).*

All right, my beloved children, I shall let you do it, but I don't have even the smallest light to decorate it with.

**Sister** *(comforting).*

If we cannot decorate it, we will just look at it with pleasure.

**Brother** *(joyfully).*

Just looking at the fresh green tree will make me entirely happy. Let me do it the whole day long, and in the evenings I will sleep.

**Widow** *(smiling).*

We'll go get the Christmas tree, decorate this small room with it; I would not feel poverty or sorrow if you two were content.

*(Scene change.)*

*In the woods.*

**Brother, carrying an ax, Sister, a little later Knecht Ruprecht**

**Sister** *(pointing at a tree).*

Look at the cute little tree!

**Brother.**

But you can barely see it because of the snow.

**Sister.**

All the same, I think it will work.

**Brother** (*steps closer to it*).

Sister, you are completely right: this is the tree I meant, now covered in snow. Let's free the branches so that they will be dry.

*(Both of the children shake and strip the snow from the tree.)*

Now look!—

*(Swinging his ax.)*

**Knecht Ruprecht** (*stands concealed behind the trees.*)

What are you doing?

**Brother** (*looking confused*).

Does that voice sound really close?

**Sister** (*grabbing his arm*).

Brother, I am scared.

**Brother.**

Don't worry, I'll protect you.

*(Calls loudly.)*

Isn't it okay for me to get a tree here for our Christmas celebration?

**Knecht Ruprecht** (*steps forward.*)

God forbid! Everyone would like to see this. But listen, children, you can first be helpful. See, I have much to do. The days are now short; I must go to many children, who are already awaiting me, and no one wants to be waiting on the beautiful Christmas celebration. Your tree will not run away. And look here and there and there.

*(points at different trees)*

Many trees still stand, all of which I would like to have. Sweep the snow from off of them, so that I will have less work to do.

**Brother.**

Surely, surely, good man!

*(Both children shake the snow from the designated trees, while Knecht Ruprecht takes his small sack off his shoulder and takes out gold and silver nuts, colored stars, and gold tinsel, with which he decorates the trees.)*

**Sister** (*looking up*).

Oh, how beautiful! Just look!

**Brother.**

Yes, this is beautiful!

**Sister.**

I've never seen anything like it.

**Brother.**

What splendor and light this will be this evening.

**Sister.**

Just look, just look. There is always something more that he takes out of his bag!

**Knecht Ruprecht** (*Looking up at his work*).

Tell me, children, when the evening comes near, are you excited, like every child, devout and well behaved?

**Both Children** (*lively*).

Yes, of course, we are very excited!

(*Knecht Ruprecht takes the trees that he has decorated and puts them in his big sack.*)

**Sister** (*sadly*).

Oh, the holy Christ<sup>2</sup> will not stop in on us poor folks.

**Brother.**

Please, dear sister, just be quiet. Just think, our trees are with us still; We have friends in them.

**Sister.**

Oh, I'm so sorry for our mother, that she could not burn the smallest Christmas light for us on Christmas Eve— It is not for us the holy Christ.

The Christ child has forgotten us!

**Knecht Ruprecht** (*annoyed*).

My goodness! Indeed, if you are so silly, would you perhaps give a twig as a gift to the holy Christ?

(*Friendly*).

Has anyone ever heard that the little Christ child has hard feelings and does not go to the poor? Right to the poor children is his favorite place to go.

(*He offers his hand to the children.*)

Now, farewell. I thank you greatly, for the help—Goodbye! Take notice: I stick the bad children in the sack.

(*Knocks on the large sack.*)

Know that I am Knecht Ruprecht.

(*Takes two angels made from sugar or porcelain from his bag and gives them to the children.*)

Take these little dolls and don't forget that the Christ also came for you.

(*The curtain falls.*)

## **Act Two.**

*In the widows room.*

(*It is late in the evening and rather dark.*)

**Brother, Sister**

(*Both sit on the floor so that they can see the tree well.*)

---

<sup>2</sup> Christ child

**Sister** (*happily*).

When mother comes in, she will also be happy. Good thing that we have not shown her the angels.

**Brother.**

How pretty it is in here! See how the little Christmas tree makes this room so festive.

**Sister.**

Oh, how I would like to go out far into the city; because it is so beautiful to look through the window, as the Christmas tree's brilliance and shine beams into the night.

**Brother.**

Of course! There has never been a more beautiful, bright, Christmas light.

**Sister.**

I never get tired of looking at it. I want to watch it for hours.

**Brother.**

And it always seems to me as if the holy Christ is there lying in his little manger. And it is from him, that the light comes.

**Sister.**

And the holy virgin is also there, with Joseph by her side.

**Brother.**

And then in the distance, diligently following the Christmas Star, are the three Kings.

**Sister.**

Oh how lovely, if we could only really see that!

(*Sighing.*)

Alas; it is so hard. It will be dark too soon, and the pretty green tree will be hardly recognizable.

(*The two angels appear.*)

(*With the entrance, the children stand and watch intently as the angels hang candles on the tree and light them.*)

**First Angel** (*entering*).

Now the day is passed, greet the Holy Christ!

**Second Angel.**

And with bright Christmas spirit He comes to the poor.

**First Angel.**

See, it shines from light to light; the Christ child comes, do not forget!

**Second Angel** (*placing a golden star on the top of the tree*).

And look here, the golden star graciously reminding you of the Lord.

(*The children kneel down. The door is knocked on several times and one of the angels goes to open it.*)

(*Knecht Ruprecht enters.*)

**Knecht Ruprecht.**

What? You close the door before Knecht Ruprecht here?

(*Points to the two angels.*)

I sent ahead messengers, they carried gifts to your home; lowly and small they probably seem to you, but you did not quite know: that it is the Christ child air that does not leave

anybody at its celebration today without joy. If the gift is still so small, today it must be exquisite. This is the Christmas Magic. (*The angels quietly leave the room. While speaking, Knecht Ruprecht decorates the tree with nuts, apples and sugar stars and spreads dresses and toys before the tree.*)

See, the dear holy Christ knows each child, and where one is religiously minded and there reflects and considers, like the parents which also give, He sends angels soon with mild sense. See, there again it went, to far ones, to some poor child.

(*Nods to the children and goes out.*)

(*While the children gaze at the Christmas tree, the Widow comes.*)

**Widow** (*calling from outside*).

Children, children! Let me in!

**Brother** (*jumps up and opens the door*).

Come quickly, dear mother! See what the holy Christ has given us today!

**Widow** (*surprised*).

Say, where did this come from? I was so frightened about all the glow and light; I thought it must have been fire! And now I see that the Christ child must have been here with you.

**Sister.**

His Angel was sent out into our little home.

**Brother.**

Because He does not leave anybody without joy on this dear Christmas day.

**Widow.**

Now, because the messengers of the Christ Child were sent here and because He is with us, we want to now, filled with praise and thanks, sing our Christmas song.

1. O you merry,  
O you blessed,  
Grace-bringing Christmas time!  
World went lost,  
Christ was born,  
Rejoice, rejoice, o Christendom!
  
2. O you merry,  
O you blessed,  
Grace-bringing Christmas time!  
Christ has appeared,  
For us to save,  
Rejoice, rejoice, o Christendom!
  
3. O you merry,  
O you blessed,  
Grace-bringing Christmas time!  
Heavenly Army,

Cheer your honor,  
Rejoice, rejoice, o Christendom!  
*(The curtain falls.)*