

Janelle

THE RADIANT LIGHT



CHARACTERS:

Jabel, who cannot see beautiful sights

Hilda, who could not hear beautiful words

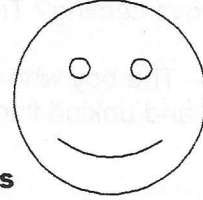
Robin, who could not speak beautiful words

Ruth, whose hands could not hold beautiful things

Christopher, whose feet could not walk to beautiful places

Thomas, who could not think beautiful thoughts

A Woman, who was really an angel



JABEL – How *dark* it is in here. I can hardly see the manger at all!

WOMAN (*walking to the manger*) – Why, here it is! Are you blind my child? (*She comes toward the front of stage*)

RUTH – He is partly blind. He cannot see and beautiful thing. (*Children form a group around woman*)

JABEL (*to woman*) – I can see your gray robes but I cannot see your face.

HILDA – He can see shadows but not light.

ROBIN – It's because she's looked so much on the dark side of life. Now she cannot see lovely things at all.

WOMAN – What a sad, sad affliction!

JABEL -- It makes me very unhappy.

RUTH – We are all unhappy. Something is wrong with each one of us. (*holds out hands*) See my hands? They can hold no beautiful thing.

ROBIN -- It's because she has *never* made them work for other people.

RUTH – They cannot hold even my gift for the manger. Robin has to carry it for me.

ROBIN (*pointing to Hilda*) – And Hilda cannot hear beautiful sounds. If an angel sang the loveliest song in the world to her, she would not hear a single note. It's because she's listened to and has been interested in so many unkind tales about others. Isn't it sad?

WOMAN – Very sad! And your affliction is very sad too! (*pointing to Robin*)

ROBIN (*surprised*) – How do you know what's wrong with me?

WOMAN – By listening to you. Each time you speak you say something unkind to someone.

ROBIN (*hanging her head*) – It is true. I have said unkind things about people so much that now I cannot say kind and beautiful words at all. (*Chris and Thomas enter*) See those boys coming? They are afflicted too.

HILDA – The boy who walks with his head hanging down is Thomas. He has thought of gloomy and unkind things so much that now he cannot think beautiful or happy thoughts at all.

ROBIN -- The other boy is Christopher.

WOMAN – He walks haltingly, as if her were lame.

ROBIN (*as Chris stops and leans for support against the wall*) – I know what's the matter with him. He never ran to help others, so now his feet grow heavy and painful whenever he tries to go near a beautiful place. Jabel can't see the manger and Christopher cannot come any nearer to it.

THOMAS (*joining the group*) – I can see the manger and walk to it, too, but I *don't think* the Christ Child is there.

HILDA – How shall we know when he comes?

RUTH – A lovely light will shine in the manger. I have seen it often in pictures.

CHRISTOPHER – (*EAGERLY*) I have too! I wonder what makes the light?

RUTH – Don't you know? It's the little halo shining around the Christ Child's head!

THOMAS (*gloomily*) – Well, there's no light shining from the manger now, and I *don't think* the Christ Child is coming at all.

HILDA – Why, Thomas, you know we have been told over and over that the Christ Child comes when Children brings gifts to his manger.

CHRISTOPHER – Perhaps he doesn't know we are here. Let's sing a song to tell him. (*starts singing "Away in a Manger"*)

ROBIN – No, Christopher. You know I can't *sing* beautiful songs.

HILDA – And I can't *hear* beautiful words.

THOMAS – Besides I don't *think* singing songs would bring the Christ Child. Maybe he's waiting for us to lay our gifts before his manger.

JABEL – Then let's do it quickly so he can come and answer our prayers.

CHRISTOPHER – (*holding out his gift to Thomas*) Take my gift to the manger, Thomas. I'll pray from here.

THOMAS – Oh, very well, but I *think* you are just pretending that you can't go near beautiful places.

ROBIN – I'll take yours, Ruth (*holding it up*) but I'm sure you could carry it yourself, if you tried.

RUTH – I can't, I can't indeed, Robin, any more than you can keep from saying unkind things.

HILDA (*to woman*) – Where is your gift for the manger?

WOMAN – My hands are empty. I came here to ask you to fill them with gifts for some little children who have nothing at all this Christmas.

CHILDREN (*clasping their gifts more closely*) – Ah, no, no!

ROBIN – Our gifts are for the Christ Child, *not* for you!

RUTH – You see, we've brought them to the Christ Child with hopes that he'll answer our prayers.

JABEL – We are hoping he will like our gifts so much that he will do what we ask. We want him to cure us, to take away our afflictions. Don't you think he will for these beautiful gifts?

WOMAN – The Christ Child does not need that kind of gifts. Will you not give them to me for my children? They have nothing to make them happy. One is stone blind, and one cannot walk at all. Some of them have no father or mother.

THOMAS – No father?

HILDA – No mother?

ROBIN – No mother to sing them to sleep at night?
(*Woman shakes her head at each question*)

JABEL – The little blind child, she cannot see shadows even??

WOMAN – She has never seen anything but darkness.

CHRISTOPHER – And the little lame boy, can he not walk a little way, perhaps?

WOMAN – His feet have never touched the ground.
(*Children look at each other, then at their gifts.*)

THOMAS – I think – I think I would like to send my gift to the little boy who has no father.

CHRISTOPHER (*running to the woman*) -- Take mine to the little boy who cannot walk.

ROBIN (*offering hers*) – Give mine to the child who has no mother to sing her to sleep at night.

RUTH – Give her mine too, Robin.

JABEL – My gift is for the little girl who cannot see.

(The woman's arms are overflowing with gifts. Ruth runs and helps her hold them. Unseen by the children a light shines from the manger. Soft music is heard from behind scenes – "Away in a Manger")

WOMAN (*veil slipping from her head and shoulders. Disclosing Gown and shining garments.*)

You have filled empty hands with gifts, and empty hearts with happiness.
Thankyou! Thankyou!

JABEL (*holding out his hands adoringly to the angel*) Oh, Look! How beautiful! How beautiful! She must be an angel!!

HILDA – Yes, for I hear her voice like the sounds of golden harps!

ROBIN (*softly*) – An angel white, with crowns of shining light!
(The children stare at each other with astonishment.)

HILDA – What has happened to us all? I thought you could not say any beautiful things, Robin? Yet the things you have said about her is beautiful and true. "An angel white, with a crown of shining light!"

ROBIN – And I thought you could not hear beautiful sounds, yet you heard the sound of golden harps in her voice!

RUTH – And Jabel who could not see beautiful things was the first to see the angel!

ANGEL – And tell me who was the first to have the beautiful thought of giving to those who have nothing to give in return?

CHILDREN – It was Thomas!!

JABEL – It was Thomas, who all this time, has not been able to think any beautiful thing!

RUTH – And, Angel, look! Christopher, who could not walk close to any beautiful place, has come to the place where you and the manger are!!

ROBIN – And your hands, Ruth! Your poor, weak hands! They are helping to hold the lovely gifts!

HILDA – What has happened to us all?

THOMAS – I think – I think the Christ Child has come.

ANGEL – Yes, he came when you first thought of giving for love, not because you want to get something in return.

(Children turn toward the manger and see the lovely light shining from it.)

CHILDREN – The Christ Child has come!

RUTH – That light is the Christ Child's halo, isn't it Angel?

ANGEL – Yes, but His light had to shine in *your* hearts before you could see it in the manger. Always keep on giving and it will help keep the light shining in the Christ Child's manger.

(Children gather round the manger to sing "Fairest Lord Jesus")

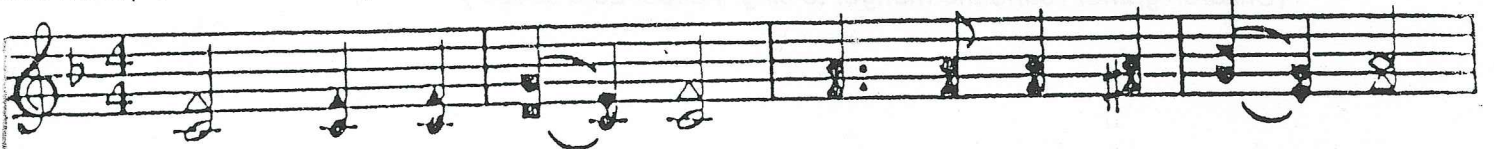


Fairest Lord Jesus

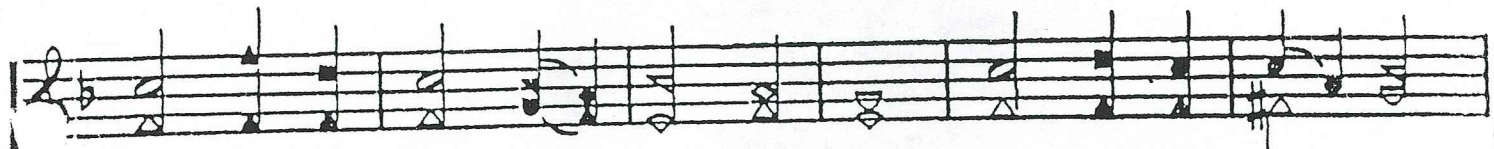
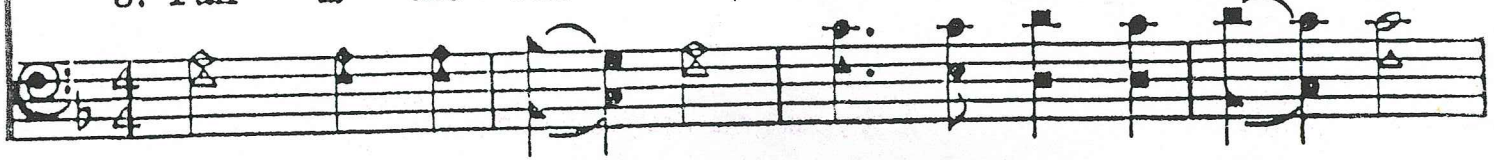
CRUSADERS' HYMN, 5. 6. 5. 8.

German, 17th Century

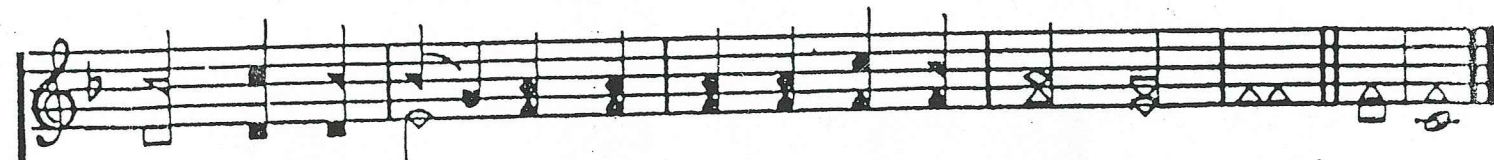
Arr. by Richard S. Willis



1. Fair - est Lord Je - sus! Rul - er of all na - ture!
 2. Fair are the mead'-ows, Fair - er still the wood - lands,
 3. Fair is the sun - shine, Fair - er still the moon - light,



O Thou of God and man the Son! Thee will I cher - ish,
 Robed in the bloom - ing garb of spring; Je - sus is fair - er,
 And all the twin - kling star - ry host; Je - sus shines bright - er,



Thee will I hon - or, Thou, my soul's glo - ry, joy, and crown!
 Je - sus is pur - er, Who makes the woe - ful heart to sing!
 Je - sus shines pur - er, Than all the an - gels heav'n can boast! A - MEN.

