

THE TUNE

A script for Advent

WILD GOOSE RESOURCE GROUP

Set up

This three person reading can be enacted if required. It does need either the Boy or someone in the background to play a tune on a recorder. It should be a kind of lullaby tune, like ROCKING or THE COVENTRY CAROL, something which the Boy can play and which the Old Man can hum.

Characters

Narrator

Reuben: a shepherd boy

Old Man: a traveller

The Script

It may be necessary to amend certain specific references or language usage, depending on when and where the script is to be used.

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Narrator: A long, long time ago on a hill near Jerusalem,
there was a boy called Reuben.

His father was a shepherd
and from time to time,
Reuben would look after his father's sheep.

Now looking after sheep can be a pretty boring thing.

They don't start conversations very easily,
they don't play at football,
they just eat grass.

So, Reuben,
to save himself getting bored,
would sometimes pass the time of day by playing on his penny whistle.

This was one of the tunes he played.

(Whistle/ recorder plays tune)

He had just finished playing his penny whistle one day
when he turned round to see an Old Man standing behind him.

The man wore strange clothes,
had a long beard
and carried a brightly wrapped parcel under his arm.

Reuben was frightened
and almost ran away,
but the Old Man spoke:

Old Man: Little boy, can you tell me something?

I'm going to see the king
and I wonder if this is the right road to the palace?

Reuben: The King?
...you're going to see the king?
Oh, I've no idea where his palace is.

Are you going to meet him?

Old Man: I hope so.

Reuben: Is that fancy box under your arm for him?

Old Man: Yes...
that's for him...
but look, if you can't help me I'd better be on my way.
I don't have much time left.

Bye bye...
what did you say your name was?

Reuben: Reuben.

Old Man: Bye bye, Reuben.

Narrator: So the Old Man went on his way
and Reuben went back to his whistle...

(Whistle/ recorder plays)

About a week later,
Reuben had a day off,
so he went to a part of the countryside five miles away to the west.

He wanted to do some fishing
so he never played his whistle
in case he frightened the fish away.

He was very, very quiet
when he heard a strange noise.

Old Man: (*Groans the tune*)

Narrator: The noise got louder and louder.
So Reuben put down his fishing rod
and looked around to see what was making the noise.

All of a sudden the Old Man appeared.

(*More groans*)

Reuben: Hello, mister.

Old Man: Hello...
Eh... Reuben isn't it?

Reuben: Yes that's right.
Have you got lost?

Old Man: No.

Reuben: But, the last time I saw you
it was miles and miles away from here.

Old Man: That's right,
but I'm going home by another way.

Reuben: Did you go to the palace?

Old Man: The palace?
...lets just say that I saw the king.

Reuben: You saw the king?

Old Man: Eh.....yes...

Reuben: Oh, tell me what he looked like.

Old Man: Lets just say he was different...

Reuben: And did you give him your present?

Old Man: Yes.

Reuben: Did he like it?

Old Man: I'm not exactly sure.

Reuben: What was that you were trying to sing just now?

Old Man: You mean this?

(He hums badly)

Reuben: Mister, is this what you're trying to sing?

(Whistle/ recorder plays)

Old Man: Yes, that's the tune.

Reuben: Where did you hear it?

Old Man: I heard it at...
eh... the palace...
The kings mother was singing it.

Why, where did you hear it?

Reuben: Well, about two weeks ago,
my dad took me to see a wee baby.

My dad said he was an important wee baby,
but all babies look the same to me.

Any rate, when I was there,
the wee baby's mummy started singing him this tune.
I remembered it when I came back to the fields
and I began to play it on my whistle.

Old Man: Do you know what I think, Reuben?

Reuben: No... what?

Old Man: I think...
that I saw your wee baby
...and you saw my king.

Narrator: And at that,
the old man turned and disappeared over the hill,
humming the tune.

And Reuben was left wondering what the old man meant.

For he couldn't forget his last words:
'I think that I saw your wee baby
...and you saw my king.'

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