

ANITA'S SECRET OR CHRISTMAS IN THE STEERAGE

From the book, "The White Christmas and Other Merry Christmas Plays"  
By Walter Ben Hare

A CHRISTMAS PLAY IN ONE ACT FOR SANTA CLAUS AND SIXTEEN CHILDREN.

CHARACTERS:

SANTA CLAUS	Adult
JOLLY JACK FROST	Little Boy
ANITA, a Little Italian Immigrant	Aged Eight or Nine
HULDA, from Holland	Aged Ten
SERGIUS, from Russia	Aged Nine
MEENY, from Germany	Aged Seven
BIDDY MARY, from Ireland	Aged about Eight
PADDY MIKE, from Ireland	Aged about Seven
KLINKER	} Little Dutch Twins
SCHWILLIE WILLIE WINKUM}	
NEELDA, from Spain	Aged Five
AH GOO, from China	Little Boy
YAKOB, from Denmark	Aged Six
HANS, from Norway	Aged Four
MIEZE, from Germany	Aged Six
SANO SAN, from Japan	Little Girl

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TIME OF PLAYING--About One Hour and Fifteen Minutes.

COSTUMES, ETC.

For notes on costuming, scenery and properties, see "Remarks on the Production of the Play" at the end of the play.

ARGUMENT.

It is the night before Christmas and the scene is on a big ocean-going vessel many miles out at sea. Down in the lower part of the ship, in the steerage, is a group of poor little immigrant children who are leaving the trials and troubles of the old world behind them and are looking forward to the golden promises held out by our own "land of the free and the home of the brave." But the hearts of the little immigrants are sad. It is the night before Christmas, and how could Santa Claus ever hope to reach them away out in the middle of the ocean? Even the sleigh and the magical reindeers could never be expected to make such a trip.

Anita, a little Italian girl, alone has faith in the coming of the good Saint. She is wandering around the ship when all of a sudden, much to her surprise, she hears a mysterious noise in a great big barrel, and who should jump out but little Jack Frost himself. Jack assures her that Santa Claus really is coming to visit the ship, and more than that, he is going to make an especial trip in an air ship! And this is little Anita's secret. The children all fall asleep, but Anita keeps watch for the mysterious aeroplane

that will bring joy to every little heart in the steerage, and, sure enough, just a little before midnight Anita and Jack Frost look through a telescope and see the lights of the approaching air ship.

Soon Santa Claus himself is on board, and such a time as he and Anita and jolly Jack Frost have in arranging a wonderful Christmas surprise for the children. As an especial favor the good Saint decides to awaken the children himself very early on Christmas morning. The clock strikes twelve and it is Christmas Day. The bells of merry Christmas are heard chiming in the distance, and Santa Claus and jolly Jack Frost hold a Christmas morning revel with the little immigrant children away down in the steerage of the big vessel.

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SCENE: The steerage of a large ocean-going vessel. Entrances R. and L. Boxes and barrels down L. Box down R. Large barrel up L.C., with JOLLY JACK FROST concealed therein. HULDA is seated on a small stool down R., taking care of KLINKER and SCHWILLIE WILLIE WINKUM, who are standing near her. MEENY is seated down L. on a box; she is knitting a woolen stocking. SERGIUS, PADDY MIKE, TOMASSO, YAKOB and AH GOO are playing leapfrog at C. of stage. HANS, MIEZE, NEELDA and SANO SAN stand at rear. BIDDY MARY is seated near HULDA; she is peeling potatoes. All sing.

OPENING SONG. (Can substitute songs of your choice)

1. The ship is sail-ing ver-y fast,  
We can't go out to play;  
But Christmas Day is com-ing soon,  
It is-n't far a-way.

2. We're sail-ing to A-mer-i-ca,  
So far a-cross the sea,  
We're hap-py lit-tle im-mi-grants,  
Our hearts are light and free.

3. We're hap-py lit-tle for-eign-ers,  
From far a-cross the way,  
But soon we will be cit-i-zens  
Of dear old U.S.A.

Then clap, clap, clap to-geth-er,  
Clap, clap, a-way;  
The steer-age is a hap-py place--  
Tomorrow's Christmas Day.]

(On the words "clap, clap, clap together," the children hold left hand horizontally in front of their chests, palm upward, raising the right hand and bringing it down on the left with a sharp clap.

Sing the first verse seated around stage. On the first four lines of the second verse nod heads and smile at audience. On the line "We're happy little immigrants," each one points to chest, nods head and smiles broadly.

For the third verse all rise and stand in couples in small groups all around stage. On the first two lines of the third verse each one faces his partner slightly, nods at him and shakes index finger of right hand at partner. On "dear, old U.S.A." all make a deep bow to audience. After third verse is completed, all form a circle and skip around in time to the music, repeating the third verse. On "clap, clap, clap together," they stand still and clap hands as before. When the song is ended all resume former positions, as at the rise of the curtain, but the boys do not play leapfrog.)

TOMASSO (seated on floor at C.). Tomorrow comes the great, grand festival of Christmas, is it not, Paddy Mike?

PADDY MIKE (seated near him, nods his head). Sure and it is. This is the holy Christmas Eve.

MEENY (seated down L., knitting stocking). The night of the day behind Christmas is always Christmas Eve, ain't it? (Nods head.) Sure it is.

SCHWILLIE. Und tomorrow we gets lots of Christmas presents always, me and Klinker; don't we, Klinker?

KLINKER. Sure we do. Leedle horses and pictures und candy and other things also; don't we, Schwillie Willie Winkum?

HULDA. That was when we were at home in Holland. It's different, maybe, out here in this great big boat. Ven we get by the city of New York next week then maybe we'll get some presents already.

KLINKER. But good Saint Nicholas always comes the night before Christmas; don't he, Schwillie Willie Winkum?

SCHWILLIE. Sure. Won't he come tonight, Hulda?

HULDA. How could he get way out here on the ocean already? Do you think he is a fish? We ain't living at home in Holland no more. We're way out on the Atlantic Ocean in a great big ship.

MEENY. Ja, und I wish I was back at home already. So much have I been seasick, mit der ship going oop und down, oop und down! Ach, it's awful. (SERGIUS, TOMASSO, YAKOB, PADDY MIKE and AH GOO play jack-stones.)

KLINKER. But Saint Nicholas ought to come tonight, Hulda. I been a awfully good boy, isn't I, Schwillie Willie Winkum?

SCHWILLIE. Sure you is. Und I've been a awfully good boy, too. Isn't I, Klinker?

KLINKER. Sure. We've been awfully good boys.

HULDA. Maybe even if Saint Nicholas don't come tonight, you can see the great, big whale tomorrow. If he's a good whale he'll surely let the leedle Dutch twins see him on Christmas Day.

MEENY. Oh, I want to see der whale. I've looked und I've looked und I've looked, but I ain't even so much as seen his leedle tail yet already. Und it makes me seasick to look so much, too.

BIDDY MARY. Are ye sure it was a whale ye saw that day, Sergius boy?

SERGIUS. Of course I'm sure. It was awful big. The biggest fish I ever saw. Even in Russia we do not have such big fish as whales. Paddy Mike saw it, too.

PADDY MIKE. Sure and I did. And me two eyes nearly fell out of me head with lookin' at it, it was that wonderful. He shot a big stream of water right up out of his head, he did, and then he dived down in the ocean again, and we didn't see him any more at all, at all. (MIEZE and SANO SAN turn backs to audience and look over the railing into the water.)

HULDA (to the twins). There! Now if you get to see the great big whale, that's almost as good as having old Saint Nicholas come, ain't it?

SCHWILLIE. Whales can't bring you no Christmas presents, can they, Klinker?

KLINKER. Und whales you can see any time. I'd rather have Saint Nicholas, wouldn't I, Schwillie Willie Winkum?

SERGIUS. Who is this Saint Nicholas they are looking for, Hulda?

HULDA (astonished). Why, don't you know who he is yet? He's the best old man that ever was. Und he comes the night before Christmas und visits all the little children in Holland.

MEENY (proudly). Und in Germany, too. (SERGIUS goes to HULDA.)

KLINKER. Und if they're good they get candy und oranges und toys und things, don't they, Schwillie Willie Winkum?

SCHWILLIE. Und if they're bad, they get a good big birch stick. But I ain't been bad. I've been awfully good, isn't I, Klinker?

KLINKER. Sure. Und me also.

HULDA (to SERGIUS). On Christmas Eve in Holland all the children march around the streets, following one who carries a big silver star. And the people who meet us give us money and gifts to help the poor. Oh, Christmas time is just grand in Holland!

KLINKER. Und we set out our leedle wooden shoes und old Saint Nicholas fills 'em with candy.

SCHWILLIE. Und we put a leedle bit of hay in our shoes for his good old horsie, Sleipner. Dot makes him happy.

MEENY. In Germany we call him Santa Claus, und he comes riding in a sleigh drawn through the sky mit reindeers. Und we have Christmas trees all lighted mit candles und things, und full of toys und paper stars und angels und apples. But Santa Claus could never get out here in der middle of der ocean. If he did maybe he'd get seasick already, und all der reindeers would get drowned in der water.

SERGIUS (standing R.C.). In Russia there is an old woman named Babouska who visits all the children on the night before Christmas. She carries a big basket full of good things.

TOMASSO (seated on floor at C.). In sunny Italy the children all go to midnight church on Christmas Eve, and when we make ourselves awake on Christmas morning, our shoes are all full of candy and chestnuts and figs and oranges. But of course on a big ship like-a this we'll not get-a nothing at all.

KLINKER (crying). But I want some presents already.

SCHWILLIE (crying). Und me also. I want some presents, too.

KLINKER. Und Saint Nicholas can't come. Oh, oh! He can't get out on the big ocean.

SCHWILLIE. Maybe he could float out on a piece of ice yet. Could he, Hulda?

HULDA. No. I don't think he's much of a floater.

MEENY. If he did it would make him awful seasick.

KLINKER. I wish we was landed in New York yet, so I do.

SCHWILLIE. Where is Anita? She'll know.

HULDA. Yes, Anita will know whether he is coming or not. She knows almost everything.

PADDY MIKE (standing at rear L.). Here comes Anita now, and sure she's having a grand time, so she is.

ALL (rising and going to rear, looking off L.). Here she comes.  
Hurrah for Anita. (Music: The same as for the Opening Song.)

TOMASSO (calling). Anita, Anita, come here quick. We want you.

ANITA (outside L.). I'm coming. Wait a minute. I'm coming.

Music swells louder. ANITA dances in from L., all sing as she dances around, waving her tambourine.

ALL (singing to tune of the "Opening Song").

We're sailing to America,  
Away across the sea,  
We're happy little immigrants,  
Our hearts are light and free.  
Then clap, clap, clap together,

(All skip around.)

Clap, clap away;  
The steerage is a happy place--  
Tomorrow's Christmas Day.

ANITA (comes forward to C. surrounded by the others). Oh, I've just had the grandest time. It was so superb, magnificent, sublime! (Extends arms in ecstasy.) I have-a been at the leetla window watching the great, grand,

magnificent ocean. It was all so blue and so green and so purple--and the sinking sun is all shining on the great-a, beeg waves, like-a sparkling diamonds. (Use elaborate gestures at all times.) And me, the poor, leetla Italian girl, gets to see all this great-a, grand-a ocean. It is superb, magnificent, sublime! Ah, I am so happy, I could sing and dance and kees everybody on the great-a, grand-a earth!

MEENY (at L.). Vot makes you so happy, Anita? Maybe I'd be happy yet also, if I didn't get seasick once in a while.

ANITA. What makes me so happy, Meeny? It's the sun and the waves, and the sunlight shining like diamonds on the great-a, grand-a ocean. Are you not also happy, Biddy Mary?

BIDDY MARY (standing by ANITA). I am not. Sure, I niver do be having time to be seeing diamonds on the great big waves. I have to be hard at work, so I do, peeling the praties for our Christmas breakfast.

ANITA. I watched the great-a red sun as he began to sink, sink, sink way down in the ocean. And the beeg-a waves got more beeg and more beeg and on top of them I saw long white lace fringe. The green silk waves were all-a trimmed with white lace fringe. And sometimes I think I see the leetla mermaid fairies dancing in the foam. Leetla green and white mermaids with the long long-a hair.

TOMASSO (at R.). You make-a me seek, Anita. There is-a no such things as fairies.

ANITA. But I love to think there is. It is a great, grand-a pleasure just to think there is. Is it not, Meeny?

MEENY (stolidly). Oh, sure.

ANITA. And that is why we should all be so verra, verra happy. We can think such-a lovely things. The poor leetla children at-a home, pouf! They cannot think such things, because they have never seen such a great, beeg-a ship, or such a great, beeg-a ocean--

SERGIUS. Or a whale.

PADDY MIKE. Or a sailor man.

HULDA. Or a nice little steerage bed built just like a shelf in the wall.

TOMASSO. Or the great beeg-a engine that makes the ship go.

MEENY. Or the tons and tons of coal vay down deep by the cellar.

SERGIUS (mocking her). Way down deep by the cellar! Whoever heard of a cellar on board of a ship? You mean--down in the hatch.

MEENY. Hatch? Vot is dot hatch? Dis ain't a chicken, it's a boat.  
(All laugh.)

KLINKER (takes SCHWILLIE by the hand and goes to ANITA). Anita, we want to ask you a question.

ANITA. Well, and what is the question of the leetla Dutch twins?

SCHWILLIE. Tonight is the night before Christmas.

KLINKER. Und we want to know if the good Saint Nicholas is coming tonight.

ANITA. I don't know. You see it would be a great beeg-a, long-a trip way out here on the ocean.

KLINKER (half crying). But I want him to come. I've been a awful good boy, isn't I, Schwillie Willie Winkum?

SCHWILLIE. Sure, you is. Und me also, ain't I, Klinker?

ANITA. If you have both been verra, verra good I think that maybe the good Saint will come. (Looks around.) Have you all been verra, verra good?

OTHERS. Yes, all of us.

HANS. We're always very, very good at Christmas time.

AH GOO. Me velly, velly good.

ANITA (points off R.). See, way up there on the upper deck, are the rich, grand-a ladies and gentlemen coming out from the great, beeg-a dining-room. If you go and stand under the hole maybe they'll throw you some oranges or candy. They're awful nice peoples on the upper deck.

MEENY. Let's all go right away quick. Maybe we'll get some oranges und candy.

KLINKER. Oh, how I do love oranges und candy, don't I, Schwillie Willie Winkum?

SCHWILLIE. Sure, und me also, don't I, Klinker?

SERGIUS. Let us all go together. (All come forward and sing to tune of the Opening Song.)

We're happy little immigrants,  
We'll sing our happy song,  
Our hearts are light, our faces bright--  
The good ship speeds along.  
Then clap, clap, clap together,  
Clap, clap away;  
The steerage is a happy place--  
Tomorrow's Christmas Day.

(All the children except ANITA go out at R., repeating the chorus of their song.)

ANITA. Surely the good-a Saint Nicholas will come tonight, because there are so many, many verra good children on board this-a ship. (Counting on fingers.) There's Hulda from Holland and her two leetla brothers, the Dutch twins, Klinker and Schwillie Willie Winkum. They must have a great-a beeg-a Christmas present. And there's Sergius from Russia, and Meeny and Paddy Mike and Bidy Mary, and Neelda from Spain, and Yakob and Hans and Ah Goo and Mieke and leetla Sano San from afar away Japan. They must all have the great-

a, grand-a presents. Maybe I could write old Santa Claus a leetla letter and tell how good the poor children way down in the steerage have been. And there's my cousin Tomasso from Italy. Oh, Santa Claus must bring him a new violin. Then he can make-a the beautiful music on the golden streets of New York. If there is anybody at all in the whole beeg world who should have a nice-a, beeg-a Christmas, it is the verra poor leetla children whose mammas and papas haven't got very much money. But sometimes the good Santa Claus forgets all about the verra poor leetla children--and that's the mostest saddest thing of all, for they are the verra ones he should remember. When I get to be a great-a, beeg, grand-a, reech lady in the golden streets of New York, ah! Then I will buy presents and presents and presents, and I will-a give them to all the verra poor leetla children in the world. I wonder why it is that the verra good Santa Claus sometimes forgets the poor leetla children on-a Christmas Day. He never forgets the reech leetla children, only those who are verra, verra poor. And that is a sad misfortune. If I had-a nice-a Christmas present, with many candies and figs and oranges, I could never rest until I had given something nice to all the poor leetla children in the city--for that is what makes the mostest happy Christmas of all.

Enter SERGIUS from R. quietly. He comes down behind ANITA and places his hands over her eyes.

SERGIUS. Guess who it is.

ANITA. Sergius!

SERGIUS (disappointed). Why, I thought that you would think it was a goblin.

ANITA. Goblin? What is a goblin, Sergius?

SERGIUS. It's a little, wee bit of a man with a long beard. And they go around having a good time at night. They are always very active on the night before Christmas. (Looks cautiously around.) I shouldn't be at all surprised if we should see some tonight.

ANITA (frightened). Oh, Sergius, will they harm us?

SERGIUS. Not very much. They just like to have a little fun, that's all. We have lots of them in Russia. And I believe there are some down here in the steerage.

ANITA (grasps his arm). Oh, Sergius! Where are they?

SERGIUS. Well, last night I could not sleep, so I got up and came in here, and just as I was passing by that barrel (points to barrel up L.C. where JACK FROST is concealed), I thought I heard a noise. It was like some one rapping on the barrel. Like this. (Raps on another barrel.) I thought it was a goblin and I never stopped running until I was safe in my bunk with the bedclothes around my head.

ANITA. Pooh! I'm not afraid. No leetla goblin man can make-a me afraid.

SERGIUS. They do wonderful things on Christmas Eve. But come; let us go to the bottom of the stairs. The ladies and gentlemen are looking down and Tomasso is playing his violin. Soon they will throw apples and oranges down to us, and perhaps money. Come and see.



ANITA. No, I'd rather wait here.

SERGIUS (crossing to door at R.). All right, but don't let the goblin man catch you. (Exits at R.)

ANITA. The goblin man! Poof! There is no such thing as a goblin man. In-a Italy we do not have such goblin mans. He said he heard something rap, rap on the inside of the barrel. Poof! Sergius must have been having one beeg, grand-a dream. Never in all my life did I ever hear anything go rap, rap on the inside of a barrel. (Stands close to JACK FROST'S barrel.) And if I did, I'd think it was a leetla, weeny-teeny mouse. But a leetla, weeny-teeny mouse never could go rap, rap on the inside of a barrel, try as hard as he could. It must have been a dream.

JACK FROST (raps sharply on the inside of the barrel).

ANITA. Oh, what was that? I thought I heard something. (Goes toward barrel cautiously.) Maybe it is the leetla, teeny-weeny baby mouse. (Rises on tiptoes to peer into the barrel.) I'll just peek in and see. (Just as she looks into the barrel, JACK FROST pops up his head almost in her very face.)

JACK FROST. Hello!

ANITA (starting back, very much frightened). Oh!

JACK FROST. Did you say oh, or hello?

ANITA. I just said, oh.

JACK FROST. Well, then, hello. (Climbs out of the barrel.)

ANITA. Hello.

JACK FROST (goes to her). You aren't frightened, are you?

ANITA (at R.). Well, I'm a leetla frightened, but not verra much.

JACK FROST. Why? I won't hurt you.

ANITA. You came up so sudden. I never expected to find a boy in that barrel. And you are such a queer looking boy.

JACK FROST. Boy? I'm not a boy.

ANITA. You're not? You look like a boy. You're not a girl, are you?

JACK FROST (indignantly). Well, I should say not! I'm just a kind of a sort of a kind of an idea, that's all. I'm your imagination.

ANITA. I hope you're not a goblin.

JACK FROST. Oh, no. I'm not a goblin. They're old and have long beards. I'm not old at all. (Twirls around on toes.) See, I'm even younger than you are. (Makes low bow.) I'm a pixie.

ANITA. And what is a pixie?

JACK FROST. I told you before, it's just your imagination.

ANITA. You look like a boy. What is your name?

JACK FROST. My name is Claus.

ANITA. Claus! Why, what a funny leetla name. I never heard a name like that in Italy. Claus what?

JACK FROST. Santa Claus. Haven't you ever heard of Santa Claus?

ANITA. Oh, yes; many, many times. But you can't be Santa Claus.

JACK FROST (indignantly). I'd like to know why I can't! It's my name, isn't it?

ANITA. But you are not the real, real truly Santa Claus. He is an old, old man. A leetla fat old man with white-a hair just like-a the snow, and a long, white-a beard.

JACK FROST. Ho, you must be thinking of my daddy.

ANITA. Your daddy? Is Santa Claus your daddy?

JACK FROST. Sure, he is. I'm Jack Frost Santa Claus, Jr. Most folks call me Jolly Jack Frost. The little fat man with the white beard is my father.

ANITA (astonished). Why, I didn't know Santa Claus had any leetla boys.

JACK FROST. Sure, he has. Who do you think takes care of the reindeer, and who waters the doll-tree and picks the dolls?

ANITA. Picks the dolls? Do the dolls grow on trees?

JACK FROST. Yes, indeed, right next door to the taffy cottage, down Chocolate Lane. I take care of the marble bushes and the popgun trees. You just ought to see our wonderful gardens.

ANITA. Oh, I'd love to see them.

JACK FROST. We've got a Teddy-bear garden, and a tool garden, and a furniture garden, and a game garden, and a candy garden, though most of the candy comes from mines.

ANITA. The mines?

JACK FROST. Sure. We dig out just the kind we want. We have caramel mines, and vanilla mines and mines full of chocolate almonds, and rivers of fig paste and strawberry ice cream soda. They flow right through the picture-book garden.

ANITA. Oh, it must be the most wonderful place in the whole world.

JACK FROST. And I help take care of it. I have fourteen little brothers, and we're all twins.

ANITA. And have you a mother, too? Has Santa Claus a nice-a, fine-a wife?

JACK FROST (laughs). Of course he's got a wife. Haven't you ever heard of my mother. Her name is Mary.

ANITA. Mary? Mary what?

JACK FROST. Why, Merry Mary Christmas, of course. I thought everyone knew that.

ANITA. And does she go round the world with Santa Claus on the night before Christmas?

JACK FROST. Oh, no, she's too busy for that. She stays at home and takes care of the gardens.

ANITA. But what are you doing here on the ship? I should think you'd be with your father.

JACK FROST. Ah, that is a secret. You mustn't tell anyone.

ANITA. How can I tell anyone when I don't know myself.

JACK FROST. Well, maybe I'll tell you.

ANITA. Oh, if you only would. I'd just love to have a great-a, beeg, grand-a secret.

JACK FROST. You can keep a secret, can't you?

ANITA. Of course I can. Girls can always keep secrets.

JACK FROST. Some girls can't. But I believe you really can. Your name's Anita, isn't it?

ANITA. Yes. But how did you know?

JACK FROST. Oh, we know everything. How old are you?

ANITA. If you tell me how you knew my name, I'll tell you how old I am.

JACK FROST. Well, I just guessed it.

ANITA. Then why don't you guess how old I am?

JACK FROST. Cute, ain't you?

ANITA. Not so verra cute. I'm going on nine.

JACK FROST. Then you're old enough to keep the secret. Now, first you must promise you won't tell until tomorrow morning.

ANITA. Cross my heart. (She does so.)

JACK FROST (crosses to her). Listen, then; here's the secret. (He whispers in her ear.)

ANITA (after a pause, while he is whispering). He is? He is? Oh!!

JACK FROST (nods his head wisely). Yes, he is.

ANITA. Honest?

JACK FROST. Honest injun!

ANITA. With his pack and presents and a Christmas tree and everything?

JACK FROST (nods head emphatically). Yes, ma'am, every single thing.

ANITA. Tonight?

JACK FROST. Just before the clock strikes twelve, when all the little children in the steerage are asleep.

ANITA. But how will he get out here in the middle of the ocean?

JACK FROST. Fly.

ANITA. Fly? But he hasn't any wings. (JACK nods.) He has? (JACK nods.) Really and truly wings?

JACK FROST (nods). Really and truly wings.

ANITA. I never knew Santa Claus had wings before.

JACK FROST. He only bought them this year.

ANITA. Bought them? (JACK nods.) Then they didn't grow on him?

JACK FROST (laughs). Of course not. He's coming in an air ship.

ANITA. Why, I never knew Santa Claus had an air ship.

JACK FROST. He's got the very latest twentieth century model. He only uses the reindeer once in a while now. He can go much faster on an air ship. (Sits down.) Oh, I'm tired.

ANITA. I didn't know pixies ever got tired.

JACK FROST. You ought to see the work I've done today.

ANITA. Here on the boat?

JACK FROST. Yes, ma'am, right here on the boat.

ANITA. Oh, show me.

JACK FROST. I will. But it's part of the secret. (Goes to rear L.) Come here and I'll show you what I've been doing.

ANITA (goes to him). It isn't anything scary, is it?

JACK FROST. Of course not. (Lets her peep through the curtain that conceals the Christmas tree from the audience.) There; what do you

think of that?

ANITA. Oh, oh! oh!! It's too great and grand and wonderful for words. Oh, what a wonderful, wonderful secret! I'm so glad you've told me. It is so much nicer to know all about it beforehand. I wish I could tell Tomasso.

JACK FROST. Well, you can't. It's a secret and you mustn't tell anybody.

ANITA. But are you really, truly sure he's coming?

JACK FROST. Of course he is. That is our secret.

ANITA. Oh, it's the grandest secret I ever had in all-a my life. I will not tell a soul that he is-a coming. It will be a Christmas surprise, and when I get to the beeg city of New York in America, I'll always remember this great-a beeg, nice-a secret about old Santa Claus and his nice leetla boy, Jack Frost.

JACK FROST. What are you going to do when you get to America?

ANITA. I am going to dance. My uncle, Pedro Spanilli, he haba de grind-organ. Until last-a month he had-a de nice-a monkey, named Mr. Jocko, but last-a month Mr. Jocko he die, and my uncle, Pedro Spanilli, he send for me to take-a his place.

JACK FROST. Take the monkey's place?

ANITA. Yes, sir. I'm going to go round with my uncle and hold out my tambourine, so! (Poses and holds out tambourine.) And then I will-a collect the pennies, just like-a Mr. Jocko used to do.

JACK FROST (mocking her). I suppose you are going to wear a leetla red cap and jump up and down this way (imitates a monkey), and say, "Give-a de monk de cent!"

ANITA (laughing). Oh, no. I'm going to sing the leetla song, and dance the leetla dance, so! (Hums and dances, or a song may be introduced at this point by ANITA.) Then, when I'm finished, I go to the kind leetla boy, Jack Frost, and hold out my tambourine, so! (Does so.) And maybe he drops a nickel in my tambourine. Eh? Does he?

JACK FROST (sighs, then drops a nickel in tambourine). Yes, I guess he does. And you just wait till tomorrow morning, Anita, and I'll give you the finest Christmas present on the Atlantic Ocean.

ANITA. And you must not forget the leetla Dutch twins, and my cousin Tomasso, and Hulda and Meeny and Sergius and Ah Goo and Sano San and Needla and Bidy Mary and Paddy Mike and all the rest.

JACK FROST. Whew! That's a big order. But we won't forget a single soul on Christmas Day. And now I've got to go and put the finishing touches on--you know what! (Goes behind curtains that conceal the Christmas tree.)

ANITA (looks around). Why, he's gone.

JACK FROST (sticking his head out of the curtains). The sun has set, it's out of sight, so little Jack Frost will say good-night!  
(Disappears back of curtains.)

ANITA. Good-night, Jolly Jack Frost, good-night. Oh, it's the most wonderful secret in all the world. And won't the leetla children be glad to know that old Santa Claus has not forgotten them. He said that Santa Claus was coming tonight in the air ship, and it's got to be true, it's just got to be true.

Enter TOMASSO from R., carrying violin.

TOMASSO. Anita, if you don't hurry you'll not get any supper at all. It's most eight o'clock.

ANITA. Oh, I don't care for supper, Tomasso. I could-a not eat. I'm too much excited to eat.

TOMASSO. What make-a you so excited, Anita?

ANITA. Why, tonight--(pauses as she remembers her promise) Oh, that I cannot tell; it's a secret.

TOMASSO. What is the secret?

ANITA. If I told-a you, Tomasso, then it would no longer be a secret.

TOMASSO. You should-a not have the secrets from me, Anita. I am your cousin, also--I am the head of the family.

ANITA. But I made the promise not to tell.

TOMASSO. Who you make-a the promise to?

ANITA. I promised Jack--(hesitates) I mean, I make-a de promise to someone.

TOMASSO. To Jack! Who is this-a Jack, Anita?

ANITA. That is part of the secret. Listen, Tomasso, tomorrow morning you shall know everything. Early in the morning shall I tell-a you my secret. That will be my Christmas present to you.

TOMASSO. All right. I'll wait. Oh, see, Anita, the moon is coming up. (Points to L.) Just like-a big, round-a silver ball.

ANITA. Let us stay here and watch the moon, Tomasso.

TOMASSO. You'd better go and get your supper. Those leetla Dutch twins are eating everything on the table. I think they'd eat the table itself if it was-a not nailed to the deck. Hurry, Anita!

ANITA. I go. (Crosses to door at R., then turns toward him). It's a awful good-a secret, Tomasso. (Laughs and runs out at R.)

TOMASSO (looks off L.). Ah, the great, grand-a lady moon. She looks at me, I look at her. Maybe she'll like a leetla serenade.

(Simple violin solo by TOMASSO, accompanied by hidden organ or piano. After he has been playing sometime, the other children come softly in from the R. and group around the stage. Note: If possible, get a boy for TOMASSO'S part who can play the violin; if not, introduce a song at this point. "Santa Lucia," found in most school collections, would prove effective either as a vocal solo or as a violin solo.)

BIDDY MARY. Sure, that's beautiful. It takes me back again to dear ould Ireland where the River Shannon flows.

HULDA. What do you do in Ireland the night before Christmas, Biddy Mary?

MEENY. Do you have a Christmas tree like we do in Germany?

BIDDY MARY. We do not. We don't have any tree at all, at all.

PADDY MIKE. And we don't get many presents. But it's a fine time we have for all that. Instead of getting presents, we have the fun of giving presents--and that's the finest thing in all the world, so it is, to make the other fellow happy. Sure, I just love to give presents.

KLINKER. You can give me some if you want to.

SCHWILLIE. Und me also some.

BIDDY MARY. But where would we be getting presents out here in the middle of the ocean? In dear ould Ireland sure it's a fine time we're after having on Christmas Day.

PADDY MIKE. It is that. With the fiddles playing and the dancers dancing and the fine suppers upon the table.

SERGIUS. In Russia we always set a table in front of the window and put a fine linen cloth on it. (Produces white lace-edged cloth.) Here is the cloth, but we have no window.

HULDA. Here, use this box as a table. (Indicates a large box at rear C.) Now, let us put the cloth on, so! (HULDA and SERGIUS put cloth on the box.)

BIDDY MARY. The night before Christmas we always put a big candle, all gay with ribbons, in the window to welcome the Christ child.

PADDY MIKE. Here is the candle. (Places it on box at rear C.) Now I'll light it. (Lights candle.)

TOMASSO. We do that also in Italy. And we put a leetla picture of the Christ child on the table. (Puts colored picture of Madonna and Child back of the candle.)

BIDDY MARY. On Christmas Day it's the fine old tales we're after

hearing in Ireland, all about the wonderful star that shone so bright that it turned night into day, and led the Wise Men all the way to where a little Babe in the manger lay.

PADDY MIKE. And all the angels sang above of peace on earth, good will and love.

BIDDY MARY.

The shepherds wandering on the hill,  
Beheld the star and followed till  
They saw the Child and heard the song,  
The angels sang the whole night long.

SERGIUS. May the spirit of Christmas enter every heart tonight, making all the world one big, happy family, no rich, no poor, no high, no low, all brothers and sisters, all children of the Lord on high!

MEENY. Maybe good old Santa Claus will come after all. Vell, if he does I want to be ready for him. (Produces two very large red stockings, made for the occasion.) Come, Yakob and Hans and Mieze, let us hang up our stockings here under the burning candle. (They hang up the four pair of stockings.)

NEELDA (places a wreath of holly on the table). Christ was born on the Christmas Day, wreath the holly, twine the bay! Light and Life and Joy is He, the Babe, the Son, the Holy One of Mary!

TOMASSO. Meeny and Yakob and Hans and leetla Mieze have hung up their stockings for the good-a Saint Nicholas, but in Italy we set out our shoes, so! And we always get them full of presents. (Places small pair of wooden shoes on table.)

MEENY. I like stockings much better than shoes already, because the stockings can stretch yet, und if they stretch real, real wide out maybe we can get a baby piano or a automobile in our stockings. Jah, stockings is mooch better als shoes.

HULDA. Here is my beautiful star. (Produces tinsel star.) That will remind us of the Star of Bethlehem that led the three Wise Men across the hills and plains of Judea unto the little manger where, surrounded by cattle and oxen, amid the straw, the Lord of Heaven was born on Christmas Eve.

SCHWILLIE. Und all the angels sang, "Peace on earth, good will to men," didn't they, Klinker?

KLINKER. Und all the shepherds heard them, and they followed the star and came to the manger to see the little Baby.

MEENY. Let us all sit down here in front of the candle and the star, and see if old Santa Claus has forgotten us already. It's almost time for him to be coming. (All sit down.)

ALL (sing).

THE TIME IS NEAR.



1. The time is near, the time is near,  
San-ta Claus will soon be here!  
All the world is sweet-ly sleep-ing,  
An-gels now their watch are keep-ing,  
And the moon shines clear,  
And the moon shines clear.

2. Be-fore the dawn, be-fore the dawn,  
Saint Nick will have come and gone!  
Now with pa-tience we'll a-wait him,  
Hop-ing noth-ing may be-late him,  
On his jour-ney long,  
On his jour-ney long.]

HULDA. Oh, I do hope Santa Claus will come and visit us tonight. But of course he cannot go every place. Some children have to be left out.

KLINKER. Yes, that's so; but I hope it ain't us. Don't you, Schwillie Willie Winkum?

SCHWILLIE. Sure, I do. I wish old Santa would hurry up and come, 'cause the old Sandman is here already. I'm getting awful sleepy.

KLINKER. Me--I'm getting awful sleepy, too. (Stretches and yawns.)

TOMASSO. I wonder what has become of Anita? She said she had a wonderful secret that was-a verra, verra grand.

MEENY. A secret, Tomasso? (Goes to him.)

TOMASSO (standing at C.). Yes, a great, beeg, grand-a secret.

BIDDY MARY (goes to him and takes his L. arm). Oh, what is it, Tomasso?

MEENY (taking his R. arm). Yes, Tomasso, tell us vot it is already.

BIDDY MARY (turning TOMASSO around to face her). Sure, if there's anything on earth I do love, it's a secret.

HULDA (and the other girls, surrounding TOMASSO). Yes, Tomasso, tell us the secret; we'll never tell anyone.

MEENY (pulling him around to face her). Sure we won't. Nice Tomasso, tell us vot it is yet.

TOMASSO (hesitates). Well, I----

BIDDY MARY (pulling him around to face her). Now, you tell me, Tomasso. I never tell any secrets at all, at all.

TOMASSO. Well, I----

MEENY (pulls him around again). If you're going to tell it, I want to hear every word. I never want to miss noddings no times.

BIDDY MARY (pulls him back). Neither do I.

HULDA. Neither do I.

MEENY. Neither do any of us.

KLINKER. I don't want to miss nothing neither.

SCHWILLIE. No, und I don't neither.

ALL. Now, what is the secret, Tomasso?

TOMASSO (loudly). It is not my secret. It is Anita's secret.

ALL. Well, what is Anita's secret.

TOMASSO. She wouldn't tell me.

ALL (turn away very much disappointed). Oh!

TOMASSO. She's promised to tell us all in the morning. She said that would be her Christmas present to us--to tell us the secret. (All sit or recline around the stage. Lower the lights.)

SERGIUS. It seems so strange to spend Christmas Eve away out here in the middle of the ocean.

KLINKER (almost asleep). Wake me up, Hulda, just as soon as Santa Claus comes.

BIDDY MARY (at R.). Sure I think the Sandman has been after spillin' sand in all of our eyes. I'm that sleepy I can't say a word at all, at all.

SANO SAN. They're putting out all the lights. Here, Sergius, hang my little lantern in front of the candle.

AH GOO. Allee samee hang mine. (SANO SAN and AH GOO each give their lanterns to SERGIUS, who lights them and hangs them on the table. Note: Nails must be put in the table at R. and L. corners facing front for these lanterns.)

SERGIUS. I'm going to stretch out here and take a little nap. (Reclines on floor.) Be sure and wake me up, Hulda, just as soon as you hear the bells on his reindeer.

TOMASSO (yawns). I wonder what has become of Anita?

HULDA (stretches). I believe I'm getting sleepy, too.

OTHERS. So are all of us.

BIDDY MARY. We're all noddin', nid, nid noddin', sure I think it's time we were all of us fast asleep.

ALL (sing sleepily).

"WE'RE ALL NODDIN'."

1. We are all nod-din', nid, nid nod-din',  
We are all nod-din', and drop-ping off to sleep.  
So see San-ta Claus we've all done our best,  
[Transcriber's Note: probably should be "To see"]  
But we're aw-ful-ly sleep-y, so we'll take a rest.

2. We are all nod-din', nid, nid nod-din',  
We are all nod-din', and drop-ping off to sleep.  
It's aw-ful-ly late, we'll no lon-ger de-lay,  
But ride with the Sand-man, a-way and a-way.]

(ALL are sound asleep. Stage is dark.)

KLINKER (talking in his sleep). Noddin', nid, nid noddin'.

SCHWILLIE (talking in his sleep). Dropping off to sleep, ain't we, Klinker?

Soft, mysterious music. ANITA dances in from R. She dances around the stage, keeping time to the music and bending over the little sleepers.

ANITA. Asleep! Every last one of them is verra sound asleep. Meeny and Biddy Mary, and Sergius and Tomasso and the leetla Dutch twins and all! (Goes to curtain at rear.) Jack Frost! Jolly Jack Frost! Come-a quick, come-a quick! They're all asleep.

JACK FROST (sticks his head out of the curtains). Hello, what is it?

ANITA. It is Anita. The leetla children are all here and sound asleep.

JACK FROST (coming down to her). And so was I. They sang a song about noddin', nid, nid noddin', and I just went to sleep myself. I dreamed I was hunting a polar bear way up by the North Pole. (Yawns.) I'm still awfully sleepy.

ANITA. I didn't know that you ever went to sleep.

JACK FROST. You bet I do. That's the one thing I've got against my daddy's Christmas trip every year. It wakes us all up right in the middle of the night.

ANITA. The middle of the night? What do you mean?

JACK FROST. Middle of the north pole night. If it wasn't for Christmas we could go to bed about half past October and sleep until a quarter of May, but ma thinks we ought to help pa and then wait up until he comes home. My, I'm sleepy! Aren't you?

ANITA. Oh, no, no! I'm verra too much excited to sleep. It's all about my secret. Are you really sure he is coming?

JACK FROST. Of course he is, and it's almost time he was here now.

It's nearly Christmas Day. Look way up there in the sky. You don't see anything that looks like an air ship, do you?

ANITA (looking up and off at R.). No, I cannot see a single thing.

JACK FROST (sees table at rear). Oh, look here! The children have lighted a candle for him. That's just fine. It always pleases him. And see; here's a picture and a wreath of holly and the star of Bethlehem. And stockings and shoes all in a row.

ANITA (looking up and off R.). I can't see a thing.

JACK FROST. Here's a telescope. Look through that. (Takes home-made telescope from his barrel.) Now do you see anything?

ANITA. Oh, no; now I cannot even see the stars or the moon.

JACK FROST. Of course you can't. You are looking through the wrong end. Turn it around.

ANITA (looks up and off R. through telescope). Oh, now I can see the stars. And, oh, look! I see a leetla, teeny-weeny thing way, way off--far up in the sky. Look, Jack Frost, is that the air ship?

(Fast music, played softly.)

JACK FROST (looks through the telescope). Yes, I believe it is.

ANITA (dances wildly about the stage). Oh, he's coming, he's coming. I'm going to get to see Santa Claus! Is it not wonderful? I'm going to see him. Let me look. (Takes telescope.) Oh, it's getting bigger and bigger and BIGGER!

Sleigh bells heard outside at R., far away in the distance.

JACK FROST (capering around). Hurray! daddy's coming! daddy's coming!

ANITA. Now I can hear the bells. Oh, it's coming closer and closer and CLOSER. Look out, it's going to hit the boat! (Small toy air ship flies across the stage at rear, with tiny lights twinkling in it. Stretch a wire across rear of stage and high up, for the toy to run on.)

JACK FROST. He flew right by us.

ANITA. Maybe he didn't see the boat. Oh, now he isn't coming at all.

JACK FROST (looking out at L.). Yes, he is. He's landed right over there. Here he comes; here he comes! (Music and bells louder and louder.)

ANITA (runs to L.). Here we are, Santa Claus. This is the place. Come in. Merry Christmas, Santa Claus, merry Christmas!

Loud fast music. Enter SANTA CLAUS from L.

SANTA CLAUS. Hello, there--where are you? It's so dark I can't see a single thing.

JACK FROST. Hello, daddy; merry Christmas.

SANTA CLAUS (shaking hands with him). Hello yourself. Merry Christmas to you, too. Are you all ready for me?

JACK FROST. Yes, it's all ready. The magical tree is just waiting for your touch to turn into a real Christmas tree.

ANITA. Oh, we're going to have a real Christmas tree.

SANTA CLAUS. Hello, who's this young person?

JACK FROST. This is Anita.

SANTA CLAUS. And why isn't she sound asleep like the rest of the children?

JACK FROST. She's such a good little girl that I told her she could stay up with me and wait until you came.

SANTA CLAUS (laughs). Oh, ho; so you've made a hit with my boy, Jack Frost, have you? Well, if that's the case, I guess you can stay.

ANITA. But all of the children would like to see you, Santa Claus. See, they've prepared the candle and the wreath of holly and the star of Bethlehem all for you. There's Sergius and Tomasso and Hulda and Meeny and Hans and Yakob and Neelda and Ah Goo and Sano San and Mieke and the leetla Dutch twins, Klinker and Schwillie Willie Winkum. They've all been awfully good children. And Biddy Mary and Paddy Mike they brought the candle. They're good, too.

SANTA CLAUS. Hurry, Jack, and fill up the shoes and stockings.

JACK FROST (filling them from the sack). Yes, daddy, I'm hurrying.

SANTA CLAUS. It's just two minutes till Christmas morning. I've had a hard night's work and I think I'll just take a little vacation here in the steerage.

ANITA. Oh, Santa Claus, may I wake up all the leetla children and let them see you?

SANTA CLAUS. Yes, just as soon as you hear the chimes announcing the birth of Christmas Day.

ANITA. And don't you have any other place to go this year?

SANTA CLAUS. I hope not. Here I am in the middle of the ocean and my air ship is just about played out. Jack, dump everything out of the sack and we'll give the little immigrants the jolliest kind of a Christmas. I'm not going to lug all of those toys and candy and things back to the North Pole again.

JACK FROST (empties sack on floor). Here they are, daddy.

SANTA CLAUS. Now, where's the tree?

JACK FROST (goes to rear of the stage and removes the curtains that have been concealing the dazzling Christmas tree.). There she is. Isn't she a beauty?

ANITA. Oh, it's the greatest, most grand-a tree in all the world.

(Faint chimes are heard in the distance.)

JACK FROST. There are the chimes. It is Christmas Day. Merry Christmas, daddy; merry Christmas, Anita. Christmas Day is here.

ANITA (dancing around). Merry Christmas, Jack Frost! Merry Christmas, Santa Claus! Merry Christmas, everybody! Merry Christmas to all the world. Wake up, Hulda! Wake up! (Shakes her.)

JACK FROST. Wake up, Paddy Mike and Sergius! Wake up! Merry Christmas!

SANTA CLAUS. Wake up, Meeny and Biddy. It's Christmas morning. And you two little shavers, Klinker and Schwillie Willie Winkum, wake up and give Santa Claus a good, old hug!

(The children all awaken. Rub eyes, stretch, etc.)

HULDA. Oh, he's come, he's come, he's come! (Runs and hugs SANTA CLAUS.)

SCHWILLIE. Me, too. (Hugs him.) I said he'd come, didn't I, Klinker?

(Lights all on full.)

KLINKER (hugging SANTA CLAUS). Sure you did. And me, too, didn't I, Schwillie Willie Winkum?

MEENY. Oh, see the tree! The beautiful, beautiful Christmas tree.

TOMASSO. And my leetla shoes are full of candy and toys.

PADDY MIKE. Now, let's be all after giving three cheers for old Santa Claus. (The cheers are given.)

ANITA (bringing JACK FROST forward). And this is the leetla Jolly Jack Frost.

PADDY MIKE. Then three cheers for the leetla Jolly Jack Frost. (The cheers are given.)

ANITA (at C. with JACK FROST). This was my Christmas secret. Santa Claus and the air ship and the Christmas tree and jolly Jack Frost and everything. This was the secret.

PADDY MIKE. Now all of yeez give three cheers for Anita's secret. (The cheers are given. Folk dance may be introduced. All sing Christmas carol as the curtain falls.)

CURTAIN.

REMARKS ON THE PRODUCTION OF THE PLAY.

THE SCENERY.

The stage should be set to represent the steerage of a large ocean-going vessel. A good elaborate set may be arranged with very little expense by following the diagram. The back drop should be of light blue with a few cumulus clouds in white. The water line should be about one-fourth from the bottom, and from this line downward the scene should be darker blue, with white waves.

The background may be made from canvas or paper, as desired. A good effect has been produced by covering frames with tissue paper of the desired shades, the clouds and the water lines being cut from white paper and pasted on.

A railing runs across rear of stage. This railing is made of wood, with a tennis net serving for the wiring. Round life-savers are cut from paper, painted and attached to the railing. The ventilator and hatchways may be made from brown bristol board.

A large Christmas tree, lighted and decorated, stands at rear L. This is concealed by curtains.

A square box or table stands at rear C. Several barrels and boxes are at left front, and a box is at right front. A large barrel stands at left of center near the rear.

PROPERTIES.

Woolen stocking and knitting needles for Meeny.  
Potatoes, knife, bowl for Bidy Mary.  
Jack-stones for Sergius.  
Tambourine for Anita.  
Nickel (coin) for Jack Frost.  
Violin for Tomasso.  
White, lace-edged table cloth for Sergius.  
Large candle decorated with red ribbons for Paddy Mike.  
Bright picture of Virgin and Child for Tomasso.  
Two large red stockings for Meeny.  
Extra stockings for Yakob, Hans and Mieke.  
Wreath of holly for Neelda.  
Small wooden shoes for Tomasso.  
Tinsel star for Hulda.  
Telescope for Jack Frost. Made from a pasteboard roll covered with black cloth.  
Toy air ship on a wire, to sail across stage at rear.  
Pack of toys for Santa Claus.  
Sleigh bells for Santa.  
Chimes heard outside.

## COSTUMES AND SUGGESTIONS.

SANTA CLAUS--High boots. Red or brown coat or mackinaw, trimmed with fur (or cotton, dotted to imitate ermine fur). Cap to match coat. String of bells around neck. Pack of toys. White hair, mustache and long, white beard. Rosy cheeks. Do not wear a false-face, as this often frightens little children and makes the character seem unreal. When there are little children in the cast, their belief in Santa Claus must not be disturbed and the adult portraying the character need not attend the general rehearsals. The high boots may be shaped from black oil-cloth and drawn on over black shoes. Use a pillow or two to give an ample girth.

JOLLY JACK FROST (aged 8 or 9)--A jolly, little chubby-faced boy who can memorize and deliver a long part. White stockings and shoes. Canton flannel suit of white, trimmed with long points cut from cloth, to represent icicles. Long-pointed cap of white, coming down around back of head and forming a long-pointed collar in front. The top point should be wired into position. Face and hands are powdered very white. Put small dabs of mucilage on the costume and sprinkle here and there with diamond dust powder. Trim the costume with bits of cotton to represent snow.

ANITA (aged 8 or 9)--Dark hair and complexion. Black slippers with red rosettes or bows on them. White stockings. Green skirt. Small dark red apron, edged with white, black and green. Black spencer waist laced in front showing the white underwaist. Puffed sleeves falling to elbows. Green and red bows on elbows. Red silk handkerchief laid loosely over the shoulders. Gold beads around neck. Large earrings may be attached with court plaster. The headdress is a white oblong cloth, about six inches wide and about eighteen inches long. This cloth is gayly decorated with bands of red, green and black ribbons and the part on the head is padded with a small square of pasteboard. Tambourine decorated with red, black and green ribbons. A yellow silk handkerchief may replace the Sicilian headdress above described.

HULDA (aged 10)--A blonde girl with hair in two long braids. Wooden shoes, white stockings. Several very full underskirts. Long skirt of dark blue, made very full around the bottom. This skirt is patched with squares of dark red and striped goods. Large blue gingham apron edged with stripes of dark red. White waist. Blue bodice of same material as skirt. Small white cap fitting close to head in back, but turned back in front with points over each ear. Face round and rosy. If the wooden shoes are not easily obtained, fair substitutes may be made by covering an old pair of shoes with cream colored oil-cloth.

SERGIUS (aged 9)--Black oil-cloth leggings to knees. Dark trousers. Long Russian blouse of dark green coming nearly to knees and belted in at waist with black oil-cloth belt. Blouse edged with dark fur. Dark green cap trimmed with dark fur.

MEENY (aged 7)--Full white waist. Black bodice laced with red. Rather short red skirt, with black stripes sewed around bottom. White lace apron edged with red and black. White mob cap, puffed high in front. Red and black strings on cap which are tied under her chin. She carries a gray woolen sock, half finished, and knitting needles. Wooden shoes if possible.



BIDDY MARY--Old shoes and ragged stockings. Old-fashioned dress, rather short, of plaid gingham. Worn gingham apron. Little square shawl of red and black checked goods, crossed on breast. Old-fashioned, little black bonnet tied under her chin. She carries a pan of potatoes and a knife. Her age is about 8.

PADDY MIKE--Small boy of 7, dressed in a man's suit, cut down in a clumsy manner. Green vest. Black swallow-tail coat. Little plug hat, made by covering a pasteboard form with black cloth. Shoes, old and worn, and many, many sizes too large for him.

TOMASSO--Black slippers, white stockings. Red and yellow ribbons wound around legs. Black knee breeches and zouave jacket. Striped sport shirt. Red and yellow bows at knees and on shoulders. Red handkerchief knotted loosely at throat. Black felt hat, turned up side, gayly decorated with red and yellow ribbons. On his second entrance he carries a violin. A dark complexioned boy aged about 9.

THE DUTCH TWINS (aged 4 or 5)--Hair in Buster Brown style. Very full blue trousers extending from under the arms to ankles. These are made of blue denim and patched with large vari-colored patches. Wooden shoes. Striped shirts. Dutch caps made of dark cloth, with a peak in front and a crown about six inches high. The twins should be dressed exactly alike and look as much alike as possible. Get chubby little fellows and thoroughly rehearse them in their part; in fact they must go over it so much that it must come as second nature to them on the night of the performance. Much of the humor in the play depends on the little Dutch twins. When they walk let them take long striding steps. Use frequent gestures, nods, etc., in their dialogue, but be sure and have every movement exactly the same at each rehearsal. These parts are not difficult if the little actors are well trained, and their success on the night of the performance will amply repay the trouble spent in their proper coaching.

NEELDA--A little brunette girl, aged 4 or 5. Yellow sateen skirt and zouave jacket, trimmed with coarse black lace. Broad red sash tied on the side. White baby waist. Black lace mantilla over head, and hair dressed high with a high comb. Red rose over left ear.

AH GOO--A chubby little Chinese boy of 5. White stockings, black slippers, white pajamas, slanting eyebrows, small round white cap and long pig-tail made of black yarn. Carries Chinese kite.

YAKOB--Chubby boy of 6, dressed similar to twins, but in contrasting colors. Wears yarn stocking cap. Wooden shoes.

HANS--Tall, thin boy of 9. Dressed similar to the twins, but in brown. Tall black cap similar to those worn by the twins.

MIEZE--Little girl of 3 or 4, dressed similar to Hulda, but in dark red and red and white checked gingham.

SANO SAN--Little Japanese girl in kimono and sash. Eyebrows slanting. Hair dressed high. Chrysanthemums over ears. Carries a paper parasol or fan.

The Christmas tree is for the whole school and is concealed during the first part of the play by curtains. If there is to be no tree, all reference to it may be omitted without injury to the continuity of the play.

Other songs may be substituted for the songs here given, but these have proved very successful in several performances of Anita's Secret.