

14

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

PLAYFUL MUSIC FADES OUT SLOWLY. SILENT STREETS.
NICHOLAS YAWNS AS HE KEEPS WALKING. A BAG WITH
GOLD COINS CLINK.

053 NICHOLAS

(to himself)

Just three bags with gold coins
left... Who are the last persons
you want me to help tonight, my
Lord?

NICHOLAS SLOWS HIS PACE AS HE WALKS DOWN THE
STREET. A WOODEN SHUTTER OPENS. NICHOLAS GASPS.

054 NICHOLAS

(whispers)

I must be careful or that man in
that cottage will see me.

NICHOLAS RUNS TO HIDE, AS MARCUS LEANS ON THE
SHUTTER.

055 MARCUS

(disconsolate)

Side 2
START >>> Oh, what am I going to do now?

NICHOLAS sees MARCUS from across the street.

056 NICHOLAS

(lowering voice)

That man... He looks familiar...

057 MARCUS

I was so stupid to partner with
that Roman merchant.

058 NICHOLAS

(lowering voice)

Marcus! He is Marcus the jewel
merchant I met during my pilgrimage
to the Holy Land! He looks
troubled. I must get closer to hear
him without being seen.

NICHOLAS crosses the street, slowly steps into the shadows.

A DOG BARKS SOMEWHERE.

059 MARCUS

What will become of my daughters?
The Roman merchant... he demands
his payment. To settle the debt...
(MORE)

MARCUS (CONT'D)

he suggested... terrible things.
Selling them... or worse. If only
they were married, it would solve
everything. But without a dowry...
no honorable man will take them.

NICHOLAS SIGHs, MOVED.

060 NICHOLAS

He really is in trouble. The Lord
has guided my steps and now, I must
help him. I'll give him these three
bags with coins. One bag to cover
the dowry of each of his three
daughters. But... How will I drop
these bags at his cottage without
being seen?

NICHOLAS GROANS, SLIGHTLY.

061 NICHOLAS

Seems like I have to climb over the
tree. But... I'll have to climb
that tree as when I was a young
boy. With my bare hands.
(sighs frustrated)
Well... Let's do this.

THE RUSTLING OF LEAVES AS NICHOLAS BEGINS TO
CLIMB THE TREE. HIS STRAINED GRUNTS. NICHOLAS
BREATHES HEAVILY.

062 NICHOLAS

Easier said than done, old bones.
These branches aren't as forgiving
as they were in my youth.

A SOFT CHIRPING NEARBY.

063 NICHOLAS

Ah, a nest. Must be careful not to
disturb the little ones. Wouldn't
want to cause any alarm.

THE BRANCHES CREAK SLIGHTLY. NICHOLAS OPENS THE
SHUTTER.

064 NICHOLAS

Okay, I've opened the shutter and
now... First bag...

HE THROWS A BAG OF COINS INSIDE THE HOUSE.

065 NICHOLAS
Second bag... And now...

066 MARCUS
(from inside the cottage)
Who's up there?

NICHOLAS GASPS SHARPLY.

067 NICHOLAS
I must throw the last bag now.

NICHOLAS THROWS THE LAST BAG. A HEAVY THUD OF
THE BAG HITTING THE FLOOR.

068 NICHOLAS
Time to run, Nicholas!

BRANCHES CREAKING AND RUSTLING AS NICHOLAS
DESCENDS. SUDDENLY, HE STOPS.

069 NICHOLAS
Oh, no! My cloak... It's stuck with
the nest...

NICHOLAS PULLS HIS ROBE CAREFULLY. MORE BIRDS
CHIRPING.

070 NICHOLAS
I won't hurt you, birdies. I
promise...

SUDDENLY, MARCUS RUSHES TO THE SHUTTER AND LEANS
OUTSIDE.

071 MARCUS
You! What are you...
(awed)
Nicholas? Is that you?

072 NICHOLAS
(innocently)
Hello, Marcus... It's been a long
time.

MARCUS STEPS OVER THE BAGS WITH COINS.

073 MARCUS
What is this?

MARCUS LIFTS THE BAGS, THE COINS CLINK. MARCUS
OPENS THE BAGS.

074 **MARCUS**

Golden coins? Nicholas... Did you... And... What are you doing in that tree?

MORE BIRDS CHIRPING. A BRIEF SILENCE. THEN, NICHOLAS BEGINS TO LAUGH JOYFULLY. HE SIGHS, DEEPLY.

075 NICHOLAS

Could you please help me get down, Marcus?

NICHOLAS CONTINUES LAUGHING.

15

CRACKLING OF A FIRE. MARCUS AND NICHOLAS SIT FACE TO FACE.

076 **MARCUS**

It was you. All this time... it was you! You are the miraculous giver in Patara and Myra!

077 NICHOLAS

It was not me, Marcus. It was the Lord. Only using my hands.

078 **MARCUS**

Your secret giving has become known all across the region! Everyone must know what you do... How you have helped me and others in need! You have saved my daughters! You have saved us all!

079 NICHOLAS

No, Marcus, please! You must not tell anyone! What I do is not for praise. It is for the love of Christ.

080 **MARCUS**

But... We must thank you, Nicholas. <<< **END**

081 NICHOLAS

Thank the Lord alone. He heard your cries, not me. He provided these gifts in answer to your prayers. He is the true source of all goodness and mercy. Promise me, Marcus, you will keep my identity secret.