

Amahl and The Night Visitors : The English Text (slightly abridged)

Opera in One Act

by Gian-Carlo Menotti

Characters:	
Amahl (a crippled boy, of about 12)	Boy Soprano
His mother	Soprano
King Kaspar (slightly deaf)	Tenor
King Melchior	Baritone
King Balthazar	Bass
The Page	Bass
Chorus of shepherds and villagers	
Dancers	

Mother: Amahl, Amahl!

Amahl: Oh!

Mother: Time to go to bed!

Amahl: Coming!

Mother: Amahl!

Amahl: Coming!

Mother: How long must I shout to make you obey?

A: I'm sorry, Mother.

M: Hurry in, it's time to go to bed.

A: But, Mother, let me stay a little longer!

M: The wind is cold.

A: But my cloak is warm, let me stay a little longer!

M: The night is dark.

A: But the sky is light, let me stay a little longer!

M: The time is late.

A: But the moon hasn't risen yet, let me stay a little.

M: There won't be any moon tonight. But there will be a weeping child very soon, if he doesn't hurry up and obey his mother.

A: Oh, very well...

M: What was keeping you outside?

A: Oh, Mother, you should go and see! There's never been such a sky! Damp clouds have shined it and soft winds have swept it as if to make it ready for a King's ball. All its lanterns are lit, all its torches are burning, and its dark floor is shining like crystal. Hanging over our roof there is a star as large as a window, and the star has a tail, and it moves across the sky like a chariot on fire.

M: Oh! Amahl, when will you stop telling lies? All day long you wander about a dream. Here we are with nothing to eat, not a stick of wood on fire, not a drop of oil in the jug, and all you do is to worry your mother with fairy tales. Oh! Amahl, have you forgotten your promise never, never lie to your mother again?

A: Mother, darling, I'm not lying. Please, do believe me, please, do believe me. Come outside and let me show you. See for yourself, see for yourself.

M: Stop bothering me! Why should I believe you? You come with a new one ev'ry day! First it was a leopard with a woman's head. Then it was a tree branch that shrieked and bled. Then it was a fish as big as a boat, with whiskers like a cat and wings like a bat and horns like a goat. And now it is a star as large as a window... or was it a carriage... And if that weren't enough, the star has a tail and the tail is of fire!

A: But there is a star and it has a tail this long. Well maybe only... .. this long. But it's there!

M: Amahl!

A: Cross my heart and hope to die.

M: Poor Amahl! Hunger has gone to your head. Dear God, what is a poor widow to do, when her cupboards and pockets are empty and ev'rything sold? Unless we go begging how shall we live through tomorrow? My little son, a beggar!

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A: Don't cry, Mother dear, don't worry for me. If we must go begging, a good beggar I'll be. I know sweet tunes to set people dancing. We'll walk and walk from village to town, you dressed as a gypsy and I as a clown. We'll walk and walk from village to town. At noon we shall eat roast goose and sweet almonds, at night we shall sleep with the sheep and the stars. I'll play my pipes, you'll sing and you'll shout. The windows will open and people lean out. The King will ride by and hear your loud voice and throw us some gold to stop all the noise.

A+M: A: At noon we shall eat roast goose and sweet almonds, at night we shall sleep with the sheep and the stars. Good night.

M: My dreamer, good night! You're wasting the light. Kiss me good night. Good night.

K+Me+B: From far away we come and farther we must go. How far, how far my crystal star? The shepherd dreams inside the fold. Cold are the sands by silent sea. Frozen the incense in our frozen hands, heavy the gold. How far, how far my crystal star?

K+M+B: By silence sunken lakes the antelope leaps. In paper painted oasis the drunken gypsy weeps. The hungry lion wanders, the copra sleeps. How far, how far, my crystal star?

M: Amahl!

A: Yes, Mother

M: Go and see, who's knocking at the door.

A: Mother...Mother...Mother, come with me. I want to be sure that you see what I see.

M: What is the matter with you now? What is all this fuss about? Who is it then?

A: Mother... outside the door... there is...there is a King with a crown.

M: What shall I do with this boy, what shall I do, what shall I do? If you don't learn to tell the truth, I'll have to spank you! Go back and see who it is and ask them what they want.

A: Mother...Mother...Mother, come with me. I want to be sure that you see what I see.

M: What is the matter with you now? What is all this fuss about?

A: Mother... I didn't tell the truth before.

M: That's a good boy.

A: There is not a King outside.

M: I should say not!

A: There are two Kings!

M: What shall I do with this boy, what shall I do, what shall I do?

Hurry back and see who it is, and don't you dare make up tales.

A: Mother, Mother, Mother, come with me. If I tell you the truth, I know you won't believe me.

M: Try it for a change!

A: But you won't believe me.

M: I'll believe you if you tell the truth.

A: Sure enough, there are not two Kings outside.

M: That is surprising.

A: The Kings are three, and one of them is black.

M: Oh! What shall I do with this boy! If you were stronger I'd like to whip you.

A: I knew it.

M: I'm going to the door myself, and then young man, you'll have to reckon with me.

K+M+B: Good evening! Good evening!

A: What did I tell you!

M: Sh! Noble sires!

B: May we rest a while in your house and warm ourselves by your fireplace?

M: I'm a poor widow. A cold fireplace and a bed of straw are all I have to offer you. To these you are welcome.

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K: What did she say?

B: That we are welcome.

K: Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you!

K+M+B: Oh, thank you!

Mo: Come in, come in.

Me: It is nice here.

Mo: I shall go and gather wood for the fire. I've nothing in the house.

Me: We can only stay a little while. We must not lose sight of our star.

Mo: Your star?

A: What did I tell you?

Mo: Sh!

Me: We still have a long to go.

Mo: I shall be right back... and Amahl, don't be a nuisance.

A: No, Mother.

A: Are you a real King?

B: Yes.

A: Have you regal blood?

B: Yes.

A: Can I see it?

B: It is like yours.

A: What's the use of having it, then?

B: No use.

A: Where is your home?

B: I live in a black marble palace full of black panthers and white doves. And you, little boy, what do you do?

A: I was a shepherd, I had a flock of sheep. But my mother sold them, sold them. Now there are no sheep left. I had a black goat who gave me warm sweet milk. But she died of old age, old age. Now there is no goat left. But mother says that now we shall both go begging from door to door. Won't it be fun?

M: It has its points.

A: Are you a real King too?

K: Eh?

A: ARE YOU A REAL KING, TOO?

K: O, truly, truly, truly, yes, I am a real King.....am I not?

B: Yes, Kaspar.

A: What is that?

K: Eh?

A: WHAT IS THAT?

K: A parrot.

A: Does it talk?

K: How do I know?

A: Does it bite?

K: Eh?

A: DOES IT BITE?

K: Yes.

A: And what is this?

K: This is my box, this is my box. I never travel without my box. In the first draw'r I keep my magic stones. One carnelian against all evil and envy. One moonstone to make you sleep. One red coral to heal your wounds. One lapis lazuli against quartern fever. One jasper to help you find water. One small topaz to soothe your eyes. One red ruby to protect you from lightning.

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This is my box, this is my box. I never travel without my box. In the second draw'r I keep all my beads. Oh, how can I love to play with beads, all kind of beads.

This is my box, this is my box. I never travel without my box. In the third draw'r... in the third draw'r...Oh, little boy!...Oh, little boy!...In the third draw'r I keep...licorice...licorice... black, sweet licorice, black, sweet, licorice. Have some.

Mo: Amahl, I told you not to be a nuisance!

A: But it isn't my fault! ---- They kept asking me questions.

Mo: I want you to go and call the other shepherds. Tell them about our visitors, and ask them to bring whatever they have in the house, as we have nothing to offer them. Hurry on.

A: Yes , Mother.

Mo: Oh, these beautiful things, and all that gold!

Me: These are the gifts to the child.

Mo: The child! Which child?

Me: We don't know. But the star will guide us to Him.

Mo: But perhaps I know him. What does he look like?

Me: Have you seen a Child, the color of wheat, the color of dawn? His eyes are mild, His hands are those of a King, as King He was born. Incense, myrrh, and gold we bring to his side, and the Eastern Star is our guide.

Mo: Yes I know a child the color of wheat, the color of dawn. His eyes are mild, his hands are those of a King, as King he was born. But no one will bring him incense or gold, thou sick and poor and hungry and cold. He's my child, my son my darling my own.

Me+B: Have you seen a Child the color of earth, the color of thorn? His eyes are sad, His hands are those of the poor, as the poor He was born. Incense, myrrh, and gold we bring to His side, and the Eastern Star is our guide.

Mo: Yes I know a child the color of earth, the color of thorn. His eyes are sad, his hands are those of the poor, as poor he was born. But no one will bring

him incense or gold, though sick and poor and hungry and cold. He's my child my son, my darling, my own.

Me: The Child we seek holds the seas and the winds on His palm,

K+Me+B: holds the winds on His palm.

K: The Child we seek has the moon and the stars at His feet.

Me: Has the stars at His feet.

B: Before Him the eagle is gentle, the lion is meek.

Mo: The child I know on his palm holds my heart. The child I know at his feet has my life.

K+Me+B: Choirs of angels hover over His roof and sing Him to sleep. He's warmed by breath. He's fed by Mother who is both Virgin and Queen.

K+Me+B: Incense, myrrh, and gold we bring to His side, and the Eastern Star is our guide.

Mo: He's my child, my son, my Darling, my own, and his name is Amahl.

Shepherds: Shepherds! Shepherdess! Who's calling, who's calling? Oh. Oh.

Mo: The shepherds are coming!

Me: Wake up, Kaspar!

S: Emily, Emily, Michael, Bartholomew, how are your children and how are your sheep?

Dorothy, Dorothy, Peter, Evangeline, give me your hand, come along with me. All the children have mumps. All the flocks are asleep. We are going with Amahl, bringing gifts to the Kings. Benjamin, Benjamin, Lucas, Elizabeth, how are your children and how are your sheep? Carolyn, Carolyn, Mathew, Veronica, give me your hand, come along with me. Brrr! How cold is the night! Brr!! How icy the wind! Hold me very, very, very tight. Oh, how warm is your cloak!! Katherine, Katherine, Christopher, Babila, how are your children and how are your sheep? Josephine, Josephine, Angela, Jeremy, come along with me. Oh, look! Oh, look!

Mo: Come in, come in! What are you afraid of?

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Mo: Don't be bashful, silly girl! Don't be bashful, silly boy! They won't eat you. Show, what you brought them.

S: Go on, go on, go on! No, you go on! Olives and quinces, apples and raisins, nutmeg and myrtle, medlars and chestnuts, this is all we shepherds can offer you.

K+Me+B: Thank you, thank you, thank you kindly, too.

S: Citrons and lemons, musk and pomegranates, goat cheese and walnut, figs and cucumbers, this is all we shepherds can offer you.

K+Me+B: Thank you, thank you, thank you kindly. Thank you, thank you, thank you kindly, too.

S: Hazelnuts and chamomile, mignonettes and laurel, honeycombs and cinnamon, thyme mint and garlic, this is all we shepherds can offer you.

K+Me+B: Thank you, thank you, thank you kindly. Thank you, thank you, thank you kindly, too.

S: Take them, eat them, you are welcome. Take them eat them, you are welcome, too!

Mo: Now want you dance for them?

S: Don't be bashful, silly girl! Don't be bashful, silly boy! They won't eat you!

B: Thank you, good friends, for your dances and gifts. But now we must bid you good night. We have little time for sleep and a long journey ahead.

S: Good night, my good Kings, good night and farewell. The pale star foretells that dawn is in sight.

Mo+A: Good night!

K: Good night!

Me: Good night!

B: Good night!

S: Good night, my goods Kings, good night and farewell. The night wind foretells the day will be bright.

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Me: Good night!

B: Good night!

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A: Excuse me, Sir, amongst your magic stones is there... is there one that could cure a crippled boy?

K: Eh?

A: Never mind... good night.

S: Good night, good night. The dawn is in sight. The dawn will be bright. Good night, farewell, good night.

Mo: All that gold! All that gold! I wonder if rich people know what to do with their gold! Do they know how a child could be fed? Do rich people know? Do they know that a house can be kept warm all day with burning logs? Do rich people know? Do they know how to roast sweet corn on the fire? Do they know? Do they know how to fill a courtyard with doves? Do they know? Do they know? Do they know how to milk a clover fed goat? Do they know? Do they know how to spice hot wine on cold winter nights? Do they know? Do they know? All that gold! All that gold! Oh, what I could do for my child with that gold!

Why should it all go to a child they don't even know? They are asleep. Do dare I? If I'll take some they'll never miss it...

For my child... for my child...for my child...for my child...

Page: Thief! Thief

Me: What is?

B: What is?

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P: I've seen her steal some of the gold. She's a thief. Don't let her go! She's stolen the gold!

K+Me+B: Shame!

P: Give it back or I'll tear it out of you!

K+Me+B: Give it back!

P: Give it back!

A: Don't you dare! Don't you dare, ugly man, hurt my mother! I'll smash in your face! I'll knock out your teeth! Don't you dare! Don't you dare, ugly man, hurt my mother!

A: Oh, Mister King, don't let him hurt my mother! My mother is good. She cannot do anything wrong. I'm the one who lies, I'm the one who steals. Don't you dare! Don't you dare, ugly man, hurt my mother!

Me: Oh, woman, you may keep the gold. The Child we seek doesn't need our gold. On love, on love alone He will build His Kingdom. His pierced hand will hold no scepter. His haloed head will wear no crown. His might will not be built on your toil. Swifter than lightning He will soon walk among us. He will bring us new life and receive our death, and the keys to His city belong to the poor.

Let us leave, my friends.

Mo: Oh, no, wait... take back your gold! For such a King I've waited all my life. And if I weren't so poor I would send a gift of my own to such a child.

A: But, Mother, let me send him my crutch. Who knows, he may need one, and this I made myself.

Mo: But that you can't, you can't!

A: I walk, Mother...I walk, Mother!

B: He walks

Me: He walks

K: He walks

Mo: He walks, he walks, he walks, he walks!

K+Me+B: He walks! It is a sign from the Holy Child. We must give praise to the newborn King. We must praise Him. This is a sign from God!

A: Look, Mother, I can dance, I can jump, I can run!

K+Me+B: Truly, he can dance, he can jump, he can run!

K: Ah!

Me: Ah!

B: Ah!

M: Please, my darling, be careful now. You must take care not to hurt yourself.

Me+B: Oh, good woman, you must not be afraid.

K: For...

K+Me+B: h/He is loved by the Son of God.

B: Oh blessed Child, may I touch you?

Me: Oh blessed Child, may I touch you?

K: Oh blessed Child, may I touch you?

P: Oh blessed Child, may I touch you?

A: Well, I don't know if I'm going to let you touch me...

Mo: Amahl!

A: Oh.. all right.. but just once. Look, Mother, I can fight, I can work, I can play! Oh, Mother, let me go with the Kings! I want to take the crutch to the Child myself.

Me+B: Yes, good woman, let him come with us!

K: We'll take good care of him,

Me: We'll take good care of him,

K+Me+K: We'll bring him back on a camel's back.

Mo: Do you really want to go?

A: Yes, Mother.

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Mo: Are you sure, sure, sure?

A: I'm sure!

Mo: Yes, I think you should go, and bring thanks to the Child yourself.

A: Are you sure, sure, sure?

Mo: Go on, get ready.

K: What did she say?

B: She said he can come.

K: Oh, lovely, lovely, lo...

B: Kaspar!

Mo: What to do with your crutch?

A: You can tie it to my back.

Mo: Don't forget to wear your hat!

A: I shall always wear my hat.

Mo: So, my darling, good-bye!

Mo+A: I shall miss you very much, very much.

Mo: Wash your ears!

A: Yes, I promise

Mo: Don't tell lies!

A: No, I promise.

Mo+A: I shall miss you very much.

A: Feed my bird!

Mo: Yes, I promise.

A: Watch the cat!

Mo: Yes I'll promise.

Mo+A: I shall miss you very much.

S: Shepherds, arise!

B: Are you ready?

A: Yes, I'm ready.

B: Let's go then.

S: Come, oh, shepherds, come outside.

S: All the stars have left the sky. Come, oh, shepherds, come outside. All the stars have left the side.

S: Oh, sweet dawn, oh dawn of peace.

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