

*Set before for Christmas*

The NIGHT VISITOR — *NEW Version*  
by Lou Bisignani

**The play takes place in a small apartment in a large city. It is Christmas Eve, 1944. It is evening. A woman sits in a chair, a letter in her hand. Two children, a boy and girl are watching her. A small Christmas tree and several boxes of ornaments are in the room.**

*Radio — in background. Advertisement (40's) — Santa was seen over Canada*

Boy: "Mom...Mom...aren't we going to do the tree? It's getting late."

*I'll be home for Christmas*

Woman: "In a few minutes. I just need a few minutes."

Boy: "But Mom...it's getting awful late! And Katie and me have to get to bed soon... You know... 'cause Santa..."

Woman: "Yes. I know...you're right. It's just..."

Boy: "How about I get this box of ornaments open for you? O.K. Mom?"

Girl: "Are you feelin' alright Mom? You're not gonna be sick again, are you?"

Woman: "No honey...I'm not going to be sick. I wouldn't want to be sick for Christmas, now would I?"

Girl: "No, Mommy! You can't be sick for Christmas! Don't worry 'cause I said a prayer for you to get all better!"

Woman: "Thank you, honey!"(embraces and hugs girl) "I promise I won't worry and I won't be sick...not tonight!"

Boy: "I opened the box Mom! Should I start with the bottom of the tree and you do up high! And Katie can do the middle! Whatta you say, Mom?"

Woman: "I don't know. I don't think I can do it. Christmas is so he... loved it so much.

*? your Daddy*

Girl: "Mom...I'll help you. Please Mom...it's almost Christmas."

Woman: "I'm sorry. Honey. You're right. Let me just rest for a little while, then I'll be alright. And we'll do the tree. You'll see! I promise" (exits into bedroom)

*Turn off the radio!*

Girl: "Why does she always cry?"

Boy: "It's the letter. She always cries when she reads it. I wish it had never come here!"

Girl: "She shouldn't read it then."

Boy: "You wouldn't understand. You're too young."

Girl: "What was he like? I can't remember him. Do you? Was he nice?"

Boy: "Sure I do! You were only a little kid when he went away! But I remember him real good!"

Girl: "Why did he go away? Didn't he love us?"

Boy: "Of course he loved us! But he had to go and fight some real bad people!"

Woman: (has overheard some of this exchange, standing in the doorway) "He was very good. He loved you both very much! And he didn't want to leave you! He wanted to stay here, but he said that sometimes you have to do things that you don't want to do! And he said that he loved you so much that he wanted you to grow up in a world that wasn't full of hate! I think that's why he went...to fight. Neither of us ever thought he wouldn't come back. At least I didn't. I was so proud of him. And he was so handsome in his uniform. I guess I was just a dope!" ( She may gather them in her arms as she speaks, but she must break away before the end of the speech. She drops letter and begins to cry. She exits into bedroom.)

Boy: (after a pause) "It's our fault she's crying. We shouldn't have asked about him."  
(He handles ornaments and may hang one or two)

Girl: "What does the letter say? Why does she keep reading it, if it makes her cry? I wouldn't want to read it if it made me cry!"

Boy: "You're just a little kid! You just don't know nothin'!"

Girl: "I tried to read the letter once, but I couldn't ! I couldn't understand the words! And it's not printed, either! It's in cursive! Can you read it to me?"

Boy: (picks up letter) "It says that he died. He was very brave and he fought real good...but he's not coming back ever."

Girl: "You're not reading it! Please read it to me!"

Boy: " Ahh...all right! I'll read it, but then that's it! No more questions! We gotta get this tree decorated!...See there's a letter, and it's signed with his name but there's a little note attached at the top."

Girl: "Will you read me all of it, please?"

Boy "O.K. This is what the note says. 'Dear Mrs. Cabot. You don't know me, but I feel like I know you real well. I was a friend of your husband, Jack, and we got along swell. He was a good guy! I guess you got your letter from the Army, and I'm real sorry. But I thought you might want to have this letter that Jack wrote the morning that he got killed. I think you should know that he talked about you and the two little kids all the time! He took a lot of ribbing about that from the other guys in the platoon but he didn't care. When we got hit, his eyes were hurt bad. The last thing I heard him say was he wouldn't be able to see your face! He died real brave and because of what he did, he probably saved a couple of us. Anyway, I'm real sorry, like I said and well I guess that's all I got to say. Pfc. Bobby Taggart'

Girl: "Is that the whole letter? And what's a platoon? "

Boy: "You ask the gooniest questions! No, that's not the letter...that's just the note from some other guy that knew him! Now be quiet!... 'Dear Mary, I am writing to let you know how cold it is here now! They are saying that it will be snowing again tonight, and we already have nearly a foot of snow on the ground. You know how

I love the snow, especially so close to Christmas. That's a joke, hon! Some poor guys from the South never saw snow like this and one froze his feet last night! Of course that means he'll be going home. Just writing that made me realize how much I want to go home! Home to you and the kids. I finally got the latest picture you sent. Mail is taking months to get through now. But, I loved getting it! My buddies are sick of me talking about you and how pretty you are! I dreamt last night that something happened to me and that I wouldn't see you again, and I woke right up! It scared me! But I'm O.K. now, because I know it's only a dream. Well, I have to close now. The word is we'll be ending this thing pretty soon, but I know I'm going to miss Christmas again! So do the tree real pretty like you do! I wish I could be there to help. I love you very much and miss you more than I can say. Kiss the little ones for me. All love, Jack'... There, that's all there is."

Girl: "I wish he could be here! He could help with the tree! I think he wouldn't have gone away if he loved us!"

Boy: "Don't you say that! Don't you ever say that! He loved us! All of us!" (There is a sound at the outside door) "What's that? Somebody at the door? It's kinda late!"

Girl: (whispered) "Better not open the door. It couldn't be Santa...could it?"

Boy: "I don't think so!" (looks through window) "It's a man. I don't know who."  
(Knocking at door) "Maybe he's looking for Mom."

Girl: "Don't open the door!"

Boy: "Don't be silly!" (opens door a crack) "Who are you looking for?"

Man: (out of sight) "I think I'm lost! This street looks like the one I'm trying to find, but I'm a little confused. It's awful cold! But I don't want to be any trouble."

Boy: "Wait a minute! I'll call my Mom!"

Man: "Is she sleeping, or something? Never mind. I'm sorry I..."

Boy: "Well, I think she's resting, but I can get her!"

Man: "Don't bother her, son. I better be on my way."

Boy: "No, wait! You can come in...come on!"

Man: (door opens) "If you think it's O.K.." (He enters and closes door. He has no overcoat. He is wearing dark glasses.)

Boy: "Yeah. It's O.K. You must be cold! You don't have a coat!"

Man: "I'm O.K., son. Is this your baby sister?"

Girl: "Who are you? And I'm not a baby! I don't think we should have let you in!"

Boy: "Don't say that, Katie! He's lost and it's awful cold outside!"

Girl: "Should I call Mom? I think we better call her!"

Boy: "No! Let her alone for now! I'll call her in a little while."

Man: "Are you the man of the house, then?" (If two girls are cast as the children, change to 'Lady of the house')

Boy: "Yeah, I guess so. My Dad's dead!"

Man: "That's rough. Is your Mom O.K.?"

Boy: "She cries a lot anymore. She says she wishes it wasn't Christmas!"

Man: "That why the tree isn't decorated yet? It's getting late."

Boy: "We were going to do it, but Mom started crying again. She says my Dad loved Christmas, and that makes her cry. So she's just taking a little a little rest."

Man: "Well, let her rest. If you'd let me, I could help you with the tree."

Boy: "You said you were lost. Who were you looking for, Mister?"

Man: "Funny. I can't remember the name. Well, what do you say? Can I help?"

Girl: "Let him help! I want the tree to get done! Please, mister!"

Man: "Sure, honey. I love to decorate trees. I love Christmas!" (he opens a box and takes out some ornaments) "Here, put this one on your side. And I'll put this Angel on top. Say, this 'angel' is a picture of your Mom dressed up like one, isn't it?"

Boy: "Yeah, I guess so. How come you're still wearin' those dark glasses? It's night out."  
(The three are decorating the tree)

Man: "Oh, I got my eyes hurt. In the war. It helps to wear them. Here! Put this one over on that branch."

(???more dialogue) (Lights fade to black. When they come back up, the tree is completely decorated)

Boy: "Gosh! It's so beautiful! Thanks a lot, Mister!"

Girl: "I love our tree! Thank you!" (she kisses Man on cheek)

Man: "I guess I better get going! I've got a long way to go tonight!"

Boy: "But it's snowing! And you don't have a coat or anything! Maybe you should stay here!"

Girl: "Please...please...please stay, Mister!"

Man: "I'm afraid I can't stay. I really have to go! But, I'm glad I was able to see you two. I wish I could just see your mother for a moment. See her face..." (he opens the door to the bedroom a bit and peers in) "Ah...she's asleep" (he closes door to bedroom) "Listen, maybe you better not tell your mother that I was here. She

might...well it might make her mad! You letting a stranger in your house, and all." (exits)

Boy: "I wish he could have stayed a little longer."

Girl: "He was nice. I wish Mom could have seen him."

Boy: "Do you think we should tell her?"

Girl: "He said not to. Why, do you think we should?"

Boy: "I don't know."

(Bedroom door opens. Woman enters.)

Woman: "I thought I heard voices. Did I...I guess I was dreaming."

Boy: "Are you O.K. Mom? Are you feeling better?"

Woman: "Yes. Yes. I'm alright. I think we better get started on that tree...it's late. And you two have to go to bed soon."

Boy: "It's all done, Mom! Look!"

Girl: "We did it all by ourselves! Nobody helped us, honest!"

Woman: "Oh...Oh...It's beautiful! How did you...all by yourselves!"

Boy: "We just did it! Honest we did!"

Girl: "All by ourselves!"

Woman: "Well, I'm very, very proud of you. Both of you! I can't believe what a good job you did! (kisses, hugs boy and girl) "The floor is wet by the door. Did you go out?"

Boy: "No! No! We Didn't!"

Girl: "Maybe the man..." (Boy nudges her)

Woman: "What? What man? Was somebody here? Answer me!"

Boy: "He asked us not to tell you."

Woman: "He...who? Who was in here? While I was asleep! Oh, my God!"

Boy: "It's O.K. Mom! He was lost and cold! And we just...let him in."

Girl: "He was nice, Mom! He helped us with the tree!"

Woman: "Oh, my God! You should never let anyone in! It could be anyone... They could... Well, never, ever do it again!"

Boy: "I'm sorry Mom, but he was nice! He really was. And he was real good at doing the tree!"

Woman: "I don't care! Please, just promise me you won't do that again!"

Girl: "Sorry!"

Boy: "We won't Mom. We promise."

Woman: "What did he want? Who was he? What did he look like?"

Boy: "He was just cold and...lost. He never said his name. He was just sort of tall and thin."

Girl: "He had real dark glasses."

Woman: "Dark glasses? At night?"

Boy: "He said his eyes were hurt...in the war!"

Woman: "In the war...?"

Boy: "He didn't want to bother you, he said. That's why we didn't call you."

Woman: "He was tall?...Was his hair dark?"

Boy: "Yeah, it was. Why, Mom? Do you think you know him?"

Woman: (opens door and looks out) "Did he say which way...where he was going?"  
(closes door) "What else did he say?"

Boy: "About what, Mom?"

Woman: "Think, anything you can remember!...Think!" (She grips boys' shoulders)

Girl: "He said you were an angel, Mom!"

Woman: "What? What do you mean...?"

Boy: "No!. He said the angel was a picture of you, Mom. Is it? It does look like you. Is it, Mom?"

Woman: "You two better get dressed for bed! Go on, now! (She is dazed)

Boy: "O.K., Mom.

Girl: "Good night, Mom." (they exit)

Woman: (picks up letter) "... 'his eyes were hurt bad. The last thing I heard him say was he wouldn't be able to see your face!'..."(She drops letter and moves to tree. She touches angel as...)

*Lights fade to black*