



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Stranger Child

Friedrich Rückert

It was Christmas Eve, and a little stranger child flew birdlike over the snow. It ran across the sparkling ground, its face bright with gladness, listening to the merry chimes of the Christmas bells and clapping its hands for joy.

It danced in the beams of light that fell from a cottage window, and, peeping in, saw a Christmas tree hung with shining candles and glittering gifts, and watched the children playing joyfully around it.

"Oh, where," cried the little stranger child, "where are my candles? Why is there no tree for me, no pretty toys? Once my dear mother decked my tree at home! Oh, little children, may I not come in to see your tree and play with you?"

With a small and frail hand, the stranger child knocked at the window and the door — but no one heard. Then the little one sat down in the cold white snow and wept.

"O Christ Child, Friend of children — I have no one to love me! Why have you forgotten to send me a little tree with lights on every bough?"

The little stranger child drew its white cloak close around its silken hair and clear blue eyes, its hands cold as ice.



Then came another pilgrim child. He held a shining light in his hand, and in a sweet, gentle voice — like soft music — he soothed the little stranger child.

"I am the Christmas Friend. Once I, too, was a little child. I heard your pleading, and I have come to deck a tree for you — more beautiful than any tree ever seen. Here in the open air is your Christmas tree, my little flower."

The little stranger child looked up — far up — into the deep night sky. There it saw a glorious tree: stars hung among its branches, and angels sang songs of joy all around it.

The child smiled with delight. Troops of radiant beings descended and lifted the little one gently in their arms. They carried it home — to the Christ Child's house, which is sweeter, far, than any home the earth can give.

Stories help us explore cultures, learn moral lessons, connect with nature — or simply have fun. That's why ririro.com offers 3,000+ free stories — fairy tales, fables, bedtime stories, myths and more — for every age, in 13 languages, with free printable PDFs and often audio. Reading should be a right, not a privilege. Share ririro.com and spread the joy of reading.

Instagram: @ririro_reading · Pinterest: pinterest.com/ririrocom