

## Act One – Scene One, the Parlor

*Overture. The stage is set as a Victorian-esque parlor, the kind you imagine Dickens held his Christmas parties in. There are Christmas trees, candles, warm lights, a bowl of punch, perhaps. The environment is warm and cozy, with an aire of formality to it. It is the ideal of Christmas – Father and Mother Christmas would themselves be impressed by it. Beyond the walls of the parlor there is a forest of pine trees dusted with snow. The five carolers have been out spreading good cheer, and are returning to their annual Christmas ball, we are their guests.*

### Song – Here We Come A-Caroling

**Carol:**

*Here we come a-caroling, among the leaves so green,  
Here we come a wand'ring, so fair to be seen.*

**All:**

*The parlor illuminates and comes alive as the carolers begin to decorate their respective trees.*

*Love and joy come to you, and to you glad Christmas too  
And God bless you and send you a Happy New Year,  
And God send you a Happy New Year.*

**Noelle:**

*We are not daily beggars that roam from door to door,  
But we are neighbors' children whom you have seen before.*

**All:**

*Love and joy come to you, and to you glad Christmas too  
And God bless you and send you a Happy New Year,  
And God send you a Happy New Year.*

**Belle:**

*God bless the master of this house, and bless the mistress more;  
And all the little children whom you have seen before*

**All:**

*Love and joy come to you, and to you glad Christmas too  
And God bless you and send you a Happy New Year,  
And God send you a Happy New Year.*

**Stella:**

*And all your kin and kinsfolk that dwell both far and near,  
We wish you Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.*

**All:**

*Love and joy come to you, and to you glad Christmas too  
And God bless you and send you a Happy New Year,  
And God send you a Happy New Year.*

**End of Song**

**Carol:**

From snow-dressed hills and icy mountains come  
We carolers, who merry tidings bring  
We shall not leave a joyful song unsung  
And soon our silvery bells shall proudly ring.  
We do not quickly pass as begging lass  
And roam like lowly lots from door to door  
No, we are rather more a lively class  
For we are neighbor's kids you've seen before.  
Now lanterns light and snow begins to fall  
And though a jolly jaunt we'll not deny  
We shan't forget the greatest gift of all  
The babe who in a manger once did lie.  
Now lend your ears to stories, tales, and song  
For though we bring great light we can't stay long.

*She smells the air. The band begins to play "Here We Come A-Caroling" beneath.*

Evergreens, holly berries, smoke curling out of a chimney on the far hill. It's Christmas ladies.

**Belle:**

Finally.

**Noelle:**

I thought it would never come.

**Belle:**

You're telling me. I never thought we'd make it here!

**Noelle:**

We are here, aren't we? Isn't that what matters?

**Meri:**

It's part of it.

**Noelle:**

Only part of it?

**Meri:**

You can't forget the music,

**Stella:**

Friends,

**Belle:**

Gifts,

**Carol:**

Lights,

**All except Noelle:**

The food.

**Noelle:**

Fair point.

**Carol:**

Ladies! Now is not the time to dawdle; we do have guests, after all.

*To audience.*

And what a lovely bunch they are.

*Get a response. If it took more than one try:*

Even if it takes them a while to realize.

*Continuing on:*

Now allow us to introduce ourselves, I am Carol

**Stella:**

Stella

**Belle:**

Belle

**Noelle:**

Noelle

**Meri:**

I'm Meri

**All:**

And we are the carolers

**Carol:**

Not merely beggars who roam from door to door, no. We are neighbor's children who you have seen before.

**Stella:**

And every year, should we do our job, the same star which shone above the blessed child will shine again above this very spot!

**Belle:**

Oh, I remember the first time the star came, it was as if Heaven came down to Earth!

**Meri:**

Heaven did come down to earth.

**Belle:**

You needn't be so rude about it.

**Carol:**

Ladies! It's time we begin!

*She gestures for Noelle to come to center.*

If you please.

**Noelle:**

Tonight, our honored guests, we present for you "The Many Roads to Bethlehem." Three stories we have heard from the people themselves. First, a tale of two sisters who set out to be counted in a Roman census.

**Carol and Belle:**

That's us.

**Carol:**

I play the lead sister.

**Belle:**

You wish.

**Noelle:**

Second, the wonderous tale of Madame Beauxhorne, a Parisian demimonde who found more than she ever thought she could on one Christmas night after stumbling across an old beggarwoman.

**Stella:**

Played by the lovely Noelle.

**Noelle:**

Opposite of Stella, the fabulous Madame Beauxhorne herself! And finally, the story of Alice, the angel tasked with Heaven's greatest mission: making sure the first Noel happens just as it should.

*Meri smiles and crosses herself slowly. All carolers cross her afterwards. The clock chimes.*

**Meri:**

It's time!

**Belle:**

Well then let's get on with it, which story first?

**Stella:**

I always love this part!

**Noelle:**

Carol?

**Carol:**

Now then attend!

Two sisters' journey will begin our tale,  
And from then we can journey to Paris (*pronounced "par-ee"*)  
Alice, though not least, will come up last  
And all together we will meet the king,  
But first, my friends, it's time for us to pray,  
To call on Him to guide us on our way,  
We travel now on to our journey's end,  
Where David's Star will greet us as a friend.

*A snap. As if magic, she summons music to begin, the stars twinkle around them, a magic seems to fill the parlor. Carol gestures for Noelle to begin:*

**Song: Gesu Bambino**

**Noelle:**

*When blossoms flowered 'mid the snows  
Upon a winter night  
Was born the Child, the Christmas Rose  
The King of Love and Light.*

**Carol:**

*The angels sang, the shepherds sang, the grateful earth rejoiced.*

**Belle:**

*And at His blessed birth the stars, their exultation voiced:*

**All:**

*O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
Christ the Lord*

**Belle:**

*Again, the heart with rapture glows  
To greet the holy night  
That gave the world its Christmas Rose  
Its King of Love and Light.*

**Meri:**

*Let ev'ry voice acclaim His name  
The grateful chorus swell  
From paradise to earth He came  
That we with Him might dwell.*

*One by One the carolers exit, leaving only Meri onstage at the end.*

**All:**

*O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
Christ the Lord.*

**End of Song**

*Noelle is left alone onstage.*

**Song: Gesu Bambino Playoff**

**Meri:**

*They came from afar, from every land  
To Bethlehem to dwell  
But never was known the Holy plan,  
To some the journey was... well...*

**End of Scene**

**Scene Two - A Home in Judea, long ago.**

*Two sisters sit, packing overstuffed suitcases.*

**Belle:**

Did you grab the new dress?

**Carol:**

What new dress?

**Belle:**

The one Abram made for me.

**Carol:**

Abram?!

**Belle:**

Don't get any ideas.

**Carol:**

Abram the tailor?!

**Belle:**

It was just a gift!

**Carol:**

A new dress for a girl is hardly just a gift.

**Belle:**

And it's hardly a proposal, either.

**Carol:**

Why shouldn't it be? Adam never gave Eve a ring.

**Belle:**

Eve had no other option.

**Carol:**

Nor do... You do?!

**Belle:**

No...

**Carol:**

Sister, you can tell me anything.

**Belle:**

I don't.

**Carol:**

You do!

**Belle:**

I do.

**Carol:**

You do?!

**Belle:**

Yes.

**Carol:**

Who?!

**Belle:**

You mustn't tell anyone!

**Carol:**

Not a soul.

**Belle:**

On your own grave!

**Carol:**

I swear!

**Belle:**



Aaron, the shepherd!

**Carol:**

No!

**Belle:**

You swore you wouldn't tell!

**Carol:**

I won't, I promised.

**Belle:**

Thank you.

**Carol:**

How?

**Belle:**

He wrote me poems. Songs from his lyre and beautiful poems.

**Carol:**

All the better! Father wants you to marry a learned man.

**Belle:**

A shepherd is no scholar.

**Carol:**

A shepherd could be a king in disguise all the same as a king can be fool.

**Belle:**

And fools they are. All the world shall be taxed!

**Carol:**

What does it matter to you?

**Belle:**

Aaron isn't from Bethlehem.

**Carol:**

So?

**Belle:**

What if he finds a new bride?

**Carol:**

Then you have new dresses for the rest of your life!

**Belle:**

I'm serious!

**Carol:**

All will be well in the end.

**Belle:**

I pray for the both of us that you are right.

**Carol:**

When have I not been?

*A look from Belle.*

**Carol:**

It's not a year's journey.

**Belle:**

All the same I worry.

**Carol:**

You needn't.

**Belle:**

And now I am better!

**Carol:**

Does he love you?

**Belle:**

I think so.

**Carol:**

Do you love him?

**Belle:**

I should hope so!

**Carol:**

One can never be too sure.

**Belle:**

I am! And I choose sheep before shawl.

**Carol:**

Then the shepherd will take you.

**Belle:**

Thank you.

**Carol:**

And then remains a heartbroken tailor.

**Belle:**

And all the better for it.

**Carol:**

A girl can dream.

**Belle:**

And dreams may come true, even if only when we sleep.

*Closing the suitcase.*

**Belle:**

Now let's go! We don't want to be the last ones there!

**Song: O Little Town of Bethlehem**

*They grab their bags and set off. Commence a travel montage, the more absurd, the better, perhaps they are on a train, venetian canal boat, or even a plane.*

**Carol:**

*O little town of Bethlehem  
How still we see thee lie  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by*

**Belle:**

*Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
An everlasting Light  
The hopes and fears of all these years  
Are met in thee tonight*