

The Noel Candle (musical)

by: Stephen DeCesare Copyright 2004

Adapted from a German legend and the story by Clement C. Moore

It is 1805 France. Lights come up on choir standing next to a lamppost singing:

Choir: SNOW ON THE GROUND, CAROLS IN THE AIR,
A SANTA ON EVERY CORNER
RINGING BELLS FOR THE POOR EVERYWHERE.

MISTLETOE AND HOLLY, TREES DECORATED WITH LIGHTS,
PEOPLE ON EVERY NATION ARE MAKING MERRY
ON THIS HOLY NIGHT.

RING THE BELLS, IT'S CHRISTMAS ONCE AGAIN;
THE NIGHT WHEN GOD CAME DOWN ON EARTH TO MEN.
A TIME FOR PEACE AND GOOD CHEER
AND WE PRAY THAT IT LASTS ALL THE YEAR.
RING THE BELLS, IT'S CHRISTMAS ONCE AGAIN.
RING THE BELLS, IT'S CHRISTMAS ONCE AGAIN!

Woman Solo: CANDLES IN THE WINDOW; THEIR FIRE ALL AGLOW;
MAKING THE NIGHT EVEN BRIGHTER
SHINING ON THE NEW FALLEN SNOW.

Man Solo: CHILDREN AWAITING TOMORROW;
TRYING TO BE GOOD AS CAN BE.
THEY ALL KNOW THAT IF THEY SUCCEED
THAT PRESENTS AWAIT THEM UNDER THEIR TREE.

Choir: RING THE BELLS, IT'S CHRISTMAS ONCE AGAIN;
THE NIGHT WHEN GOD CAME DOWN ON EARTH TO MEN.
A TIME FOR PEACE AND GOOD CHEER
AND WE PRAY THAT IT LASTS ALL THE YEAR.
RING THE BELLS, IT'S CHRISTMAS ONCE AGAIN.
RING THE BELLS, IT'S CHRISTMAS ONCE AGAIN!

Suddenly, the tempo changes and shoppers rush onto the stage hurriedly, scaring the choir off the stage.

Shoppers: THIS TIME OF YEAR IS ALWAYS THE SAME:
WE RUSH AROUND TO BUY MORE GIFTS; IT'S REALLY INSANE.
FOR PEOPLE WHO EVENTUALLY WILL JUST COMPLAIN.
WE VOW - NO MORE, BUT THEN WE DO IT ANYWAY!

Shoppers: SO WE'VE BEEN RUSHING CRAZY EVERYWHERE.
WE SHOPPED ALL UP AND DOWN THE SQUARE.
IT MUST BE FINISHED COME WHAT MAY
BECAUSE TOMORROW'S CHRISTMAS DAY!

Man #2: I STILL HAVE TO BUY SOMETHING FOR MY TWO BOYS.
THEY WON'T CARE JUST WHAT THEY GET, AS LONG AS IT'S TOYS.

Woman #2: I'M SURE THAT YOU WILL FIND SOMETHING THAT THEY'LL ENJOY,
BUT FOR YOUR SANITY, MAKE SURE IT CAN'T MAKE ANY NOISE.

Shoppers: IT IS NO WONDER THAT THIS HOLIDAY
TAKES ALL OUR ENERGY AWAY.
THERE HAS TO BE AN EASIER WAY TO COPE AND DEAL
WITH CHRISTMAS DAY!

WE ARE STILL RUSHING CRAZY EVERYWHERE;
SHOPPING UP AND DOWN THE SQUARE.
IT MUST BE FINISHED COME WHAT MAY
BECAUSE TOMORROW'S CHRISTMAS DAY!

WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT WE HAVE EVERYTHING.

Woman #3: THIS RUSHING IS SO TIRING!

Man #3: I SAY, LET'S DO THIS EVERY DAY.

Shoppers: NO WAY!!! WE'VE HAD ENOUGH OF CHRISTMAS DAY!
THANK GOD TOMORROW'S CHRISTMAS DAY!

After song, as people are exiting, a little boy wanders in. He is dressed in rags and has no shoes on his feet. People pass him by without any notice.

Boy: THROUGH THE WORLD, I HAVE BEEN WANDERING;
TRAVELING TO EACH LOVELY CITY.
NOW I'VE COME TO YOU, GOOD PEOPLE,
TO ASK "WHO'LL SHARE THEIR CHRISTMAS WITH ME?"

The boy approaches a house, knocks and a large man-servant greets him and shakes his head sadly.

Man-Servant:
Get down off the steps. There is no room here for such as you.

Boy:
Is there no one in all this great city who will share the Christmas with me?

IN SOME PLACES, I WAS NOT WELCOME;
I WAS TREATED VERY HARSHLY.
NOW I'VE COME TO YOU, MY PEOPLE, TO ASK
"WHO'LL SHARE THEIR CHRISTMAS WITH ME?"

The boy approaches another door and a little girl answers. She frowns and shakes her head.

Little Girl:
Go away and come some other time. We are too busy to take care you now.

Boy: IN THIS TIME OF PEACE AND KINDNESS,
WILL NO ONE SHOW SOME CHARITY?
I HAVE COME TO YOU, MY CHILDREN, TO ASK
"WHO'LL SHARE THEIR CHRISTMAS WITH ME?"
WHO WILL SHARE THEIR CHRISTMAS WITH ME?"

After song is over, the boy disappears into the darkness.

Lights up on a humble home where a young woman is bending over a spinning wheel, a boy of seven is setting the table with their few cracked dishes and a girl (a year or so older) is stirring the kettle.

Jeanne & Louis: CHRISTMAS BRINGS JOY TO EVERY HEART,
SETS OLD AND YOUNG REJOICING,
WHAT ANGELS SANG ONCE TO ALL ON EARTH,
OH, HEAR THE CHILDREN VOICING.

Louis: BRIGHT IS THE TREE WITH LIGHTS AGLOW,
LIKE BIRDS THAT PERCH TOGETHER,
THE CHILD THAT HOLDS CHRISTMAS DEAR
SHALL KEEP THESE JOYS FOREVER.

Jeanne: ONCE TO THIS EARTH OUR SAVIOR CAME,
AN INFANT POOR AND LOWLY,
TO OPEN FOR US THOSE GARDENS FAIR
WHERE DWELL HIS ANGELS HOLY.

Jeanne and Louis: CHRISTMAS JOY HE BRINGS TO US,
THE CHRIST-CHILD KING OF HEAVEN,
“TO EVERY LITTLE CHILD,” HE SAYS,
“SHALL ANGEL WINGS BE GIVEN.”

After the song, Louis notices his mother crying. He goes over to her and kisses her on the cheek.

Louis:
Merry Christmas, Maman. Are you all right?

Mother (trying to cover it up):
I'm fine. Just thinking of the old days; When we lived in the castle and on Christmas Day we would go down to the gate and give to the poor warm clothes and food...

Louis:
And we would even give them some of our toys.

Mother:
Yes, you did, Louis.

Jeanne (approaching):
And you were thinking about father.

Mother:
Yes, Jeanne. Especially your father. Ever since Napoleon's soldiers took your father away in chains that night and we had to flee for our lives, it's been...so hard: wandering the streets, trading away our belongings in return for food and lodging...I don't know how much longer we can go on. (**starts to weep**)

Jeanne:
Don't cry, Maman. It is Christmas tonight.

Mother:
Yes, but there will be no toys or sweets for you and little Louis.

Louis:
We don't need them. We have you, Mother, and we can keep Christmas in our heart.

I DON'T NEED ANY TOYS TO HAVE A JOYOUS CHRISTMAS.
ALL I NEED IS MY FAMILY; I TRULY FEEL THAT I'VE BEEN BLESSED.

Louis and Jeanne: THERE IS NOTHING MONEY COULD BUY
THAT WOULD MAKE THIS SEASON BRIGHTER.

WE DON'T NEED ANYTHING,
JUST AS LONG AS WE HAVE EACH OTHER.

Jeanne: I DON'T NEED ANY DOLLS, FANCY SHAWLS OR CANDY SWEETS.
MY GIFT WILL WHEN FATHER'S BACK AGAIN;
IT'S ONLY THEN I'LL FEEL COMPLETE.

Jeanne and Louis: HE KNOWS WE ARE THINKING OF HIM
AND WHEN WE'LL BE TOGETHER.
UNTIL THAT DAY, WE WILL BE STRONG
JUST AS LONG AS WE HAVE EACH OTHER.

Their father appears up stage right in his own spotlight. He is dressed in a Napoleonic uniform and sings:

Father: ONE DAY, I WILL FIND MY FAMILY AND SOON WE'LL BE TOGETHER.

Mother, Father,

Jeanne and Louis: UNTIL THAT DAY, WE (I) WILL BE STRONG JUST AS LONG
AS WE HAVE EACH OTHER.
WE HAVE EACH OTHER. WE'LL MEET AGAIN.
WE HAVE EACH OTHER.

Lights out on Father and scene continues with Jeanne, Louis and Mother.

Mother (looks up and smiles):

Yes, though life is hard we still have each other, and even though we miss your father, I'm sure we will see him again, someday. I just wish we had something to give the poor as we once did..

Silence fills the room

Jeanne (excitedly):

Mother, I know something we can give. **(She picks up a small candle from the table and hurries to the window of the hut)** See, I will put it on the sill and perhaps someone who passes, someone like ourselves, will be happier because of this little gift of light. There - see how it shines out in the snow. **(She stands back to survey her work)**

Mother:

You are a good child, Jeanne.

Louis:

Maman, can you sing us a song?

Jeanne:

Yes! A Christmas song.

Mother:

I think I can manage that. Now let me see.

(The following song, can be pantomimed with a girl coming out from the audience with a basket full of matches, etc)

Mother: NEW YEAR'S EVE, BITTER COLD, THERE'S NO ONE IN THE STREETS
EXCEPT A GIRL WHO'S SELLING MATCHES IN THE SNOW.
RAGGED CLOTHES, STRAW-SEWN HAIR AND NOTHING ON HER FEET.
IF SHE WENT HOME, HER PA WOULD BEAT HER 'TIL SHE BLEEDS.
OH, POOR LITTLE MATCH GIRL.
OH, POOR LITTLE MATCH GIRL.

TO KEEP WARM SHE DECIDES TO LIGHT ALL THAT SHE HAD;
AND IN THE FLAMES SHE SAW THE THINGS SHE LOVED THE MOST.
CHRISTMAS TREES: TALL AND BRIGHT AND THEN A BURNING STOVE;
BUT SOON THEY FADE AND THEN THE GIRL BEGAN TO CRY.
OH, POOR LITTLE MATCH GIRL.
OH, POOR LITTLE MATCH GIRL.

THE LAST MATCH SHE LIT WAS TRULY BEST!
HER GRANDMA THAT DIED WAS STANDING THERE.
THE MATCH GIRL REACHED OUT AND SAID TO HER:
“I MISS YOU. PLEASE TAKE ME WHERE YOU’RE GOING!”

NEW YEAR’S DAY FINALLY CAME; THE SUN SHONE IN THE EAST.
THE PEOPLE WAKE TO SEE THE NEW YEAR THAT HAS COME.
THEY DON’T SEE IN THE STREET THE MATCH GIRL WHO WAS THERE
WITH A BIG SMILE; FOR GRANDMA TOOK HER TO HER GOD.
OH, POOR LITTLE MATCH GIRL.
OH, POOR LITTLE MATCH GIRL.

After song, you hear a gentle tapping at the door.

Jeanne:

What was that, maman?

Mother:

I think it was some one tapping on the door. Run as quickly as you can and open it, dear, for it is a bitter cold night to keep any one waiting in this storm.

Louis:

Maman, I think it was the bough of the tree tapping against the window-pane.

Again, there is a tapping at the door

Mother:

That certainly was a rap on the door. Run quickly and open it. No one must be left out in the cold on our beautiful Christmas Eve.

Jeanne runs to the door and throws it wide open. It is the ragged little boy.

Jeanne: MOTHER STANDING AT OUR DOORWAY IS A LITTLE BOY SO LOVELY.
HE IS COLD AND WEEPING SADLY AND HIS CLOTHES
ARE OH, SO SHABBY.

The mother sees him standing there, cold and shivering, with bare head and feet. She holds out her hands and draws him into the warm, bright room.

Mother (putting her arms around him and drawing him close to her breast)

You poor, dear child. (To Louis and Jeanne) He is very cold, my children. We must warm him.

Jeanne:

And we must love him and give him some of our Christmas, too.

Mother:

Yes, but first let us warm him.