

Christmas play 2005

Carol: Ding dong merrily on high

Scene 1

Two spies, dressed in dark coats, hats and glasses, come onto the stage from opposite sides, obviously looking for something. They bump into each other, and then look out at the audience

Spy 1 Ah, good morning everyone.

Spy 2 (Peering out) Who have we here?

Spy 1 There's a lot of people out there! What do you think they are all doing?

Spy 2 Just sitting there it seems. We should say "Hello".

Spy 1 (Sound desperate) I just did, weren't you listening?

Spy 2 Sorry, I was pre-occupied with our mission. Did you tell them about it?

Spy 1 No. (Turns to crowd) Do you want to know about our mission?

The audience may respond enthusiastically or may be a bit wet; the spies will need to respond appropriately

Spy 1 Well, we are spies on a special mission – Operation Isaiah. As you can see, we are in disguise.

Spy 2 And my name is John.

Spy 1 And *my* name is Carrie.

Spy 2 (Pause for laughter to end) We are looking for someone special, but we don't yet have many clues.

Spy 1 At the start of any mission, things don't quite add up, so we have to look for any bit of information that might be useful.

Spy 2 So, does anyone have any questions?

Spies go out into the audience with a microphone.

Audience 1 Who do you work for?

Spy 1 It's hard to tell. Sometimes we work for the Romans, sometimes for the Jewish rulers. Basically, anyone who is willing to pay.

Spy 2 I think he may be asking who we are working for *right now*.

Spy 1 I don't think we can say, can we?

Spy 2 No, I think not. Next question please.

Audience 2 How long have you been spies for?

Spy 1 Good question. Probably since we were teenagers. But we don't want to give away our age, so let's leave it as "long enough", and quickly move on to the next question.

Audience 3 Have you ever been caught?

Spy 2 Not us. We are too quick.

Spy 1 We almost got caught once, but we managed to trick our way out of trouble. It would be giving away our secrets if we told you what we did. Next question anyone?

Audience 4 So why are you working on Christmas Day?

Spy 2 We work every day.

Spy 1 But what is this about Christmas Day?

Audience 4 It's the day that Jesus was born?

Spy 1 This is very interesting. What's this about Jesus? I think you know more than you are letting on.

Audience 4 I think I have said enough already! Anyway, I thought we were asking the questions!

Spy 2 Fair enough. One last question please?

Audience 5 So, what clues do you have in your current mission?

Spy 2 Good question. We have one that we don't understand. Perhaps you can help.

Spy 1 We have some names of the person we are looking for. But they are in code. Perhaps someone can help crack the code. Here is one for you.

Spy 2 Maybe not for those parents who have been up since 3 o'clock!

The spy gets out a piece of paper, which is projected on the screen. The paper reads

V N M C D Q E T K B N T M R D K K N Q

Q S J O D F P G Q F B D F

Y T H G I M D O G

The spies work with the audience to crack the codes. Then one of the spies' mobile phone rings.

Spy 1 Yes, yes, okay, right, be there, thanks.

Spy 2 Useful information?

Spy 1 Possibly. (Turns to audience) We had better go now. Goodbye.

Spy 2 Goodbye everyone.

Spies run out of the back

Carol: Silent night

Scene 2

Mary and Joseph walk in from the back, and sit down, as it were, by the side of the road.

Mary I guess we still have a long way to go to Bethlehem.

Joseph I'm afraid so. I think we are only half way there. It is a long journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. How are you doing?

Mary I'm okay. The baby moves around from time to time, but I think we have a few days yet!

Joseph Good. This isn't quite the place for him to be born.

Mary You know, Joseph, so much has happened to us. Ever since the Angel visited us I keep thinking about what he said. But there is still so much I don't understand.

Joseph I know. I wonder whether it will be a bit clearer once he is born.

Mary Joseph, who's that coming towards us?

Joseph I don't know. Remember, we agreed to not say anything about this to anyone we meet.

Spies come in and sit down

Spy 1 Do you mind if we sit with you?

Joseph Not at all; be our guest.

Spy 2 Where are you heading to?

Joseph Bethlehem, for the taxation.

Spy 1 Ah yes.

Spy 2 (to Mary) You don't look to be in any state for this journey. When do you think your baby will be born?

Mary He is due any day now.

Spy 1 So you know it's a boy then?

Joseph *Sorry?* You are a bit inquisitive for a couple of strangers.

Spy 2 Sorry about her. It is just that we are looking for someone who might be a baby boy. Does this mean anything to you?

Joseph No, nothing at all.

Mary Joseph, can I have a word with you?

Joseph (to the spies) Do you mind?

Spy 1 We'll go over here and just talk to ourselves.

Spies move to the side and talk to each other

Joseph What is it, Mary?

Mary I think we have to talk to someone. And these people seem to know something. I can't keep it all just to myself.

Joseph Okay then, but we must be careful.

Joseph turns to the spies

Joseph Okay, we may know some things.

Spies come to listen

Joseph We hear that a new king may be born soon. A king sent from God.

Spy 1 Do you know where?

Mary Bethlehem we think.

Spy 2 That is where you said you are going, isn't it?

Joseph Yes, but we don't know much more.

Spy 1 Thanks, that was very helpful. That's where we will head to now.

Mary You should go ahead. We are not very quick.

Spy 2 Okay thanks. Take it easy you two.

Spy 1 Maybe we will meet in Bethlehem. Bye now.

Spies stand up

Joseph Bye.

Spies leave

Song: Mary did you know

Scene 3

Fanfare. The kings move up from the back to the front and then sit down. The servants need to put the gifts down carefully.

King 1 I need a rest.

King 2 So do I.

King 3 Not for long though. We don't know whether we are close yet. The star we are following is still moving.

King 1 (to a servant) Look after the gifts. They are very valuable.

King 2 Be careful. Some strange people are coming near.

King 3 Keep a close eye on the gifts.

Spies come onto the stage and sits with the Kings.

Spy 1 Do you mind if we sit with you?

King 1 (Suspiciously) Maybe.

Spy 2 You are an impressive looking set of chaps. Where are you from?

King 2 We come from various places. We have been following a star, looking for a king to be born.

Spy 1 We also are looking for a king. We don't know much about him yet. We have some names, like "Prince of Peace" and "Wonderful Counsellor", and we have heard that he is to be born in Bethlehem,

King 3 We understand he is to be the King of the Jews.

King 1 Which would make Bethlehem very unlikely as the place to be born. We were thinking more of Jerusalem.

King 2 And we are planning to visit the palace there. We presume Jerusalem has a palace.

Spy 2 Well, yes, but that isn't what we heard.

King 3 Maybe you heard wrong.

King 1 We are following that star over there, see it? It looks to us to be heading towards Jerusalem.

Spies look at the stars.

Spy 1 I see it now. But Bethlehem is only a day's journey away from Jerusalem.

King 2 Now my good man, it makes much more sense for a king to be born in the capital of the kingdom, so we are going to check out Jerusalem first.

King 3 Come with us.

Spy 2 Maybe we will. Perhaps we can talk more as we journey on.
Kings and spies stand up, and the servants gather up all the gifts. They all walk off.

Carol: We three kings

Scene 4

The scene is a room in Herod's Palace. The Kings and spies are ushered in.

Advisor 1 Wait here. King Herod will come to see you when he is ready.

Everyone stands ready. Then there is a fanfare and in comes Herod with his advisors. Herod sits on the throne

Herod So, I am told you are looking for a new king. As you can see, there is no new king here. Where do you expect to find this new king?

King 1 Sir, thank you for seeing us. You are most kind. Sir, we expected to find the king here in Jerusalem.

Herod Then you have come on a wasted journey. Perhaps my advisors could help?

Advisor 1 Well, since you all came, we have been looking at our books. As Herod has said, there are no new kings born here in Jerusalem.

Advisor 2 But according to Micah the prophet, there could be a king in Bethlehem.

Spy 1 Bethlehem, told you!

Herod Who is he? He doesn't look like one of you.

King 2 I think he has come along for the ride!

Spy 2 Yes, we sort of bonded.

Herod Well, tell them to keep quiet. So, what do you plan to do about Bethlehem then? I suggest you stay here the night, then go to look for your new king in Bethlehem. And if you find him, be sure to come back to tell me so that we also can go to worship him.

King 3 That is very good of you Sir.

Herod And these two, do they want to stay the night?

Spy 2 Thank you so, but I think we should be on our way quickly.

Herod Then go. And the same goes for you; if you find a king, make sure you come back here to tell me about him.

Spy 1 We will, Sir, we will.

Spies leave and walk down the aisle. As they go Spy 1 turns to Spy 2 and loudly says:

Spy 1 We told them it was Bethlehem, but they wouldn't listen.

Spy 2 (Sarcastically) Wise men, eh?

Song: God has spoken, to his people

Scene 5

The angel Gabriel stands in the middle of the stage, arms outstretched. The spies return from the back. They come onto the stage, talking a lot, and not noticing Gabriel. They then bump into Gabriel.

Spy 1 Very sorry indeed, we didn't see you there.

Gabriel That's okay.

Spy 2 Who *are* you?

Gabriel I am the Archangel Gabriel. You see those shepherds coming in our direction? I am waiting for them.

Spy 1 An Archangel eh? (Turns to Spy 2) Have you made a note of that?

Spy 2 Is that Ark as in " 'Ark the Herald Angels Sing' "?

Gabriel (Pause for laughter to end) So, you are you?

Spy 2 We are on a mission. We think we are looking for a king, who is to be called the "Prince of Peace" and "Wonderful Counsellor", who we believe will be born in Bethlehem very soon.

Gabriel You have done your homework well!
 Spy 1 Thank you, but we are not sure how close we are.
 Gabriel You stand here. As soon as these shepherds get here, you will understand.
Spies stand back. The shepherds come onto the stage.
 Shepherds (All together) Woah, what is that?
When they see Gabriel they fall down
 Gabriel Fear not good shepherds. I am here to bring you only good news. Tonight, in Bethlehem, a child is born who will be Christ the Lord. He will save his people from their sins. This will be a sign to you: the child will be wrapped in cloths and you will find him lying in a manger.
Gabriel beckons, and the angels rush onto the stage from the back and stand with Gabriel. They say together:
 Angels (All together) Glory to God in the highest. Glory to God. And on earth, peace to all men.
The angels all run off with Gabriel.
 Shepherd 1 (Pause for Angels to leave) *Who was that?*
 Shepherd 2 I don't know, but do you think what he said was true?
 Shepherd 1 There's only one way to find out. Let's go off to Bethlehem.
 Shepherd 2 I'm right behind you ...
Shepherds leave
 Spy 1 I am not sure I understood any of that, but we too must go to Bethlehem now.
Spies leave the stage.

Song: Tonight

Scene 6

Mary and Joseph are sitting in the stable with Mary holding her baby. In comes the innkeeper.

Innkeeper How are you doing now? I am very sorry that you have had to give birth here in the stable.
 Joseph We're fine, thank you.
 Innkeeper And how is your baby doing?
 Mary He seems very healthy, thank you.
 Innkeeper Does he have a name?
 Joseph Yes, "Jesus".
Knock on the door
 Innkeeper Excuse me, I should answer it. As you know, we are very busy tonight. Guests are coming and going all the time, and we don't have room in our inn for anyone else.
Innkeeper goes and then returns with the two spies.
 Innkeeper I think that these two people are looking for you.
 Joseph Aren't you the people we met on the road to Bethlehem?
 Spy 1 Yes, we are.
 Mary Have you learned any more about your king?
 Spy 2 Indeed we have.
 Spy 1 We know that the king will be born in Bethlehem. We have asked, and this is the only new baby in town.
 Spy 2 And I don't know whether you noticed, but there is a special star right over this stable.
 Spy 1 We believe that your son is the king given us by God, and he will be the saviour of the whole world. So we have come to worship.
 Spy 2 And we don't think that we will be the only ones coming tonight.
 Innkeeper Let me go to look.

The innkeeper goes out, and the spies kneel at the feet of Mary and Joseph. The shepherds come in, present their lambs to Mary and Joseph, and sit down. Then the kings come in, present their gifts and sit down. Finally the angels join the stage.

Song: Light of the world

Scene 7

The spies are positioned half way down the church aisle, with the time having moved on a few days. Simeon and Anna are sitting on the stage quietly.

Spy 2 In our investigations we have met many different types of people. We have met kings travelling to Bethlehem, shepherds, angels, and even King Herod.

Spy 1 The secret is that the baby Jesus, born in Bethlehem, is God's own son, given as a gift to us.

Spy 2 We have learned that Jesus will be the one who saves all of God's people.

Spy 1 And to understand this better, we are coming to the temple in Jerusalem, where we hope to meet someone who can help us piece together all the facts.

The spies move onto the stage. Simeon and Anna stand to greet them.

Simeon Welcome to the temple.

Spy 2 Simeon, thank you for meeting us. We understand you have been promised that you will not die until you have seen the Messiah.

Simeon That is so. Wait here and you will see.

Mary and Joseph come towards Simeon with their baby. The spies step back.

Simeon Welcome, welcome, is this your baby?

Mary Yes, it is. Please take him.

Simeon takes the baby from Mary.

Simeon Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you can now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.

Joseph This is what we were told by the Angel.

Mary And it is almost beyond belief.

Simeon Bless you both, and blessed be this child. Here is Anna. She too has been waiting to see this moment.

Anna Thanks be to God for giving us his son. All of us who have been looking for God to save his people can now rejoice. Thanks to God for his gift.

The spies step forward.

Spy 1 Mission accomplished! We started not knowing what we were looking for, and now our investigations are completed.

Spy 2 Who was it that said that today was Christmas? Ah ...

The spies move down the aisle towards Audience 4.

Spy 1 When we spoke to you before, you knew all about Jesus. Now we understand what you were saying.

Spy 2 You knew all about this all along, didn't you?

Audience 4 Yes, I did.

Spy 1 So are you spending the day celebrating then?

Audience 4 Yes, that's right.

Spy 2 So, do you think we should end with a party?

Audience 4 You could do. What do you think.

Spy 1 Right then everyone, lets go for it!

Everyone rushes onto the stage for the last song.

Song: TBA