

A Swell Noel

A Children's Musical
By Steven Sandy

CAST

Name	Character	Speaking Role Size
Donna	A kind-hearted waitress at the diner.	Large
Dennis Claiborne	A notorious food critic.	Large
Gloria	Owner of the diner.	Medium
Johnny	A hot-headed waiter at the diner.	Medium
Sonny	Another waiter at the diner who is a big Elvis fan.	Medium
Chef Sheepsy	An aggressively complimentary head chef.	Medium
Assistant Chef	A nervous assistant to Chef Sheepsy who doesn't quite know what to make of him.	Small
Gail	A customer at the diner.	Small

Approximate Run Time: 29 Minutes

Table of Contents

Act 1	3
SCENE 1: RESTAURANT	3
SONG: HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY	5
SCENE 2: RESTAURANT	6
SONG: OH JOSEPH	7
SCENE 3: RESTAURANT	8
SONG: HUMBLE LORD	11
SCENE 4: RESTAURANT	12
SONG: THE ONE THAT MAKES ME WHOLE	13
SCENE 5: RESTAURANT	14
SONG: THE FLOCK	15
SCENE 6: RESTAURANT	16
SONG REPRISE: HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY	19

Act 1**SCENE 1: RESTAURANT**

[Sonny and Gloria enter]

SONNY

Wow Boss, there's a big crowd of people out there!

GLORIA

Wonderful! Our grand opening is going to be a night to remember.

SONNY

Gee whiz, they look hungry...

GLORIA

Then they've come to the right place.

[Dennis enters]

DENNIS

Hello, are you the owner of this joint?

GLORIA

Sure am, the name's Gloria. And you must be the food critic here for our Grand Opening and first annual Christmas Burger Bash!

DENNIS

Right-o, that's me. I'm Dennis Claiborne.

GLORIA

Swell, so glad you can be here. Let me show you around. This is your table, Donna will be serving you today. Here is our jukebox with all of the latest hits. And of course, you'll want to meet our head chef. If you'll follow me back into the kitchen-

[going to the kitchen, it is busy. Chef Sheepsy is yelling.]

CHEF SHEEPSY

What do you think you're doing?! (goes to Assistant Chef) Taste this-(Assistant Chef tastes). It's dis..gusting...ly good! Keep it up! (Goes to another) This burger is rawr!

Assistant Chef

Sorry chef, I thought I cooked it...

CHEF SHEEPSY

No, not raw, rawr! (makes claws and roars) Like a lion! It's perfect! (kisses his own fingers)

Assistant Chef

Thank you chef?

GLORIA

Excuse me chef? There is someone I'd like you to meet. This is Dennis Claiborne, our special guest.

CHEF SHEEPSY

(shaking hands) I'm Jordan Sheepsy, pleasure to meet you. If you don't mind, we've got a lot of food to prepare and not much time to prepare it!

DENNIS

Of course.

CHEF SHEEPSY

Hey, you! (to Assistant Chef) You call that food? (Pause) I call it a work of art! Well done! (Assistant Chef points at the burger, mouths "Well done?") No, not the burger, you!

[Gloria and Dennis go back to the front]

GLORIA

He's a bit unconventional, but he's great at what he does.

DENNIS

I'll be the judge of that.

GLORIA

Right...

DENNIS

Do you mind if I ask you a couple of questions?

GLORIA

Go right ahead!

DENNIS

Thank you. To start, what made you want to open up a diner in the first place? And why do it on Christmas Eve?

GLORIA

Well, I was inspired by the Christmas story. After the angel tells Mary that she is going to have a baby, and that he will be great and called the Son of the Most High, Mary sings a song of praise. In that song, she says that God "has filled the hungry with good things." I heard that and thought, that's what I want to do too! Now, it's time to open up!

[Flip closed sign to open, people flood in]

GLORIA

Welcome to Gloria's Diner, where we fill the hungry with good things!

SONG: HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY

SHOOPY DOO WAH-WAH, SHOOPY DOO WAH-WAH,
SHOOPY DOO WAH-WAH, SHOOPY DOO WAH-WAH, YEAH!

CHORUS

MY SOUL MAGNIFIES THE LORD AND MY SPIRIT JOYFULLY SINGS
FOR HE HAS DONE MARVELOUS DEEDS
AND FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS
THE MIGHTY ONE HAS DONE GREAT THINGS, HOLY IS HIS NAME
HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY, SO WE WILL FILL THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD
THINGS.

(GLORIA SOLO)

MAN DOES NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE
BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT COMES FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD
WE ALL NEED TO EAT, BUT OUR LIFE'S INCOMPLETE
UNTIL WE'VE TASTED AND WE'VE SEEN AND HEARD
THE GOODNESS OF GOD'S HOLY WORD.

CHORUS

MY SOUL MAGNIFIES THE LORD AND MY SPIRIT JOYFULLY SINGS
FOR HE HAS DONE MARVELOUS DEEDS
AND FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS
THE MIGHTY ONE HAS DONE GREAT THINGS, HOLY IS HIS NAME
HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY,
SO WE WILL FILL THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS.

VERSE 2

JESUS THE WORD OF GOD MADE FLESH
JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE BROKEN FOR MANKIND
AT CHRISTMAS WE SING OF OUR HEAVENLY KING
AND WE PROCLAIM THE WONDER OF HIS BIRTH
IN EVERY CORNER OF THE EARTH

CHORUS

MY SOUL MAGNIFIES THE LORD AND MY SPIRIT JOYFULLY SINGS
FOR HE HAS DONE MARVELOUS DEEDS
AND FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS
THE MIGHTY ONE HAS DONE GREAT THINGS, HOLY IS HIS NAME
HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY,
SO WE WILL FILL THE HUNGRY,
HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS

SCENE 2: RESTAURANT

DONNA

(To Dennis) Hello, and Merry Christmas! I'm Donna and I will be your waitress today.

DENNIS

Hello.

DONNA

Tonight's menu is prix fixe, and each course has been chosen specifically to help tell the Christmas story. We want you to leave with full bellies and full spirits!

DENNIS

Using food to tell a story? Get out of town! But how is telling me a story going to give me a full spirit?

DONNA

...that's a good question. I'm not sure I know how to answer...

DENNIS

Well, ain't that a bite. Why don't we focus on filling my belly then. What have you got for me?

DONNA

We're going to start you off with something to drink, our hand-crafted Dream Soda. (chimes)

DENNIS

Dream soda? What is that?

DONNA

It's cream soda... with a "D" (chimes) instead of a "C." It's to remind us of the time an angel of the Lord visited Joseph, the man who was betrothed to Mary. When he found out Mary was pregnant, he was sad and planned to divorce her quietly. *That's* when the angel showed up in his dream.

[Cool Angel walks out with sunglasses, leather jacket, cool hair, etc. Elvis-like]

SONG: OH JOSEPH

CHORUS

(SONNY SOLO)

OH JOSEPH, SON OF DAVID, DO NOT BE AFRAID
OH JOSEPH, SON OF DAVID, DO NOT BE AFRAID
TO TAKE MARY AS YOUR WIFE

BECAUSE THAT PRECIOUS LITTLE LIFE
IS HOLY SPIRIT MADE

SHE'LL GIVE BIRTH TO A SON
JESUS, THE HOLY ONE
WHO'LL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS

CHORUS

(EVERYONE)

OH JOSEPH, SON OF DAVID, DO NOT BE AFRAID
OH JOSEPH, SON OF DAVID, DO NOT BE AFRAID
TO TAKE MARY AS YOUR WIFE
BECAUSE THAT PRECIOUS LITTLE LIFE
IS HOLY SPIRIT MADE
DO NOT BE AFRAID
DO NOT BE AFRAID

(SONNY)
OH JOSEPH—
THANK YOU, THANK YOU VERY
MUCH.

(EVERYONE ELSE)
DO NOT BE AFRAID

SCENE 3: RESTAURANT

DONNA
Here you are, your Caesar Augustus salad.

DENNIS
Caesar Augustus? What does he have to do with anything?

DONNA
"In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register."

DENNIS
Those details make it sound more like a history lesson than a "feel good" Christmas story.

DONNA

Well, we believe the Christmas story *is* history. That's part of what makes it so wonderful-these things really happened. (leaves and walks back to the kitchen)

CHEF SHEEPSY

(Tastes food, grimaces) Ugh, unbelievable. Taste this. (Assistant Chef tastes). I can't believe how good it is. Great job!

SONNY

Say, Donna, aren't you serving that restaurant critic?

DONNA

Yeah

SONNY

That guy is *bad* news. Listen to this review he gave Sandy's Steakhouse last week. "The service is terrible and the food is even worse. Maybe they should change the name of this establishment to Blandy's, or perhaps Sandy's *mistake* house." I've eaten at Sandy's before, and it is really good!

JOHNNY

I heard that he's never left a good review *anywhere*. People like that rattle my cage.

SONNY

So, has he been completely unbearable?

DONNA

I don't know...he's been a little short, and he asks a lot of questions, but I don't think he's been particularly unkind.

SONNY

Well, if you need anything, let us know.

DONNA

Thanks. (heading back out to the table) Here is your main course, a delicious Bethle-hamburger with cheese.

DENNIS

Shouldn't it be called a Bethle-cheeseburger?

DONNA

That doesn't have quite the same ring to it. *Bethlehem* is the name of the town, not Bethlecheese.

DENNIS

(takes a bite). This is... not terrible.

GAIL

(overhears) Not terrible? I think it is delicious! May I give my compliments to the chef?

SONNY

Certainly, let me get him for you. (Going to the back room)

SHEEPSY

(puts Assistant Chef's head between two tortillas) What are you?! (Assistant Chef shrugs) A clever quesadilla! I could learn a thing or two from you!

SONNY

Excuse me chef, a customer would like to speak to you.

[Sonny returns with Sheepsy]

GAIL

Chef, this is the best burger I've ever had! What is your secret? What makes it so good?

SHEEPSY

'Tis the seasoning.

DENNIS

So I take it this Bethlehem place is important?

DONNA

Well, yes and no. Bethlehem was actually a very small and *unimportant* town. But God chose Bethlehem as the place for Jesus to be born instead of, say, a palace in Jerusalem.

SONG: HUMBLE LORDVERSE 1

(SOLO)

ON A NIGHT LONG AGO
UNDERNEATH THE BRIGHTEST STAR'S GLOW
WANDERED THEY, MARY AND JOE
LOOKING FOR SOMEPLACE, SOMEPLACE TO GO

VERSE 2

(SOLO)

BETHLEHEM OVERFLOWED
THERE WAS NO ROOM, NOTHING TO SHOW
SOON THE CHILD WAS COMING AND THOUGH
HE WAS A KING YOU NEVER WOULD KNOW

CHORUS

(EVERYONE)

BETHLEHEM WASN'T TOO SMALL FOR OUR SAVIOR
THE CHILD OF HEAVEN WAS BORN IN A MANGER
THOUGH HE DESERVED MORE, HE BECAME POOR
OUR GRACIOUS, LOVING HUMBLE LORD

AWAY IN A MANGER, NO CRIB FOR A BED
THE LITTLE LORD JESUS LAY DOWN HIS SWEET HEAD
THE STARS IN THE SKY LOOKED DOWN WHERE HE LAY
THE LITTLE LORD JESUS ASLEEP ON THE HAY

CHORUS

OH BETHLEHEM

WASN'T TOO SMALL FOR OUR SAVIOR
THE CHILD OF HEAVEN WAS BORN IN A MANGER
THOUGH HE DESERVED MORE, HE BECAME POOR
OUR GRACIOUS, LOVING HUMBLE LORD
OUR GRACIOUS, LOVING HUMBLE LORD
OUR GRACIOUS, LOVING HUMBLE LORD

(SOLO: 000-000-000-000)

SCENE 4: RESTAURANT

DENNIS

I guess I can understand why people like you buy into this Christmas story.

DONNA

What do you mean?

DENNIS

Jesus was born in a small town, to regular, poor, unimportant people. Like you. I get it, it helps you feel important, even though you are just a waitress serving other people at an unremarkable burger joint.

DONNA

(noticeably upset) Excuse me. (leaves quickly)

SONNY

Hey, what's wrong?

JOHNNY

I think that critic just ordered a knuckle sandwich...(punches hand, heads toward critic)

SONNY

(holding Johnny back) Whoah whoah whoah, cool it Johnny, don't flip your lid! (they exit).

GLORIA

Donna? What's wrong?

DONNA

Oh, it's nothing.

GLORIA

It doesn't look like nothing.

DONNA

Well...it's something that restaurant critic said. He said I was unimportant, that I was "just" a waitress serving other people. It made me feel really small.

GLORIA

Just a waitress serving other people? You aren't *just* anything. But Jesus himself came to us at Christmas in order to serve others, not to be served. Now, being a waitress isn't exactly the same thing, but as a waitress you have always served people with love, joy and kindness. There is no higher calling than that!

DONNA

Gee, I never thought about it like that before.

GLORIA

As for that critic? Sometimes people say mean things because *they* feel an emptiness inside, and they think tearing others down will fill that emptiness. But it won't. Only one thing can satisfy that kind of hunger. Or, rather, one person.

SONG: THE ONE THAT MAKES ME WHOLE

VERSE 1

(GLORIA AND DONNA DUET)

THE PEOPLE WALKING IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT
ON THOSE LIVING IN DARKNESS A LIGHT HAS SHINED
AND WE WHO'VE SEEN THE LIGHT CAN SHINE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT
SO THAT THE WORLD MIGHT SEE CHRIST IN US AND COME TO FIND

CHORUS

A HOPE THAT ENDURES, A JOY THAT OVERFLOWS
PEACE THAT SECURES AND A LOVE THAT EVER EVER GROWS
HE'S A LIGHT IN THE DARK, WATER FOR MY SOUL
FIRE IN MY HEART, THE ONE THAT MAKES ME WHOLE

VERSE 2

(GLORIA AND DONNA DUET)

THE TRUE LIGHT CAME TO THE WORLD TO MAKE GOD KNOWN
 BUT THEY DIDN'T RECEIVE HIM, NOT EVEN HIS OWN
 AND WE MAY FACE THE SAME WHEN WE PROCLAIM
 SALVATION COMES BY FAITH ALONE IN JESUS' NAME

CHORUS

(EVERYONE)

A HOPE THAT ENDURES, A JOY THAT OVERFLOWS
 PEACE THAT SECURES AND A LOVE THAT EVER EVER GROWS
 HE'S A LIGHT IN THE DARK, WATER FOR MY SOUL
 FIRE IN MY HEART, THE ONE THAT MAKES ME WHOLE

HE'S THE HOPE THAT ENDURES, A JOY THAT OVERFLOWS
 PEACE THAT SECURES AND A LOVE THAT EVER EVER GROWS
 HE'S A LIGHT IN THE DARK, WATER FOR MY SOUL
 FIRE IN MY HEART, THE ONE THAT MAKES ME WHOLE

THE ONE THAT MAKES ME WHOLE
 THE ONE THAT MAKES ME WHOLE
 THE ONE THAT MAKES ME WHOLE

SCENE 5: RESTAURANT

GLORIA

Now, why don't you take a break for a little while, I'll handle our *esteemed* guest.

DONNA

Actually, Miss Gloria, I would like to keep serving him, if that is alright.

GLORIA

Are you sure? (Donna nods) Well, ok then. (They go back out to the front) Ladies and gentleman, at this time, Chef Sheepsy would like to present something very special he has prepared for us.

SHEEPSY

That's right! And I need you, you, you, and you! (They react, he gives them all sheep hats). Hit it, boys!

SONG: THE FLOCKVERSE 1

(SHEEPSY SOLO)

WELL THERE WERE SHEPHERDS ON A HILL
AND THEY WERE HAVING SUCH A THRILL
OUT WITH THE FLOCK
KEEPING WATCH OUT IN THE FIELD
AND THEN AN ANGEL WAS REVEALED
ABOVE THE FLOCK
THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHONE ALL AROUND,
THE SHEPHERDS' KNEES WERE SHAKING AND THEY FELL TO THE GROUND

CHORUS

(EVERYONE)

SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK THEY GOT QUITE A SHOCK
SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK HEARD THE ANGEL TALK
BAH, BAH, SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK

VERSE 2

(SOLO)

THE ANGEL SAID DO NOT BE SCARED,
I HAVE GOOD NEWS THAT'S TO BE SHARED
AMONG THE FLOCK
PEACE ON EARTH GOODWILL TO MEN,
LET ME SAY IT ONCE AGAIN NOW TO THE FLOCK
THE NEWS I BRING TO YOU WILL CAUSE GREAT JOY
TO EVERY SINGLE PERSON, WOMAN, MAN, GIRL AND BOY

CHORUS

(EVERYONE)

SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK THEY GOT QUITE A SHOCK
SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK HEARD THE ANGEL TALK
BAH, BAH, SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK

VERSE 3

(SOLO)

THAT LITTLE BABY THAT YOU SEE
 THE GREATEST SHEPHERD HE WILL BE
 AND YOU'RE HIS FLOCK
 HE WILL LEAD YOU BY A STREAM
 AND HE WILL FEED YOU AND REDEEM
 HIS PRECIOUS FLOCK
 HE GUIDES US ALL ALONG THE RIGHTEOUS PATH
 HE COMFORTS AND PROTECTS US WITH HIS ROD AND HIS STAFF

CHORUS

(EVERYONE)

SHEPHERD OF THE FLOCK WITH US AS WE WALK
 SHEPHERD OF THE FLOCK OUR GREAT CORNER ROCK
 BAH, BAH, SHEPHERD OF THE FLOCK
 BAH, BAH, SHEPHERD OF THE FLOCK

SCENE 6: RESTAURANT

GLORIA

That was... very special chef. But when you said you had prepared
 something special...I thought you meant something special to eat.
 You know, dessert?

SHEEPSY

Ah yes, the angel food cake! May its sweetness remind us of the
 joyous news the Angels brought on that first Christmas, a Savior
 has been born!

DONNA

Here you go!

DENNIS

Thank you.

DONNA

Sir, I have an answer for you.

DENNIS

Huh?

DONNA

About how the Christmas story can fill our spirit.

DENNIS

Oh. Well, what is it then?

DONNA

Jesus came at Christmas to save us, to forgive us, and to show God's love to us. It isn't that the story makes me feel important, that doesn't matter. But it does remind me that I am loved by God, whether I am important or not. And that fills my Spirit. And I want you to know that God loves you too.

DENNIS

That's nice of you to say, but it won't change my review.

DONNA

That's ok. Merry Christmas.

JOHNNY

Hey Sonny, why is Donna being so nice to that guy?

SONNY

Because God has filled her with good things. And when you're full, you can give good things to other people, even people who might not deserve it, just like Jesus did for us.

GLORIA

Well folks, it's almost time to split. I hope you enjoyed your meal and that you got a taste of the hope, joy, peace, and love that the Christmas story brings. The only thing left now is the bill...and it has already been paid for you.

[everyone reacts. What? Huh? Are you serious?]

GLORIA

It is our gift to you, to help remember Jesus' gift to all of us. He paid the price for our sins so that we can have eternal life with him.

GAIL

Hold on, what's the catch? There's no such thing as a free lunch.

GLORIA

That may be true for most people, but not with God. Romans 6:23 says "For the wages of sin is death, but the *free gift* of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Merry Christmas, and come back again soon!

[Patrons start to leave, waiters get to work cleaning tables]

JOHNNY

Whew, what a kick! I'm exhausted.

SONNY

Yeah, me too. Hey, I got something for you. (Hands him a wrapped gift)

JOHNNY

Really? Nifty! A transistor radio! Hey, I got you something too. (Hands Sonny a wrapped gift)

SONNY

Hotdog! The Elvis Christmas Album! Thank you, thank you very much!

DENNIS

Excuse me.

DONNA

Oh, did you need something?

DENNIS

No, but I have finished my review, and I wanted you to see it before I submit it to the paper. (Hands her the review)

JOHNNY

Oh boy, here we go.

DONNA

(reading) "On Christmas Eve, I attended the grand opening and first annual Christmas Burger Bash at Gloria's Diner. I have been to hundreds of similar events, and, as usual, I went into it hoping for something good. What was *unusual* is that I actually found something good, and I don't just mean the food. I have heard the Christmas story before, though this was the first time I tasted it. But more importantly, I *experienced* the light of Christmas in the way I was treated, which was far kinder than I deserved, and I left feeling full." (pauses, smiling, then squints) "But the burger needed more salt."

SONNY

You couldn't leave that last part out, huh?

DENNIS

(shrugs) I have a reputation to uphold.

DONNA

Thank you for writing that.

DENNIS

No, thank you. Have a swell noel.

SONG REPRISE: HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY

SHOOPY DOO WAH-WAH, SHOOPY DOO WAH-WAH,
SHOOPY DOO WAH-WAH, SHOOPY DOO WAH-WAH, YEAH!
MY SOUL MAGNIFIES THE LORD AND MY SPIRIT JOYFULLY SINGS
FOR HE HAS DONE MARVELOUS DEEDS
AND FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS
THE MIGHTY ONE HAS DONE GREAT THINGS, HOLY IS HIS NAME
HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY,
SO WE WILL FILL THE HUNGRY,
HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS!

THE END