

THE BELLS OF CHRISTMAS

Adapted from an Italian legend

By
Jim Pappas
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(Sample of Script - approximately 1/2 of total)
Suggested Donation \$12.00

This is a fun little play with a good message. I believe you'll have fun with your cast.

Length 20 minutes

Cast*

1. Little Brother
2. Pedro
3. Musician
4. Artist
5. Poet
6. Grandfather
7. Musician's wife (son)
8. Alter Boy
9. Deacon
10. Constable
11. Secretary
12. Keeper of the Poor
13. Coroner
14. Doorkeeper
15. Narrator
16. Old Woman's voice

*Sound effects Sounds of carriages, Wind, Knocking, Applause, Beginning & end of a concerto, Cathedral choir singing, Great bells ringing

*Optional Hats, scarves, etc. to indicate cold weather

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SCENE 1

Little Brother: Pedro?

Pedro: Yes, Little Brother?

Little Brother: Do you think the bells will ring tonight, Pedro?

Pedro: Who can say, Little Brother. Many people have done great deeds within the city walls this year, so it is possible.

Little Brother: Have you ever heard the bells ring, Pedro?

Pedro: No, Little Brother.

Little Brother: Has Father?

Pedro: No.

Little Brother: Has Grandfather?

Pedro: No.

Little Brother: Then how do we know that the silver bells are real? Has anyone climbed the church tower and seen them?

Pedro: Many have climbed, but the bells are invisible.

Little Brother; Perhaps it is only a fairy tale, like Snow White.

Pedro: No, Little Brother. It is no fairy tale. It is a tradition as old as our village itself. But the bells do not ring for just any good deed.

Little Brother: I hope they ring before I grow old and die.

Pedro: Surely, if we live good lives like the noble mayor and the good townspeople, we ourselves will one day cause them to ring.

Little Brother: I hope so. (Enter Musician) Look! There is the choir director. I have heard that he has written a new concerto in honor of God. Let's ask him (her). .

Pedro: Yes, let's!

Both: Sir. Sir!

Musician: Yes, boys?

Pedro: Is it true that you have written a new song for God?

Musician: Why, yes, my children, I have.

Little Brother: Will you have it sung for tonight's program?

Musician: Yes, boys.

Pedro: You must be very proud to be able to give such a great gift to God.

Musician: Proud! Oh no, boys! Not proud. Pride is a sin. Besides, it is such a small thing.

Little Brother: No. No! It is a great gift. Perhaps God will smile upon it and the great bells will ring tonight.

Musician: (Flattered) Oh, my no. I'm sure God would never consider my song that great.

Pedro: But He could, couldn't He?

Musician: Well, uh. . heh heh, I uh suppose He could. But, alas! there are so many great men presenting their gifts to God tonight that I doubt if He'll even notice my humble attempts to honor Him. . . Well, I must be off to rehearse my choir once more. Only our best for God, you know.

Pedro: Oh, yes.

Musician: Goodbye, boys. (Exits singing)

I w-ill make the church bells rinngg

when I start to sinnggg.

I will make the big one bonngg

When I play my sonnnggg!

Pedro: Ah. He (she) is such a great man.

Little Brother: And so humble.

Pedro: Yes. Surely God will reward such unselfish labor.

Little Brother: Surely. (Enter poet & Artist conversing) Look! There is the poet talking to the artist. Let's go listen to what they are saying.

Pedro: Yes, lets. They are great men.

Artist: . . .and I'm sure that if the silver bells have ever rung, they will surely ring tonight when you recite your poem of the Savior's birth.

Poet "Au contraire" my friend. I doubt that God will even take notice of my humble and fleeting performance in comparison to your masterpiece of the Christ Child.

Artist: Oh?

Poet: Why, I've heard that it is the greatest work of art our village has seen in 100 years!

Artist: No!

Poet: But yes. 'Tis the talk of every tongue.

Artist: is it really! Well, my! My my my! Heh, he. Isn't that something! Heh heh. Not that there's anything to it, of course. I was just painting along one fine day and I seemed to be seized by the spirit of inspiration!

Poet: Indeed?

Artist: Aye! Why, sometimes the painting itself seems to be alive!

Poet: My! My!

Artist: It's really not much though. Only my humble efforts to please God.

Poet: Well, certainly, if anything sets the sacred bells to ringing tonight, it will surely be your painting. Oh, I'm so eager to see it!

Artist: Well, thank you. Thank you, dear poet. But come now, be hones with me. I've heard that your poem is a literary masterpiece, the like of which has never been heard in our village. Don't you think that God will smile upon your recital tonight?

Poet: Oh, dear me no! I'm much too insignificant for God to notice. Especially compared to your exquisite painting, and the choir master's masterful composition.

Artist: Now, now. Be not humble overmuch, dear "wordsmith". Poetry is as much a gift of God as any of the other fine arts.

Poet: Well, thank you. I hope you are right. Say! Perhaps the bells will ring three times tonight Ha ha ha.

Pedro: (Stage whisper to Little Brother) Three

Little Brother: (Stage whisper) Three?

Artist: Now, don't laugh. You know, I'd never thought of that, but it may be. God knows we've all done our very best.

Poet: Oh! Our very best, yes. And in great humility, I might add.

Artist: Indeed. Why, I've only shown my painting to a few of the village ladies who were, of course, sworn to the strictest secrecy.

Poet: Oh?

Artist: Yes. And I only showed them to get some constructive criticism.

Poet: Indeed? Well the same here.

Artist: Oh! I'm so excited! I can't wait to hear the famous bells ring tonight. Oh, uh, for you, of course. Well, my brush hand is getting cold out here and I must check my painting one more time to be sure it is all just so. Only the best for God, you know.

Poet: Right you are. And I must rehearse my poem once more so I don't make a single mistake.

Artist: Indeed.

Poet: And! For your sake, I do hope God will ring the bells more than once. Er uh. . . that is. . . if the choirmaster causes the bells to ring, I pray He will ring them for you as well.

Artist: Oh, uh, yes, heh heh. I'm sure He will. Uh, for you, that is. But wouldn't it be simple grand if they did ring three times!

Poet: T'would be the talk of Italy for centuries to be sure. Well, see you up at the church.

Artist: Yes. And be careful! The roads will be icy. (Exit)

Poet: Thank you. I shall.

Pedro: Did you hear, Little Brother? The bells will ring tonight!

Little Brother: Oh, how wonderful! Let's hurry home and tell Grandfather. He will want to go up the hill and hear them as well. . .

SCENE II

Little Brother: Grandfather!

Pedro: Grandfather!

Grandfather: Yes?

Little Brother: Grandfather! Grandfather! The bells will ring tonight!

Pedro: Perhaps three times!

Little Brother: At least twice!

Pedro: We must hurry so we can get good seats.

Little Brother: Yes, hurry, Grandfather. here are your mittens.

Pedro: And your coat.

Little Brother: And. . .

Grandfather: Wait, wait, wait, my boys.

Pedro: There is no time to waste, Grandfather. The day is almost gone and it is starting to snow. We must leave soon or we will be late.

Little Brother: Yes, late, Grandfather. It is a steep road up to the church.

Grandfather: Well, then, you had better get into your warmest clothes. You can tell me about the bells while you change.

Pedro: They are going to ring, Grandfather! (Dons scarf)

Little Brother: Tonight, Grandfather. (Dons scarf)

Grandfather: Boys, boys! Surely you know that the great bells of heaven ring only when someone has done a great and noble deed.

Pedro: I know, Grandfather. (Dons coat)

Little Brother: We know, Grandfather. (Dons coat)

Grandfather: I have not heard of any great deed done this year.

Little Brother: Oh, but there have been many.

Pedro: Yes, many.

Grandfather: Such as?

Pedro: Well, the painter and the poet are giving their best to the church tonight.

Little Brother: And the choirmaster will have the choir sing his greatest song for the glory of God.

Grandfather: Ah. And these will set the bells to ringing?

Both: Yes, Grandfather.

Grandfather: What makes you think so?

Little Brother: They said so.

Grandfather: Hmmm?

Pedro: Yes. We heard them talking, Grandfather. They are very great men.

Little Brother: Very humble.

Pedro: And kind.

Little Brother: Surely God will ring the bells tonight.

Grandfather: Hmmm. I doubt that the bells will ring for such as they. But. . . who am I to say.

Pedro: Even if the bells don't ring for them there is still the noble mayor who has done so much for our city.

Little Brother: And the Prince will be there to tell of his brave deeds.

Pedro: And the Bishop too. Surely the bells will ring for the Bishop!

Grandfather: No, my boys. No no no. They already have their rewards.

Pedro: They do? How?

Grandfather: In their positions and in the admiration of men.

Pedro: Well, there is still you, Grandfather. You are kind and good to all.

Grandfather: Yes, but I have a warm home and food to eat while others are cold and hungry. We all have our reward. The bells don't ring for such as we. But go along anyway. Perhaps some secret deed has been done and you will be right.

Little Brother: Aren't you going to come, Grandfather?

Grandfather: Oh, no. Out in a storm is no place for an old one.

Little Brother: But the bells!

Grandfather: If the bells ring, I will hear them from here.

Little Brother: Yes, Grandfather.

Grandfather: Are you well dressed? It is snowing harder than usual.

Pedro: Yes, Grandfather.

Grandfather: All right then, hurry along or you'll be tardy. And be very careful. There will be late ones traveling very fast in their carriages.

Little Brother: Yes, Grandfather. Bye, Grandfather.

Pedro: Bye, Grandfather.

SCENE III

Pedro: Brrr!! It is so cold!

Little Brother: Yes. let's hurry. We're only part way up and my fingers and toes hurt already.

Pedro: Mine too. But the church will be warm.

Little Brother: I hope so. Oh! Stand back. Here comes the mayor's carriage.

Pedro: And the Prince is with him. Take off your hat! (SFX of passing carriage)

Little Brother: Such noble horses.

Pedro: And such a fine carriage.

Little Brother: God certainly blessed the mayor.

Pedro: Because he is such a noble man. Surely Grandfather is wrong and the bells will ring tonight.

Little Brother: (Old woman groans) Listen! (Groan) The music has started! We are late!

Pedro: I don't hear anything. . . It is only the wind.

Little Brother: I hear it again. . . Listen. (Groan)
Pedro: Look. Someone has fallen off the road. Let's help them up.
Little Brother: It is an old woman wearing only a light summer jacket.
Pedro: She is almost frozen to death. Let's help her up to the road where someone can give her a ride up to the church.
Little Brother: Ugghh. (Groan) Oh, she's too heavy for us. Let's go up to the road and get help.
Pedro: Yes. (On the road) Hmmm. No one is coming.
Little Brother: They are probably already in church by now.
Pedro: Yes. (Groan) Oh, poor dear. I'll be right there. you go to the church for help and I'll go down and helper keep warm.
Little Brother: All right. (SFX distant carriage growing louder) Oh, wait. Someone is coming in a carriage.
Little Brother: It looks like. . . Yes! It is the choirmaster!
Pedro: Oh, good. He is a man of God. Stop!
Little Brother: Stop! Stop! Help us!
Musician: What?
Pedro: Come help us! We have an old woman fallen in the snow.
Musician: Fallen in the snow you say?
Pedro: yes. She is freezing.
Musician: Hmmm. Well, if you don't wear proper boots you must expect to fall in the snow now and then. Ta ta.
Little Brother: No, don't go. You must help us.
Musician: Help you! Dear boys, I am already late and i must get the choir ready before the bells, . . . I mean before the service begins.
Pedro: But she will die!
Little Brother: Please sir!
Musician: C'mon! Gittup! Ha! (SFX carriage fading)
Pedro: Please sir!
Wife: Who was that?
Musician: Oh, just a couple of boys who admire me very much.
Wife: What were they yelling about?
Musician: Who knows. Old women playing in the snow or something. . .
Wife: Indeed! Playing pranks on Christmas Eve?
Musician: Well, if I weren't in such a hurry I would humor them, but the choir will not organize itself and only our best effort if good enough for the Lord.
Wife: Hmmph. We should turn the rascals into the constable.
Musician: Now, now, dear. They're not all that bad. In fact, with the right training, they could turn out to be very nice young men.
Wife: Hmmph!!
Little Brother: Why didn't they stop?
Pedro: I guess he didn't hear us right. Besides, he is a very busy man. But no matter. Here comes someone else.
Little Brother: It's the poet.
Pedro: Good. He will stop for sure. Help!
Little Brother: Stop! Help us!

Poet: Eh?

Pedro: We have an old woman who is freezing!

Poet: An old woman freezing?

Pedro: Yes, down the bank. (Groan Come help us.

Poet: (To himself) Oh, why did I ever stop?

Pedro: What?

Poet: I said it is a good thing that I stopped.

Little Brother: yes.

Poet: Ah! Look! The painter is coming and since his carriage is so much bigger he will be able to help you better than I.

Pedro: Oh, good.

Poet: Yes. I must get out of his way. Carry on boys. Be sure to get there in time for my poem.

Pedro: We'll try!

Poet: Good. Good. Well, here he comes. See you at the ringing, boys.

Pedro: Yes sir.

Little Brother: I'm sure glad he stopped.

Pedro: Me too. Stand back a bit. Here comes the artist.

Artist: Hyahh. Gittup there!

Pedro: Stop! Stop!

Little Brother: Help us!

Artist: What? Whoa! What?

Pedro: You must help us. We have an old woman who is freezing.

Artist: What?

Pedro: I said we have an old woman who is freezing.

Artist: Freezing?

Pedro: Yes. Freezing to death!

Artist: Well, don't just stand there. You can't expect to keep warm by standing still. See you at the church. Hiyahh. Gittup!

Pedro: They didn't understand us.

Little Brother: Oh, now we'll never get her up to the church. All the people are there and now the great men have all driven right by us.

Pedro: I know. You run up to the church and get help while I stay here and try to keep her warm.

Little Brother: Well, all right. I'll be as quick as I can.

Pedro: Be careful. And God bless you.

Little Brother: The same to you. (Exit Little Brother)

Pedro: I'm back, old woman. don't worry. My brother has gone to get help and I will lend you my coat and gloves until he returns. Here - put them on. Oh, you're too cold to move. Here. . . I'll help you. How long have you been here? Are you too cold to speak? Well, it doesn't matter. You'll be warm enough soon. Here, I'll try to block the wind 'til my brother gets here. Brrr!!!

SCENE IV

Alter Boy: (Hears knocking) Yes?

Little Brother: Alter boy? My brother and I have found an old woman who has fallen off the road and is freezing to death.

Alter Boy: What!

Little Brother: Yes, freezing. Please come help us before they both freeze.

Alter Boy: Hmmm. This is obviously a very serious matter. But I must light the candles in a few moments so I certainly cannot help you. Hmmm. Come with me to the deacon. This is his line of work.

Little Brother: Thank you, sir. I . . .

End of sample. This is approximately 1/2 of the entire script.