

And a Partridge in a Pear Tree

An hour-long play

by Tracy Wells

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And a Partridge in a Pear Tree

- 2 -

STORY OF THE PLAY

A guy with an invisible drum, a medieval restaurant host who won't break character, a milkmaid who just wants to get rid of some cheese, and a dancing snowflake in the world's ugliest costume. These are just some of the characters you'll find in "And a Partridge in a Pear Tree." This 60-minute holiday play weaves together 12 five-minute scenes based on the well-known verses of the Christmas carol "The Twelve Days of Christmas." With a basic set and hugely flexible cast from adults to children, this play uses humor and heart to remind us about the gifts we give and receive... and not just the ones you can buy in a store. Two endings are provided, one secular and one religious.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

The world premiere of this production was produced by Lompoc High Theatre Arts at Lompoc (CA) High School, in December 2021, with Director Sarah A. M. Barthel, Assistant Director Bree Jansen, and Technical Director Sarah Santiago.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(24 - 30+ flexible)

To expand the cast, feel free to add additional Dancers and Drummers and assign or combine lines as needed. You may also add additional shoppers or store employees to any scene.

12 Drummers Drumming

TOY SOLDIER: An unenthusiastic mall toy soldier; adult.

DRUMMER: A lover of drums who can't resist the beat;
teen/adult.

DRUMMERS: Additional Drummers (3+); teens/adults.

11 Pipers Piping

BAKER: A wizened baker trying to pass along her/his skills;
adult.

APPRENTICE: Newly hired baker who cannot figure out the
piping bag; teen/adult.

10 Lords A-Leaping

HERALD: Employee at a medieval restaurant who is just
trying to do his job; teen/adult.

BOSS: Restaurant owner; adult.

9 Ladies Dancing

CHOREOGRAPHER: A choreographer trying to get a dancer
to cooperate; adult.

SNOWFLAKE: A dancer who hates her costume; child/teen.

DANCERS: Additional dancers dressed as snowflakes (3+);
children/teens.

8 Maids A-Milking

MILKMAID: A girl who just wants to sell some cheese;
teen/adult female.

CHEESY GUY: A lover of cheese...and the girl that sells it;
teen/adult male.

7 Swans A-Swimming

TRAVEL AGENT: An agent trying to make a sale; adult.

TRAVELER: A guy with nothing to do and no place to go;
adult.

And a Partridge in a Pear Tree

- 4 -

6 Geese A-Laying

SHOPPER: A spouse who loves to shop; adult.

SPOUSE: A spouse who just wants to go home; adult.

5 Golden Rings

SUITOR: An undecided potential proposer; adult.

JEWELER: A knowledgeable jeweler; adult.

4 Calling Birds

CALLER: A friend who can't stay off the phone; adult.

FRIEND: A friend who just wants to connect; adult.

3 French Hens

1ST FILM BUFF: A not-so-know-it-all movie buff; teen/adult.

2ND FILM BUFF: Another not-so-know-it-all movie buff;
teen/adult.

2 Turtle Doves

OLDER CHILD: A sibling who's supposed to be in charge;
teen.

MIDDLE CHILD: A sibling who really wants a turtle; teen or
older child.

YOUNGER CHILD: A sibling who is easily distracted; child
aged 5-10.

A Partridge in a Pear Tree

PARENT: A distraught parent looking for her/his missing
child; adult.

The entire cast joins in the final scene.

And a Partridge in a Pear Tree

- 5 -

SETTING / TIME

A shopping mall. Modern day.

SET / PROPS

This play could be done with minimal set or can be more elaborate. Center stage is a large Christmas tree. To the right of the tree is a small cafe table with 2 chairs. On either side of the tree are spaces for the shops, which are all decorated for Christmas. "Ye Olde Garden of Olives" and the "Cheese the Day" are the only two named shops. Feel free to come up with your own names for the other shops and incorporate them into your set. This play is meant to be funny and lighthearted, and adding those personal touches will add to the fun of the piece. Each scene will alternate, using space to the left or the right of the tree.

Scene 1: Takes place in front of the tree. Drum, drumsticks, garbage can.

Scene 2: A counter with baked goods with a workspace on top or nearby. 2 baking trays with real or faux sugar cookies, 5 piping bags in multiple colors, a stack of at least 3 towels.

Scene 3: A medieval flag on a post with the name "Ye Olde Garden of Olives." A long scroll, a feather quill pen, clipboard, keys.

Scene 4: A few large snowflake decorations.

Scene 5: A large shop sign that says, "Cheese the Day." Serving tray with cheese samples, backpack.

Scene 6: A counter with travel posters on the front, perhaps also behind it, and travel brochures on top. Travel pamphlets, key.

Scene 7: A display table with various gadgets or home good items and a recliner or other comfortable chair. Shopping bags of all shapes and sizes, remote control, "Try Me" sign, purse.

Scene 8: A counter displaying various types of jewelry. A tray with a few cheap rings, a velvet tray with 5 faux engagement rings on it, a cloth.

Scene 9: Takes place at the table in front of the tree. 2 mobile phones, 2 cups of coffee, 2 muffins or Danishes on a plate.

Scene 10: Entrance to a movie theater with faux movie posters displayed: "Savoir Faire" and various French images and another with a nutcracker and the title, "Die Hard 17: A Hard Nut to Crack." A tub of popcorn, a disposable drink cup, a box of Milk Duds.

Scene 11: A counter or table with pet supplies and a small aquarium with a faux turtle in it, as well as containers holding a faux snake, and a faux tarantula.

Scene 12: Takes place in front of the tree. Cell phone, baby Jesus for religious ending.

LIGHTING/SOUND

No special lighting effects. For sound, you will need a phone ringing for "4 Calling Birds." Additionally, you might choose to have an accompanist or pre-recorded track play parts of the song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" at the beginning, end, and during scene changes.

COSTUMES

Modern day attire. Shoppers should wear some outdoor items, such as scarves and hats. Toy Soldier wears toy soldier costume and carries a drum. Shop owners are dressed for the workplace. Herald should wear medieval attire. Snowflake and Dancers should wear over the top, ridiculous snowflake costumes with headpieces. Baker and Apprentice should wear white chef's coats. Milkmaid should be wearing a milkmaid costume. French Hens could be wearing berets.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

While this play was written to be performed at Christmas, the references to Christmas could be removed, making this a vignette style play that could be performed any time of year. I would suggest changing the costume of the Dancer to reflect whatever season you are performing the piece.

Scene 1
12 Drummers Drumming

(AT RISE: In the center court area of the mall, in front of the Christmas tree. A small two-seater café table is to the right of the tree and a garbage can is to the left of the tree. 2ND and 4TH DRUMMERS are seated at the table, talking or eating. At start of scene, the sound of someone hitting a drum is heard from offstage. Moments later, TOY SOLDIER enters, marching, and playing his drum. He marches past the tree, does an about face, then crosses to stand directly in front of the tree. A moment later, DRUMMER enters, pretending to play his invisible drum, marching the same path as the Toy Soldier and then coming to a stop next to him, drumming.)

TOY SOLDIER: *(Drumming quieter, annoyed, sneaks a quick peek at DRUMMER, then stares straight ahead.)* What do you think you're doing?

DRUMMER: *(Sneaks a quick peek at TOY SOLDIER then stares straight ahead.)* Same thing as you.

TOY SOLDIER: I'm drumming.

DRUMMER: So am I.

TOY SOLDIER: No, you're not. You're just hitting the air with your imaginary drumsticks.

DRUMMER: Just because you can't see my drumsticks doesn't make them imaginary. You can hear that drumbeat, can't you?

TOY SOLDIER: *(Incredulously.)* Of course I can! It's from *my* drum!

DRUMMER: *(Smirks.)* That's what you think.

TOY SOLDIER: Fine. *(Stops drumming and turns to DRUMMER.)* Can you hear the drumbeat now?

DRUMMER: *(Has also stopped drumming.)* No, but that's because I've stopped drumming.

TOY SOLDIER: *(Groaning loudly.)* Are you just standing here to annoy me? Because this job is annoying enough.

DRUMMER: Your job isn't annoying. It's cool. You're like the little drummer boy or something.

TOY SOLDIER: I'm a toy soldier.

And a Partridge in a Pear Tree

- 8 -

DRUMMER: Whatever. They're both from Christmas stories.
Same thing.

TOY SOLDIER: Not the same thing at all, actually.

DRUMMER: Either way, it's Christmas time and you get to play music for all these shoppers!

TOY SOLDIER: I'm dressed up like a toy soldier and playing drums in the mall. That's hardly cool... not for a serious musician like me.

DRUMMER: I'm a serious musician too.

TOY SOLDIER: Is that so? You're a real percussionist?

DRUMMER: I try to be.

TOY SOLDIER: (*Disbelieving.*) Alright, then tell me.... who are your favorite conductors?

DRUMMER: Trains really aren't my thing.

TOY SOLDIER: (*Rolls his eyes.*) Not that kind of conductor but okay... have you done any work in the industry?

DRUMMER: Oh yeah, I've worked a ton!

TOY SOLDIER: With who?

DRUMMER: You know, the usual.... Dunkin, McDonald's, Lowe's...

TOY SOLDIER: (*Interested.*) Any relation to Frederick Loewe, the composer of *My Fair Lady* and *Brigadoon*?

DRUMMER: (*Shrugs his shoulders.*) I don't know. Maybe.

TOY SOLDIER: Wow. That *is* impressive!

DRUMMER: I've even worked with the king!

TOY SOLDIER: (*Intrigued.*) You don't mean....

(*THEY say their next lines in unison.*)

DRUMMER: Burger King!

TOY SOLDIER: John Williams!

(*THEY both look at one another confused.*)

DRUMMER: (*Chuckles.*) Ah, you mean the "Star Wars" guy.
Cool soundtrack.

TOY SOLDIER: (*With disdain.*) And I suppose you mean the purveyor of sandwiches.

DRUMMER: I'll have you know the Whopper is practically a work of art.

TOY SOLDIER: So, you're *not* a percussionist then?

DRUMMER: Is that a person who hits their head a lot? Because if so, I'm definitely a percussionist.

TOY SOLDIER: You're thinking of concussionist, which I don't think is a word... although I can't say I'm surprised to hear you may have hit your head a time or two.

DRUMMER: Alright, fine, I'm not a discussionist like you are. *(Waves his hand, from TOY SOLDIER'S head to toe.)* But I am a real drummer.

TOY SOLDIER: You don't even have a drum.

DRUMMER: I don't need one.

TOY SOLDIER: Okay, now I am intrigued. Tell me, how exactly can you be a drummer without a drum?

DRUMMER: Music is all around us. *(Crosses to table.)* Sometimes when I'm at a restaurant waiting for my sandwich, *(Turns to TOY SOLDIER.)* my *Whopper* for example, *(Turns back to table.)* I just tap out a cool beat, right there on the table. *(Taps out a beat on the table.)*

2ND DRUMMER: Hey! That's great sound. Let me try.

(2ND DRUMMER starts tapping a beat on the table. DRUMMER joins in on a duet, then they both stop and smile as 3RD DRUMMER enters, holding a brown paper bag and crosses to the garbage can during next line.)

TOY SOLDIER: So, it's not just me you annoy, then... it's everyone in Burger King.

DRUMMER: Exactly. *(Stands and crosses to garbage cans.)* And tables aren't the only thing that make a great drum.

(Picks up garbage can just before 3RD Drummer throws away his brown paper bag. 3RD DRUMMER watches, surprised.)

TOY SOLDIER: *(Tries to stop HIM.)* I wouldn't do that if I were you!

And a Partridge in a Pear Tree
- 10 -

(DRUMMER starts to turn over the can. TOY SOLDIER cringes.)

DRUMMER: Relax. It's empty.

TOY SOLDIER: *(Relieved.)* Good. 'Cause there was no way I was going to help you clean up mall garbage. Do you know what people throw away in there? Chewed up gum, babies' diapers, those weird stocking things they use when they try on shoes, half eaten nachos...

DRUMMER: *(To himself.)* Mmmmmm... nachos.

TOY SOLDIER: Gross.

DRUMMER: *(Shaking his head and picking up where he left off.)* If you look around, there are lots of things that can make a good drum... pots and pans, pails and buckets... even garbage cans!

TOY SOLDIER: *Empty* garbage cans.

DRUMMER: Right! *(Taps out a beat on the bottom of the garbage can.)*

3RD DRUMMER: Wow! I'll never look at garbage cans the same way again!

(3RD DRUMMER puts down the bag and starts to tap out a beat on the garbage can. DRUMMER joins in on the can, and 2ND DRUMMER joins in by tapping on the table.)

TOY SOLDIER: *(Nodding along with the beat.)* Not bad.

(All DRUMMERS stop drumming. If there are additional DRUMMERS, they enter now and watch DRUMMER and TOY SOLDIER.)

DRUMMER: *(Puts down the garbage can and crosses to TOY SOLDIER.)* And the best thing is, if you don't have anything at all, you can still make a great drumbeat.

TOY SOLDIER: How do you do that?

DRUMMER: Like this! *(Starts to drum on his thighs, then his belly, and then the top of his head.)*

4TH DRUMMER: *(Stands and crosses to DRUMMER.)* Let me in on this drumming action!

And a Partridge in a Pear Tree

- 11 -

(4TH DRUMMER watches DRUMMER, then imitates him by drumming on his thighs, then his belly, and then the top of his head. They smile at one another, then Drummer turns to TOY SOLDIER and tries to drum on Toy Soldier's head. Toy Soldier takes a step away from Drummer. All DRUMMERS stop drumming.)

TOY SOLDIER: Hey! Watch it, will you! I have no interest in becoming a concussionist.

DRUMMER: No matter where I go, I'm always making music because music is one of the most wonderful gifts in the world. *(Looks at TOY SOLDIER pointedly.)* Any serious musician knows that.

TOY SOLDIER: Well, when you put it like that... *(Smiles.)* I guess that makes you a percussionist after all.

DRUMMER: That's what I was trying to tell you! And you get to make music all day... with a real drum! If that's not a cool job, I don't know what is.

TOY SOLDIER: Hmm... I guess you're right.

DRUMMER: Now are we going to do some drumming or what? 'Cause if we aren't, I'm getting some of those nachos.

TOY SOLDIER: *(Chuckles.)* Get your drum.

DRUMMER: *(Smiles and rushes to pick up garbage can, then crosses to line up behind TOY SOLDIER.)* Let's do this!

(All other DRUMMERS line up behind DRUMMER.)

TOY SOLDIER: *(Counting off.)* And a one... and a two... and a—

(TOY SOLDIER starts drumming. DRUMMER follows his lead, drumming on his garbage can. All other DRUMMERS drum on their bodies. They march past the tree, do an about-face and the march offstage as LIGHTS blackout.)

Scene 2
11 Pipers Piping

(AT RISE: One of the shops is setup as a bakery. There is a display case with baked goods inside or tables with baked goods on top. There should also be a workstation present, either on top of the display case or nearby. On the workstation is one tray with cookies, decorated. Five piping bags in various colors are also present, as is a stack of towels. At start of scene, APPRENTICE is arranging baked goods in the display case.)

APPRENTICE: There. That's better. *(BAKER enters, carrying a baking tray full of undecorated sugar cookies. APPRENTICE turns to look.)* Mmmmm... those smell great.

BAKER: They should. They're my grandmother's secret sugar cookie recipe, passed down for generations. *(Puts the tray down on the workstation.)*

APPRENTICE: *(Crosses to the workstation.)* Top secret recipe, you say? *(Reaches out toward the cookies.)* Maybe I'll have to try one of those.

BAKER: *(Swats away her hand.)* Ah, ah, ah! Not so fast! Those cookies are for the customers, not the employees.

APPRENTICE: But they smell so good! Besides, if you want me to help sell the product, I should probably know what they taste like. *(Reaches for a cookie again.)*

BAKER: *(Picks up the tray and moves it out of her reach.)* What I want your help with is decorating these Christmas cookies. A local business put in a last-minute order for ten dozen cookies to give as gifts to their employees.

APPRENTICE: *(Nervously.)* I'm not sure you want my help with that.

BAKER: I know today's your first day, but I have every confidence in you. Besides, this is a huge order and I'll never get it done by myself.

APPRENTICE: Well, you see... decorating isn't really my thing.

BAKER: But during your interview you said you had decorating experience.

APPRENTICE: I do! *(Sheepishly.)* Does decorating my friend's bedroom count? Because she said I really have an eye for mixing colors and patterns. *(Looking around.)* In fact, your shop could use a little updating. If you want, I could put together some paint samples and—

BAKER: *(Interrupting.)* The shop is fine, and if you have such a great eye for colors, then try this on for size. *(Picks up a piping bag and hands it to APPRENTICE.)*

APPRENTICE: *(Looking down at the bag.)* What's this?

BAKER: It's a piping bag. It's filled with buttercream icing for decorating these Christmas cookies.

APPRENTICE: *(Intrigued.)* Icing, you say? I love buttercream icing. *(Tries to get some of the icing out onto her finger to try.)*

BAKER: The icing is for the cookies, not the employees.

APPRENTICE: Okay, but it's so hard to be surrounded by cookies and icing and other treats and not be able to eat it all.

BAKER: Then why did you apply for a job in a bakery?

APPRENTICE: Glutton for punishment, I guess. *(Shrugs her shoulders.)* Or maybe just a glutton. *(Thinks.)* Or both.

BAKER: You'll survive. Now, are you ready to pipe some icing!

APPRENTICE: Sure! *(Lifts up icing bag and looks at it.)* How does this bag work, exactly?

(BAKER crosses to stand beside of a tray of cookies and picks up another icing bag. APPRENTICE follows her and stands beside the second tray of cookies and watches Baker.)

BAKER: *(Demonstrating.)* You hold the bag with one hand near the gathered end to prevent icing from leaking out the back. Then place your other hand near the piping tip.

APPRENTICE: *(Imitating.)* Like this?

BAKER: That's right! *(Positions the bag over a cookie.)* Now you want to give it a gentle squeeze—

APPRENTICE: *(Overeager.)* Like this?! *(Squeezes the piping bag hard, causing a lot of frosting to come out. Looks down at the mess.)* Oops.

And a Partridge in a Pear Tree

- 14 -

BAKER: Nope. Not like that. *(Takes a towel and wipes mess.)*

APPRENTICE: Sorry. I told you I'd be bad at this.

BAKER: It's okay. It's your first time. I'll show you again.
(Picks up piping bag and demonstrates.) You hold the bag like this.

APPRENTICE: *(Imitating.)* Got it.

BAKER: Then you give it a nice, gentle squeeze. *(Squeezes her bag and a thin ribbon of icing comes out.)* Like this.

APPRENTICE: Alright, here goes. *(Squeezes the bag agonizingly slow. Nothing happens.)* Nothing's happening.

BAKER: You're going to need to squeeze it harder than that.

APPRENTICE: Like this? *(Squeezes again, but nothing happens.)*

BAKER: Harder than that.

APPRENTICE: Like this? *(Squeezes again, but nothing happens.)*

BAKER: Harder still.

APPRENTICE: Alright. Here goes! *(Squeezes the piping bag hard, causing a lot of frosting to come out. Looks down at the mess.)* Oops.

BAKER: Okay. So that just happened... again. *(Takes a towel and wipes up the mess.)*

APPRENTICE: I'm sorry! I'm not trying to make a mess, I swear!

BAKER: I know. Mistakes happen.

APPRENTICE: I appreciate how patient you're being with me.

BAKER: What can I say? It's a gift. Now you'll just have to try again. *(Picks up another piping bag and hands it to APPRENTICE.)*

APPRENTICE: *(Holding up her hands and taking a step back.)* Yeah, I don't think that's such a good idea.

BAKER: *(Taking a step toward HER.)* I have faith in you.

APPRENTICE: *(Taking another step back.)* You reeeaaaally shouldn't.

BAKER: *(Taking a step closer.)* One more try, and if it doesn't work out, I promise I'll let you redecorate my shop.

APPRENTICE: Okay, but you asked for it. *(Takes the bag tentatively then positions it.)* Am I holding it right?

BAKER: It's perfect. Now just give it a gentle squeeze.

And a Partridge in a Pear Tree
- 15 -

(APPRENTICE slowly squeezes the piping bag, a perfect stream of icing comes out and onto the cookie.)

APPRENTICE: *(Astonished.)* I did it.

BAKER: You sure did!

APPRENTICE: *(Jumping up and down a little, still holding the piping bag.)* I actually piped some icing onto that cookie!

BAKER: That's right! Now if you just want to give me that—
(Reaches out for the piping bag.)

APPRENTICE: *(Ignoring BAKER, growing more excited.)* It wasn't too much icing and it wasn't too little!

BAKER: *(Trying to get the piping bag.)* Yes, and that's very exciting, but if we can just—

APPRENTICE: *(Ignoring BAKER, turning away from her, now more excited.)* I just gave the piping bag a gentle squeeze like this and—

(Turns, squeezing the bag as she does, and squirts icing all over the BAKER'S jacket or face. APPRENTICE freezes as she looks at what she's done.)

APPRENTICE: *(Cont'd.)* Oops. *(Puts the piping bag down, picks up a towel and hands it to BAKER.)*

BAKER: *(Wiping away the icing, calmly.)* So about those updates to my shop you were mentioning...

APPRENTICE: *(Excitedly.)* Right! *(Crosses over to display tables or counter.)* So, I was thinking, we could cover this area in a nice checkered fabric, maybe in pink and white, or a nice buttercream yellow.

BAKER: Let's just stay away from anything buttercream.

APPRENTICE: You got it! *(Turns away and motions for BAKER to follow.)* And right over here would be a great spot for a nice, plotted plant. What do you think of ficuses?

(BAKER follows APPRENTICE offstage as LIGHTS fade to a blackout.)

Scene 3
10 Lords A-Leaping

(AT RISE: One of the shops is setup as the entrance to a medieval restaurant. If walls are present, they should be covered or painted to look like stone, with medieval banners in bright colors. A flag or sign reading, "Ye Olde Garden of Olives" is also present. At the start of the scene, HERALD stands next to the sign, holding a rolled-up scroll and a feather quill pen. Herald remains in character until the end of the scene.)

HERALD: *(Calls out.)* Hear ye, hear ye! Tonight's specials at Ye Olde Garden of Olives are as follows: *(Unrolls scroll and reads.)* Roast leg of turkey with pan drippings, a mix of wild grains of rice, and a buttered medley of beans and corn. *(Unrolls the scroll a little more.)* For the Lords and Ladies that doth have an affinity for the sweeter things in life, our dessert menu features a lovely plum pudding as well as the specialty of Ye Olde Garden of Olives... *(Pauses as BOSS enters from restaurant, carrying a clipboard.)* Ye Towering Chocolate Inferno! A cake so decadent it has inspired many a quest. A dessert so glorious that any knight would slay a dragon for just one bite. A morsel so tasty that—

BOSS: *(Interrupts.)* Right. I think they got it. It's a really good chocolate cake. Now listen, Greg— *(Or Gabby if played by a female.)*

HERALD: The name is Master Gregory of the House Thompson.

BOSS: Okay, Master Gregory. We need to make a few changes to tonight's menu. *(Flips a few pages on his clipboard.)* Instead of the roast beef au jus, we're going to substitute a pork chop.

HERALD: Very well, m'lord. *(Uses quill to cross something out on the scroll and writes as he delivers next line.)* No longer shall this tavern serve the herb-roasted side of beef but shall instead grace our diners with the sumptuous slice of wild boar.

BOSS: Well, it's pork, but whatever.

And a Partridge in a Pear Tree

- 17 -

HERALD: Forgive me, m'lord, but doth the wild boar belong to the family of swine?

BOSS: I... I guess, but wild boar does not sound very appetizing, and you and I both know our customers are just getting plain old pork chops.

HERALD: (*Offended.*) I must protest, m'lord! The feast served by Ye Olde Garden of Olives is some of the finest fare in the tri-state area!

BOSS: Of course, it is, I only meant—

HERALD: (*Interrupting.*) And the portion sizes are fit for a king!

BOSS: (*Sighs.*) Can we get back to the menu now?

HERALD: Of course, m'lord. Please forgive my dalliance from the task at hand. (*Holding quill at the ready over scroll.*) And what shall grace the side of the aforementioned chop of pork?

BOSS: (*Shrugs.*) The usual. Potatoes and beans.

HERALD: (*Calls out.*) Fear not, friends of tubers and legumes, our chop of pork will be accompanied by our own tavern-made potatoes and beans, seasoned to perfection and served piping hot.

BOSS: How else would we serve them? Ice cold?

HERALD: (*Chuckling.*) M'lord doth jest! Of course, our weary yuletide travelers would prefer their tubers warm after a long day of hunting and gathering at the Valley View Mall!

BOSS: Hunting and gathering... right, good one. (*Flips a page on his clipboard.*) And we're also taking the Caesar salad off the menu. (*Looks at HERALD and grimaces.*) The anchovies went bad.

HERALD: (*Aghast.*) Fie! Not the anchovies! Those rogues. Perhaps we should send out the Black Knight to bring them back to the side of good.

BOSS: Oh, there's no bringing those anchovies back. (*Waves his hand in front of his nose to indicate the anchovies stink.*)

HERALD: (*Resigned.*) Then slay them we must.

BOSS: (*Looking at his clipboard.*) So, we'll just have the tossed salad and coleslaw tonight.

HERALD: *(As he writes on the scroll.)* A noble task you have tonight, coleslaw, to make our yuletide travelers forget about their beloved Caesar salad. *(Looks upward and puts a hand over his heart.)* Godspeed, coleslaw.

BOSS: *(Looks at his clipboard.)* And last but not least... *(Puts down his clipboard and sighs.)* We're all out of the Towering Chocolate Inferno.

HERALD: *(Drops to his knees and cries out in anguish.)*
Nooooooooooooo!!!

BOSS: *(Looking around.)* Would you get up? People are starting to stare.

HERALD: *(Stands, distraught.)* Not Ye Towering Chocolate Inferno! Why, Ye Olde Garden of Olives is nothing if it doesn't have its signature dessert!

BOSS: It'll be fine. We're just going to have to make do with the Dragonfruit Surprise and I think I have some Neapolitan ice cream in the back of the freezer. We'll toss it in a mini knight's helmet and call it a day.

HERALD: *(Aghast.)* Neapolitan ice cream! *(Putting down his scroll.)* M'lord, I cannot in good faith offer our guests Neapolitan.

BOSS: Well, you're going to offer it if you want to keep your job.

HERALD: *(Gets down on one knee, looks down and holds up his rolled-up scroll and quill.)* I regretfully decree that I must discharge my post.

BOSS: *(Shocked.)* So, you're quitting... over chocolate cake?

HERALD: I shall not abandon my post as herald in vain. Nay, m'lord. I ask instead that you bestow upon me the great honor of knighthood, so that I might begin my quest to bring you back the long-lost Towering Chocolate Inferno.

BOSS: So, you're asking for a promotion?

HERALD: *(Not looking up.)* If m'lord sees it fit.

BOSS: Wow. That's a bold move.

HERALD: Knights are nothing if not bold, wouldn't you agree, m'lord?

BOSS: *(Nodding.)* I guess so. *(Now playing along.)* So, tell me, squire, where would you quest to find the elusive Towering Chocolate Inferno?

And a Partridge in a Pear Tree

- 19 -

HERALD: I've heard tales of its presence at Lord Garcia's castle in the Middlebury Mall in Springfield.

BOSS: And how might you find your way to Lord Garcia's castle? The journey is much too long to take on foot.

HERALD: *(Looking up, with a smile.)* I was hoping I might borrow your stead, m'lord?

BOSS: *(Aghast.)* You want to take my brand-new Mustang? *(Shaking his head, which turns into appreciation.)* Wow. You do have courage, Greg. That's for sure. *(Takes keys out of his pocket and drops them in HERALD'S outstretched hand.)* Here, take it. And tell Lord Garcia I owe him one. *(Starts to walk away, then turns back when Herald does not get up.)* What are you still doing down there? You need to get a move on if you want to make it back before dinner rush.

HERALD: Forgive my impudence, m'lord, but I think thou doth forget something.

BOSS: What's that? *(HERALD bows his head, BOSS realizes.)* Oh, right. *(Crosses back to Herald and uses the scroll to tap each of Herald's shoulders, knighting him.)* I now bestow upon you, Master Greg of House Thompson, the title of knight, with all rank and privileges which it affords.

HERALD: *(Stands.)* Thank you, m'lord.

BOSS: Now are you going to get that cake or what?

HERALD: Of course, m'lord. I bid thee farewell. *(Starts to walk away, in opposite direction of BOSS, who turns to exit into restaurant. HERALD turns back.)* Just one more thing, m'lord?

BOSS: *(Stops and turns.)* Yes, Sir Greg?

HERALD: *(Finally breaking character.)* Does that mean I get a raise? Because I still have a lot of Christmas shopping to do and I could really use the money.

BOSS: *(Smiling, in character.)* You bringeth back Ye Towering Chocolate Inferno and I'll guarantee ye'll find some extra ducats in your paycheck.

HERALD: *(Thrusting his arm in the air, cheering.)* Huzzah!

(Exits in a rush as BOSS chuckles and exits into restaurant as LIGHTS fade to black.)

Scene 4
9 Ladies Dancing

(AT RISE: Center stage, in front of the Christmas tree are a couple of large snowflake decorations. At start of scene, SNOWFLAKE is lying behind one of the decorations, with just her legs sticking out. DANCERS are standing in the final pose of a dance number that they just performed. A beat later, CHOREOGRAPHER enters.)

CHOREOGRAPHER: *(Clapping.)* Alright, everyone, great job! *(To DANCERS.)* You all look like a bunch of very happy snowflakes. The shoppers are going to love your performance.

1ST DANCER: Um, excuse me.

CHOREOGRAPHER: Yes? What is it?

1ST DANCER: Our lead snowflake isn't here.

CHOREOGRAPHER: Oh, she's here alright.

2ND DANCER: Well, she didn't rehearse with us.

CHOREOGRAPHER: I'm aware.

3RD DANCER: *(Pointing to SNOWFLAKE'S feet.)* Is that her feet over there? Because those look like ballet shoes to me.

1ST DANCER: Why does she just get to lay around while the rest of us rehearse?

2ND DANCER: Yeah! That's not fair!

3RD DANCER: It's because she's the lead snowflake, isn't it? I call favoritism!

CHOREOGRAPHER: *(Quickly tries to diffuse the situation.)* Why don't we take a quick break and then I think we have just enough time for one more run-through before the big show. Everyone be back here in five minutes!

(DANCERS exit, grumbling as CHOREOGRAPHER watches for a moment, waves, and then looks around. She sees SNOWFLAKE'S feet. She shakes her head then crosses over to stand next to Snowflake with hands on her hips.)

CHOREOGRAPHER: *(Cont'd.)* You ready to come out now, Trina? *(Or Tommy.)*

End of Freeview

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