

a charlie brown christmas

Pan winter scene; move to frozen pond where children are skating and singing:

Christmas time is here,
Happiness and cheer,
Fun for all that children call
Their favorite time of year.
Snowflakes in the air,
Carols everywhere.
Olden times and ancient rhymes
Of love and dreams to share.

Fade in on Charlie Brown and Linus walking through a light snowfall. They stop to talk over a brick wall

CHARLIE BROWN

I think there must be something wrong with me, Linus. Christmas is coming, but I'm not happy. I don't feel the way I'm supposed to feel.

They continue walking

CHARLIE BROWN (cont.)

I just don't understand Christmas, I guess. I might be getting presents and sending Christmas cards and decorating trees and all that, but I'm still not happy. I always end up feeling depressed.

LINUS

Charlie Brown, you're the only person I know who can take a wonderful season like Christmas and turn it into a problem. Maybe Lucy's right. Of all the Charlie Browns in the world, you're the Charlie Browniest.

*They turn and walk toward skating pond.
The kids are skating and singing:*

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Sleighbells in the air,
Beauty everywhere;
Yuletide by the fireside
And joyful memories there.
Christmas time is here,
Christmas time is here . . .

*Cut to Snoopy skating solo. He grabs
Lucy's hand and skates off. More kids
join hands to make a long tail. Snoopy
cracks the whip and kids fly in all directions*

*Snoopy is left spinning and comes to a stop as
Linus and Charlie Brown skate into the scene.
Snoopy charges in, grabs Linus's blanket in his
mouth and drags Linus off. As they race past
Charlie Brown, he gets caught in the blanket
and Snoopy spins them both around*

*Charlie Brown is snapped off, spins on the
ice and slides into a tree. A snow avalanche
falls over him and title appears over the shot:
A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS*

*Cut to Charlie Brown at home, standing
at the window watching the snow fall. He
puts his coat on and goes outside to check
the mailbox. He opens it and looks in:*

CHARLIE BROWN
Hello in there!

Stands angrily next to the empty mailbox

CHARLIE BROWN
Rats! Nobody sent me a Christmas
card today.

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Begins walking

CHARLIE BROWN

I almost wish there weren't a holiday season. I know nobody likes me. Why do we have to have a holiday season to emphasize it?

Meets up with Violet and Pig Pen

CHARLIE BROWN *(cont.)*

Thanks for the Christmas card you sent me, Violet.

VIOLET

I didn't send you a Christmas card, Charlie Brown.

CHARLIE BROWN

Don't you know a sarcasm when you hear it?

Charlie Brown walks away and comes to a large snowman. Pig Pen appears from behind the snowman, patting the snow into place

CHARLIE BROWN

Pig Pen, you're the only person I know who can raise a cloud of dust in a snowstorm.

Charlie Brown walks along and stops at Snoopy's doghouse. A tall pile of bones rises from the dog dish. Snoopy reads a newspaper and occasionally takes a bones from the stack and munches it

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Charlie Brown continues walking and meets Schroeder, Patty, Lucy and Linus standing in the light snowfall

PATTY

Try to get snowflakes on your tongue. It's fun.

LUCY

Mm. Needs sugar. It's too early. I never eat December snowflakes. I always wait until January.

LINUS

They sure look ripe to me.

The kids try to knock a can off the wall with snowballs, with no success. Linus puts a snowball in his blanket and snaps it like a sling toward the can. He knocks the can off the wall and proudly walks past the group

LUCY (to Linus)

You think you're so smart with that blanket. What are you going to do with it when you grow up?

LINUS

Maybe I'll make it into a sport coat.

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*Charlie Brown walks over to Lucy's
psychiatric booth*

Cut to Schroeder and Lucy

SCHROEDER *(to Lucy)*
I think you have a customer.

Lucy dashes over to the booth

LUCY
May I help you?

CHARLIE BROWN
I am in sad shape.

*Lucy hands Charlie Brown a can with a
money slot on top*

LUCY
Wait a minute. Before you begin, I
must ask that you pay in advance.
Five cents, please.

*Charlie Brown digs a nickel out of his pocket
and drops it in the can with a "clink"*

LUCY
Boy, what a sound. How I love hearing
that old money plate, that beautiful sound
of cold, hard cash. That beautiful, beautiful
sound. Nickels, nickels, nickels. That
beautiful sound of plunking nickels. All
right, now, what seems to be your trouble?

CHARLIE BROWN
I feel depressed. I know I should be
happy, but I'm not.

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LUCY

Well, as they say on TV, the mere fact that you realize you need help indicates that you are not too far gone. I think we'd better pinpoint your fears. If we can find out what you're afraid of, we can label it. Are you afraid of responsibility? If you are, then you have hypengyophobia.

CHARLIE BROWN

I don't think that's quite it.

LUCY

How about cats? If you're afraid of cats, you have ailurophasia.

CHARLIE BROWN

Well, sort of, but I'm not sure.

LUCY

Are you afraid of staircases? If you are, then you have climacaphobia. Maybe you have thalassophobia. This is fear of the ocean, or gephyrobia, which is the fear of crossing bridges. Or maybe you have pantophobia. Do you think you have pantophobia?

CHARLIE BROWN

What's pantophobia?

LUCY

The fear of everything.

CHARLIE BROWN

(Shouts) That's it!

Lucy is blown off her chair onto the ground

CHARLIE BROWN

Actually, Lucy, my trouble is Christmas. I just don't understand it. Instead of feeling happy, I feel sort of let down.

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LUCY

You need involvement. You need to get involved in some real Christmas project. How would you like to be the director of our Christmas play?

CHARLIE BROWN

Me? You want me to be the director of the Christmas play?

LUCY

Sure, Charlie Brown. We need a director. You need involvement. We've got a shepherd, musicians, animals, everyone we need. We've even got a Christmas Queen.

CHARLIE BROWN

I don't know anything about directing a Christmas play.

LUCY

Don't worry. I'll be there to help you. I'll meet you at the auditorium. Incidentally, I know how you feel about all this Christmas business, getting depressed and all that. (*Charlie Brown watches Snoopy walk past*) It happens to me every year. I never get what I really want. I always get a lot of stupid toys or a bicycle or clothes or something like that.

CHARLIE BROWN

What is it you want?

LUCY

Real estate.

They both watch Snoopy walk past carrying a box of Christmas lights and decorations. Charlie Brown follows him. Snoopy begins building a crazy display that covers his doghouse

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CHARLIE BROWN

What's going on here?

Snoopy hands him a piece of paper

CHARLIE BROWN *(cont.)*

What's this? *(Reading)* Find the true meaning of Christmas. Win money, money, money. Spectacular, supercolossal, neighborhood Christmas lights and display contest. *(Looks up from the paper)* Lights and display contest! Oh, no. My own dog gone commercial. I can't stand it!

Charlie Brown throws the paper in the air and walks away. Meets Sally who is holding a clipboard and pen

SALLY

I've been looking for you, big brother. Will you please write a letter to Santa Claus for me?

CHARLIE BROWN

Well, I don't have much time. I'm supposed to get down to the school auditorium and direct the Christmas play.

SALLY

You write it and I'll tell you what I want to say.

CHARLIE BROWN

Okay, shoot.

SALLY

Dear Santa Claus, how've you been? How is your wife? Did you have a nice summer? I wish it was. I have been extra good this year, so I have a long list of presents that I want.

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CHARLIE BROWN

Oh, brother.

SALLY

Please note the size and color of each item and send as many as possible. If it seems too complicated, make it easy on yourself. Just send money. How about tens and twenties?

CHARLIE BROWN

Tens and twenties? Oh, even my baby sister!

CHILD

All I want is what I have coming to me.
All I want is my fair share.

*Fade out. Open to new scene at the auditorium.
Kids are all over the stage dancing to jazz music*

Cut to Lucy

LUCY

All right, quiet, everybody. Our director will be here any minute and we'll start rehearsal.

PATTY

Director? What director?

LUCY

Charlie Brown.

VIOLET

Oh, no! We're doomed!

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PATTY

This will be the worst Christmas play ever.

LUCY

Here he comes! Attention, everyone!

Here's our director.

*General applause from the group except for one
"boo," which turns out to be from Snoopy.*

Charlie Brown looks at him:

CHARLIE BROWN

Man's best friend.

*Charlie Brown walks over to the director's chair
and addresses the kids*

CHARLIE BROWN

Well, it's real good seeing you all here.

As you know, we are going to put on
the Christmas play. Due to the shortage
of time, we'll get right down to work.

One of the first things to ensure a good
performance, pay strict attention to the
director. I'll keep my direction simple.

If I point to the right, it means focus
attention stage right. If I make a slashing
motion across my throat, it means cut

the scene short. If I make a revolving
motion with my hand, it means pick up
the tempo. If I spread my hands apart,

it means slow down. It's the spirit of
the actors that counts. The interest that
they show in their director. Am I right?

I said, am I right?

*Cut to kids wildly dancing to "Linus
and Lucy" music. Charlie Brown picks
up megaphone*

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CHARLIE BROWN

Stop the music! All right, now. We're going to do this play and we're going to do it right. Lucy, get those costumes and scripts and pass 'em out. Now, the script girl will be handing out your parts.

Lucy walks over to Frieda and hands her a script and a costume

LUCY

You're the innkeeper's wife.

FRIEDA *(bouncing her curls in her hand)*

Did innkeepers' wives have naturally curly hair?

Lucy walks over to Pig Pen and hands him a script and a costume

LUCY

Pig Pen, you're the innkeeper.

PIG PEN

In spite of my outward appearance, I shall try to run a neat inn.

Lucy walks over to Shermy and hands him a script and a costume

LUCY

Shermy, you're a shepherd.

SHERMY

Every Christmas it's the same. I always end up playing a shepherd.

Lucy walks over to Snoopy and hands him a script

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LUCY

Snoopy, you'll have to be all the animals
in our play. Can you be a sheep?

SNOOPY

Baaaaaa!

LUCY

How about a cow?

SNOOPY

Moooo!

LUCY

How about a penguin?

*Snoopy walks around with his arms stiffly at
his side, making clicking sounds with his feet*

LUCY

Yes, he's even a good penguin.

*Snoopy mugs around, acting out different
animals, and sits on top of Lucy's head*

LUCY

No, no, no!

Snoopy falls off her head

LUCY

Listen, all of you.

*Snoopy stands behind Lucy and imitates
her as she speaks to the group*

LUCY

You've got to take direction. You've
got to have discipline! You've got to
have respect for your director!

*Lucy turns around and catches Snoopy
making fun of her*

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LUCY

I ought to slug you!

Snoopy kisses her

LUCY

Ugh! I've been kissed by a dog! I have dog germs! Get hot water! Get some disinfectant! Get some iodine!

Cut to Snoopy

SNOOPY

Aagh!

Cut to Charlie Brown with megaphone

CHARLIE BROWN

All right, all right, script girl. Continue with the scripts.

Lucy walks over to Linus

LUCY

Linus, you've got to get rid of that stupid blanket.

She hands him a script and costume

LUCY

And here, memorize these lines.

LINUS

I can't memorize these lines. This is ridiculous.

LUCY

Memorize it and be ready to recite when your cue comes.

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LINUS

I can't memorize something like this so quickly. Why should I be put through such agony? Give me one good reason why I should memorize this . . .

LUCY

I'll give you five good reasons.
(She makes a fist, one finger at a time)
One, two, three, four, five.

LINUS

Those are good reasons. Christmas is not only getting too commercial, it's getting too dangerous.

LUCY

And get rid of that stupid blanket! What's a Christmas shepherd going to look like holding a stupid blanket like that?

LINUS

Well, this is one Christmas shepherd who's going to keep his trusty blanket with him.

Linus quickly drapes his blanket over his head

LINUS

See? You wouldn't hit an innocent shepherd, would you?

Cut to Charlie Brown, trying to hold back his temper. Lucy approaches him

LUCY

Okay, Mr. Director. The cast is set. Take over.

CHARLIE BROWN

All right. Let's have it quiet. Places, everybody. Schroeder, set the mood for the first scene.

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*Schroeder begins playing "Linus and Lucy"
which sets the kids off dancing again*

CHARLIE BROWN

Cut! Cut! No, no, no!

Walks over to Frieda and Pig Pen

CHARLIE BROWN

Look. Let's rehearse the scene at the inn.
Frieda . . .

FRIEDA

This can't go on. There's too much dust.
It's taking the curl out of my naturally
curly hair.

CHARLIE BROWN

Don't think of it as dust. Think of it
as maybe the soil of some great, past
civilization. Maybe the soil of ancient
Babylon. It staggers the imagination. You
may be carrying soil that was trod upon
by Solomon. Or even Nebuchadnezzar.

PIG PEN

Sort of makes you want to treat me with
more respect, doesn't it?

FRIEDA

You're an absolute mess. Just look
at yourself.

PIG PEN

On the contrary, I didn't think
I looked *that* good.

Cut to Charlie Brown and Linus

CHARLIE BROWN

Sally, come here.

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LINUS

What do you want her for?

CHARLIE BROWN

She's going to be your wife.

LINUS

Good grief.

Cut to Sally, clapping her hands gleefully, surrounded by hearts. She walks over to Linus and leans her head on his shoulder

SALLY

Isn't he the cutest thing? He has the nicest sense of humor.

LUCY

Lunch break. Lunch break.

CHARLIE BROWN

Lunch break?

Snoopy enters with his dish, kicking it and playing with it

CHARLIE BROWN

All right, now. There's no time for foolishness. We've got to get on with our play.

LUCY

That's right. What about my part? What about the Christmas Queen? Hmm? Are you going to let all this beauty go to waste? You do think I'm beautiful, don't you, Charlie Brown? You didn't answer me right away. You had to think about it first, didn't you? If you really had thought I was beautiful, you would have spoken right up. I know when I've been insulted. I know when I've been insulted!

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Exit Lucy

CHARLIE BROWN

Good grief. All right, let's take it from the top again. Places. Action.

Kids dance to "Linus and Lucy"

Cut to Lucy and Charlie Brown

LUCY

Charlie Brown, isn't it a great play?

CHARLIE BROWN

That does it. Now, look. If we're ever to get this play off the ground, you've got to have some cooperation.

LUCY

What's the matter, Charlie Brown? Don't you think it's great?

CHARLIE BROWN

It's all wrong.

LUCY

Look, Charlie. Let's face it. We all know that Christmas is a big commercial racket. It's run by a big eastern syndicate, you know.

CHARLIE BROWN

Well, this is one play that's not going to be commercial.

LUCY

Look, Charlie Brown. What do you want?

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CHARLIE BROWN

The proper mood. We need
a Christmas tree.

LUCY

Hey, perhaps a tree. A great, big, shiny
aluminum Christmas tree. That's it,
Charlie Brown. You get the tree. I'll
handle this crowd.

The group gathers around them

CHARLIE BROWN

Okay. I'll take Linus with me. The rest
of you, practice your lines.

LUCY

Get the biggest aluminum tree you can
find, Charlie Brown. Maybe paint it pink.

PATTY

Yeah. Do something right for a change,
Charlie Brown.

Cut to Charlie Brown and Linus walking outside

CHARLIE BROWN

I don't know, Linus. I just don't know.
Well, I guess we'd better concentrate on
finding a nice Christmas tree.

LINUS

I suggest we try those searchlights, Charlie
Brown.

*They enter a Christmas tree lot and Linus
knocks on an aluminum tree, making a
metallic clinking sound*

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LINUS

This really brings Christmas close
to a person.

CHARLIE BROWN

Fantastic.

*Pan shot of various colorful trees. Zoom to
tiny pine tree on a wooden stand*

LINUS

Gee, do they still make wooden
Christmas trees?

CHARLIE BROWN

This little green one here seems to need
a home.

LINUS

I don't know, Charlie Brown. Remember
what Lucy said? This doesn't seem to fit
the modern spirit.

CHARLIE BROWN

I don't care. We'll decorate it and it will
be just right for our play. Besides, I think
it needs me.

*Cut to Schroeder at the piano with Lucy leaning
on it at the far end*

SCHROEDER

This is the music I've selected for the
Christmas play.

Plays Beethoven's "Für Elise"

LUCY

What kind of Christmas music is that?

SCHROEDER

Beethoven Christmas music.

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LUCY

What has Beethoven got to do with Christmas? Everyone talks about how great Beethoven was. Beethoven wasn't so great.

SCHROEDER

(Angry) What do you mean Beethoven wasn't so great?

LUCY

He never got his picture on bubble gum cards, did he? Have you ever seen his picture on a bubble gum card? Hmm?

How can you say someone is great who's never had his picture on bubble gum cards?

SCHROEDER

Good grief.

Begins to play jazz. Enter Snoopy, who dances around and on top of the piano. He keeps dancing after Schroeder has stopped playing. Once he realizes the music has stopped and that Schroeder and Lucy are glaring at him, he blushes and slinks off. Schroeder begins playing "Für Elise"

LUCY

Say, by the way, can you play "Jingle Bells"?

Schroeder plays "Jingle Bells" in classical style

LUCY

No, no. I mean "Jingle Bells." You know, deck them halls and all that stuff.

He plays again with an organ sound

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LUCY

No, no. You don't get it at all. I mean "Jingle Bells." You know, Santa Claus and ho, ho, ho and mistletoe and presents to pretty girls.

He taps out the melody with one finger

LUCY

(Shouts) That's it!

Schroeder is blown off his seat

Cut to auditorium. Charlie Brown sets the tree on top of Schroeder's piano.

CHARLIE BROWN

We're back.

The kids gather around, astounded at the sad little tree

VIOLET

Boy, are you stupid, Charlie Brown.

PATTY

What kind of a tree is that?

LUCY

You were supposed to get a good tree. Can't you even tell a good tree from a poor tree?

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VIOLET

I told you he'd goof it up. He's not the kind you can depend on to do anything right.

PATTY

You're hopeless, Charlie Brown.

FRIEDA

Completely hopeless.

CHARLIE BROWN

Rats.

LUCY

You've been dumb before, Charlie Brown. But this time, you really did it.

Kids and Snoopy laugh

LUCY

What a tree!

*Kids walk away, except for Snoopy, who continues to laugh, then exits.
Linus approaches Charlie Brown*

CHARLIE BROWN

I guess you were right, Linus. I shouldn't have picked this little tree. Everything I do turns into a disaster. I guess I really don't know what Christmas is all about. *(Unhinged)* Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?

LINUS

Sure, Charlie Brown. I can tell you what Christmas is all about.

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Linus walks to center stage, dragging his blanket

LINUS

Lights, please?

Auditorium lights dim and spot shines on Linus

LINUS

And there were in the same country
shepherds abiding in the field, keeping
watch over their flock by night. And lo,
the angel of the Lord came upon them,
and the glory of the Lord shown round
about them. And they were sore afraid.
And the angel said unto them, "Fear not,
for behold, I bring you tidings of great joy
which will be to all people. For unto you
is born this day in the city of David a
savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this
shall be a sign unto you. Ye shall find the
babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying
in a manger." And suddenly there was
with the angel a multitude of the heavenly
host, praising God and saying, "Glory to
God in the highest, and on Earth peace,
goodwill toward men."

Picks up blanket and exits stage left.

Approaches Charlie Brown

LINUS

That's what Christmas is all about,
Charlie Brown.

*Charlie Brown picks up the little tree and
walks out, past the group of quiet kids.
Enters the dark outdoors and gazes up at
the stars while remembering Linus's words*

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LINUS (*echo of previous speech*)

. . . for behold, I bring you tidings of
great joy which will be to all people.
For unto you is born this day in the city
of David a savior, which is Christ the
Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you.

CHARLIE BROWN

Linus is right. I won't let all this
commercialism ruin my Christmas.
I'll take this little tree home and
decorate it and I'll show them it
really will work in our play.

Fade out as Charlie walks into the distance

*Cut to Snoopy's crazily decorated doghouse.
Charlie Brown looks at the 1st prize ribbon*

CHARLIE BROWN

First prize? Oh, well, this commercial
dog is not going to ruin my Christmas.

*Charlie Brown happily sets the tree down.
Picks an ornament from the doghouse and
hangs it on the little tree. Tree slumps way
over from the weight of the bulb*

CHARLIE BROWN

I've killed it!
(*Complete disgust and resignation*)
Oh, everything I touch gets ruined!

*Charlie Brown exits, leaving the
sad little tree*

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Kids enter and gather around tree

LINUS

I never thought it was such a bad little tree.

*Linus pulls up the droopy branch, straightens it
and wraps his blanket around the base of the tree*

LINUS

It's not bad at all, really. Maybe it just
needs a little love.

*Pan to kids, tree and decorated doghouse.
The kids takes ornaments from the doghouse
and decorate the tree, transforming it into a
lush, beautiful Christmas tree*

LUCY

Charlie Brown is a blockhead, but he did
get a nice tree.

*Kids hum "O Little Town of Bethlehem"
Enter Charlie Brown*

CHARLIE BROWN

What's going on here?

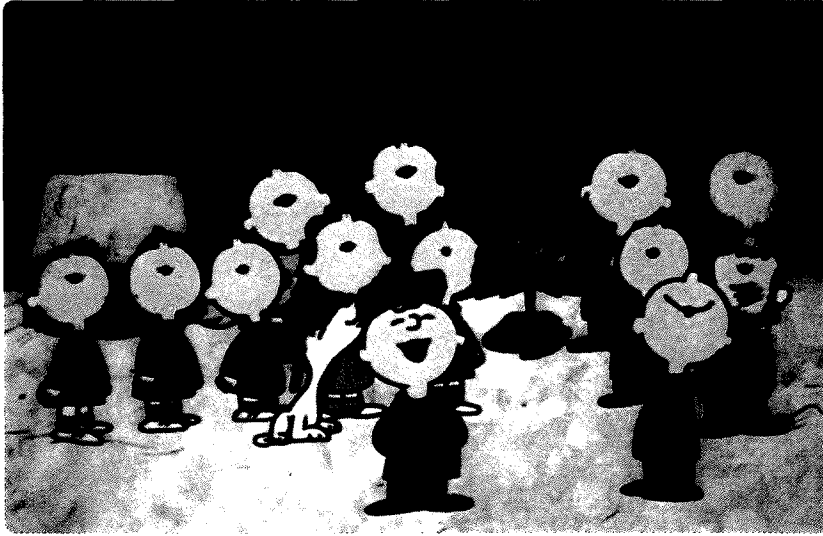
CHILDREN *(shout in unison)*

Merry Christmas, Charlie Brown!

*Charlie Brown smiles and joins the festivities.
Kids sing "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"*

Hark, the herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on Earth and mercy mild,
God and sinner reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations, rise!
Join the triumph of the skies!
With angelic host proclaim:
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
Hark, the herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King.

THE END



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