

# **St. Nicolas & Rudy**

**BY**

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St. Nicolas & Rudy  
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by Nicholas Conti  
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# St. Nicolas & Rudy

## Cast

**A FLEX Cast** plays all the rolls by quick changes of costume. Warm climate: summer wear & strawhats etc., cool climates: Heavy winter clothing & hats/scarves etc. Overdress; along with wigs/beards. Dialects and personality of the peoples in a country can be enacted or done straight. Can be inter-racial. The cast can be expanded into an all grade performance. [A separate cast for each country. Adults; or younger people playing adults (which is fun), can play multiple parts or individual roles for each country. (Can do multiple fathers/mothers, children with topical costume change), depending on your talent pool. St. Nicolas & Rudy remain the same throughout for continuity.]

**St. Nicolas:** A jovial man, with an even disposition, Godly, benevolent. Wears a long dark robe, a furry Russian hat, with a **colorful sash**, dark pants, black boots, red cheeks, long white beard and hair. **AGELESS**.

**Rudy:** Pleasant but more businesslike than St. Nicolas, benevolent, religious, work-a-Holic. I see him bent from heavy lifting; can be jovial at times. **AGELESS**

**Italy---***Dressed for warm clime!*

**Giovanni:** Italian father of Tonio & Maria and husband to Mamma. a gentle, religious man, good husband & father. Intelligent, hard working living in Sorrento. 30-50'S.

**Mamma:** Tonio & Maria's mother and Giovanni's wife. **Religious, loving mother.** 30'S-50'S.

**Maria:** Daughter of Giovanni and Mamma & sister to Tonio. Youngest, bright, pleasant, and religious. 7-12.

**Tonio:** Oldest son, friendly, smart, religious and loving. 13-17.

**Sweden---***Dressed for cold clime.*

**Papa:** Friendly, good father to Olaf & Olga, husband to Mama. Good spirited, religious, loving. 35-50's.

**Mama:** Friendly, religious, Olaf & Olga's mom, wife to Papa. 35-50's

**Olaf:** Oldest son, friendly, religious. 13-17.

**Spain---***Dressed for a warmer clime!*

**Don:** Father cynical, mistrusting paranoid, delusional, mercenary, selfish. Has a Don Quixote fixation. Father of Sancho, Pedro, & Carmen. Husband to Dulcinea. **Not** religious. 35-50's

**Dulcinea**: Wife to Don; mother to Sancho, Pedro & Carmen ...Exceptionally avaricious, selfish, attractive, **gaudy makeup & jewelry**, sexy, vane, conniving. **Not** religious. 35-50's.

**Sancho**: Oldest boy, cynical and mean at first but softens. Basically religious, 13-17.

**Pedro**: The Youngest, all loving, unselfish, religious. 7-10.

**Carmen**: Middle daughter, selfish, mean, then softens. Basically religious. 11-12.

**England**---*Dressed for cold climate!*

**Grandpa**: To Harry, Harriet, & Halcyon...Husband to Agnes... Fine, good hearted, religious, excellent man. 50's & up.

**Agnes**: Grandma to the kids, wife to Grandpa, a fine, loving, nice lady, religious. 50's & up.

**Harry**: Oldest boy, good-natured, loving and religious. 13-17.

**Harriet**: Middle child, happy, religious, loving. 10-12.

**Halcyon**: Youngest, brightest, sassy, loving, religious & good-natured. 6-9.

**France**---*Dressed for cold climate!*

**Monique**: Mother [Maman] to Jacques & Catherine. Sweet, loving, single mom. Poor, does everything she can for her kids including sewing which she does to pay the rent. Very religious. 35-50's.

**Jacques**: Oldest smart, religious, good son and brother. Happy & good-natured. 13-17,

**Catherine**: Younger sister, religious, happy, pleasant child. 7-12.

# “St. Nicolas & Rudy” BY Nicholas Conti

Time: Almost---Christmas the present.

Scene: *The Capsule* is down stage right. Flush to Mid-Stage left is *Everyman’s Home* for different countries with a single **doorless** entry for easy entrances & exits. Between the two is an easel [stand] with a large changeable sign and **large lettering** so the audience can clearly see the countries and underneath the Christmas greeting of that country--- underneath that; Merry Christmas. **The Christmas Greeting gets quickly changed for each of the five countries.** The actors make simple costume changes add a coat, jacket, vest, hat, scarf or over-dress; that gives an impression of that country---There are easy, quick changes, throughout.

## At Rise:

*The Capsule* is discovered on stage, heralded by lighting effects, fog and travel sounds [ a mix of mechanical, wind & sleigh bells] And agitation provided by St. Nicolas & Rudy his helper with hand grips inside to agitate it giving it an appearance of movement on its arrival in the country of choice. Suddenly the lights come up and St. Nicolas & Rudy magically appear stepping out of *The Capsule*---Sign reads: **EARTH**...St. Nicolas talks about their special Mission. Earth: Scene ONE

**St. Nicolas:** Phew! [*Dusts himself & woozy*] that was a lightening fast flight through the heavens. [*Breathlessly*] I still can’t catch my breath...Suddenly God comes up with this idea to take this Survey. And Pow! Here we are sent to check out a bunch of Christmas customs just to make sure people haven’t lost sight of the true meaning of Christmas. About His birth and his mother Mary, and Joseph and all. Whew! [*Does things to keep warm.*] The earth sure hasn’t gotten any warmer this time-a-year Rudy! I’d swear you landed in Alaska...Might surprise you... Never did take kindly to the cold. You’re better at the cold than I am besides we’re both outa shape bein up there with The Almighty. A fella gets too soft you know. I guess I really used to enjoy my work, because it’s just too sedentary up there. Even the reindeer have been complainin’ about there bein nothin’ to do and all. They keep saying---boring! Just like kids do---I’m kinda glad he sent us down here to see how things really are; how they’re celebratin’ Christmas. You know sumpin’... I miss not goin’ round on Christmas Eve and leavin’ gifts for the people specially’ those without the means to buy much.

**Rudy:** [*Dusts himself off, squinting from the journey.*] Yeah! you’re right, cold never bothered me much Father Nicolas. And ya know sumpin’ I’m glad He assigned us to this job but I’m like you, terribly outa shape. Can’t seem to catch my breath. [*Facetiously, jokingly.*] But outside of the hardship of the cold, lack-a-food and no warm house to stay in--We could really enjoy this Christmas Survey. This fella they got for the job now, he’s good, but *too* modern---wears an earring, listens to jingle bell rock: [briefly mimics him singing and with movement] Jingle Bell, Jingle Bell, Jingle Bell Rock!...But I guess **He** needed to modernize from that version of your old self---No offense intended, cause I liked the old ways best myself. So **he** was given the latest. What with a rocket powered sleigh and them

fiberglass reindeer for show and sportin'. It was the very best design Detroit could come up with.

**St. Nicolas:** Runs pretty quiet I hear but not as quiet as our old mule and later the reindeer. And as to all that negative stuff you're spoutin' Rudy you're forgettin' the Lord will be taking good care of us this trip. And I think you might better call me Nick, cause number one: you're olderin' me, and number two it just seems kinda strange a grown up man callin' another grown man Father Nick all the time. Especially since I'm not your Father besides I always liked Nick, or St. Nick suits me fine. And did ya ever know God not to provide for us; and make it possible for us to be giving away gifts aplenty---specially this time a year. At least we have **The Capsule** which will take us anywhere in no time at all and the Lord will provide; remember the Lord always provides!

**Rudy:** Well Father...I mean er! *Nick*, I have difficulty callin' you that since we changed our address and we're now living in the Penthouse. [*Points up.*]

**St. Nicolas:** You know people down here are gonna get the wrong idea, thinkin' since we passed on that we're livin' a life of luxury.

**Rudy:** Guess you're right...er... Nick. What's our plan now that we're here?

**St. Nicolas:** You heard Him. He wants us to get out there in The Capsule as soon as possible so's we can make any necessary suggestions as to changes in the way people celebrate Christmas and its *customs*..

**Rudy:** Kinda thinkin we're barkin' up the wrong Christmas tree. How ya gonna change *customs* after all these years? I mean that's what *customs* are; *sumpin's* been around for years.

**St. Nicolas:** God is God! He can do anything He needs to or wants to!

**Rudy:** Yeah Nick, but change customs?---Gotta be real hard!

**St. Nicolas:** I think our approach should be one of boldness, but caution at the same time. Visit the countries, ask questions about local customs then bring it up with the Lord, if need be. If **He's** happy we're happy and the people are happy too; we hope.

**Rudy:** Let's give The Capsule a go! It got us to earth now let's see if it's gonna take us where we need to go.

**St. Nicolas:** You can't be flip about questioning the almighty like that! I mean the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away and if he chooses to, he could also at the snap of one of his billions of fingers totally do away with man's customs of Christmas. **Rudy:** Alright then so let's give this another go. Where shall we go first?

## Italy: Scene TWO

**St. Nicolas:** How about Sorrento Italy. I love it there---It's warmer than here that's for sure! Follow me Rudy and lets kick off this adventure! [*They go into The Capsule, labeled St. Nick & Rudy---Lights flash, fog, sound effects, it agitates. Then they emerge.*] Let's see where we wound up?

[*As they step out; the sun shines brightly. Sign reads: top, Italy---middle, Buono Natale---and bottom, Merry Christmas.*]

**Family:** [*In front of their house, S.L., see & hear the Capsule and greet Nick & Rudy with sounds of laughter, singing and talking..*] Buona Natale! Buono Natale!

**Nick and Rudy:** [*Getting into the spirit!*] Buono Natale! Buono Natale! Merry Christmas!

**Giovanni:** [*The Father of the family speaks up.*] And just where did you come from? You just fall out of the sky just like-a-that? Its Christmas eve and we were just on our way to the market and Bravissimo! You appear as if by magic and dressed like you stepped out of a play in this dark long robe from another century!

**Maria:** It could be Santo Nicola, Papa he has the look---The white beardthe hair and he's friendly and he has a helper with him dressed in bright red with a sack on his back.

**Mamma:** No mio caro Santo Nicola always has on a *bricht* red suit and is accompanied by tiny elves and reindeer.

**Tonio:** I think it's him Mamma. I can tell. Kids, can always tell!

**Giovanni:** All of a sudden! [*Hand gesture.*] What makes you so smart?

**Tonio:** Mamma mia!...He just all of a sudden appears in a big red Capsule. And his helper has the sack over his shoulder---And I'll bet he has gifts for everyone in there besides!

**Maria:** Do you have gifts for us in there Santo Nicola?

**Mamma:** Where are your manners? Let the man go on his way!

**St. Nicolas:** Children can always spot me. One time I dressed as a *chimney sweep* and they still knew me.

**Giovanni:** I suppose you expect me to believe that you're him?

**Rudy:** Nah! I can tell you from personal experience if you don't believe in him he won't be him....Does that make sense?

**Mamma:** It's all in your belief [*hand gestures.*] Just like your faith, it's a feeling, a belief !

**Giovanni:** And children have these feelings---*naturally*?

**St. Nicolas:** It's a kind of sixth sense where they can feel it---Grown ups, at least some of them, don't have that magic.

**Tonio:** Yes I feel it too sir and I just know it's you, or you are him...  
Santo Nicola do you have gifts for us in there? Not that---*that's* all I want.  
I like just having you here---Si! Yes I do!

**St. Nicolas:** Let me ask you Tonio what you've done to deserve a gift?

**Maria:** Our parents always tell us nothing for nothing that we should do good and be good to get rewards.

**St. Nicolas:** Except you should be humble about it and not be going all over bragging about your charity! But they're right on track with that. Now tell me! Because I'm strange to your customs how do you celebrate here in Italy?

**Tonio:** [*The oldest of the children.*] Please Santo Nicola, er...St. Nicolas you know everything about how we celebrate---That's your job my father always said.

**Giovanni:** You have such a big mouth for one so young but yes I have said that---Isn't it true Santo Nicola?

**St. Nicolas:** Well yes I know a lot about customs but then sometimes it's hard to keep all the details right---Isn't that right Rudy?

**Rudy:** That's a *fact!* My memory's pretty good---It's my job to keep the gifts organized and even *I* forget things specially'as I get older. That's why they had to replace us when our time was up---with a more modern, St. Nicolas or as you seem to know him down here Santa he even has his own *lap top* to keep up with all the deliveries he has to make.

**St. Nicolas:** Can you tell us now what does Christmas mean to you? And what do you do to prepare for it?

**Giovanni:** We go to the church [gestures] on Christmas Eve---to the midnight mass.

**Maria:** And it's up to me to put up the *Nativita* or how you say it, the Nativity, which is very, very old.

**Mamma:** It was my grandparent's and all hand carved.

**Giovanni:** Come si bello! It's *beautiful!* such patience her grandfather showed in carving it.

**Rudy:** Do you enjoy putting up a Christmas tree?

**Giovanni:** Oh you bet! That's my job after all it's an old Roman custom [*aside*] actually they say, a pagan ritual but don't tell anybody!

**Rudy:** Yes I know. And the great food; tell me about the fantastic meals you have! You Italians are known for your great feasts.

**Mamma:** Si what a feast! We start with the antipasto then we have the

zuppa you know soup, with the little meatballs. Then there's pasta, sausage and meatballs and chicken cacciatore. Then the salad---then last but not least is the desert.

**Tonio:** And what deserts! [*Kisses his hand at the thought of it.*] Italian cakes: Panetone, Pandoro, and Torrone...Uhm with nuts, honey and plenty of sugar and demitasse to wash it down. We children have the soft drinks. I can't wait!

**Maria:** Neither can I...I love the Torrone especially. And do you know I have the most important job of all. I have to put the baby Jesus in His crib!

**Giovanni:** Si! It's an honor for the youngest child to do that. I was the youngest and for a long time, growing up, the honor fell to me.

**Tonio:** Me---I like Christmas Eve the best, because right before the midnight mass we open up our gifts. [*Sings*] **la la la, la, la!** [*and dances all excited.*]

**Maria:** Then we have another chance to get gifts not like in America!

**Tonio:** Gifts that satisfy our sweet tooth; candies and chocolate on the eve of the Epiphany and brought to us by a witch called the "**Befana.**" A *spoooooky* lady that rides a broomstick.

**Maria:** One year he got coal because he was bad!

**Tonio:** So did you.

**Maria:** But Mamma said **you** put the coal there and she yelled at you--- Don't pretend you don't remember! See what kind of a brother I have Santo Nicola! [*Laughs.*] Ha,ha,ha---He's a clown but we love him and we have a lots of fun!

**Mamma:** Before you know it; we are having such a good time right away comes January sixth--- the Epiphany---the end of our Christmas; the feast of the Magi when the three King's visit the infant Jesus. [*Exuberantly!*] Si! We love all these celebrations! We enjoy God's love! We salute Him and we have a good time while we're at it! [*She grabs Giovanni's arm and they both do a quickie dance & sing a little tarantella to la, la!*]

**St. Nicolas:** Well it seems as if you enjoy the holiday as good religious people should and the *festivities* and *food* and *all* that goes with it. So I'm sure God is pleased with you. But now Rudy and I have more visits to make and must be on our way but before we go; reach into the bag and pick out a gift! Tonio and Maria come on now I know how kids are---I was actually one once.

**Tonio:** [*Rushes the bag but then in the spirit of Christmas steps back and lets the others go before him.*] But Santo Nicola how do we know which is ours to take?

**St. Nicolas:** It's all ordained by a higher power you'll see!

**Maria:** [*Reaches in,*] It's an infant doll in babies clothes and it has my name on the tag...How did you know?. It's so beautiful and here's a small crib. How nice now we can put the doll in the crib.

**Tonio:** [*Reaches in*] Look a donkey; believe it or not I always wanted a hand made donkey--my favorite. We can start a crib outside now just what I always wanted!

**Maria:** It even looks like you ...It has your ears!...Ha,ha, ha.  
[*She runs behind her Mamma for protection.*]

**All:** [*Laugh, the jokes on Tonio.*] A donkey! Ha. Ha, ha...

**Giovanni:** [*He reaches in*] its Joseph...I knew it had to be Joseph! A hard working father and *carpenter* just-a-like me...He can join the others in the nativity scene...It's up to you Mamma to bring out Mary.

**Mamma:** Of course she's last! It's not easy giving birth to the future savior of the earth. [*Reaches in and behold.*] How beautiful, a statue of Mary, how beautiful. Thank you so much gratia! I'm so lucky! Santo Nicola.

**All:** Gratia! Thank you so much for the nice gifts. Buona Natale! Buona Natale!

**Rudy:** What a beautiful family and Merry Christmas! I love you all!

**St. Nicolas:** And now things are so good here, no use to ask God anything. He's got enough on his mind. You know He's pleased...So we must be on our way and visit another country today. Goodbye everyone [*They rush him and give him and Rudy a hug. Both head to The Capsule, step in, it quakes, travel noises, lights flash, fog, and in a few beats step out into Sweden!*] [*Sign has to be set up quickly, it says Sweden, God Jul, and Merry Christmas.*]

## Sweden: Scene THREE

**St. Nicolas:** [*Steps out of the Capsule, shivering.*] Brewhrrr! Rudy the sign clearly says Sweden! Here we go with the cold again. I thought you set The Capsule for Spain; some place a little warmer?

**Rudy:** I thought I did Nick but I must have miscalculated with The Capsule *setting*. And here we are in Sweden--brewhrrr is right! Sorry musta been my excitement..

**St. Nicolas:** Well I like the way they celebrate here, very religious, with interesting customs so...I'll just have to shiver my way through.

**Olga & Olaf:** [*They are just coming out of the house and immediately greet Santa & Rudy.*] Hello! Hello!

**Olaf:** [*If using one cast the Italian Family has quickly changed from their Italian outfits into bright Swedish sweaters/vests/colorful ski caps etc.*] [*Shouts to his mother & father in the house.*] Look Mama and Papa! We have strangers amongst us perhaps they come from the

Reindeer country from Lapland. One is carrying a great big bag and is all dressed in Red and is funny looking. The other looks like he could be Santa Clause or his brother, ha ha ha.

**Papa:** [Rushes out.] What is all the racket. Well hello who have we here? We left the gate open and look who flew in from the ice country! Whom do I have the pleasure of meeting?

**St. Nicolas:** I'm Nicolas and this is my side kick and man Friday, Rudy and we've been given this job to do by God. He wanted us to go around and do a Survey of how people celebrate Christmas in different countries of the world and that's it in a nut shell!

**Papa:** No less than God Himself? And why should I believe you? How do I know you're not some thief?...Besides God knows everything; so He should have no trouble what with Satellites and all to figure things out for Himself. [*Lights flash suddenly and we hear the wind!*]

**God's Voiceover: Get with the program Papa!**

**Papa:** [*Shields his face from the effects.*] I'm ...I'm sorry!...I didn't know [*looks up*] God. I beg your pardon Nicolas or is it Saint Nicolas?

**St. Nicolas:** Either is fine with me.

**Rudy:** And to answer your doubts God likes first hand information, likes to go right to the source, so to speak. All right then let's get down to cases. So anything, any bit of Christmas custom you and your family care to share with us we'll share later with God. Get His opinion and other than that...

**St. Nicolas:** We make a mental note about your customs accept them wholeheartedly and go on our way, as simple as that. Unless there's a problem an, *un-Godliness*.

**Mama:** [*Joins them outside.*] Well now---no one says anything? We have guests and nobody tells me anything did you at least offer them something to drink, a cookie or something...nothing?...  
[*She is about to go in and do so and...*]

**St. Nicolas:** Please don't bother but thanks. And if you don't mind I'll call you Mama too...We're here to talk about the wonderful customs you have in Sweden for Christmas...And just want to hear from you on how you celebrate.

**Papa:** Then first I shall wish you *God Jul!* That's how we say it and I want you to know we start *very* early.

**Mama:** And take our sweet time, you see we celebrate for almost *two months*.

**Papa:** We begin with *Advent* and each Sunday before Christmas a candle is lit on our Advent wreath made from a stick decorated with white lichen and red berries.

**Olga:** And wow! I really enjoy St. Lucia's Day on December 13th. When I get to wear a white robe and a wreath on my head with 7 candles. I feel just like a Queen!

**Olaf:** This is the part I like best after she dresses up like that, she serves the family St. Lucia buns called Lussaekatter and coffee; Al, right in our beds!

**Rudy:** I would like that custom too but I probably would stay in bed all day then.

**Papa:** Don't worry we wouldn't let you we are too busy for that. Too many chores!

**Mama:** And oh! Do we have a wonderful time when the young girls portray Lucia.

**Olaf:** And the Terns, [*boys*] are the Starboys, another words *Jultomten's* helpers or can even be Ginger Cookie Characters. Ha! I'm glad I outgrew that stuff. I got tired of being a *Star* all the time---No! Now I like making things for Christmas...Olga and I make ornaments out of straw it's a great tradition and we have loads of fun!

**Mama:** And on Christmas Eve it's up to us---Myself and Olga to put up the Smorgasbord and to keep all the male animals like Papa and Olaf away from it till it's time.

**Papa:** You make it sound like we don't do anything.

**Mama:** Yes you don't eat! [*Playfully.*] Till it's all set up! I see to that.

**Papa:** Quit your foolin' Mama; we men help too!

**Olaf:** Yeah we set up the table, put all the utensils, dishes and things out. And then, and then we help you eat the food so there's less work for you to do. When we get through eating there's no leftovers! *Nothing* to put away.

**Olga:** I can't wait for the desert...Mama told me if I get the hidden almond in the rice pudding...I'll be next to get married in the next year.

**Mama:** You know you are too young for that fable to come true besides we would miss you---It's too soon!

**Olaf:** Then we kids put out a bowl of porridge for Jultomten he's a cross between a little gnome and the German's Santa Klaus.

**Olga:** And of course we must put candles in the windows so he can find our houses.

**Olaf:** Otherwise nobody gets presents.

**Papa:** Do you know we spend Christmas Day in church. [*St. Nick nods no.*] Then on the day after Christmas December 26<sup>th</sup> is St. Stephen's day in honor of the patron saint of the animals. And on that day...

**Olaf:** All of us join in except Mama she's too busy and we give the animals ...

**Olga:** Extra food to eat. All on St. Stephan's day.

**Olaf:** Then boohoo! it's all over on January 13<sup>th</sup> which is the 20<sup>th</sup> day, called Knut. And crash! down comes the Christmas tree for another year.

**Mama:** And the saddest part of all is that the children have to pack up all the ornaments and put them away till next time. Ha, Ha!

**Papa:** But you know something St. Nicolas we have the nicest children in all the world...not angels. [*Beckons to the family and they gather in one big embrace.*]

**St. Nicolas:** No we have plenty of angels where we come from, right Rudy?

**Rudy:** Right you are St. Nick [*If you like in this spot a number of angels could suddenly appear and disappear.*]

**St. Nicolas:** Well we'll make our report to God that all is well here that's for certain!...Children before we go reach into the big bag held by Rudy and find yourself a Gift, and take the first one you grab! That's the one meant for you.

**Olaf:** But St. Nicolas can't I pick my own?

**Mama:** Now Olaf don't argue! Just do as St. Nicolas says!

**St. Nicolas:** Reach in all of you, you'll see there's a gift chosen for you by *Himself!* [*Points up.*]

**Olga:** [*Digs in first.*] Oh my let me see! Oh this is like magic! I got a doll with my name on it, it's Blessed Mary herself and it says God Jul! Wow!

**Olaf:** Alright I guess I'm ready. No way it's going to have my name on it. No way! [*He reaches in,*] Why it's a fancy Bible. Oh boy my old one is all worn from use. Here Olga you check the tag too! I can't believe my eyes. I don't believe any of this. You read the tag for me! Is it really for me!

**Olga:** You are such an unbeliever! And *smarty!* there it is, your name bigger than the Heavens. That is, if your name is still Olaf and not doubting Thomas!

**Olaf:** Wow again! [*he looks at it hard.*] You are St. Nicolas for real! Wait until I tell all my friends I met you in person.

**St. Nicolas:** Well you go right ahead but they probably won't believe you. Now Rudy give Mama and Papa each a small bag of Christmas WishingDust to be used when things are not going well---after all---wishing and believing will at least help make things get better for you. [*Rudy hands them each a bag of Wishing Dust.*]

**All:** [*They all rush St. Nicolas and Rudy and give them hugs and kisses.*] Thank you! God Jul! Merry Christmas! God Jul!

**St. Nicolas:** Merry Christmas, everyone it's been a great pleasure for us to meet you. God Jul! And now it's away we go [*as they walk to The Capsule.*] Set the controls to a warmer climate for *real* this time Rudy! Make it southern Spain if you please! Merry Christmas to aaaaall!

**All:** [**Wave.**] Merry Christmas! God Jul! [*The Capsule lights up, travel sounds, agitation, fog, and then and then it's Christmas in Spain. Change sign!*]

## Spain: Scene FOUR

**St. Nicolas:** [*Steps out of The Capsule.*] This is more like it weather wise, nice and sunny even mild!--It hasn't changed much since I last saw it. Rudy where are you? [*Rudy is struggling.*] Is that bag too much for you--- If so I'll give you a hand....

**Rudy:** [*Steps out of The Capsule dragging the bag.*] No thanks Nick; I'm managing. It's something of a miracle as soon as we give out gifts God just replenishes it with more and this time [*struggles,*] heavier gifts.

**St. Nicolas:** Why is it so quiet Rudy. Ah! I'll bet it's time for their Siesta right in the heat of the day...I forgot about that--my goodness! But I guess we made enough of a racket...to wake the dead even! Ah! There now! I see someone coming. And there's a sign, yes it's Spain alright! And a Christmas greeting--Feliz Navidad! So the Capsule got us here fine.

**Don:** [*Brandishing a long pole carries it like a lance. He believes he's Don Quixote.*] Hola! Who trespasses on this Holy ground? Name yourself or I shall impale you as the King has empowered me to do as one of his most trusted knights. [*Slight bow.*] [*Rudy hides behind St. Nicolas.*]

**St. Nicolas:** Rudy come on out from behind me! He won't hurt us. He's obviously having an anxiety attack and thinks he's Don Quixote. Pretty soon no doubt, Dulcinea his current wife and his son who in all probability will be called Sancho will make an appearance and who knows who else— Your name is Don, is it not?

**Don:** How'd you know? And what if it is? Who are you? Speak up! or I shall regale and impale you all in one mighty thrust---You look very dangerous to me.

**St. Nicolas:** You'll be proud to know that I'm on business from your King. Your *Heavenly* King! So put up your lance and don't attack me. I'm certainly not a windmill which I understand you like attacking. I bring you good tidings and gifts from afar. Tell me in confidence---are you having delusions or are you at least a distant cousin of the long dead Don Quixote?

**Don:** You are very perceptive...And allow me to fall upon my knee [*one knee*] for you are truly from the King---The Heavenly King---[*Aside.*] My goodness I must be doing something right if he sends me his emissary...Your name sir?

**Rudy:** Wise up man this is St. Nicolas.

**Don:** Then I am the king of Spain! [*Rises,*] and wouldn't have knelt if I thought this was a hoax and you were an interloper. Then up lance into my trusty hands and beware interloper! Because you're looking more and more like a windmill to me!

**St. Nicolas:** Then I say Down Lance and into a trance, lance! [*The lance is immediately dropped by Don and he rubs his hands as if burned.*] There that's better. Now my dear friend Don before you go off attacking windmills please call your family. We're here to honor them and have a nice talk about how you and your neighbors celebrate the Holy Day of Christmas in Spain.

**Don:** [*Now he drops to both knees.*] I'm so sorry---you must be he!--- The way you arrived and burned that lance out of my hands [*keeps eyeing the goodie bag*] the way your helper carries that nice big---that great, big bag---Does it have some small but *precious* gifts for my family and er---me?

**Rudy:** St. Nicolas this Don is not at all humble and he's grabby and grubby too!

**St. Nicolas:** Don I'm a patient man, was a Bishop once did you know that?--- Probably not. But please call your family out before I find a much more cooperative Spanish family.

**Don:** Oh no way! There's none as cooperative as we!...Er...What of the gift bag Sir?

**Rudy:** [*Almost swings the bag at him.*]

**Don:** He runs off [*tries to grab his lance it's red hot, can't, yells into the house.*] Everyone come on out and get your gift! St. Nicolas is here early! [*St. Nicolas shakes his head in disbelief.*] [*The family comes running out Sancho the oldest boy, Carmen the daughter, Pedro the youngest and wife Dulcinea.*]

**Sancho:** I have been very good all year where is my gift and yes I like toys---*not* clothes!

**Carmen:** I am the *girl*. Girls should always get their gifts *first*!

**Pedro:** [*Sincere.*] I don't care about gifts St. Nicolas. I just want to meet you and hug you. I've always loved you, always. [*Runs to St. Nicolas, hugs him.*]

**Dulcinea:** Leave the old gentleman alone Pedro! [*Pedro backs off. She coyly uses her feminine wiles.*] He's got some nice *jewels* for me I'll bet!

**St. Nicolas:** The Almighty said that first you need to tell me about your customs before there's any talk of Christmas gifts.

**Dulcinea:** Oh Very well then! [*Sassy, sachets about a bit*] what is it you need to know *sweetheart*?

**Rudy:** Show a little respect for St. Nicholas please! Now if I may speak for St. Nick. [Nick nods,] we just want to hear about your customs. We hear you have very interesting religious ones and many that are fun too!

**Don:** If that's all you need to know, then I can fill you in. First of all we start early, very early.

**Dulcinea:** In many of our cities and towns we start with decorations and the lights at the beginning of December.

**Sancho:** [*Excited,*] and it goes all the way to January!

**Pedro:** Si!---The Eighth!

**Carmen:** And we celebrate three times. First, Christmas Eve or Noche Buena and Christmas on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December.

**Pedro:** And second we celebrate Noche Viega my father and mother call it New Years Eve. And we celebrate at home which I like very much!

**Sancho:** And then it's King's Day or how we say El Dia de Reyes. That's the day I look forward to the most it's when we get our gifts. [*Dances around, sings.*]

**Pedro:** And the three kings fly through the sky. Like great big Eagles! [*Imitates an eagle.*]

**Dulcinea:** And they go from house to house ---I can't wait for that day [*primps herself*] that's when I get my nicest jewelry thanks to the Three kings...The Pastries they bring I don't care about; they only make me fat and I like to stay attractive, to my husband of course.

**St. Nicolas:** Of course.

**Three Children:** *We love* the pastries hmmm! [*Dance in a ring and sing.*]

**St. Nicolas:** I heard no talk of church here; it is after all Christ's birthday; what about that?

**Pedro:** St. Nicolas I love Noche Buena and Navidad when the family all get together and we all go to church Christmas Eve even mi Madre, my mother.

**Dulcinea:** Pedro what are you saying, *even* Madre---I always go unless I am ill or have too much work to do in the house or one of my family is sick or I have nothing to wear, or a bad hair day [*primps herself.*] I always go, always! And I love how we gather round and sing Villancicos. What you call Christmas carols---I have a beautiful voice. I could have been a professional singer. *Right ! ---* Don?

**Don:** *Right!* St. Nicolas she has a great voice! And we all sing and sing and sing until it gets to be St. Steven's Day---El Dia de San Esteban that's December the 26<sup>th</sup> then we celebrate with the whole family---everybody!

**Dulcinea:** Then Don and I---We enjoy very much to celebrate on Noche Vieja to do it right you must eat 12 grapes. One each for each gong that sounds just before midnight one a second and there are 12 gongs.

**Don:** This way you are guaranteed a prosperous year.

**Dulcinea:** Last year I received many gold earrings, because I was very successful and I ate my twelve grapes on schedule. I'm really very good at most everything! Am I not *dear*?

**Don:** Oh Yes! Even if she had to choke; she would eat one grape for each gong.

**Dulcinea:** You and Pedro you make me seem so awful; everybody else seems to like me in the village.

**St. Nicolas:** I'm *sure* they do. Pedro I'll just bet you have a nativity scene set up in the house, I heard your country is famous for that?

**Pedro:** Si! That's our pride and joy.

**Carmen:** All the kids set it up and we have lots of fun I tell you.

**Sancho:** And we make it seem really real, as we get closer and closer to the Eighth---The three Kings and all of the shepherds and the animals all get closer and closer till the magic day. Then it's here---King's Day, El Dia de Reyes and we get gifts lots of gifts.

**Pedro:** I love the baby Jesus!

**Carmen:** Me too!

**Sancho:** Me Three!

**St. Nicolas:** Ha, Ha! [*claps his hands enjoying what he's about to say.*] And what about those sugar cubes dyed black that look like coal to show you've been bad; as a joke?

**Pedro:** Si! but only as a *joke* because we are such good children [*impishly.*]

**St. Nicolas:** You kids seem to be doin' alright; need a little tightening up here and there but I can see where it comes from; let me have a word with the Almighty about a few things. [*Looks up.*] **Lord** [the family can't hear this.] Lord I have a problem with this couple; amazingly the kids are needing only a little rethinking but are *pretty* good---I see nothing wrong with the customs but I don't know---I just don't know---should I let'em have a gift out of the bag or do they need a reprimand?

**God---Voiceover:** **Forget reprimand!...** Play it by ear you'll know what to do when the time comes. And that Dulcinea always was a loose cannon! By the way you're doing a great job down there!

**St. Nicolas:** Thanks for that! [*Pleadingly*] but God how will I know? [*No response God has spoken.*] Alright---gather round kids and dig deep! Don't worry about findin' something with your name on it for God knows everything and has arranged for some surprises for you.

**Pedro and Carmen:** Sancho you go first!

**Sancho:** [*Reaches in.*] Madre me! Look what I got. A present and it has a tag with my name on it! Mira! let's see. Oh how beautiful you knew exactly what I wanted---statues of the Three Kings how great! I love them. Now I have them for my very own! But you know something Santo Nicolas and Rudy I think I will share them with everybody at Christmas. Gracias!

**St. Nicolas:** You're welcome! That's the way to think Pablo! Now you're catching on! Good!

**Carmen:** And look what I got [*holds it up,*] I got a baby doll it's just the right size--- I'm going to use it for the crib. Is that alright St. Nicolas? **St. Nicolas:** A perfect thought, Carmen perfect! You children only needed a little inspiration to set you on the right track.

**Pedro:** Mira! Look! [*holds it up*] I have a very light package. a big envelope...What can it be, what? I'll take a quick look....It's my favorite villancicos, Silent Night. Now I have my own Christmas Carol music and can sing it in the church and to my family. Thank you so much St. Nicolas. [*Picks up music sings a few bars of Silent Night.*]

**St. Nicolas:** You're welcome. Now Rudy bring the big bag over to the parents of these fine children.

**Rudy:** Coming right up St. Nicolas...right up!...I Can't move it---I don't understand---It just got so heavy!---They'll just have to come over here to it and reach in!

[*Dulcinea and Don excitedly come over, she pushes him aside reaches inside to the first thing she can get her hands on.*]

**Dulcinea:** Oh my what have I here! And it has my name on it, how sweet! Quick Don give me a hand! Why I'll just bet it's a big sack of heavy expensive, valuable, jewelry. Come'on help me! **Hurry up**---help me! Why are you so slow! Lift it out! **Lift** this great big gift bag of? Of? I'll just bet it's gold and precious jewels those are the only gifts that are that heavy--I know! See God knows how good I am and He rewarded me [*opens the sack reaches in and, and grabs a handful of, of?* Show the audience!]*It's coal? coal?* I don't believe it, it can't be. I'm the perfect mother, the perfect wife, the perfect everything! I'm just perfect that's all! I don't understand! Don what does this mean? [*Sheds phony tears.*]

**Don:** I don't know **Dear!**---All I know is God is about to reward **me!** [*He reaches in*] I gave you a hand now you've gotta give me a hand! [*She does, reluctantly, still sobbing.*] Look at the size of my just reward--- a huge sack. I'll bet it's a treasure! Look! my goodness it's loaded with--- I don't know, maybe gold and Silver? You see God knows how

trustworthy I am. How noble and loyal!--Sees how I defend Him and my King. **He knows--  
-He rewards!**---Watch! [*unties bag reaches in.*] What's this red Stuff? It must be a heavenly dust that grants all my wishes! Magic powder like Christmas wishing powder? What is it St. Nick? Rudy do you know? [*They shrug their shoulders.*] Oh I'm so blessed! [*dances, sings.*] So blessed God knows how marvelous I am, what a warm and loving person I am! Let me show how truly generous I am and sprinkle it all around and you'll see treasure abound! Gold and silver will magically appear as I twirl and spread it round and round. *Remember!* I have **first DIVS on any that's found!** Tra, la, la, I sprinkle as I dance and sing oh! I'm so happy happy happy! As I sprinkle round and round. [**People on stage cough it's obviously an irritant!**] What's happening? It doesn't seem to have any magic powers!...This is a fake! A fraud! God is playing tricks. No He wouldn't do such a thing...**I** know! It's an elixir— Here I'll try some on my tongue maybe it's a magic health formula. [*He tastes it.*] Mira! Mira! Oh!----Heeeelp me! Oh my! My tongue is on fire! Oh what did I do to deserve this---What? Heeelp me! [*fans his mouth.*]

**St. Nicolas:** I can't imagine!-- Well I'm afraid we have to go now [*anxious to leave.*]... Just let me wish you all Feliz Navidad!

**Don:** [*Agitated, fans his mouth.*] Is that all you've got to say? You can't leave us like this! Get me water somebody...water! [*No one moves.*]

**Dulcinea:** Where is my jewelry my gold? I don't understand!

**St. Nicolas:** You will, You Will! In due time...God has spoken, you got your just rewards!

**Dulcinea :** [*Stands there in disbelief and SOBS!*] Oh! how can you say that! It's unfair!

**Don: Sobs!** [*Goes to Dulcinea for comfort she pushes him away.*]

**Both: Sobbing!** [*Embrace, misery demands company now.*]

**Rudy & St. Nicolas:** Feliz Navidad! Merry Christmas Everyone!

**Children:** Merry Christmas St. Nicolas and Rudy---Feliz Navidad!

**St. Nicolas & Rudy:** Goodbye everyone Merry Christmas...Feliz Navidad!

**St. Nicolas:** [*To Rudy only.*] Let's get out of here! Rudy set the controls for England, try London that should be interesting!

**Rudy:** I'll set The Capsule for London and we'll be there in a jiffy.

**St. Nicolas and Rudy:** [*Quickly get into The Capsule and they are out of there! Lights flash, agitates, travel noise, fog rises, a few beats pass and it's a sign for Londinium.*]

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