

Jeannette, Isabella

Un Flambeau, Jeanette, Isabella

Lyricist unknown, music possibly a lively court dance tune for the nobility dating the 14th century.

E *C#m/G#* *F#m* *B⁷*
Bring a torch, Jeannette, Isabella,

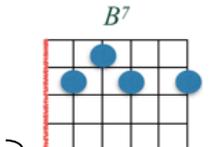
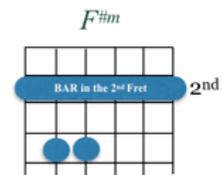
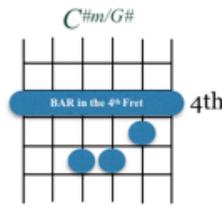
E *C#m/G#* *F#m* *B* *E*
Bring a torch, to the cra - dle run!

E *B*
It is Jesus, good folk of the village,

F#m *E* *F#m⁷* *B*
Christ is born and Mary's calling,

E *B⁷* *E* *B* *G#m*
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the Mother!

C#m/G# *F#m⁷* *E* *B⁷* *E*
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is her Son!

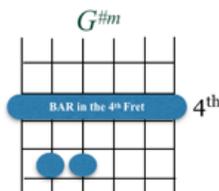
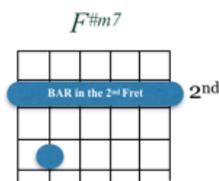


INTRO

E *C#m/G#* *F#m* *B⁷*
It is wrong when the Child is sleeping,

E *C#m/G#* *F#m* *B* *E*
It is wrong to talk so loud.

E *B*
Silence, all, as you gather around,



F#m *E* *F#m⁷* *B*
Lest your noise should waken Jesus:

E *B⁷* *E* *B* *G#m*
Hush! Hush! See how fast He slumbers;

C#m/G# *F#m⁷* *E* *B⁷* *E*
Hush! Hush! See how fast He sleeps!

E *C#m/G#* *F#m* *B⁷*
Softly to the little stable,

E *C#m/G#* *F#m* *B* *E*
Softly for a moment come!

E *B*
Look and see how charming is Jesus,

F#m *E* *F#m⁷* *B*
How calm He is, His cheeks are rosy!

E *B⁷* *E* *B* *G#m*
Hush! Hush! See how the Child is sleeping;

C#m/G# *F#m⁷* *E* *B⁷* *E*
Hush! Hush! See how He smiles in dreams!

Christmas as you go

Scripture and History

Luke 2:4-7 And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

"**Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella**" (French: *Un flambeau, Jeannette, Isabelle*) is a Christmas carol which originating in the Provence region of France in the 16th century.

The music for "Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella" is very old, dating the 14th century. Evidently it wasn't originally composed as sacred music at all, but as a lively court dance tune for the nobility.

The words were composed by an unknown author in the 1500s. The carol, with both words and music, first appeared in a French book of Christmas Carols published in 1553. In French, it is called, "Un Flambeau, Jeanette, Isabelle." It appears to have come from the region of Provence. To this day in Provence, children dressed as shepherds carry torches and candles as they go to church for Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve while singing this and other carols.

Who was Jeanette and who was Isabella? Our best clue is that shortly after this carol became popular, the great French painter, Georges de La Tour, apparently inspired by this song, reportedly painted a nativity scene (reproduced above) in which two milkmaids had come to the stable to milk the cows on that first Christmas morning. They were so filled with excitement that they took their torches and ran to the village to spread the news that the newborn Christ as sleeping softly in the hay. The whole village, bearing torches, thus came to see the Christ child.

As I said, this isn't one of our great theological Christmas carols, but it emphasizes two things—first that the great secret of that first Christmas wasn't revealed to the theologians and clergymen and rabbis of the day, but to simple farming people—shepherds and milkmaids. Jesus was the son of a shepherd-king. And second, it speaks of the excitement we should feel as we come and see the newborn King and as we run to share the news with others.

This is the theme that shows up in **Luke's chapter 2** version of the birth of Christ.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20040124084340/http://www.donelson.org/pocket/pp-031130.html> A Pocket Paper from The Donelson Fellowship, **Robert J. Morgan** November 30, 2003

