

A TANGLED THISTLE WORLD

The Carol House at Closing Time

Field Guide. A free first look at the World.

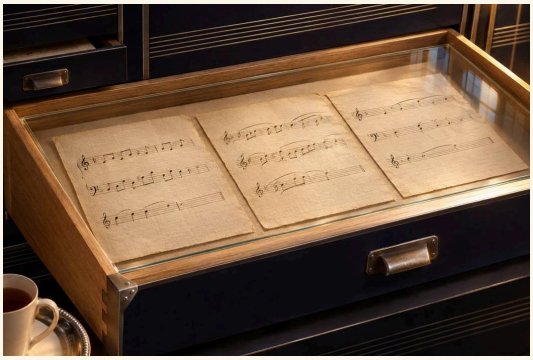
FREE FIELD GUIDE · ENGLISH EDITION 1.0

Stay after *closing*

A free Field Guide to The Carol House at Closing Time: a Christmas Eve supper in a music library that keeps three endings, and never once asks you to sing.

Every December somebody tries to make me sing. This World is my answer.

The Carol House is a fictional city music library that locks its public doors early on Christmas Eve and keeps its archivists, musicians, cooks and guests in for supper. Its oldest score is missing its last page, and the first page carries three different endings in three different hands. Nobody ever picked one. So each year the House plays all three together and ends on a bar of written silence, with tea in every hand that wants it.



The founding page. Three endings in three hands. The House never chose.

It is a long winter supper with music in it. Not a concert, not a singalong. Listening is a complete way to take part, and the guest in the quiet room is served exactly like the one by the piano.

> *Closing time. The rooms will sing back. Leave the last bar open.*



The door, shortly before it locks.



The World at a glance. Above, the Main World Moodboard. Below, the after-hours identity board: paper, pewter, cut glass and white winter flowers.

The first minute, and the *five lines*

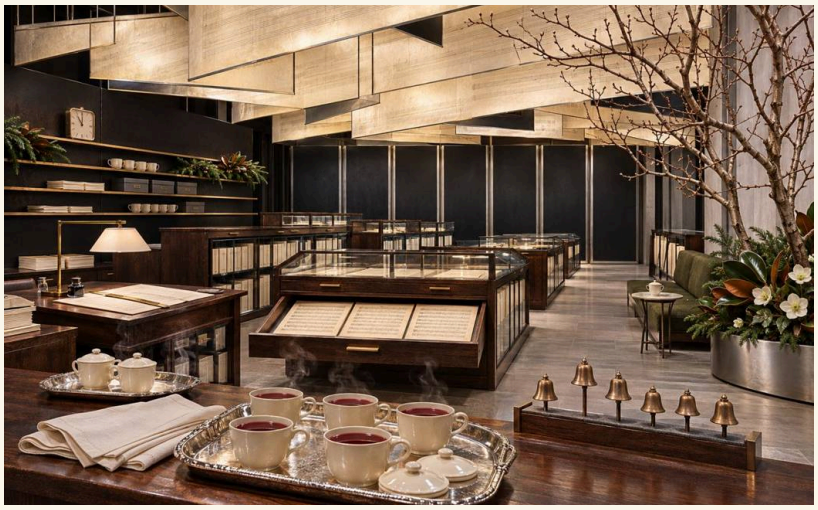
Your coat is gone before you have finished saying your name. A warm cup is in your hand inside the first minute. On the dark green wall above the bench, five thin brass lines run toward a clock that has read four minutes to midnight for as long as anyone can remember, and stop a hand's width short of it.

That unfinished line is the whole World in miniature. It comes back as rails through the rooms, as five green stitches down the supper cloth, and finally as enamel on a small brass clip that goes home in your pocket. Doorways are bar lines. Quiet places are rests. Every line stops just before it arrives.

Wander if you like. An archivist will open a drawer and show you the three endings, none marked correct. A copyist rules five lines at once with a brass pen and draws tonight's final bar onto every guest's score by hand. Six bells wait behind a curtain and sound only if asked. Nothing needs solving.



Closing Punch. Black tea, cranberry, orange and ginger, warm, in a handled cream cup.





Arrival, and the copyist's rastrum: five nibs, one stroke, a whole staff.

Supper, the turn, and *what you keep*

The supper is plain, generous and timed like a score. Warm brown bread and milk rolls with orange-pepper butter. Smoked trout, or its smoked-mushroom twin. Leek and potato soup poured at the table while the room goes quiet. Warm chicory, pear and walnut. Roast chicken with thyme jus, or a mushroom-lentil pithivier with the same ceremony. A little cheese, where the apple comes back in another key. Sticky ginger pudding, caramel poured once the plate lands. Every dish has an equal twin; every drink is zero-proof first.







The quiet pour; chicken and pithivier side by side; ginger pudding and pear. Concept images, not photographs of cooked food.

Then tea is poured, clearing stops, and for about ninety seconds the tall leaves of the house score open one by one, felt, then paper, then brass, each with its own short fragment on piano, low strings and clarinet. The three play together. The last bar is silence. Behind the score a lit room has appeared, with cocoa in it.

At the door your folded score comes back with a brass clip seated at a bar line somebody drew for you that evening, beside a margin the House left blank.





The pages open; the score goes home.

One practical thought, and *the rest*

You do not need a library. You need a door, a table, a wall and a quiet corner. The hallway takes the coats and the first warm cup. A bookcase holds three framed endings. The dining table gets a cream runner with five ruled green lines that stop short of each end, one shaded lamp, and a low band of white winter flowers with exactly five white points. Three folding screens, or three lamps and a curtain, turn the page. One chair in a side room, properly quiet, with the same tea, is the most important seat in the house.



The open-measure table. Five stitched lines stop where the shared dishes land.

The paid editions give you the whole method: every room and its job, three honest ways to build the score wall, the seven flower recipes with stem counts, the table measured place by place, complete measured recipes with their twins, the service plan and the cue, a planner and the House's own paper to print.

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EDITION	FOR	HOLDS
Complete World Experience	Private hosts	Experience & Host Book, full Culinary & Beverage Book, Service & Reset Guide, fillable planner, printables
World at the Table	One restaurant service	The supper as a complete restaurant format, staff guide, one workbook, print and launch assets
World Residency	A transformed room for a run of nights	Everything in Table, the score wall and late room, the Rehearsal Tea, repeat-service operation
Hotel World Season	Dining, lounge and arrival together	Everything in Residency, three zones, breakfast, a three-day arc, guest-room touches

HONEST LABELS

The pictures are concept visualisations, not photographs of an installed event; they take liberties, mostly more notation and more flowers than the design calls for. The recipes in the paid editions are developed, not kitchen-tested. Field Guide, English edition 1.0, 19 November 2026.