

The Inn-Spectors

SCENE 1 - BUSY BETHLEHEM

Narrator 1, 2 and 3, Travellers, Soldiers, Street seller, Tour guide, Posh Innkeepers, Mrs Innkeeper, Mr Innkeeper and Grumpy Guests.

The travellers, Roman Soldiers, Tour Guides and Street Sellers mill about in groups on the stage. After each section of dialogue, they continue to carry out an occupational mime to communicate the hustle and bustle of busy Bethlehem.

NARRATOR 1: Bethlehem was getting busier by the day. The Emperor, Caesar Augustus, had ordered a census and everyone was travelling to the town they were born in to be counted.

TRAVELLER 1: We made it!

TRAVELLER 2: What a journey!

TRAVELLER 3: I'm worn out!

TRAVELLER 4: My Poor feet!

TRAVELLER 5: I've completed ninety-nine thousand, six hundred and seventy-eight steps since Tuesday!

The Roman Soldiers address the Travellers.

SOLDIER 1: Right you lot, form an orderly queue.

SOLDIER 2: No pushing in!

SOLDIER 3: (To one of the Travellers) What's your name and where are you from?

SOLDIER 1: Chop, chop. We don't have all day!

The Roman Soldiers mime getting the Travellers organised into lines while the Street Sellers and Tour Guides enter.

STREET SELLER: Get your Bethlehem snacks and souvenirs here!

TOUR GUIDE: Tours of Bethlehem start at 12 noon.

TRAVELLER 6: It's too busy!

TRAVELLER 7: People everywhere!

TRAVELLER 8: Crowded streets.

TRAVELLER 9: Queues for miles.

TRAVELLER 10: Total chaos!

NARRATOR 2: As you can see, the town was jam-packed!

NARRATOR 3: Everyone was looking for a place to stay and the inns were filling up fast.

Enter posh Innkeepers (POSH INN).

POSH INNKEEPER 1: Naturally, our five-star inn is already fully booked.

POSH INNKEEPER 2: We were full up weeks ago!

POSH INNKEEPER 3: Do you know that people travel for miles to sample our delicious food?

POSH INNKEEPER 4: No room here! Everybody wants to sleep in our beds. They're the most comfortable in town!

POSH INNKEEPER 5: We're just so popular darling!

NARRATOR 3: Even the little inn at the end of a Bethlehem street was busy.

Enter Mr and Mrs Innkeeper and Grumpy Guests.

MRS INNKEEPER: Oh, I'm rushed off my feet! That Caesar Augustus has a lot to answer for, you know. I'd like to give him a piece of my mind!

MR INNKEEPER: Well, we shouldn't complain. It's a long time since we were this busy!

MRS INNKEEPER: Well, I shall be glad when it's all over. All I've heard this week is grumble after grumble.

GRUMPY GUEST 1: My window won't shut.

GRUMPY GUEST 2: There's a spider in my bath!

GRUMPY GUEST 3: It's too noisy.

GRUMPY GUEST 4: It's too crowded.

GRUMPY GUEST 5: *(With a superior air)* Oh, how very disappointing. I was rather hoping this establishment would offer spa facilities!

MRS INNKEEPER: *(Increasingly flustered)* Spa facilities? What do they think this is, the Bethlehem Plaza?

The Travellers and Grumpy Guests join together to sing the following song.

SONG 1 - WE'RE GOING HOME!

The travellers, Grumpy Guests and Innkeepers exit in a huff.

SCENE 2 - THE INN-SPECTORS ARRIVE

Narrator 4, Inn-spectors and Soldiers.

The Soldiers remain on the stage. The Soldiers stand on guard. The inn-spectors enter from the stage left. Their movements are in unison. They form a very neat line and stand with their clipboards at the ready.

NARRATOR 4: As you can see, Bethlehem was attracting all sorts of visitors.

INN-SPECTOR 1: At last, we have arrived in Bethlehem!

SOLDIER 2: *(Noticing the Inn-spectors)* That's the best queue I've seen all day.

SOLDIER 3: Impressive!

SOLDER 1: Can we help you?

INN-SPECTOR 2: Perhaps we should introduce ourselves.

INN-SPECTORS: *(In unison)* We are the Inn-spectors.

There are audible gasps

NARRATOR 1: The teachers have just fainted!

INN-SPECTOR 3: Don't worry. We're not Ofsted Inspectors. We are the INN-spectors. We inspect inns.

INN-SPECTOR 4: Yes, and once we heard that Emperor Augustus had called a census in Bethlehem, we knew we had to visit.

INN-SPECTOR 5: *(Clears his throat)* I must say, I think I have a lot in common with the Emperor Augustus. We are both very organised and love a good list. You just can't beat a bit of box-ticking. It's so satisfying.

INN-SPECTOR 6: *(Rolling their eyes)* Lets stick to the point, shall we?

INN-SPECTOR 1: With so many visitors staying in Bethlehem, we believe this is the perfect opportunity to find out if the inns in this town are up to scratch!

INN-SPECTOR 2: We are here to carry out INN-spections!

INN-SPECTOR 3: We must get to work immediately.

INN-SPECTOR 4: We will be thorough.

INN-SPECTOR 5: We will be rigorous.

INN-SPECTOR 6: We cannot let standards slip!

SOLDIER 2: So, what exactly are you looking for?

INN-SPECTORS: Everything has to be perfect!

SONG 2 - EVERYTHING HAS TO BE PERFECT!

SOLDIER 3: That's what I like to hear!

SOLDIER 1: Keep everyone on their toes I say!

SOLDIER 2: We'll let you know if we hear of any innkeepers flouting the rules.

INN-SPECTOR 1: That would be very useful indeed. Now, which inn shall we visit first?

INN-SPECTOR 2: *(Consulting clipboards)* First stop, the Bethlehem Plaza. The reviews are excellent and I've heard they do a lovely lunch.

INN-SPECTOR 3: Off we go!

The Inn-spectors exit stage left. The Roman Soldiers stage right.

SCENE 3 - NAZARETH

Narrator 5 and 6, Mary, Joseph and Angel Gabriel

Enter Mary and Joseph

NARRATOR 5: At that time there were some very special people who were also travelling to Bethlehem to take part in the census. Their names were Mary and Joseph and they lived in Nazareth.

NARRATOR 6: Mary was expecting a baby very soon. Some months before, an angel had told Mary she would give birth to the Son of God. He would be a new King and she would call him Jesus.

ANGEL GABRIEL: Mary you will give birth to the Son of God!

NARRATOR 5: As you can imagine, Mary was very surprised when she heard the news.

SONG 3 - CAN THIS BE TRUE?

All exit the stage.

SCENE 4 - THE JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

Narrator 7, 8, 9 and 10, Mary, Joseph, Donkey, Posh Innkeepers, Mrs Innkeeper, Mr Innkeeper

Enter Mary, Joseph and the Donkey. They all slowly across the stage.

NARRATOR 7: Mary and Joseph had to travel all the way to Bethlehem on a donkey.

MARY: My baby is going to be born any day.

DONKEY: (Moaning) Are we nearly there yet?

JOSEPH: Not far now.

DONKEY: (Moaning even more) Humph! My job description didn't say anything about long distance travel.

Enter Posh Innkeepers.

NARRATOR 7: Eventually they reached Bethlehem. They searched and searched for somewhere to stay, but the answer was always the same.

Joseph mimes knocking on the door of each inn. Each time Mary, Joseph and the Donkey are turned away. Each time the Donkey sighs and looks suitably disgruntled.

POSH INNKEEPER 1: Sorry, no room!

POSH INNKEEPER 2: Sorry, no room!

POSH INNKEEPER 3: Sorry, no room!

POSH INNKEEPER 4: Sorry, no room!

POSH INNKEEPER 5: Sorry, no room!

Exit Posh Innkeepers. Mr Innkeeper and Mrs Innkeeper enter.

NARRATOR 8: Finally, they reached the little inn at the end of a Bethlehem street.

Joseph mimes knowing at the door.

MRS INNKEEPER: (To Mr Innkeeper) You'll have to answer that, I'm far too busy. I've got beds to make, floors to sweep and, would you believe, the guest in Room 5 has just asked for room service?

She exits in a huff. Mr Innkeeper answers the door.

JOSEPH: Do you have a room for the night? My wife is going to have a baby very soon.

MR INNKEEPER: I'm very sorry, but all my rooms are full.

Mary and Joseph look sad. The Donkey groans.

NARRATOR 8: The Innkeeper felt so sorry for Mary and Joseph. Suddenly, he had an idea.

Mr Innkeeper shows Mary, Joseph and the Donkey towards the stable.

MR INNKEEPER: Come with me. My inn may be full, but you are welcome to stay in my stable.

DONKEY: (*Dramatically*) Thank goodness for that! My hooves are absolutely killing me!

Mary takes a seat by the crib. Joseph and the Donkey stand next to her.

NARRATOR 9: And it was in that stable that Mary gave birth to Jesus, God's son, the King of the world. Mary wrapped Jesus in a blanket and laid him in a manger.

MR INNKEEPER: Who would have thought a King would be born in my little stable?

NARRATOR 10: And as they all looked in wonder at Jesus, the new born King, they all felt very peaceful and calm.

NARRATOR 9: Even the donkey looked happy.

Exit Mr Innkeeper.

SCENE 5 - OUTSIDE THE INN

Narrator 11, Inn-spectors and Soldiers.

The Inn-spectors enter. The Roman Soldiers are outside the inn and stable.

NARRATOR 11: It was getting late and the Inn-spectors were still hard at work.

INN-SPECTOR 1: Well, the Lobster platter at the Bethlehem Plaza was divine!

INN-SPECTOR 2: Not to mention the hot tub at the Bethlehem Grand. Perfect!

INN-SPECTOR 3: It's good to know that standards remain high in Bethlehem.

SOLDIER 3: (*Pointing to the little inn*) You obviously haven't visited this inn then!

INN-SPECTOR 4: It's the last one on our list.

INN-SPECTOR 5: Hmm, it has not exactly got the wow factor!

SOLDIER 1: There have been some strange goings-on there, I can tell you!

SOLDIER 2: I'm sure I heard voices coming from their stable this evening.

SOLDIER 3: Squeezing in extra guests, I expect!

The Inn-spectors look shocked.

INN-SPECTOR 6: You cannot keep guests in a stable!

INN-SPECTOR 1: It's against regulations!

INN-SPECTOR 2: It will not do.

INN-SPECTORS: It will not do at all!

SCENE 6 - THE INN

Narrator 12, Mrs Innkeeper, Mr Innkeeper, Inn-spectors, Donkey, Joseph, Mary, Shepherds and Sheep (Year 1)

Mr and Mrs Innkeeper enter the inn. The Inn-Spectors knock at the inn door.

MRS INNKEEPER: (Annoyed and shouting towards the door) Well, isn't that just typical? I've had a very busy day and I was hoping to put my feet up!

Mr Innkeeper answers the door.

MR INNKEEPER: Can I help you?

INN-SPECTOR 1: We are here to carry out an inspection of your inn. We are the INN-spectors.

MRS INNKEEPER: (To the audience) Oh dear, I think I can feel one of my heads coming on.

MR INNKEEPER: (To the Inn-spectors) Welcome, welcome.

The Inn-Spectors begin to look around.

INN-SPECTOR 2: Hmm, I don't think much of the wallpaper - very last year.

INN-SPECTOR 3: Look at the cobwebs! It will not do!

INN-SPECTORS: It will not do at all!

MRS INNKEEPER: Cobwebs? The cheek of it!

INN-SPECTOR 4: Mr and Mrs Innkeeper, we also have reason to believe that you are keeping guests in your stable.

MR INNKEEPER: (Cheerfully) Yes, that's right.

MRS INNKEEPER: (To Mr Innkeeper, horrified) Since when did we have guests in the stable?

MR INNKEEPER: Don't worry, they are very happy and so is their beautiful baby.

INN-SPECTOR 5: (Absolutely shocked) I don't believe my ears. A baby? You mean to tell me there is a baby in your stable?

MR INNKEEPER: Yes, he was born here. His mum and dad arrived and they looked so tired. They came all the way from Nazareth.

INN-SPECTOR 6: Ooh, that is a long way and it can get very congested on a Friday. I prefer to take the B roads myself. Yes, if you get off at the Nazareth junction and then bear left, there's a lovely little scenic route.

INN-SPECTOR 1: (Interrupting) Thank you. I don't think we need to hear any more.

Mr Innkeeper leads the Inn-spectors and Mrs Innkeeper to the table. The Inn-spectors look cross, mutter and begin to make notes.

INN-SPECTOR 2: Mr Innkeeper, you cannot, I repeat, cannot keep a baby in a stable!

MR INNKEEPER: (Proudly gesturing towards the crib) Oh, but he isn't just any baby. He's the Son of God. He's a King!

MRS INNKEEPER: I beg your pardon? (To the Inn-spectors) I really don't know what's got into my husband!

INN-SPECTOR 3: Is this some kind of joke?

INN-SPECTOR 4: It will not do.

INN-SPECTORS: It will not do at all!

The Donkey casually strolls over to the Inn-spectors.

DONKEY: (To the Inn-Spectors) Hey, why the glum faces? You guys sound like you have the blues.

INN-SPECTOR 5: Did that donkey just talk? (They wipe their brow) Perhaps I am coming down with something.

DONKEY: Moan, moan, moan. Groan, groan, groan. I used to be just like you – always grumbling, always complaining, until I met this little fellow. (He points to Jesus proudly) I am the one who carried this King all the way from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Ooh, I could do with a hoof spa right now, I can tell you.

SONG 4 – OOH, OHH, SINGING THE BLUES

The Inn-spectors inspect the crib.

INN-SPECTOR 6: So, are you really saying this baby is a king, the Son of God?

DONKEY: He sure is!

The Inn-spectors look impressed and write notes on their clipboards.

INN-SPECTOR 1: This is all quite amazing, but why would the Son of God come here? Just look at this place. It's just so...

DONKEY: Smelly?

INN-SPECTOR 2: Well, yes. It's hardly suitable for a king!

JOSEPH: There was nowhere else for us to go. All the other innkeepers turned us away.

MARY: That's why we're so grateful to the innkeeper for letting us stay.

INN-SPECTOR 3: Well in that case, I think you are the kindest innkeeper we've ever met.

INN-SPECTOR 4: Ten out of ten for hospitality!

They continue to write notes on their clipboards and then mime a large tick.

MRS INNKEEPER: (Proudly) Of course, I've taught him everything he knows.

INN-SPECTOR 5: (Looking at the crib) You know, I'm not normally a baby person, but I have to say that Jesus is adorable. He is obviously a very special baby.

The Inn-spectors coo over the baby and nod happily in agreement. Enter the flock of sheep with plenty of noisy baaing to disturb the peaceful scene.

INN-SPECTOR 6: Sheep? Surely not.

INN-SPECTOR 1: (Shocked) It's a health and safety nightmare.

Enter Shepherds 1, 2 and 5 out of breath, waving their hands. The inn-spectors look flustered.

SHEPHERD 1: Wait for us and stop that noise!

The sheep baa even more loudly, ignoring the shepherds.

SHEPHERD 2: Oh dear, why don't they ever listen to us?

SHEPHERD 3: Those sheep are exhausting!

INN-SPECTOR 2: (To the shepherds) Look, it's no good waving your arms about and hoping for the best. Sheep need boundaries. You need to show them who's boss.

Inn-spector 2 looks over their spectacles, claps hands rhythmically and the sheep instantly stop baaing and sit up obediently in neat rows.

SHEPHERDS: Wow!

SHEPHERD 4: I've been trying that for years!

INN-SPECTOR 3: Right, that's much better. Perhaps you might explain why you are here.

SHEEP 1: Well, we thought this was going to be another boring night.

ALL SHEEP: (Bored) Baaaaaa!

SHEEP 2: But it's turned out to be the most exciting night of our lives!

ALL SHEEP: (Excited and noisy) Baaaaaa!

SONG 5 – UH-HUH, OH YEAH!

ALL SHEEP: Baaaaaa!

Shepherds remain on the stage.

INN-SPECTOR 4: But tell me, are sheep really the most suitable visitors for Jesus, the King of the world?

SHEPHERD 5: Yes, of course. Everyone is welcome to worship Jesus.

SHEPHERD 1: Jesus loves everyone, no matter who they are.

INN-SPECTOR 5: Really? (pauses) Does he even love inn-spectors?

SHEPHERD 2: Yea, he even loves inn-spectors!

Shepherds join Mary, Joseph and the Donkey in the nativity tableau.

INN-SPECTOR 6: Mr Innkeeper, we need to get this stable of yours on the map. We need to tell everyone that Jesus, the King of the world, has been born.

NARRATOR 12: Suddenly, the most wonderful star shone above the stable. It was the most dazzling star in the sky.

INN-SPECTOR 1: (Pointing outside the stable) Look at that amazing star!

NARRATOR 12: They all ran outside to see.

The Inn-spectors and Mr and Mrs Innkeeper exit the stable.

SCENE 7 – OUTSIDE THE STABLE

Twinkles, Star, Mrs Innkeeper, Mr Innkeeper and Inn-spectors

The Inn-spectors and Mr and Mrs Innkeeper watch in amazement! Enter the Star of Bethlehem and her backing group, The Twinkles.

TWINKLE 1: Ladies and gentlemen, prepare to be dazzled.

TWINKLE 2: Prepare to be amazed!

TWINKLE 3: It's the star everyone is talking about.

TWINKLE 4: It's the Star of Bethlehem!

STAR: I will shine my light to tell everyone that Jesus, the new King has been born.

There is huge applause from the Inn-spectors and Mr and Mrs Innkeeper. The Star acts in a diva-like way.

MRS INNKEEPER: I bet you don't get this at the Bethlehem Plaza!

SONG 6 – WHEN YOU'RE A STAR

INN-SPECTORS: Bravo! More!

INN-SPECTOR 2: I don't know what came over me. That was wonderful!

INN-SPECTOR 3: I feel so happy and alive!

INN-SPECTOR 4: (To Inn-spector 3) You had such groovy moves!

INN-SPECTOR 3: Well I am partial to a bit of Strictly, I think I could even give Mr Schumm a run for his money!

MRS INNKEEPER: Of course, I always knew our inn had star quality!

MR INNKEEPER: Well that Star of Bethlehem is shining very brightly. The news of Jesus' birth is sure to spread fast.

STAR: (Dramatically to the audience) There are three very wise men from the East who wish to meet Jesus. I must shine my wonderful light to guide them here.

The star takes a prominent position.

SCENE 8 – FOLLOWING THE STAR

Narrator 13 and 14, Star and Soldiers.

Enter the Three Wise Men with their telescopes. The Star calls out her satnav-style commands from her prominent position.

STAR: At the end of the road, turn left.

WISE MAN 1: (To the star) Now, are you absolutely sure about that? I've had many years' experience in navigation and I could have sworn Bethlehem was this way. (He points in the opposite direction).

WISE MAN 2: (To Wise Man 1) The last time we followed your directions we ended up in Herod's palace.

WISE MAN 3: We're not going there again!

STAR: (Crossly, with hands on hips) At the end of the road, turn left.

WISE MAN 1: (Sighing) Very well. Left it is.

The star looks pleased with herself.

WISE MAN 2: This star will lead us to the new King, the Saviour of the world.

WISE MAN 3: Such a clever star!

The star beams and bows etc.

WISE MEN 2: And we should know. After all, we are very wise.

ALL WISE MEN: Very, very, very wise.

SONG 7 – AS WISE AS CAN POSSIBLY BE

At the end of the song the Wise Men stand in front of the stable.

STAR: You have reached your destination.

WISE MAN 1: A stable? I was rather expecting a palace!

WISE MAN 2: If the new King is here, then this stable is better than a palace.

NARRATOR 13: The three wise men went inside the stable where they found Jesus, the new born King in the manger.

WISE MAN 3: Look, he is here. We have found him!

INN-SPECTOR 5: (To other Inn-spectors) Look at these visitors. They look very important indeed.

WISE MAN 1: We have come to worship the new baby King, the Son of God.

WISE MAN 2: We have been told this child will bring peace to everyone.

WISE MAN 3: He is God's gift of love to the world.

INN-SPECTOR 2: They certainly know their stuff!

NARRATOR 14: The three wise men presented their precious gifts to Jesus.

WISE MAN 1: Gold.

WISE MAN 2: Frankincense.

WISE MAN 3: Myrrh.

The Inn-spectors look at each other. They are very impressed.

INN-SPECTORS: Wow!

Everyone on stage.

NARRATOR 14: As everyone gathered in the stable to worship Jesus. The Inn-spectors felt so proud that they had met such a special baby.

The Inn-spectors complete on final inspection of the scene.

INN-SPECTOR 1: What a perfect sight! What a wonderful night!

INN-SPECTOR 2: Jesus Christ, King of the world has been born in this stable!

INN-SPECTOR 3: Who would have thought that something so amazing would happen here?

INN-SPECTOR 4: The story of Jesus' birth must be kept alive forever.

INN-SPECTOR 5: Everybody needs to hear about it!

INN-SPECTOR 6: It's something to celebrate!

The Inn-spectors all agree happily.

MR INNKEEPER: So does this mean the inspection is over?

INN-SPECTOR 1: I think it is safe to say that our inspection is complete.

The Inn-spectors hold their clipboards in unison.

INN-SPECTOR 2: We have made our decision.

INN-SPECTOR 3: It gives us great pleasure to announce that this stable is...

INN-SPECTORS: Fit for a King!

The Inn-spectors all mime a large tick in unison.

ALL: Hooray!

The whole cast assembles for the final song.

SONG 8 – FIT FOR A KING!

THE END