

“I’M TIRED AND I WANT TO GO TO BED!”



A nativity play with suggested traditional carols

by Stewart Auty

***Aaron is a disgruntled harassed innkeeper in Bethlehem.
Every time he tries to go to sleep, there’s another knock at the door***

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The script is available by email for you to customize.

No music is supplied with this production, but there are suggestions for traditional carols, and for sing-along songs to encourage audience participation.

The play is set in one of the inns in Bethlehem offering accommodation to travellers who have returned to their home town for the Census.

The stage needs to include an area outside the inn (L), a simple, double bedroom (centre), and a stable area (R). The Narrators ideally have a lectern to one side of the stage. The backdrop could be a silhouette Bethlehem skyline set against a sunset sky.

There are 20 speaking parts. Non-speaking parts can be included as extra shepherds, soldiers etc.

A small group of children will be required to play Brahms' Lullaby on xylophones and glockenspiels (or other instruments) at regular intervals throughout the play – every time the innkeeper tries to go to sleep!

Cast, in order of appearance:

NARRATOR 1

NARRATOR 2

AARON the Innkeeper - wears brightly coloured pyjamas, striped or football strip type; also needs slippers and a dressing gown. Lots of lines! Needs to be a proficient cast member!!

SARAH, the harassed wife of Aaron - spends most of her time in bed. Curlers, rollers in, and a face pack would be wonderful!

DANIEL

JACOB

MARY

JOSEPH

SHEPHERD 1

SHEPHERD 2

SHEPHERD 3

SHEPHERD 4

SHEPHERD 5

MELCHIOR

BALTHAZAR

GASPAR

KING no. 4

SOLDIER 1

SOLDIER 2

SOLDIER 3

Traditional carols have been suggested for inclusion at various points in the script.

Introduction (class teacher or better still, headteacher) – The full cast is on stage

Good afternoon/evening everyone. Welcome to our Christmas Play. The children have worked very hard during rehearsals, and I'm sure we're in for a wonderful time. I need your help however. There is an old saying that performers are only as good as their audience. The Government has recognised this, and has issued a directive insisting on improved audience participation. So the cast will start our play by singing a song, and all you need to do is to join in with the chorus. Simple. You might not immediately recognise the song, but I'm sure most of you will know the chorus, and when you join in with the singing, we can tick another OFSTED inspection box! Thank you.

(Chords can be found online at http://www.jbott.com/showme_home.html)

A ukulele accompaniment would be very suitable!

*When I'm happy, when I'm happy, singing all the while
I don't need nobody then to tell me how to smile
When I've been out on the spree, toddling down the street
With this little melody, everyone I greet (Chorus)*

*Show me the way to go home, I'm tired and I want to go to bed
I had a little drink about an hour ago, and it's gone right to my head
No matter where I roam, on land or sea or foam
You will always hear me singing this song
Show me the way to go home*

*Some folks say, eat more fruit, some say, eat more meat
Others say what's wrong with fish and how's your poor old feet?
I think it's a waste of time, you must with me agree
everyone should sing more songs, so sing this one with me. (Chorus)*

Act 1

(O Little Town of Bethlehem – verses 1, 2 and 5 only)

Exit all apart from Aaron and Sarah, who are in bed, and two Narrators

NARRATOR 1: Our story takes place in Bethlehem.

NARRATOR 2: Bethlehem is crowded, because of the census ordered by the Romans.

NARRATOR 1: It was the end of the day.

NARRATOR 2: It had been a very busy day.

NARRATOR 1: And after a very busy day, there was nothing the innkeeper liked more than a good night's sleep.

NARRATOR 2: With so many extra visitors, all the innkeeper wanted to do was to go to bed.

NARRATOR 1: But even the best of plans can fail.

NARRATOR 2: The Innkeeper had no idea of what lay ahead.

NARRATOR 1: This was going to be a special night.

(Brahms' Lullaby – played on Xylophones etc.)

Aaron and Sarah are in bed, apparently asleep.

AARON: *(Sits up suddenly)* I've forgotten to do my exercises!

SARAH: We've had a busy day! I'm just dropping off to sleep and now this!

AARON: I can't go to bed without doing my exercises.

SARAH: Look Aaron, all I need is a good night's sleep. That's what I need, and that's what I'm going to have. You can please yourself. *(Aaron gets up)*

AARON: *(exercises in time)* Bend, stretch, crouch, straight. Bend, stretch, crouch, straight. *(repeats twice more)*

SARAH: Up and down, up and down. That's all you do, all day, up and down. Is that it?

AARON: Finished now. That's better

SARAH: Come on, Aaron, hurry up back to bed. It's cold in here.

AARON: *(back in bed now)* You know, Sarah, people might grumble about the census, but it's good for business.

SARAH: But think of all the extra work we've had to do!

AARON: Think of all the extra money!

SARAH: I don't want to talk about it now. I'm tired.

AARON: You're tired? I'm tired. We're both tired.

SARAH: I'm not listening. Go to sleep!

NARRATOR 1: You can see that he drives his wife mad most of the time.

NARRATOR 2: That's what husbands are for! That's what they do best!

AARON: And now for the sleep to end a perfect day.

SARAH: At last. Goodnight Aaron. Sweet dreams.

AARON: You always say that. It doesn't stop me having nightmares though.

SARAH: It's just an expression. Now no more talk until the morning. Good night dear.

AARON: All those visitors, all that extra money.

SARAH: Not now dear, I want to go to sleep too. I've said goodnight.

AARON: It's been such a busy day.

WIFE (getting angry) Will you settle down Aaron and go to sleep?

AARON: Sorry! I'm taking some time to unwind. Goodnight, dear.

(Brahms Lullaby)

(Two men are talking outside in the street)

DANIEL: You ready for the eclipse, then Jacob?

JACOB: But it's months away yet Daniel.

DANIEL: But a bit of forward planning never did any harm. Preparation, my friend, preparation.

JACOB: There's plenty of time for preparation. Anyway, what's wrong with last minute panic? Now that really concentrates the mind.

DANIEL: But you've seen the crowds? So have you noticed the money people are making from this census?

JACOB: What's that got to do with the eclipse?

DANIEL: There'll be even more people for the eclipse, and all of them with no where to stay.

JACOB: No one wanted to come here for the census. That was the Romans' idea.

DANIEL: But the eclipse! Now that's totally different!

JACOB: So what are you going to do?

DANIEL: I'm going to rent out my fields as campsites.

JACOB: What a good idea, Daniel. I'll do the same.

DANIEL: It won't take long to prepare the field.

JACOB: Toilets, things like that?

DANIEL: No, mud. That's what they expect, people who go to pop festivals.

JACOB: It's a pity we didn't think of this before the census.

DANIEL: Yes. People are still wandering about with nowhere to stay.

(How far is it to Bethlehem?)

*How far is it to Bethlehem?
Not very far.
Shall we find the stable room
Lit by a star?*

*Can we see the little child?
Is he within?
If we lift the wooden latch
May we go in?*

*May we stroke the creatures there
Ox, ass, or sheep?
May we peep like them and see
Jesus asleep?*

*If we touch his tiny hand
will he awake?*

*Will he know we've come so far
Just for his sake?*

*Great kings have precious gifts
and we have naught
little smiles and little tears
are all we brought.*

*For all weary children
Mary must weep
here, on his bed of straw
Sleep, children, sleep.*

*God in his mother's arms
Babes in the byre
Sleep, as they sleep who find
their heart's desire.*

DANIEL: Look out, strangers about.

JACOB: It's very late. I wonder who they are, and what they want?
(Enter Joseph and Mary)

MARY: How much further, Joseph? Are we nearly there yet?

JOSEPH: Not much more, Mary. We are nearly there.

MARY: My feet are killing me, and my back aches.

JOSEPH: I know it wasn't the best of times to travel, but we had no choice.

MARY: So this is Bethlehem. I have not been here before.

JOSEPH: It is a long time since I have been here. But it is the town of my birth.

MARY: I wish we could have stayed at home.

JOSEPH: But the Romans ordered it. We had to do as we were told.

MARY: And for that reason we had to come back? Just because the Romans said so?

JOSEPH: For the census. But I know it's a bad time for you.

MARY: I'm worn out. I need to rest soon.

JOSEPH: I'll ask for help. Excuse me, but we need to find somewhere to stay.

DANIEL: You'll be lucky! Most places are full.

JACOB: It really is a busy time. It's the census, you see.

JOSEPH: I know about the census. That's why we're here.

DANIEL: Bethlehem is full of visitors.

JOSEPH: But I'm not a visitor, I lived here once. That is why I have come back.

JACOB: I remember you now. Didn't we go to school together?

JOSEPH: Yes, I think so. But I moved away, to Nazareth.

DANIEL: You were a carpenter if I remember rightly.

JOSEPH: I still am. You have remembered well.

MARY: Joseph, I really need to rest.

JOSEPH: Sorry, Mary. But he's an old friend.

JACOB: So you're going to be counted by the Romans too?

JOSEPH: Yes. We have travelled from Nazareth in Galilee.

DANIEL: Well, you have walked a long way.

JOSEPH: It has taken us over a week.

JACOB: No wonder you look so tired.

DANIEL: Have you tried the inn over there? They might have room.

JACOB: The place is in darkness. It looks like everyone has gone to bed.

DANIEL: It's very late.

JOSEPH: But we need to find somewhere soon.

DANIEL: Just knock on the door. There may be someone still awake.

JACOB: Good luck. I hope you find somewhere to rest.

DANIEL: Are you coming back for the eclipse? I can do you a special deal for early booking.

JOSEPH: No, thank you. But I will do what you suggest and try the inn.

DANIEL: (*whilst walking off with Jacob*) It's a lovely campsite, close to the beach with an uninterrupted view of the sky. Perfect for watching the eclipse.

JACOB: All amenities, lovely place to stay. Very reasonable too.

NARRATOR 1: The Innkeeper and his wife lay fast asleep in their beds.

NARRATOR 2: They were both tired out.

NARRATOR 1: But no sooner had they settled down,

NARRATOR 2: when there was a knock at the door.

(*Joseph knocks on the door*)

AARON: (*sits up in bed*) What's that? There's somebody at the door. Who can it be?

SARAH: How do I know? I can't see through walls.

AARON: Aren't you going to see?

SARAH: Not me, I'm asleep. (*pretends to snore loudly*) You go Aaron, you're the man of the house.

AARON: Oh, I suppose I'll have to go. I hate being disturbed. I'm tired.

NARRATOR 1: So Aaron got out of bed.

NARRATOR 2: Put on his slippers

NARRATOR 1: And his dressing gown

NARRATOR 1: Climbed down the stairs

NARRATOR 2: And opened the door.

NARRATOR 1: Two weary travellers had just arrived for the census.

NARRATOR 2: They were desperate to find somewhere to stay.

AARON: (*shouts*) Do you know what time it is? It's way past my bedtime! What do you want?

JOSEPH: I'm very sorry. We have walked all day.

MARY: I'm very tired. We've nowhere else to go.

AARON: I'm sorry about that, but we'd gone to bed. We were already asleep.

JOSEPH: I've already said I'm sorry.

AARON: And so you should be, disturbing people at this time of night.

JOSEPH: We need a room for a few days.

AARON: No room here. Sorry, we're full. Absolutely chocker. It's the census you see.

JOSEPH: Yes, that's why we are here.

MARY: I can't walk much further.

AARON: I don't suppose you booked?

JOSEPH: Now how on earth could I have booked?