

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Narrator 1

Narrator 2

Narrator 3

Mary

Joseph

Innkeeper

Shepherd 1

Shepherd 2

Shepherd 3

Angel

Melchior *A Wiseman or King*

Caspar *A Wiseman or King*

Balthazar *A Wiseman or King*

Gatekeeper

Herod

Innkeeper's Wife

Crowd 1-4

Priest 1

Priest 2

Scribe

Chorus & Choir

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Narrator 1: It was a cold, dark night and many people were travelling; returning to their birth town for the census that was taking place.

Narrator 2: Some had travelled a long way, through the hot desert sand.

Narrator 3: All were tired and hungry and looking for somewhere to rest...

Narrator 1: But all the rooms and lodgings were already taken...

Narrator 2: Amongst them was a young couple; tired and weary. She was soon to give birth and was exhausted from the long journey.

(The scene lights up to show many travellers, wearily plodding the road. Amongst them are MARY and JOSEPH with a tired-looking donkey.)

Song One – No Room For Mary

Long ago two strangers came to town.
They travelled far just like the Bible says
And then they searched all over Bethlehem
To find a room for the night where they could stay.

No room for Mary; Nowhere at all.
But the world came to love
The child from above
Who was born in a cattle stall.

Joseph walked the streets of Bethlehem.
He had to find a place somehow, somewhere.
He knocked on doors, but no one seemed to care
When Mary smiled Joseph said a silent prayer:

No room for Mary; Nowhere at all.
But the world came to love
The child from above
Who was born in a cattle stall.

To the inn they slowly made their way.
But it was full; no room at all that day.
There's just one place the kind innkeeper said
It's all I have but it's yours, my cattle shed.

No room for Mary; Nowhere at all.
But the world came to love
The child from above
Who was born in a cattle stall.

(The crowd carry on walking as MARY and JOSEPH break away and move downstage.)

Mary: I must rest for a while, Joseph. I am so tired.

Joseph: I'm sure you are, my dear. It's been a long, tiring day. We must be nearly at Bethlehem, now. The poor donkey looks exhausted as well.

Mary: He must be as tired as me. He's had to carry me all this way.

Joseph: I'll see if I can find anywhere nearby, where we can stay for the night.

(JOSEPH approaches the crowd.)

Joseph: **(To one of the crowd)** Excuse me, do you know of anywhere around here, where we might stay.

Crowd 1: Sorry. I'm not from around here. I wouldn't know.

Joseph: Thanks. **(To another)** Do you live around these parts.

Crowd 2: No – I'm from Nazareth.

Joseph: That's where we have come from. Mary is having a baby soon and needs to rest.

Crowd 3: You won't find anywhere around here to stay for the next few days – apart from under the stars.

Joseph: There must be somewhere that we can stay.

Crowd 4: Are you joking? Look around you – this is the result of Herod and his bright ideas!

Crowd 1: **(Aping Herod)** "Let's have a census" he said. "Let's count the people" – Brilliant! But then he wants us all to go back to our home towns for the pleasure...

(The INNKEEPER approaches JOSEPH from out of the crowd.)

Innkeeper: Greetings, friend.

Joseph: Greetings.

Innkeeper: I heard you say that you were looking for somewhere to stay.

Joseph: **(Hopes raised)** Do you have a room?

Innkeeper: Not a chance, I am afraid. However, I might be able to give you some shelter from the cold of the night. I have stables at the back of my Inn.

Song Two – The Inn at Bethlehem

Joseph: Innkeeper sir, have you a bed?
Where we can rest our sleepy heads
Mary my wife must rest awhile,
For we have travelled many 'a mile.

Innkeeper: All of my rooms are full kind sir,
Sorry I can't help you.
This is our busy time of the year,
There's nothing I can do.

Joseph: Innkeeper sir, don't turn away,
Surely you know somewhere to stay.
Innkeeper: Well there's a place but very small,
Yes you can share my cattle stall.

Choir/Chorus: While all the world was fast asleep,
On that first Christmas morn.
There in a stall in Bethlehem,
The Holy babe was born.

(JOSEPH beckons to MARY to join him. She gets up and crosses to JOSEPH followed by the DONKEY.)

Innkeeper: Come, follow me.

Mary: Where are we going?

Joseph: The Innkeeper has somewhere we can shelter for the night.

Innkeeper: Bethlehem is crowded. There are no rooms to let, I'm afraid. But I have a stable. It isn't much, but it's better than being outside on a cold night like this.

Mary: Thank you. You're very kind.

Joseph: We can have another good look around tomorrow, but tonight we must rest.

Innkeeper: Follow me.

Joseph: You go along, Mary and I'll be with you in a moment.

(The INNKEEPER leads MARY away, as JOSEPH returns to the DONKEY; the CHORUS sing "The Broken Hearted Donkey". During the song, Joseph pats and reassures the donkey.)

Song Three – The Broken-Hearted Donkey

Clippety clop, clippety clop
Got to keep going on an on to Bethlehem.
Clippety clop, I'm ready to drop
Daren't even stop, I must plod on to Bethlehem.

Once there was a donkey, a broken-hearted donkey
Neglected and rejected, no-one loved him.
Then one day a stranger, a kind and gentle stranger
Said, "I need you for a special journey."
And who's the lovely lady who stroked my face and smiled,
Befriended me and whispered please go steady?
And for my lovely lady who rides upon my back
I'll tread with care down every mountain track.
"Who do I carry?" said the donkey with each stride.
Who do I carry on this long, long, ride?"

Clippety clop, clippety clop
Got to keep going on an on to Bethlehem.
Clippety clop, I'm ready to drop
Daren't even stop, I must plod on to Bethlehem.

When Bethlehem was sighted, the donkey was delighted
Excited for he'd reached his destination.
And while the world was sleeping, the angels were a-keeping
Constant watch on Mary's new creation.
And when the donkey saw the baby in the straw
Mary's holy child, the King of Heaven
He nestled to his side, with joy knelt down and cried
With happiness for all the help he'd given.
"Look who I carried," said the donkey full of pride
"I carried Mary on the long, long ride.

(MARY and the INNKEEPER have arrived at the stable. Mary is preparing to settle down for the night. At the end of the song, JOSEPH joins them with the DONKEY.)

Innkeeper: I'm sorry it's not much, but I hope you get some rest. Help yourself to straw and hay. The animals won't bother you. Goodnight. **(He exits)**

Joseph & Mary: Goodnight.

Narrator 1: And so they settled down for the night.

Narrator 2: But they weren't alone.

Narrator 3: The donkey went inside to shelter from the cold...

Narrator 1: As well as the cattle eating straw from the manger.

Narrator 2: That night, Mary's baby was born, right there in the stable.

Narrator 3: Not far away, in the fields just outside Bethlehem, there were some shepherds looking after their flock.

Narrator 1: They had just eaten their meal and were feeling sleepy...

Narrator 2: ...When suddenly...

(The lights fade on the NARRATORS and come up on the SHEPHERDS gathered around a little camp fire, finishing off their meal.)

Shepherd 1: It's a beautiful night.

Shepherd 2: Time to turn in

Shepherd 3: That's all you think of – eating and sleeping.

Shepherd 2: ... and counting sheep! Especially when I can't sleep! **(They all laugh)**

(There is a flash of light and an ANGEL appears to them. The SHEPHERDS cower in fear.)

Angel: Fear not. I bring you good news. A child is born in Bethlehem.

Shepherd 1: What child?

Angel : He is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
Shepherd 2: Son of God! Here in Bethlehem. Are you sure?
Angel: You will find him in a stable, lying in a manger.
Shepherd 3: We must go, straight away and see for ourselves.
Angel: He is to be a King. The greatest King, that ever lived.
Shepherd 1: This is fantastic! We must take a present with us.
Shepherd 2: Just a minute – am I having a dream or what? Somebody pinch me.
(One of the other SHEPHERDS gives him a shake.) Well. If I am not dreaming, who are you?
Angel: I am an angel, sent by God, to bring you this Good News.

(At this moment more ANGELS appear to sing the “Angels’ Alleluia”.)

Song Four – Angels’ Alleluia

Chorus: Gloria in excelsis,
Gloria in excelsis deo,
For Jesus Christ has been born
In Bethlehem this Christmas morn.

Angels: Alleluia sing
Let’s rejoice and tell the world
That today will be the first Christmas morn.
Alleluia sing
For mankind can live again,
For a child in Bethlehem
Has been born.

Chorus: Gloria in excelsis,
Gloria in excelsis deo,
For Jesus Christ has been born
In Bethlehem this Christmas morn.

Angels: Alleluia sing
Celebrate the news we bring
Everyone must know of Jesus Christ’s birth.
Shepherds leave your sheep
You must go to Bethlehem
It’s the greatest place tonight here on earth.

Chorus: Gloria in excelsis,
Gloria in excelsis deo,
For Jesus Christ has been born
In Bethlehem this Christmas morn.
In Bethlehem this Christmas morn.

Shepherd 2: I'm sure that I'll wake up in a minute!

Shepherd 3: Stop doubting your eyes – this is real.

Shepherd 1: I said it was a beautiful night.

Angel: You must go – now!

Shepherd 2: Well, if this is for real, we must take a present with us. What can we give Him?

Shepherd 3: Let's take some of the fleeces. That will keep Him warm on a cold night like this. **(Starts to exit)**

Shepherd 1: Hang on a minute! How will we know where to find this child?

Angel: The baby was born in a stable and is lying in a manger. Follow the star!

Shepherd 2: **(Still having some doubts)** I thought you said this baby was the Son of God. Why is he in a manger in a stable?

Shepherd 1 & 3: **(Together)** Stop doubting!

Shepherd 2: Well, come on then – what are you waiting for? Let's follow the star!

Song Five – The Friendly Star

The sheep are still, the shepherds watch,
A fire is burning bright,
And overhead a friendly star
Shines out with wondrous light.

Then Angel voices fill the sky,
“A King is born today.”
The friendly star says “Follow me,
And I will light the way.”

“Leave your sheep on the hill,”
says the friendly star.
“They will graze in safety still,
and Bethlehem,
Bethlehem is not far.”

(After the song, the shepherds exit. They could go out through the auditorium, following the route that the travellers made at the start of the show. If so, they will need to enter by the same route later, when they visit the stable.)

Narrator 1: And so the Shepherds hurried off to see the baby King.

Narrator 2: Meanwhile, three Wisemen had also heard of the birth and were travelling from the East to see for themselves.

Narrator 3: They had studied the scriptures and prophecies and were following a bright star.

Narrator 1: The star led them first of all to Jerusalem, where King Herod ruled.

(The scene changes to Herod's Palace. The WISEMEN will enter and be confronted by a GATE-KEEPER OR GUARD. The scene needs to have 'outside the palace' and 'inside the palace' areas.)

Melchior: We've lost the road now that the star has disappeared.

Caspar: It was so clear and so bright. Surely it would shine through these clouds?

Balthazar: I don't understand how it can just disappear. Let's stop here and see if the star re-appears tomorrow night.

(One of the Wisemen bangs a staff on the ground as if knocking for attention.)

Gatekeeper: **(Offstage)** I'm coming. **(The WISEMAN knocks again)** Alright, alright, I said I'm coming! I can't go any faster. **(He enters and faces the WISEMEN as if inside the Palace.)** Well, what is it?

Caspar: What place is this?

Gatekeeper: What place? What place? You've dragged me out of my bed to ask me where you are? **(As if talking to a naughty child)** THIS – IS – HEROD'S – PALACE. – Jerusalem!

Melchior: Herod the King. He lives here?

Gatekeeper: Ye-e-e-s. What do you want with him?

Balthazar: We *must* see him.

Gatekeeper: *Must* see him? Strong words to speak about our king.

Caspar: You don't understand, do you? We have come a long, long way...

Melchior: ... over mountains... rivers

Balthazar: ... even deserts...

Melchior: ... and we have brought gifts. See, I have gold.

Caspar: And I have Frankincense...

Balthazar: I have brought the purest Myrrh.

Gatekeeper: **(Quizzical)** For Herod? You have brought these gifts for Herod?

Melchior: We have brought these gifts for the greatest King on earth.

(The lights fade on this scene as the CHORUS sing "Gifts They Bring").

Song Six – Gifts They Bring

Three mighty Kings came a riding
A glorious, wonderful sight;
A star in the sky is their guide from on high,
They travel by day and by night.

And gifts they bring: Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh,
For the child born in a stable bare.
The three eastern Kings bow their heads
As they kneel down in prayer.
Onwards by valley and mountain.
Is Bethlehem really so far?
They're hoping to see him, the King of all Kings.
But always they follow the star.

And gifts they bring: Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh,
For the child born in a stable bare.
The three eastern Kings bow their heads
As they kneel down in prayer.

(Lights back up on the NARRATORS.)

- Narrator 1: Herod was not happy being woken from his sleep.
Narrator 2: Especially when he found out his visitors were looking for another king in his realm.
Narrator 3: And their gifts were not for him!
Narrator 1: He called for his experts in these matters – his scribes and chief priests – and demanded to know more.

(Lights out on NARRATORS and back up on the Palace scene. HEROD is with his advisors.)

- Herod: ***(Raging with temper)*** What do you know! Come on! Out with it!
All: Nothing Your Majesty!
Herod: I don't believe you. Rumour has it, these Wisemen are seeking another king; a child-king!
Priest 1: It is written that... that...
Herod: Out with it!
Priest 1: ... a new Messiah shall be born.
Herod: A Messiah! Not a king then?
Priest 2: He shall be King of the Jews.
Herod: So he is a king, then? Where do I find him?
Scribe 1: It is also written that he shall be found in Bethlehem, sire.

Herod: Why wasn't I advised of this before? (*The priests and scribes remain silent.*) I AM KING OF JUDAEA! Do you hear me! Out! All of you. I must speak with these visitors. Send them to me.

(The PRIESTS and SCRIBES exit, leaving HEROD to plan a scheme.)

Herod: I need to be cunning here, if I am to find this child-king. I must win their trust. Ah, yes... I know how.

(The WISEMEN enter and bow courteously to HEROD.)

Melchior: Greetings to you Herod.

Herod: Greetings! I hear you have travelled some distance, for many days. Pray tell me, why have you come all this way to Jerusalem?

Balthazar: We are here to pay our respects to a new-born king.

Caspar: One who is to be greater than any other king.

(HEROD bristles with rage and can barely control himself, pacing up and down during the song.)

Song Seven – Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar

Melchior: I'm Melchior,
Caspar: I'm Caspar,
Balthazar: And I am Balthazar;
All: Three kings we come a riding,
Following a star.
Just following, just following a star.

We're Eastern kings
Lord Herod
And we have journeyed far,
To find a child, the Son of God,
Guided by a star.
We're following, we're following a star.

A King is born,
Lord Herod,
The greatest King of all.
His home is not a palace,
But a cattle stall.
The greatest King, the greatest King of all.

Melchior: I'm Melchior.
Caspar: I'm Caspar.
Balthazar: And I am Balthazar;
All: Tomorrow we must travel on,
Following the star.
Just following, just following the star.
Just following, just following the star.

Herod: Gre..e..e..eater than any other! I think not!

Melchior: It is written in the great prophesies, your majesty.

Herod: I have heard that a child may have been born in Bethlehem.

Balthazar: Bethlehem! Of course. **(To other Wisemen)** We must go at once.

Herod: Do! Do! Go now! Can I give you provisions or anything? **(Not waiting for an answer)** Make sure you find this child-king and then send me word so that I may also visit and pay him homage.

Caspar: We will indeed, sire.

(The WISEMEN bow and exit. HEROD'S guards enter for the song.)

Song Eight – Who Is This Child?

Herod: Who is this child, who threatens me,
And where is this child tonight?
And why do they call Him the 'King of all Kings?'
I must crush him with all my might!

So follow the kings as they follow the star,
And remember to keep out of sight.
Find this child, search high and low,
Over desert, sands and sea;
And once he is found,
Don't hesitate:
Destroy; this is my decree.

How can a child be King of Kings?
Perhaps it is all a lie!
But I cannot rest while this child is alive,
So it's better this child should die!

So follow the kings as they follow the star.
You must follow, no matter how far.
Just follow the kings as they follow the star.
You must follow, no matter how far,
You must follow, no matter how far.

(Lights down at the end of the song as the GUARDS exit the stage in one direction, HEROD by another. Lights up on the NARRATORS.)

Narrator 1: And so the Wisemen left Herod's palace and continued their journey to Bethlehem.

Narrator 2: The skies cleared and the star shone once again.

Narrator 3: And guided them all the way to Bethlehem.

Narrator 1: When they arrived in Bethlehem, the star finally stood still.

Narrator 2: It seemed to come to rest over a wayside Inn.

Narrator 3: And so the Wisemen's journey finally came to an end
Narrator 1: Tired and weary, they went to the inn to find the child king.

Song Nine – Three Night Riders

(Chorus)

Three night riders, three night riders,
Following a star.
On and on to Bethlehem:
They have travelled far.

Three night riders, three night riders,
Bethlehem's in sight.
There to find the infant king
Born this Christmas night.

Knelt before this stranger,
In a stable bare.
Eastern Kings in robes of gold,
Frankincense they offered;
Gifts of gold and myrrh.
As the Holy Scripture foretold.

Baby sleeps, there's not a sound
And Mary rest her head.
Just three night riders knelt in prayer,
Round the Saviour's bed.
Round the Saviour's bed.

Narrator 1: Everything took place just as the scriptures had foretold. Whilst the little town of Bethlehem slept, Mary's baby was born in a stable.

Narrator 2: She wrapped the baby Jesus in warm clothes and laid him in the animal's manger, amongst the hay and straw.

Narrator 1: Because of this, the shepherds and the Kings would know that this child was not any child but Jesus the Saviour.

Narrator 2: And all this took place right under the noses of the Innkeeper and his wife...

(Lights down on the NARRATORS and up on the Inn scene. To one side of the stage is the Nativity; the INNKEEPER and his WIFE enter down stage so not to draw attention to the crib just at this moment.)

Innkeeper: Another dawn – another day.

Wife: Yes. But not just any other day.

Innkeeper: What do you mean?

Wife: Didn't you hear the baby cry, in the night?

Innkeeper: No. What baby?

Wife: You're impossible. The couple that arrived yesterday... we had no room for them...

Innkeeper: We turned many people away yesterday...

Wife: She was expecting a baby... surely you noticed...

Innkeeper: Ah, the couple that we put up in the stable.

Wife: At last – the drachma has dropped! She had the baby during the night.

Innkeeper: Well I never heard a baby cry!

Song Ten – Did You Hear?

Did you hear a baby cry?
One December morn;
A simple cry that told the world
That Jesus Christ was born?
Did you hear the Angel's song?
Fill the skies with joy;
A song that echoed far and wide
That Mary had a boy?

Come and see him,
You will find him
Asleep in a Bethlehem stable.
It is just as the angels said;
That's where Jesus Christ was born,
Where Mary first laid his gentle head.

Did you see the Holy star
On that special night?
The world below just stood and stared
At such a wondrous sight.
Did you see three Kings ride by
With gifts for Mary's son?
It happened while the whole world slept,
Before the light of dawn.

Come and see him,
You will find him
Asleep in a Bethlehem stable.
It is just as the angels said;
That's where Jesus Christ was born,
Where Mary first laid his gentle head.

(The SHEPHERDS enter at the end of the song and one of them moves forward to the INNKEEPER'S WIFE.)

Shepherd 1: Did you say that a child had been born?

Shepherd 2: ***(Joining them)*** In a stable?