

A STRANGE NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM

by Melanie Koster

CHARACTERS

JOSEPH	INNKEEPER	SHEPHERD 1	WISE MAN 1
MARY	INNKEEPER'S WIFE	SHEPHERD 2	WISE MAN 2
DONKEY		ANGELS	WISE MAN 3

OPENING HYMN SUGGESTIONS: **Little Donkey,**
Mary's Boy Child,
Or Silent Night

SCENE : INN AT BETHLEHEM

ACT ONE

JOSEPH AND MARY ARRIVE AT THE DOOR OF THE INN.

JOSEPH: Can we have a room?

INNKEEPER: No room.

JOSEPH: Oh, thanks anyway. *(Turns to leave)*

MARY: Joseph!

JOSEPH: He said they're full. *(Shrugs)*

MARY: I am not going another step on this donkey! Get a room! *(Gets off donkey)*

JOSEPH: My wife's having a baby.

INNKEEPER: My wife will have a cow if I squeeze another guest in.

JOSEPH: *Please!*

INNKEEPER: You could have the barn.

JOSEPH: At a discounted rate?

MARY: *Joseph!*

INNKEEPER: Off you go, it's just around the corner.

Mary and Joseph exit.

HYMN SUGGESTION: While Shepherds Watched

ACT TWO

SHEPHERDS ARRIVE AT THE INN DOOR.

SHEPHERD 1: Here we are, at Bethlehem.

SHEPHERD 2: Are you sure this is the right place?

SHEPHERD 1: It doesn't look like the birthplace of a king, does it?

SHEPHERD 2: That's for sure.

SHEPHERD 1: But, the angel did say...

SHEPHERD 2: Are you *sure* he was an angel?

SHEPHERD 1: The wings and halo rather give him away. I hope he passed on our congratulations to the big Fella.

SHEPHERD 2: What about the baby's name!

SHEPHERD 1: "Saviour, Emmanuel, Christ the Lord, Jesus," the angel said.

SHEPHERD 2: A bit of a mouthful. Poor kid. He'll be teased at school.

SHEPHERD 1: Bruce, or Bob – they'd have been better choices, nice, simple, won't date.

SHEPHERD 2: True, true.

SHEPHERD 1: Must be some important baby, that's all I can say. They went to a lot of trouble with the birth announcement.

SHEPHERD 2: We just put a notice in the 'Bethlehem Herald' when our Baaaart was born.

SHEPHERD 1: And what was with all the bright lights and angels?

SHEPHERD 2: Tell me about it! And all that singing - "Peace on earth!" they cried.

SHEPHERD 1: Well, it *was* peaceful until that rowdy lot showed up.

SHEPHERD 2: Impressive, though.

SHEPHERD 1: I reckon! We'll be talking about it for years to come.

SHEPHERD 2: This doesn't look like the right place. Maybe we got it all wrong.

SHEPHERD 1: Are you going to knock on the door, or shall I?

SHEPHERD 2: You do it.

SHEPHERD 1 Pushes doorbell.

(SOUND of a doorbell: Ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong!)

SHEPHERD 2: My ears are still ringing from all that singing. *(pretends to clear ears out with fingers)*

SHEPHERD 1: Ah.... buddy - that would be the doorbell.

SHEPHERD 2: Ohhhh!

INNKEEPER: *(opens door, looks disapprovingly at shepherds)* Yes? Can I help you?

SHEPHERD 1: We're looking for a baby.

INNKEEPER: A baby?

SHEPHERD 2: Yes, a baby.

SHEPHERD 1: Which way to the maternity ward?

INNKEEPER: *(Speaking to wife, over shoulder)* Listen to this Doris, these jokers are looking for a *baby!*

WIFE: *(Comes to door)* Are you relatives of Mary and... Jo, I think his name is?

SHEPHERD 2: No... um, er-

SHEPHERD 1: *(elbows shepherd 2)* Friends... close friends of the family.

WIFE: News travels fast.

SHEPHERD 2: The angel told us.

SHEPHERD 1: *(elbows shepherd 2, harder this time)* Shhhhh!

INNKEEPER: The *what?!*

WIFE: The young woman had the baby just a few hours ago. They're round the back in the stable.

SHEPHERD 1: Stable? That's no place for a baby.

INNKEEPER: No choice, I'm afraid. Full house tonight. Whole town's packed.

SHEPHERD 2: Oh. Thanks for your help.

Shepherds leave.

INNKEEPER: They were a bit odd. Did they mention *angels?*

WIFE: Been too long out in the fields, probably. Who knows! It's a strange night.

Innkeeper shuts door.

**HYMN SUGGESTION: Going on a journey (from Julie Wylie's 'Sing Merry Christmas'),
Or We three kings of orient are**

ACT THREE

Wise men ring doorbell.

SOUND of doorbell: Ding-dong, ding-dong!

INNKEEPER opens door.

WISE MAN 1: We're looking for a king.

INNKEEPER: A king? Here? You must be joking.

WISE MAN 2: No, we're not.

WISE MAN 3: We're very serious.

WISE MAN 1: Where is the king?

INNKEEPER: *(Calls over shoulder to his wife)* Hey Doris! These fellas are looking for a king!

WIFE: *(comes to door)* A king? Here? You must be joking.

WISE MAN 2: No, we're not.

WISE MAN 3: We're very serious.

WISE MAN 1: Where is the king?

INNKEEPER: A king? Does this place look like it's fit for royalty?!

WIFE: You should try the 'five star' hotel down the road.

INNKEEPER: Did you not see our sign? We are just a 'one star' inn.

WISE MAN 1: Yes, we saw the star.

WISE MAN 2: We followed the star.

WISE MAN 3: And here we are.

INNKEEPER: Did you hear that, Doris? They followed "the star".

WIFE: It's a strange night in Bethlehem.

WISE MAN 1: Where is the king?

INNKEEPER: Maybe we'd best send them out to the barn with the others. Off you go.
(he shoos them out door.)

HYMN SUGGESTION: Away in a Manger

ACT FOUR

SCENE: IN THE STABLE, BEHIND THE BETHLEHEM INN

Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, Wise Men and angels gather around manger.

WISE MAN 1: Here's my gift of *gold*.

WISE MAN 2: Here's my gift of *frankincense*.

WISE MAN 3: Here's my gift of *myrrh*.

Innkeeper's Wife enters, carrying a dish.

WISE MAN 1: What are you doing here?

WISE MAN 2: What gift have you brought for the king?

WIFE: Wise *men* bring gold, frankincense and myrrh. Wise *woman* brings
casserole!!!

HYMN SUGGESTION: Joy to the World,

Or O Come all ye faithful