

The Inn Keeper
A Christmas Comedy By
Josh Reid

Third Draft

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***This script is written so that Christmas Carols can be placed in between each, or most of the scenes. Ideally the characters should start singing the carols, as part of the production.**

1 INN KEEPER NARRATION

The set is made up as an old inn. There is an old man - the INN KEEPER wandering around the reception counter. He is fussing with some stuff, muttering under his breath about some customer. He looks up and sees the audience.

INN KEEPER

Oh hello! I didn't see you all there. - Which is remarkable really because there certainly is a lot of you. Well - thank God you're all good looking! Seriously, we have all types come through here - you should see some of them! - actually maybe you shouldn't.

INN KEEPER

So...do you all want a place to stay the night? What's that? - Oh okay - you're all just here for lunch. No problem though - I've got plenty of space here - room for all - everyone's welcome! Yes - that's our motto here at the Bethlehem Inn - "Everyone's Welcome!" So if you feel the need

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

INN KEEPER (cont'd)
to sleep it off after your
banquet today just come and see
me and I'll find a lovely room
for you. - Or if you're too full
to make it up the stairs to your
room, well - you can always sleep
in the shed round the back!

INN KEEPER
Hey, that reminds me of something
that happened here not too long
ago - quite a story it is. About
a young couple that did actually
camp out in the back shed. I
though they were crazy - but it
was the busy season, I was
totally booked out, and they were
desperate for somewhere to stay
and... - oh, will you listen to
me prattle on, I sound like an
old woman! Well, I'll leave you
be.

INN KEEPER
What's that? - You want to hear
more about the crazy couple that
camped out in the shed? Oh okay,
but it'll take a few minutes
though - as it's quite a tale.
Well let me see now, where do I
begin? Ah yes. There I was
working away in my office, just
like I am today when I heard a
loud knock on the door.

2 JOSEPH AND MARY

There is a loud knock on the door of the inn. This is where the beginning narration moves smoothly into the actual play. The INN KEEPER stops being the narrator and simply plays out his role as the character.

The INN KEEPER hears the knock on the door which was made by JOSEPH accompanied by his wife MARY. They are on the far side of the set on the other side of the inn's front door. MARY is on a donkey. When I say 'on a donkey' here what I mean is that there is a man dressed up in a donkey costume. He is not on all fours, but standing up and is carrying MARY in his arms. Obviously this is weirdly funny and will get laughs but the characters act as though it is normal behavior. The DONKEY doesn't say anything, but just stands around carrying MARY - as you would expect a donkey to do.

(CONTINUED)

The stage should be so that one side is the inside of the inn and the other side the outside of the inn. There should be a door in the middle of the stage so the characters can knock on the door and the INN KEEPER can answer it.

JOSEPH knocks on the door a second time.

MARY

Maybe we should just try somewhere else?

JOSEPH

We've tried everywhere! There's nowhere to stay in this town. Maybe we should keep on traveling?

MARY

I don't know if I can. I'm so tired. I don't think I can walk any further.

Joseph looks at her for a moment.

JOSEPH

Ya know, you're not really 'walking' - I mean, strictly speaking it's the donkey that's been doing all the 'walking'. You've just been - sitting - on the donkey.

MARY

Yes well I suppose he must be tired too.

JOSEPH

You suppose? I would say he's really tired. Look at him, he can barely stand up. And he's had to carry you the whole trip - give him a break.

MARY

Hey I'm the pregnant one here!!! - Give him a break! Why don't you give me a break and find us a place to stay tonight?!

JOSEPH

Okay! Okay. I'm sorry.

JOSEPH turns again to the door. Knocks very loudly.

JOSEPH
Hello? Hello? Anyone in? Anyone
in the inn? Hello?

3 JOSEPH MARY AND INN KEEPER

The INN KEEPER stops ignoring the knocks on the door and wanders over to open the door. He is most put out from this interruption.

INN KEEPER
Yes!?! What is it?

JOSEPH
Oh. Hello. Sorry to disturb you.
We're traveling through and are
looking for a place to stay
tonight.

INN KEEPER
Look mate, there is no room here.
In fact I would guess that
there's no room anywhere. Every
thing's booked up all over
Bethlehem.

JOSEPH
Well there's got to be somewhere
that -

INN KEEPER
There's nowhere. Especially not
here. Goodnight!

The INN KEEPER slams the door shut and goes back into his office.

4 JOSEPH AND MARY

JOSEPH and MARY look dumbfounded at one another. The DONKEY looks tired.

JOSEPH
We could try up the road a bit?

MARY
Joseph. Look out there - this is
the end of the road. We've tried
everywhere in town and if we take
a few steps further we'll be out
of town.

JOSEPH
Yeah, but what do you want me to
do? - It's full.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

Just ask him again. There's got to be somewhere to stay. Maybe a B&B?

JOSEPH signs and turns back to the door. He knocks on it loudly.

5 JOSEPH MARY AND INN KEEPER

The INN KEEPER looks up again at the knock on the door. He goes over and opens in a huff.

INN KEEPER

You again?! I thought I told you there was no room.

JOSEPH

Yes I know, but my wife and my donkey are both very tired.

MARY hits JOSEPH.

JOSEPH

Ouch. What'd you hit me for?

MARY glares at JOSEPH.

INN KEEPER

Well your donkey can stay in the back shed with the other animals, but I don't know where you two are going to sleep.

JOSEPH

I see.

INN KEEPER

Unless you want to sleep in the shed with your donkey?

JOSEPH

No, I don't think that would -

MARY

That'll do.

INN KEEPER

What? You want to sleep in the shed? Good one.

JOSEPH

Sorry, excuse my wife, she -

MARY

Excuse your wife!? - Joseph, I'm right here. Don't talk about me as though I'm not here. What are you embarrassed to be with me now?

JOSEPH

No. But we can't stay in the shed. Not with you in your -

MARY

Joseph. I'm tired. As you mentioned, the donkey's tired. There's no where else to stay. We all need to rest. If the shed is the only place to stay then the shed it is.

JOSEPH turns back to the INN KEEPER.

JOSEPH

Ah...we...

INN KEEPER

You two are crazy. But if that's your decision let me at least get you a couple of blankets.

The INN KEEPER grabs a couple of blankets from his office.

JOSEPH

Are you sure about this?

MARY

No. But I'm too tired to care.

The INN KEEPER returns with two blankets.

INN KEEPER

Here you go. Two blankets. The shed's around the back.

JOSEPH

Ah...Thank you.

INN KEEPER

Do you want to order breakfast now?

JOSEPH

You serve breakfast in the shed?

INN KEEPER

Hey, I'm running a business here.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH

Right. Two continental breakfasts please.

INN KEEPER

Alrighty. I'm off to bed, so I'll see you two in the morning. Goodnight and good luck.

JOSEPH

Okay. Don't we need a key?

INN KEEPER

Key? - There's not even a door! Sleep well.

The INN KEEPER closes the front door and goes into his back office area where there is a bed, which he gets into and sleeps. JOSEPH and MARY and the DONKEY exit. The lights go down. A possible space for a song or two. Potentially, instead of the lights going down completely, either JOSEPH or MARY or BOTH - or perhaps even the DONKEY could start singing one of the carols. Therefore a nice way to tie in the drama with the rest of the show. In any case either we have a song, or the lights come up again for the next scene.

6

JOSEPH AND INN KEEPER

MARY is now off stage, as she is currently in labour - which, from my personal experience is not something you want to put on stage - especially during lunch. In any case JOSEPH approaches the door of the inn and knocks loudly again. The INN KEEPER is snoring, but wakes upon JOSEPH's second loud knock and opens the front door.

INN KEEPER

You again!

JOSEPH

Ah.. yes.. Sorry to disturb you, I hope I didn't wake you?

INN KEEPER

Yes you did.

JOSEPH

Oh, I, uh...

INN KEEPER

What do you want?

JOSEPH

Yes, well, look I'm just wondering if I could get some hot soapy water and towels at all?

(CONTINUED)

INN KEEPER

Need to take a bath do you?

JOSEPH

Well actually my wife is -

INN KEEPER

There's a laundry around the side. There's a bucket and hot running water - which is remarkable really considering we're in Bethlehem somewhere between the years 6 and 4 BC.

JOSEPH

Yeah, that is good. What is 'BC' anyway?

INN KEEPER

God knows. You'll find some towels in the laundry too. Now good night!

The INN KEEPER shuts the door and goes back to bed.

JOSEPH

Ah - thank you.

JOSEPH exits. Either lights down or time for another song. One thought is that we could have all the singers in costume too, even if they aren't in the play, and they could even be somewhere on stage and just get up when it's their turn.

7

JOSEPH AND INN KEEPER

Lights up. JOSEPH again is approaching the door of the inn. He knocks loudly. The INN KEEPER is asleep, but wakes up and approaches the door.

INN KEEPER

What now?

JOSEPH

Ah, yes. I don't suppose I could borrow another small blanket at all?

INN KEEPER

A small blanket?

JOSEPH

Yes, you see me wife has -

(CONTINUED)

INN KEEPER

Okay! Here. Here is a small blanket. Now please leave me alone!

JOSEPH

No problem. I won't disturb you again -

The INN KEEPER slams the doors shut and goes back to bed. JOSEPH takes the small blanket and exits. Time again for another song or other segment. Another thought is that this quick bit might even go in between a song - breaking the song up. Or a quick bit between two songs.

8

CRANKY LADY AND INN KEEPER

Lights come up - or song finishes. A very large bright spot light breaks the darkness by shining right down on top of the inn. This of course represents the star of Bethlehem announcing Jesus' birth. A CRANKY LADY with curlers in her hair and a face mask on approaches the inn door. She is in her pyjamas and has a dressing gown wrapped around her. Fluffy bunny slippers on. She is cranky and knocks loudly on the door of the inn. The INN KEEPER wakes from his slumber and moves slowly to the door. He opens it.

INN KEEPER

What in the -

CRANKY LADY

Don't you 'what in the' me! I'm a guest in this hotel and I am furious! I thought this was a fine establishment - what with the hot running water and all - but this just makes me mad!

INN KEEPER

What? What makes you mad?

The CRANKY LADY points up.

CRANKY LADY

That! - I'm trying to get my beauty sleep, but I can't because of that great light that's appeared right above your inn!

INN KEEPER

Well I don't think you need any 'beauty sleep'...

(CONTINUED)

CRANKY LADY

Don't get smart with me sunshine!
I paid top dollar for my room and
now I can't sleep because of some
great star that's all of a sudden
appeared and is shining right
through my window! You never told
me a great big star would be
shining through my window!

The INN KEEPER looks up to see the star.

INN KEEPER

I can assure you ma'am that this
has never happened before. I've
never even seen this star before.

CRANKY LADY

Well it's here now! What are you
going to do about it?

INN KEEPER

Ah...I don't think there's much I
can do about a new star appearing
in the sky...

CRANKY LADY

Don't give me your excuses Inn
Keeper! I demand a solution!

INN KEEPER

Ah...I could send some dark
curtains up to your room...?

CRANKY LADY

Right. Fine then. But do it soon.
I need my beauty sleep!

The CRANKY LADY storms off.

INN KEEPER

Yeah, maybe you're right.

From off stage.

CRANKY LADY

I heard that!

The INN KEEPER goes back to his office as though he is
organising some dark curtains for her. Lights down at this
stage and/or into another song session.

SHEPHERDS

The INN KEEPER is once again asleep. A group of SHEPHERDS approach the front door. They are accompanied by several SHEEP. Again these sheep are people dressed in sheep costumes, standing up. Potentially these sheep could all be singers or a chorus and go into a carol at some stage.

SHEPHERD

There it is. Just like they said.

SHEPHERDS WIFE

Yep. A huge bright shining star.

SHEPHERD

Man it's bright. Should have brought my sunglasses - or star glasses or something.

SHEPHERDS WIFE

What are sunglasses?

SHEPHERD

I've got no idea.

SHEPHERDS WIFE

So, where is it supposed to be?

SHEPHERD

Right here. Directly below the great star. - I'm just not sure exactly where.

SHEPHERDS WIFE

Maybe you should ask for directions?

SHEPHERD

No, I don't need to ask for directions! They said it's below a big star, and we're below one. It's here somewhere.

SHEPHERDS WIFE

Maybe we're below the wrong star?

SHEPHERD

Oh come on! How many stars this big can there be? This has got to be it. - I just, I just can't see exactly where it is...

SHEPHERDS WIFE

Just knock on the door and ask someone.

(CONTINUED)

SHEPHERD

No!

SHEPHERDS WIFE

Ya know, asking for directions isn't going to affect your manhood. Asking is better than wandering around lost for hours.

SHEPHERD

Hmm. Maybe you're right.

SHEPHERDS WIFE

Of course I am.

The SHEPHERD turns to knock on the Inn's door.

SHEPHERD

You won't think less of me because I asked for directions?

SHEPHERDS WIFE

I promise, I won't think any less of you than I already do.

SHEPHERD

Okay then.

The SHEPHERD knocks loudly on the Inn's door.

10 SHEPHERDS AND INN KEEPER

The INN KEEPER wakes up from his sleep. He answers the phone next to his bed.

INN KEEPER

Hello? ... Hello?!

He looks at the phone in his hand. He looks up. Looks around. Rolls his eyes. Sighs.

INN KEEPER

Oh. That's right.

He hangs the phone up.

INN KEEPER

Must be the door then.

The INN KEEPER answers the door.

INN KEEPER

Hello?

(CONTINUED)

SHEPHERD

Oh yes hello. I'm a shepherd and this is my wife, a shepherds wife.

SHEPHERDS WIFE

I have a name you know!

SHEPHERD

Right. Ah, this is Sheila. But I usually just call her 'Wifey'.

SHEPHERDS WIFE

I'll call you something in a minute!

SHEPHERD

Ah, yeah...hey I think we might be a bit lost. We were told that there was a great event happening beneath a great big star.

INN KEEPER

Oh yeah. I'm sorry about that - it's keeping everyone up.

SHEPHERD

Right. Well, can you tell us where this miraculous birth has taken place? It's a big deal apparently. It was certainly a big deal when they told us about it.

INN KEEPER

I have no idea what you are talking about. This hotel is full of people - all who are trying to sleep. But as far as I'm aware no one has given birth, or thrown a party or anything weird like that.

SHEPHERD

Oh. Oh, I see.

SHEPHERDS WIFE

I told you it was the wrong star.

INN KEEPER

Of course it wouldn't surprise me if something odd did happen tonight.

SHEPHERD

Why's that?

(CONTINUED)

INN KEEPER

Well first the crazy couple and their donkey who are sleeping in the animal shed out the back arrive, then they want some soapy water and towels, then a small blanket, then all my customers complain because of this extremely bright star that's shining in all my windows, and then you lot turn up in the middle of the night asking about some great event! - I mean what's next? - God visiting Bethlehem?

SHEPHERD

Maybe.

INN KEEPER

Look, I'm tired. It's the middle of the night. Why don't you and your wife and your sheep go around and share the shed with the other crazies - and let me get some sleep?!

SHEPHERD

Ah, okay. No problem mate. We'll do just that.

The INN KEEPER shuts the door and goes back to bed.

SHEPHERDS WIFE

How rude!

The SHEPHERD and the SHEPHERDS WIFE and the SHEEP all leave the stage - or first they burst into song. Personally I would prefer the SHEEP to start bleating out the melody of the song and then go into the actual song. So we have another song session then lights down or into the next drama bit. - In any case the shepherds have now left the stage.

11 WISE MEN

A group of WISE MEN enter the stage. They look up and see the star. Then they see the inn. They approach the inn.

WISE MAN 1

If my calculations are correct - this is the place of the great event!

WISE MAN 2

Yes - well, there's the great star we've been following.

(CONTINUED)

WISE MAN 1
Signifying a world changing
event.

WISE MAN 2
A change of the ages!

WISE MAN 1
A chasm in time and space!

WISE MAN 2
A wondrous life changing event!!

WISE MAN 1
The greatest occurrence in
history!!

WISE MAN 3
It's cool...

WISE MAN 1 and WISE MAN 2 both look at WISE MAN 3.

WISE MAN 1
Did you just say - 'cool'?

WISE MAN 3
Yeah...?

WISE MAN 1
How did you ever get into the
wise man's club in the first
place?

WISE MAN 2
His dad's the president.

WISE MAN 1
Oh yes. - That's right. Nepotism!

WISE MAN 3
Sorry.

WISE MAN 1
Never mind.

WISE MAN 1 knocks loudly on the door of the inn.

12 WISE MEN AND INN KEEPER

The INN KEEPER once again wakes from his sleep from the
knock at the door.

INN KEEPER
What now?

The INN KEEPER goes and answers the door.

(CONTINUED)

INN KEEPER

What?

WISE MAN 1

Greetings and salutations my kind sir! What a blessed being you must be to have such a holy and magnificent event bestowed upon your most wondrous establishment!

INN KEEPER

Do you mean the hot running water?

WISE MAN 1

No. But that certainly is remarkable. I am referring to the incredible event foretold by our studies and understanding of the great stars.

INN KEEPER

Oh that! - Yeah, well if you can tell me how to turn it off I'd appreciate it - it's keeping all the guests awake.

WISE MAN 2

Kind sir. Please tell us where the holy child is. We must present our gifts to him.

INN KEEPER

Look as I told the other guys I don't know anything about a child... did you say gifts? What kind of gifts?

WISE MAN 1

I bring gold - as a tribute to the new king!

WISE MAN 2

I bring frankincense - a sweet and rare perfume!

WISE MAN 3

And I bring myrrh!

WISE MAN 1

Not again.

WISE MAN 2

Always with the myrrh. Can't you think of anything original?

(CONTINUED)

WISE MAN 3

Hey myrrh is good oil man. - It's cool.

WISE MAN 1

Again with the 'cool'.

WISE MAN 2

He'll never learn.

INN KEEPER

I see. You can leave your gifts here is you want.

WISE MAN 1

No my fine friend. We must present these to the new born king. Pray tell - where is he?

INN KEEPER

He's not in here that's for sure. Perhaps you should try the other crazies congregating in the shed out the back.

WISE MAN 1

'Crazies' you say. That sounds promising. Let us go wise men.

The WISE MEN all exit the stage and the INN KEEPER closes the door, shaking his head.

INN KEEPER

Crazy wise guys.

The wise men have either left the stage - or actually they stay and another song happens. Then lights down as previous scenes.

13 ANGELS AND THE INN KEEPER

Lights up and there are some ANGELS on the stage. One of them knocks on the door. The INN KEEPER gets up angrily and throws the door open.

INN KEEPER

Now what's goi...- uhhhh.
... h e l l o

ANGEL

Greetings Inn Keeper. We are here to see the baby king!

The INN KEEPER is awe struck.

(CONTINUED)

INN KEEPER

Uhh. Sure. I believe something is going on in the back shed.

ANGEL

I see. Round the back is it?

INN KEEPER

Uhh. Yeah...

ANGEL

Very well. Thank you for your assistance. You may now go back to bed.

INN KEEPER

Uhh. Thanks.

ANGEL

Oh by the way - that new star isn't keeping you up at night is it?

INN KEEPER

Huh? - Oh. No. - no, not at all - everything's good.

ANGEL

Good to hear. Thanks again.

The INN KEEPER closes the door quietly behind him and goes back to bed - but not laying down this time - just sitting on it a bit bewildered. The ANGELS still on stage burst into an appropriate carol. Then lights down.

14 LITTLE DRUMMER BOY AND INN KEEPER

After the last song as the ANGELS exit the set and little boy with a drum knocks on the door. The INN KEEPER is still a bit bewildered by the angelic visit and opens the door quietly - not quite knowing what to expect next.

INN KEEPER

Yes?

LITTLE DRUMMER BOY

Hello. I'm the little drummer boy. I'm looking for -

The INN KEEPER puts up his hand to stop the boy from talking. He looks at the boy, looks over at the audience, looks back at the boy and shrugs.

INN KEEPER

Round the back.

The INN KEEPER now closes the door and goes back and sits on his bed. The LITTLE DRUMMER BOY now sings some appropriate song - can't think of anything at the moment but it'll come to me. Then he exits the stage and lights down.

15 INN KEEPER

There should be another very loud song now. When it's over the INN KEEPER gets up.

INN KEEPER

That does it. What is all that noise and singing coming from the back shed? I'm going to find out what's going on.

The INN KEEPER gets up - puts his coat and boots on and exits the set.

Lights down.

16 MANGER SET

This is the last scene - or second last. But it's a whole new set - either have it hidden somewhere else on the stage or somewhere in the auditorium, or rebuild during one of the meals perhaps. All the characters are there. The WISE MEN, the ANGELS, the SHEPHERDS, DRUMMER BOY, JOSEPH, MARY, the DONKEY and of course the new arrival JESUS.

There are other animals around too. All the characters are sitting or standing around looking admiringly at the new baby which is in MARY's arms. The INN KEEPER storms in.

INN KEEPER

Alright! What is going on in here? - Enough's enou-

SHEPHERD

Shhhh! - You'll wake the baby.

INN KEEPER

Baby? There's a baby here in the animal shed?

SHEPHERD

Yes. Look.

The INN KEEPER moves into the manger set more and sees the new baby Jesus. Mary looks up and smiles at him. The INN KEEPER stares at the baby.

(CONTINUED)

INN KEEPER

This is what you've all come to see?

WISE MAN 1

It is indeed. A miracle for all mankind.

WISE MAN 2

Yes. This baby is destined to change the world as we know it.

INN KEEPER

Oh I see. Some religious thing is it?

WISE MAN 1

It's not a religious thing at all. - It's a 'life' thing.

INN KEEPER

What do you mean? How is it a life thing?

WISE MAN 1

It's a life thing because this baby is destined to become the Saviour of all mankind.

INN KEEPER

What? How is that possible?

WISE MAN 2

It is said that he, in all his innocence, will take on the guilt and sins of the world, so that we all can be free.

INN KEEPER

Free from what?

WISE MAN 2

Free from a life separated from God. Through this child completing his destiny we will all be able to spent eternity with God.

INN KEEPER

That's a long time.

WISE MAN 2

Indeed.

INN KEEPER

So, this child will choose to take on my sins? Erasing

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

INN KEEPER (cont'd)
everything I've ever done wrong
in God's eyes?

WISE MAN 1
That's right. You see God loves
us all so much that he sent his
only Son to bear the burden of
our sins, so that we don't have
to.

INN KEEPER
Why would God do that?

WISE MAN 1
Because God loves you and wants
you to be in His family?

INN KEEPER
I see. That's...that's
really...really...

WISE MAN 3
Cool.

INN KEEPER
Yes.

The INN KEEPER falls to his knees in front of the baby
Jesus.

INN KEEPER
I...I'm overwhelmed. I can't
explain it properly, but I feel
such a sense of - hope. This
baby...the whole room feels
like...like - something amazing
has happened here tonight.

INN KEEPER looks around at others.

INN KEEPER
I'm sorry if I was rude to you
all before. I just didn't know. I
am so filled with hope and
belonging. Now I know why you all
came to see this child - this
amazing child. I feel like a new
man - like a young man again. I
feel like I have been - saved
from myself - like I've been
renewed somehow. All because of
the birth of this child. How can
that be?

ANGEL

This child is the Son of God - he
will be the Saviour of all
mankind. Whoever believes in Him
will have true life - forever.

INN KEEPER

I believe. I mean, I'm not a
religious man at all. Last time I
stepped into a church I thought
the walls would fall down around
me. But this is - real. Now that
I've seen what you've all come to
see - I...I just know it's true -
really true. I believe - oh, I
believe!

The INN KEEPER makes a shout.

INN KEEPER

Whooo! Man, I ...I just feel like
- I know this sounds silly
but...- I really feel like
singing!

They all laugh along with him and then they enter into the
last song. I'm not sure which carol or hymn or whatever
but something appropriate, relating to the INN KEEPER's
reaction to seeing Jesus.

After the song, lights down and...

THE END.