

## **Scene 1**

(As **Intro Music** plays (CD track 8) the cast members take their seats – fade the music when ready. At the back of the main stage market stalls are covered with sheets. A separate stage, representing the stable, is set up to the right of the main stage. Alternatively, the main stage could represent the stable, and the floor space in front be used for the stalls – see staging suggestions/scenery. To one side stands a narrator, or maybe four narrators, reading from an old book.)

**Narrator** ~ Bethlehem was a town like any other town, a normal place with normal people doing normal things. But one day lots of visitors started to arrive – hundreds of weary travellers looking for a hot meal and somewhere to stay.

(The stage starts to fill with travellers and locals – see staging suggestions/costumes. They greet each other with friendly handshakes.)

For the locals it was very exciting, if a little worrying, as their town was nearly bursting at the seams! One thing was for sure, for the first time since they could remember, Bethlehem was definitely buzzin'!

## **Song 1 – Bethlehem's Buzzin'** (CD track9, lyrics p13) (Locals and Travellers)

(As the song ends, four locals stand forward of the crowd.)

**Local 1** ~ Looking for a place to stay? Come with me! I have a lovely hotel with excellent food!

**Traveller 1** ~ (moving to stand by Local 1) Thank you. Just what I need!

**Local 2** ~ (to travellers) You don't want to go there! They've got a rat problem! I've got clean rooms with great views...and no rodents!

**Traveller 2** ~ (to husband) That would suit us perfectly. Let's go there. (bossily) Grab the bags, Dear! Hurry! (they move to stand by Local 2)

**Local 3** ~ Well, my place is very up-market, with fine-dining and room service. It's not cheap, but you get what you pay for.

**Traveller 3** ~ (to wife) That sounds like the place for us – no riff-raff! (they move to stand by Local 3) We'd like a room, please!

**Local 4** ~ My guest house is so popular I've only got one room left! Who's going to be the lucky person who gets it?

(To **Intro Music** (CD track 10) all the travellers pair up with locals and are led off.)

## **Scene 2**

*(Fade the Intro Music when ready. The market stalls are uncovered by the stall-holders – see staging suggestions/scenery. They then stand behind their stalls.)*

**Narrator** ~ The next day was market-day in Bethlehem. Well, every day was market day, but with visitors in town, all with money to spend, this was an extra special market day. Stall-holders, Jacob, Rebecca and Samuel, were keen to cash-in!

*(Jacob, Rebecca and Samuel enter, and stand centrally in front of their stalls. They each bring on a sign on a post or sandwich board, and place it next to or behind their stall. Slogans on these signs describe the nature of the goods they are selling, eg. "HALF-PRICE SPICES", "GENUINE SILKS FROM THE EAST" or "REAL EGYPTIAN JEWELLERY – AS WORN BY THE PHAROAHS" etc etc.)*

**Jacob** ~ We'll be rolling in it by the end of the day!

**Rebecca** ~ All these out-of-towners looking for souvenirs of their visit to Bethlehem!

**Samuel** ~ They'll never guess all our stuff is fake or knock-off! Easy money! Oh, look! Here comes the morning rush!

*(To the opening bars of the next song, some of the locals and travellers enter and begin chatting and bargaining with the stall-holders.)*

### **Song 2 – Business Is Booming** (CD track11, lyrics p14) *(Stall-holders and shoppers)*

*(All exit, including the other stall-holders, who first cover their stalls with the sheets. Jacob, Rebecca and Samuel remain, happily counting cash, their stalls still uncovered.)*

**Samuel** ~ I can't believe they fell for it! One man bought a mat 'cause I told him it was from a king's palace. Ha! It's the one I wipe my feet on at home!

*(As they laugh, a tired man and woman, Mary and Joseph, approach them.)*

**Rebecca** ~ Look! Two more customers! Sir, Madam, can I interest you in a lovely necklace, once worn by an Egyptian princess?

**Joseph** ~ I'm sorry, friend, but we have little money to spare. We are tired, and my wife is about to have a baby. Do you know where we can find a room for the night?

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