

Scene 1

(As the **Intro music** ('All Work-No Play' backing) plays (CD track 9) the cast members take their seats – fade the music when ready. The main stage is set up to show a stable, with bales of straw (if possible) and empty pens – see staging suggestions. A manger full of hay and a water trough stand in front of the pens. A line of washing hangs across one corner of the stage. James, the stable boy, sits on a bale, holding a pitch fork and/or a broom. He looks glum!)

Narrator James was a stable boy. He looked after the animals that lived in a small stable, in a small yard, behind a small inn, in the small town of Bethlehem. His days were spent grooming the horse, milking the cow, collecting eggs from the chickens and stopping the goat and the sheep eating the washing on the line! He had to keep the trough full of water and the manger full of hay. But the worst job of all was cleaning up all the.....well, you-know-what!

(The animals enter; a cow, a horse, two chickens, a sheep and a goat – see staging suggestions/costumes. James stands centre-stage for the opening song, with the animals around him. During verse 2 James uses the pitchfork/broom to clear up.)

Song 1 – All Work - No Play (CD track10, lyrics p12) (James and animals, supported by the whole cast)

(As the song ends, the animals go to the back of the stage and into the pens. James sits back down on the bale, exhausted.)

Narrator And if James ever stopped to catch his breath, there was always someone telling him to work harder.....like the innkeeper.

(The innkeeper enters, trailing a finger along the surfaces of the trough and manger, and inspecting it for dust. He stands over James wagging the finger!)

Innkeeper I don't pay you to sit down all day! This stable is filthy! Get it cleaned properly, you lazy good-for-nothing!

(The innkeeper exits, and his wife enters. She wags her finger at James.)

Narrator Or the innkeeper's wife.....

Wife I've got guests to feed, you know! Hurry up and bring me the milk and eggs, you lazy good-for-nothing!

(The wife exits and the maid enters. She inspects the washing on the line, then wags her finger at James.)

Narrator Or the maid.....

Maid Have you been letting that goat and sheep nibble my washing again? Control them, you lazy good-for-nothing?

(She exits and James stands up. He leans on his broom, day-dreaming)

James One day my life will change....one day soon.

Narrator For James had a dream. He longed to be a fisherman on the great Sea of Galilee, just like the ones who would visit the inn to sell their fish and enjoy a drink and a meal with their friends. James would listen to their stories, as they filled the inn with laughter and song.

(The Fishermen enter and gather on the floor in front of the stage.)

Fisherman Let’s drink to the salty sea! May she always be generous in her gifts to us!

Song 2 – A Fisherman’s Life (CD track11, lyrics p13) (Fishermen, supported by the whole cast)

(The Fishermen exit and James lies on the bale, pulling a blanket over himself.)

James Their lives seem so exciting. I’d love to be a fisherman!

Narrator And with thoughts of sea spray and fishing boats filling his head, James settled down for the night. Little did he know that tomorrow he would have to work harder than he’d ever done in his life!

*(To **Intro Music** (CD track 12) the lights fade.)*

Scene 2

(The lights come up. The innkeeper, his wife and maid enter, and stand over the sleeping James.)

Narrator In the morning James was awoken by a very excited innkeeper, his wife and the maid.

Innkeeper Wake up, you lazy good-for-nothing! There’s work to do. Lots of visitors have arrived in Bethlehem, and they all want somewhere to stay!

Wife And they all want feeding, so get that cow milked and collect those eggs, you lazy good-for-nothing!

Maid And they all need clean sheets on their beds, so bring in this washing, you lazy good-for-nothing!

Narrator Sure enough, many people had come to Bethlehem – more than ever before! They were people who had been born there, and had been told to return to sign a large register. Whatever their reason for coming, one thing was for sure, James was in for a busy day!

(Lots of visitors enter, in couples. Each couple has a donkey on a rope – see staging suggestions/costumes. During the song, the innkeeper, wife and maid fuss round the visitors.)

Song 3 – Knock! Knock! Knock! (CD track13, lyrics p14) *(Visitors, supported by the whole cast)*

(When the song finishes, as they exit each visitor hands their donkey’s rope to James, who is soon surrounded by the animals!)

Visitor 1 There you are, young man. Take good care of her – she’s walked a long way. *(S/he exits.)*

Visitor 2 Make sure you give her lots of hay. She’s got a big appetite! *(S/he exits.)*

Visitor 3 Give this one a good rub-down. He’s a bit hot and sticky after his journey. *(S/he exits.)*

Visitor 4 He needs a bit of TLC, this one. He likes his ears tickling, and his belly patting. Oh, and if it’s not too much trouble, he likes a bedtime story last thing at night. *(S/he exits.)*

Narrator James may have had dreams of becoming a fisherman, but for now there would be no time for anything else but stable-work.....well, ‘donkey-work’!

(During the song James attends to the donkeys – grooming, patting, tickling and feeding them!)

Song 4 – Donkey-Work (CD track14, lyrics p15) *(Donkeys, supported by the whole cast)*

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