



Scene 1

(As **intro music** plays (**track 8**) the cast enters and opening positions are taken. Centre stage stands a stable door - **see staging suggestions/scenery p20**. As the music ends, a voice shouts '**GET OUT!**' To the **chasing music** (**track 9**), the cat and dog run out from behind the door and cower at the side of the stage. The innkeeper's wife follows them, angrily waving a broom!)

Innkeeper's Wife And don't try sneaking in here again! Clear off!

(She goes back behind the door. The cat and dog join the line of other animals already sitting at the front of the stage – an ox, a donkey, a sheep and three camels. They all look fed-up.)

Narrator 1 One cold evening in Bethlehem, in a stable behind an inn, the innkeeper's wife had a bee in her bonnet! For some reason, which the animals did not understand, she had decided that tonight not one of them was allowed inside.

Cat But it's a stable! It's supposed to have animals in it!

Dog Why are lots of people in there, and why are we out here?

Ox It's a very curious situation!

Camels (*snootily*) Humph! And rather inconvenient!

Sheep It's got me baaa-fled!

Donkey What exactly is going on behind that stable door?

All We'd really like to know.....

Song **Behind The Stable Door** (*tracks 1 & 10, lyrics p13*)
(*Animals supported by the whole cast*)

Narrator 2 Now, the innkeeper's wife was very house-proud and liked everything 'just so'. But throwing the animals out of the stable seemed a little harsh, even by her standards!

(*The innkeeper's wife pops her head round the stable door.*)

Innkeeper's Wife It may seem a little harsh, but I can't have any mess in here. Not tonight! (*She pops back again.*)

Narrator 3 But what was so special about tonight? The animals scratched their heads and tried to think.

(*The animals scratch their heads with a thoughtful 'Hmmmmmm?'*)

Narrator 1 They each thought about what had happened to them in the months, weeks, days and hours before now. Maybe this would give them some clues?

Dog Well, it was a few days ago when 'her indoors' (*pointing at the stable*) started giving me a hard time. Talk about a dog's life!

Cat I got it in the neck too! Me, her favourite cat! I remember feeling quite upset at the way I was being treated.....

*(We hear **harp music (track 11)** to signify a step back in time, and the animals exit to the side seats. The innkeeper and his wife enter, carrying a mop, bucket and cloth.)*

Narrator 2 Earlier that week, the innkeeper and his wife had heard news that Bethlehem would soon be full of visitors. These visitors would need somewhere to stay.....somewhere clean.

Innkeeper's Wife Look at the state of this inn!

Innkeeper But you only cleaned this morning! It's spotless!

Innkeeper's Wife It was spotless, but now there's cat and dog hair everywhere! That's it, I'm kicking those two out! Oh, and I saw a rat in the kitchen – as the man of the house, you might want to deal with that!

(The other innkeepers enter, all carrying cleaning products.)

Narrator 3 Every innkeeper in Bethlehem had the same idea – they had to get cleaning. With lots of visitors on their way, beds had to be made, floors had to be scrubbed, cushions had to be plumped and all animals had to be.....evicted!

Song **Bustling About** *(tracks 2 & 12, lyrics p14)*
(Innkeepers supported by the whole cast)

*(As **intro music** plays (**track 13**), the innkeepers exit and the animals return to the front of the stage. Fade the music when all are in position.)*

Scene 2

*(We hear the **harp music** again (**track 14**), bringing the action back to the present.)*

Dog OK, I sort of understand why we were thrown out of the inn, but I still can't see why none of us are allowed in that stable.

Narrator 1 Again, the animals scratched their heads and tried to think.

(The animals scratch their heads with a thoughtful 'Hmmmmmm?')

Donkey Well, we had a visitor at our house a while ago. Things got a little strange after that.....

*(Again we hear **harp music (track 15)**. The Donkey stands to one side of the main stage as the other animals exit to the side seats, **all except the ox who goes behind the stable door**. Mary enters and sits on a stool, then the Angel Gabriel enters and stands by her. The donkey watches, cocking its ear to hear what is being said.)*

Narrator 2 Some months before, in a village called Nazareth, a young woman, Mary, had been visited by Gabriel, an angel sent by God. The donkey had only heard the end of their conversation, but it had sounded very exciting!

Mary But I'm so afraid. Why has He chosen me to do this?

Gabriel Fear not Mary. God loves you and will be watching over you.

.....**continued**.....