

A script from



## **“The Innkeeper’s Dilemma” Original Version**

by  
Eddie James

- What** This drama covers the Christmas story from the point of view of an innkeeper who is seeking to fill that hole in his spirit. (Themes: Christmas, Holiness, Grace)
- Who** Stuart                                      Estelle  
Wiseman                                      Mary  
Drummer Boy                                      Paperboy  
Patron
- When** Biblical times
- Wear  
(Props)** 2 coffee mugs  
Bagel  
Briefcase  
Mints  
Newspaper  
Drumsticks
- Also biblical costuming for everyone but Wiseman, he should look like a Blues Brother.
- Why** Luke 2:1-20; Matthew 2:1-12
- How** This drama can be done as a large one-act, or spread over three sessions (there are message outlines to accompany each scene). Also it would be best to use a real baby for Jesus, it adds a lot emotionally.
- Time** Approximately 20-25 minutes; This script is 13 pages long.

## Scene 1

*The scene starts with **Stuart**, the innkeeper, yelling at his wife offstage.*

**Stuart:** Estelle, Estelle! Put the bed down! I said put the bed down. Estelle, sweetheart please put the bed down, I'll be right there. I'm trying to get some of my tools. Estelle put the bed down. *(To audience)* We're trying to fix a bed in one of our rooms. She thinks that I intentionally try to make her mad. I would never try to do something to make my dear, sweet Estelle mad.

*(To wife)* Honey, put the bed down, I'll be right there. I said, put the bed down. Oh, hold the bed up. I'm trying to find some tools, yes, tools! Put the bed down, I said... oh, hold the bed up.

*(To audience)* It has been chaos outside everywhere. You see, Caesar has issued this decree that everyone in the land has to be counted. Everyone has come back to their hometown to register, and Bethlehem is packed with people. I've never seen anything like this before! The vendors are out selling like mad, the economy has never seen better days! Quite amazing. I tell you, it would take a miracle to top what I've seen in Bethlehem over these past few weeks. A complete miracle!

***Patron** enters.*

**Patron:** Excuse me, can you describe your rooms for me?

**Stuart:** Oh, I thought I turned the sign off. We have no vacancy.

**Patron:** Oh well, I could have sworn that sign was pointing to the inn but maybe it's over your barn. You wouldn't put anyone in your barn now would you?

**Stuart:** No, no of course not! No!

**Patron:** Well, where can I stay?

**Stuart:** There is a motel, lets see... one, two, three... six motels down!

**Patron:** Oh yeah, Motel 6™! Looks like they left their light on for me.

**Stuart:** Yeah, looks like it.

**Patron:** Well, thank you and Merry Census!

**Stuart:** What?

**Patron:** Merry Census. I mean this has got to be the biggest time of the year, economically, I even trademarked the phrase! Merry Census!

**Stuart:** Oh! Ok, Merry Census!

**Patron:** Owe me a dollar!

*Stuart gives him a dollar, and Patron leaves.*

Forgive me for being so rude, my name is Stuart and I own this inn. My wife Estelle would probably tell you differently. She'd tell you that I only work here... part time... half-heartedly even at that. *(To wife)* Estelle, sweetheart, put the bed down. I said put the bed down. No, I didn't say shed a few pounds, I said... Oh, never mind, hold the bed up. *(To audience)* The evening is upon us and I've already turned people away. At least half a dozen people if not more. There is one gentleman, fisherman and his wife. Newborn baby in her arms, John, I think they said is name was. I visited with them awhile and they said they hoped their son would find something better to do with his life than haul fish all day. When I asked what they had in mind, they said they hoped he would write books. I inquired about the kind of books and they began to explain in great detail about how they wanted him to write about the meaning of life. Now, I'm a simple man who never has even attempted to ask those questions. I looked at them and told them, "It would probably take a divine revelation to show your son John the meaning of life." The father looked at me and said, "That's what I'm hoping for."

There was this other couple that came late tonight. They have made a lasting impression on me. The two looked very tired. I was on the front porch with my wife when they came up to us; the girl was on this donkey. She said to me, "Sir, we are very tired. Can you please find a place for us at your inn?" I told them like I told the people before them - I was so sorry but there was just no room here. She looked at me and said, "You don't understand, my husband has been on foot all this time. We've been traveling eighty-five miles and we are very exhausted. Don't you have anything?" Now, please know I'm a businessman first. Always have been! I couldn't do anything. Bethlehem was packed! So, when I say to you I was about to tell them to leave for the second time, don't think me rude. *(Pause)* My wife did. She did something to me at that moment, she did this thing where she jabs me in the ribs with her finger. I only had two options at this point. "A" find a place for them to sleep, or "B" find myself a place to sleep other than this inn.

My wife, Estelle, she saw something which I totally missed. The young girl, she was pregnant. I knew right then I couldn't leave them out in the cold night. I started to think where I could put them. The only place I could think of was the barn. My mother would roll over in her grave if she knew I was thinking of sending someone there. It's full of stench, manure, animals, hay. No place to put two people! It's all I had. I said to them, "You can have the barn. There's nothing else I can offer. It's yours if you want it." They both smiled at me and said thank you. They started to walk off and the husband turned around and said, "God bless you..." then looked at his wife, smiled, put his hand on her stomach and said, "because He's about to bless us."

I tell you, there was something different about them. If only you could have seen the way he treated her. The way they treated each other! It was such a sight to see. I've tried to think of a word to describe this couple. The only word that seems to run through my mind is kind of a quirky word. We don't hear the word very much but it's the only word that seems to fit. The word, "Holy." Yes, that is the only word that can describe what I witnessed. Holy... they were just different. Speaking of different, my wife... *(Yelling offstage)* Estelle! Are you still holding the bed up? Why don't you just put it down! *(Yelling louder)* I said... *(Softening, to himself)* holy.

*(Laughing to himself)* To think I was almost too busy to catch this. Holy. I'll be right there, sweetheart. I'll be right there.

*End of Scene 1*

## Scene 2

*The scene enters as **Stuart** is carrying 2 coffee cups, a bagel, and looking for **Estelle**. **Estelle** is outside taking in the night.*

**Stuart:** *(Offstage)* Estelle! Estelle! Where are you? The bed is finished. *(Enters)* Estelle...what are you doing?

**Estelle:** Look at that star!

**Stuart:** *(Looks)* It's a star. What about it?

**Estelle:** It's huge, so bright. I've never seen anything like it!

**Stuart:** A star is a star is a star, Estelle. Come on inside. *(Pauses. **Stuart** can see **Estelle** is too fixated on the star)* You aren't going to budge are you? Well, here, at least drink your coffee.

**Estelle:** No. Coffee will keep me up.

**Stuart:** Not this coffee. It's decaffeinated. Drink up.

**Estelle:** *(Sips coffee)* But it tastes like regular. Are you sure this is decaf?

**Stuart:** Oh, yes. Quite sure. That's the secret of new "Pharaoh's naturally brewed decaffeinated coffee," it tastes like regular but it's decaffeinated.

**Estelle:** Mmmm. Good cup of coffee. This star. I'm mesmerized by it. I wonder if it's guiding some weary traveler tonight. Can you imagine what it would be like to be out in the middle of nowhere and your only guide is a star? *(Grabs bagel from Stuart)*

**Stuart:** I think it would take a very wise man to answer that question.

**Estelle:** Since you're not busy, rub my shoulders.

**Stuart:** Why should I rub your shoulders?

**Estelle:** Because I was only holding up a bed for ten minutes, rub my shoulders!

**Stuart:** All right, all right. *(Putting down coffee cup to rub shoulders)*

**Estelle:** *(Eating bagel)* Good bagel, where did you get it?

**Stuart:** Like it, do you? I bought a whole slew of them at old man Moses' Deli down the street.

**Estelle:** Is this butter on it?

**Stuart:** No, it's a butter substitute. It has half the fat of regular margarine or butter.

**Estelle:** Are you sure it's not butter?

**Stuart:** It's not butter.

**Estelle:** I can't believe it's not butter.

**Stuart:** I tell you, Estelle, we are probably the only two people up tonight. I mean the whole town of Bethlehem is asleep. After the day we've had, I don't know what we're still doing up. We're up and those shepherds are up. Why do they keep going into our barn?

**Estelle:** Maybe they know the couple inside.

**Stuart:** Oh yes, the couple. What are their names?

**Estelle:** Mary and...

**Stuart:** Joe, I think. *(Grabs coffee cup)* Take one more good look at that star and then let's turn in. Let's go.

**Estelle:** The star. What do you think it means?

**Stuart:** *(Pause)* Blue light special, I don't know.

**Estelle:** I'm serious. Do you think it's a God-thing?

**Stuart:** A what?

**Estelle:** Maybe God has a purpose for that star.

**Stuart:** Estelle, you're getting loopy on me again. We have been down this road too many times. It's just a star. Let's go inside.

**Estelle:** It could happen!

**Stuart:** Enough, already!

**Estelle:** Stuart, give it a chance. It could mean something.

**Stuart:** *(Upset)* Enough! *(Freezes)*

**Estelle:** *(To Audience)* My husband, Stuart. He's a good man. I feel sometimes he's too busy and he misses the blessings of life. Don't get me wrong... He's a sweet, kind, and gentle husband. Other times, he's a perfect example of why mothers eat their young. You see I have a joy in my heart for God. I'd like to share that joy with him... If only he'd let me. *(Estelle freezes)*

**Stuart:** *(To audience)* My wife Estelle. A marvelous woman. There's no doubt about it. Sometimes I feel she gets a little carried with what she calls these "God-things." She tries to correlate everything in her life somehow around God. I mean, a perfect example: The star. She wants to parallel that star somehow with God. It's just absurd. At other times, I look at the inner peace she has and I must say I'd like some of it. I always find myself shying away from it because I feel like I wouldn't be good enough to understand the joy Estelle finds with God. I would like to know the faith Estelle has but I get too fearful. I do wish sometimes that God would just reveal himself in the flesh. God in the flesh, now that would be a miracle now wouldn't it? My wife... she sees miracles all day long, and I guess I keep looking for one.

**Together:** (*Stuart puts down coffee cup and places his hands on Estelle, which makes her unfreeze*) I guess... I desire intimacy.

**Estelle:** What did you say?

**Stuart:** I didn't say anything. What did you say?

**Estelle:** I didn't. I thought you...

**Stuart:** I heard you, something about "Macy's" or something.

**Estelle:** Well, "Macy's" is having their winter sale.

**Stuart:** It doesn't matter. Do me a favor and tell those shepherds to get out of our barn. The couple in there needs their sleep. Tell them they have to pay rent like everyone else!

**Estelle:** Oh, all right. Don't get in such a huff. I'll be right back. (*Exits*)

**Stuart:** (*Looking at star*) You know, maybe Estelle is right. Perhaps the star does have something to do with God. Could it be? No, now Stuart get a hold of yourself. Quit thinking such foolishness. But what if? What if the star really was a "God-thing?" Estelle...

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**ENDING:**

**Estelle:** Well, He worked through you. If He can work through you, He can work through anybody. Besides Stuart, it's a...

**Stuart:** I know, I know...

**Together:** A "God-thing."

**Stuart:** I know. I'm sorry about that. I'm going to be better, I promise.

**Estelle:** This moment, it's so, so...

**Stuart:** Holy.

**Estelle:** (*Smiles, looking at Stuart making a spiritual connection, which they have never experienced before*) Yes, holy. (*Pauses*) I have to go get ready. I have a lot of mouths to feed. (*Pauses with an awkward silence*) I've never felt closer to you than I do right now.

*(Starts to exit) Oh, hey... (Tosses the pad that **Stuart** had been writing on at the very first of Scene 3) I like it. It's really good!*

**Stuart:** You do, huh? Estelle...

**Estelle:** *(Stops before exiting)* Yes?

**Stuart:** I love you.

**Estelle:** I love you too. *(Exits)*

**Stuart:** *(To audience)* Bethlehem will be waking up soon and the people will be wanting food in their stomach and everyone will be rushing to register for the census. Lives everywhere, will be in their own little world and what they won't realize is that a Savior just entered the world. Yes, indeed. What a night. *(Looking at pad)* She likes it. *(Starts to read from pad)* Silent night... *(Starts to exit and pauses)* yes, child sleep while you can because your work is about to begin. *(Pause)* Silent night, Holy night...

*He exits. The end.*