

A RUFF! RUFF! NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM

BY JAMES WRIGHT

SCRIPT

Narrator 1 It's early evening in Bethlehem. Caesar Augustus has ordered that a census is to be taken of the whole Roman Empire. Every person must return to the town in which they were born to register.

Roman soldier Hear ye! Hear ye! The birth census for Bethlehem will begin tomorrow at day break in the town square! Please queue in an orderly fashion!
(As the soldier repeats this line over and over, Moses the dog barks at him, eventually taking away his town crier's bell and runs off with it. The soldier chases Moses around the stage/room shouting at him and eventually disappears).

SONG 1 **WE HAVE TRAVELLED FROM A VERY LONG WAY...** *(CD tracks 1/10)*
(As the song is played there's a lot of hustle and bustle as travellers fill up all the inns in Bethlehem. When the song has ended, guests enter the inn. This could have a sign outside such as 'The Travellers Rest'. As they enter 'knock, knock' jokes can be told).

Guest 1 Knock, knock!
Innkeeper Who's there?
Guest 1 Anita
Innkeeper Anita who?
Guest 1 Anita rent a room. Do you have any?
Innkeeper Yes! Please come on in

Guest 2 Knock, knock!
Innkeeper Who's there?
Guest 2 Amarillo!
Innkeeper Amarillo who?
Guest 2 Amarillo nice guy, do you have a spare room? *(said with Italian accent)*
Innkeeper Yes! Please come on in

Guest 3 Knock, knock!
Innkeeper Who's there?
Guest 3 Leena!
Innkeeper Leena who?
Guest 3 Leena little closer, I'm a little deaf. Do you have any spare rooms?
Innkeeper Yes we do! Please come on in *(answer shouted)*

Guest 4 Knock, knock!
Innkeeper Who's there?
Guest 4 General Lee
Innkeeper General Lee who?
Guest 4 General Lee I stay in a Hotel but they're all full up. Do you have a room?
Innkeeper Yes! Please come on in

Guest 5 Knock, knock!
 Innkeeper Who's there?
 Guest 5 Iris!
 Innkeeper Iris who?
 Guest 5 Iris I could find a room in this town. Do you have any?
 Innkeeper Yes! Please come on in.

Guest 6 Knock, knock!
 Innkeeper Who's there?
 Guest 6 Sadie!
 Innkeeper Sadie who?
 Guest 6 Sadie magic words. You still have rooms! Yes?
 Innkeeper Yes we still have rooms! Please come on in.

Guest 7 Knock, knock!
 Innkeeper Who's there?
 Guest 7 Shirley!
 Innkeeper Shirley who?
 Guest 7 Shirley you know me by now, I'm your most regular customer.
 Is my room ready?
 Innkeeper Oh Yes madam! Please come on in.

Guest 8 Knock, knock!
 Innkeeper Who's there?
 Guest 8 Kenny!
 Innkeeper Kenny who?
 Guest 8 Kenny 'y' tell me, do 'y' have anymore wee rooms? *(said with Scottish accent)*
 Innkeeper Yes! Please come on in

Guest 9 Knock, knock!
 Innkeeper Who's there?
 Guest 9 Oliver!
 Innkeeper Oliver who?
 Guest 9 Oliver troubles are over! A hotel with vacancies! Yes?
 Innkeeper Yes! Please come on in

Guest 10 Knock, knock!
 Innkeeper Who's there?
 Guest 10 Justin
 Innkeeper Justin who?
 Guest 10 Justin time for dinner, is the restaurant still open?
 Innkeeper Yes! Please come on in

Moses the dog Ruff-ruff! *(Moses the dog barks at the inn door, he could also ring the town crier's bell that the soldier failed to retrieve)*
 Ruff-ruff! *(The Innkeeper answers the door)*

Innkeeper Ah! Moses there you are! Where have you been? And where did you get that bell? Let me have a look at it? *(He examines the bell and reads the inscription)*
 ‘This is the property of Rome. Any unauthorised possession of this bell will lead to severe punishment!’ Oh no! Now we’re in big trouble, I’m in possession of stolen property and these Romans can be brutal! Quick Moses get in here, I hope no one saw you. All my rooms are full, so please no more barking! We need to keep a low profile and you’ll wake up all our paying guests. Not another sound!

Moses the dog Ruff-ruff! Ruff-ruff!

Inn keeper Right that’s it Moses! Bed! Now!

(Moses whimpers as he makes his way to his bed. The Innkeeper locks the front door and also makes his way to his room, takes off his dressing gown and puts on his night cap and climbs into bed)

Innkeeper What a crazy day it’s been. I’ve had to clean rooms, wash sheets, cook meals, and scrub the dishes, and now I’m in trouble with the law! Oh well, maybe things will look better in the morning. I need a stiff drink!
(He pours himself a drink and downs it in one gulp, and then yawns)
 I’m exhausted! *(He pulls the blanket over him and tries to sleep)*

Narrator 2 One by one all the lamps of Bethlehem fade into darkness and the silence of night falls upon the town.
(Mary and Joseph walk up to the Innkeeper’s door looking very tired from their long journey).

Mary Oh Joseph, we’ve travelled such a long way. I’m so tired and that donkey is so lumpy. I need to rest, now!

Joseph Mary, we’ve tried all the other hotels and B&Bs. This is our last chance of a nice warm bed. Here we go. Knock! Knock!
(The Innkeeper has snuggled himself up in bed but is soon disturbed by Moses running up to the front door and barking as Joseph knocks at the door).

Moses the dog Ruff-ruff! Ruff-ruff! *(The Innkeeper turns over and pretends not to hear).*
 Ruff-ruff! Ruff-ruff! *(The Innkeeper groans, puts on his dressing gown, picks up his lamp and goes to see what the barking is all about).*

Innkeeper Moses! What’s wrong with you! I told you, we need to keep a low profile. That Roman soldier’s looking for you and it won’t be to take you for a walk!
(Joseph knocks at the door again).

Moses the dog Ruff-ruff! Ruff-ruff!

Innkeeper Oh no! That soldier has found us, now we're in deep trouble!
(The innkeeper cautiously unlocks and opens the door and is relieved to find a man and woman standing outside) This had better not be another 'knock, knock' joke, I'm not in the mood!

Joseph Good evening to you sir. My wife and I are desperate for a room for the night. We've tried every other place in town, do you have any left?

Innkeeper You have got to be joking!

Joseph Sir! This is no joking matter. My wife is heavily pregnant, she's about to give birth! Please, you must have somewhere that we can stay?

Innkeeper I'm very sorry but all the rooms are taken. You'll just have to sleep...

Moses the dog Ruff!

Innkeeper Thank you Moses! As the dog said you'll just have to sleep.... rough!

Joseph As I just said, this is no joking matter!

Mary Come on Joseph, we're wasting our time here, and I need to sit down. I'm sooo tired. *(Joseph & Mary start to walk away disappointed)*

Innkeeper Excuse me! Wait! Come back!

Moses the dog Ruff-ruff! Ruff-ruff!

Innkeeper Moses shut up! Don't forget that soldier's after you!
(Joseph & Mary return to the inn door)
 Okay, I do have one more room; although it's more of a...er... stable and it does have...er... animals in it I'm afraid. Smelly ones at that!
 But you're welcome to use it, if you like?

Joseph Sir, you have got to be joking! A stable?

Mary We'll take it!

Joseph But Mary, it could have cows, sheep, chickens and RATS!

Mary I don't care anymore, I just need to rest!

Innkeeper The stable it is then! Please follow me.
(The innkeeper quickly leads Mary & Joseph to the stable, and then hurries back to the inn. Joseph spreads some fresh straw around while Mary sings).

SONG 2

I'VE BEEN HOLDING ON TO A PROMISE... Mary's solo *(CD tracks 2/11)*

Innkeeper Right Moses; let's have no more barking or those Romans will be having you for breakfast and I need my beauty sleep! *(He looks at his empty glass)*
Is that all gone? *(He drains the dregs of the glass)*. Now, Moses. Not another sound! *(The innkeeper goes back to his room, takes off his dressing gown, yawns, gets back into bed, and pulls the blanket over him again)*

Joseph *(Joseph runs back to the door)* Knock! Knock!
(Joseph waits anxiously at the door then knocks again) Knock! Knock!

Moses the dog Ruff-ruff! Ruff-ruff!

Innkeeper Moses shut up! Oh no! It must be the soldier this time, he's found us!
(The Innkeeper groans puts on his dressing gown, picks up his lamp and goes to see why Moses is barking)

Joseph Sorry to bother you again but this is an emergency! I need towels and a bowl of warm water! And maybe a strong drink? Please! As fast as you can! This is an emergency! I think the baby's on its way!

(The innkeeper rushes to get the bowl of water and towels muttering to himself)

Innkeeper Why did I say I had a stable? I should have kept my mouth shut. Now I'm having to work overtime! This is going to cost him extra!

(The Innkeeper rummages around, trying to find everything Joseph had asked for. Moses follows behind him, barking excitedly).

Moses the dog Ruff-ruff! Ruff-ruff! Ruff-ruff! Ruff-ruff!

Innkeeper Moses! Quiet! *(But Moses becomes more excited)* Down boy! Heel!
Shut-up Moses! Shut-up! *(Eventually the Innkeeper gets everything and returns to the door out of breath)*. Here you are. Towels, water and a strong drink.
And I'll have one myself too. Thank you. *(He downs another glass)*.

Joseph Oh thank you, thank you, thank you, so much, Mr.....ah Innkeeper man.
Goodbye! *(Joseph anxiously runs back to the stable)*

Innkeeper Moses! *(Said angrily)* I'm seeing red and it's not the Red Sea. Bed! Now!
(Once again Moses returns to his bed whimpering to himself. The Innkeeper locks the door, takes off his dressing gown and goes back to bed).

(A child dressed as a star or holding a stick with a star attached to the top, comes on stage and performs a slow dance routine to music. The child could be holding a torch which occasionally could be shone in the innkeepers eyes).

SONG 3

STARY MUSIC... *(CD tracks 3/12)*

(The Innkeeper tosses and turns then buries his head in his pillow but the starlight is too strong. He gets up again and looks out of the window to see where the light is coming from).