

SCENE TWO

- Narrator 1** Meanwhile, Bethlehem's inns were doing a roaring trade.
- Narrator 2** Drove of people entered the little town, all seeking accommodation.
- Narrator 3** The innkeepers were rushed off their feet.
- Narrator 1** And still the people kept on coming.
- Narrator 2** Beds were filled.
- Narrator 3** Tummies were filled.
- Narrator 1** Wine glasses were filled.
- Narrator 2** But for one man, his wife and a donkey, a few more miles remained before they could finally rest.

Inside the inn. Busy and bustling. Lots of groups stand around, chatting, drinking and eating little titbits.

- Isaac** So, how was the journey?
- Elijah** Not too bad actually. We bought a new donkey last week - well, part-exchange for the old one: she goes like the clappers.
- Adriel** I've been telling Isaac for weeks that we need a new donkey: ours is on its last legs.
- Isaac** It was a new donkey or a new roof, my dear, and you know how cold the nights can get.
- Elijah** Well, we're all here now, that's the main thing. Now, where has that waiter got to with the vol-au-vents?

Elijah walks off in search of something to eat.

- Adriel** What on earth is a vol-au-vent?
- Isaac** Don't ask me. What on earth is a waiter?

Confused, they move off as action switches to another group.

Lucas Well I don't mind telling you, I am exhausted.

Josiah You look it. Which way did you come?

Lucas I took the road to Emmaus actually, then past Jerusalem and in from the west.

Josiah Oh, right. Did you not think about coming down past Jericho? It's always pretty clear that way. Decent road surface too.

Lucas Yes, well, maybe next time. Now, I need refuelling: where's the bar?

They move off as another group comes forward.

Diana Yes, it really is a lovely room: double aspect, generous balcony, ooh and a lovely view over Bethlehem Plaza.

Esther Lucky you. Mine overlooks the latrines.

Diana Oh, how smelly, what rotten luck. Well, bunk in with us, Jeremiah won't mind I'm sure. Let's go and tell him.

They move away as another group comes forward.

Leah I wonder what actually happens when we get counted. Do you think the Roman soldiers will do it?

Grace Ooh, I hope so.

Joanna Do you think it will take a long time?

Grace Ooh, I hope so.

Leah Will they ask us how old we are?

Grace Ooh, I ... well, we'll just have to see, won't we.

The Innkeeper enters with a flourish, drink in hand, ready to speak to all of his guests.

Innkeeper Ladies and gentlemen, if I could kindly ask for your attention. The inn is now full! The door is locked, the bar is stocked, and we've got a good ten hours until dawn.
(*raising his cup*) Merry Census.

All (*with cups raised*) Merry Census.

THE INN CROWD

All the people being counted,
Now the inn is over-crowded.
But it's quite some party.

All the dancing, all the singing,
Now the inn is really swinging.
Yes it's quite some party.

We're lucky that we found this place.
The town is filling at a pace.

We're glad that ...
We're the inn crowd.
We're the inn, we're the inn,
We're the inn crowd.
We're the inn, we're the inn crowd.

Every journey has been worth it,
Just relax, we've really earned it.
This is quite some party.

Dancing 'round a Roman candle,
Careful you don't lose your sandals,
'Cos it's quite some party.

We're lucky that we found this place.
The town is filling at a pace.

We're glad that ...

We're the inn crowd.
We're the inn, we're the inn,
We're the inn crowd.
We're the inn, we're the inn crowd.