

# SLEEPOVER AT THE STABLE

*by Douglas J. Eboch*



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# **Sleepover at the Stable**

A children's Christmas fantasy

by Douglas J. Eboch

**CAST OF CHARACTERS****DONKEY****MULE****GOAT****COW****CHICKENS 1, 2, and 3****SHEEP*****PRODUCTION NOTES***

**Synopsis:** It's bedtime at the stable and the menagerie is snoozing soundly. Suddenly, two humans crash the scene! The humans' donkey strikes up a conversation with the other animals. Their repartee gives a play-by-play of the birth of baby Jesus. There's the trio of Chickens who say everything in triplicate, the grouchy Goat who's trying to sleep, the weary Donkey who carried Mary to Bethlehem, the kind Cow, the chatty Sheep and the wisecracking Mule. There isn't a single human in this charming performance, but still the complete Nativity story is told.

**Costumes:** The animals may be easily conveyed with symbolic costuming. Donkey may be dressed in brown and Mule may be dressed in gray. Both of them should wear long ears made of felt to match the color of their costumes. Goat may be dressed in white with a small beard and horns. Cow may be dressed in white with large black spots. Sheep may be dressed in white with cotton balls glued to the costume. Chickens may be dressed in yellow with construction paper beaks.

**Lighting:** Some simple lighting instructions are included, but if your performance venue is without theatrical lights, simply disregard these directions. The play is equally effective either way.

**Set and Staging:** Use bales of hay to create varied levels for staging. Goat, Mule, Cow and Donkey reside in stalls Upstage. The four stalls may be conveyed by cubicle dividers covered in brown paper for a rustic look, or simply by hay bales stacked up. If a spotlight is unavailable, you will need to hang a large cardboard star covered with aluminum foil from the ceiling. The Chickens should run around energetically — like chickens! When the animals look at the humans in their stable, they look out toward the audience.

**Music:** Traditional Christmas carols are suggested throughout the script. The play may be done straight through or with a choir performing these songs to break up the action and create a more musical presentation.

*All Scripture is taken from the King James Version.*

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1           (*MULE, GOAT and COW are in place at their stalls.*  
2           *CHICKENS are Downstage.*)

3

4       **SONG:** “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

5

6           (*If available, lighting suggesting moonlight reveals the stable*  
7           *where the ANIMALS sleep. A commotion awakens them and*  
8           *DONKEY enters, taking an empty stall next to MULE.*)

9       **DONKEY:** Good evening.

10       **GOAT:** Quiet! I’m trying to sleep.

11       **DONKEY:** I beg your pardon?

12       **MULE:** Don’t mind him, kid.

13       **COW:** He’s in a bad mood because all the coming and going  
14           at the inn has kept us awake.

15       **CHICKEN 1:** He’s always —

16       **CHICKEN 2:** Always —

17       **CHICKEN 3:** Always —

18       **CHICKEN 1:** In a bad mood.

19       **GOAT:** Shut your beaks, Chickens!

20       **COW:** I wonder what’s going on tonight that all the humans  
21           are running about so?

22       **DONKEY:** The human king has ordered them to return to  
23           the place of their ancestors so they may be counted.

24       **GOAT:** Humph. Typical human foolishness. I’ll tell you how  
25           many there are. Too many!

26       **DONKEY:** I like my humans. They are very kind.

27       **CHICKEN 1:** Look!

28       **CHICKEN 2:** Look!

29       **CHICKEN 3:** Look!

30       **MULE:** Those two act like they intend to sleep here.

31       **GOAT:** Ridiculous!

32       **DONKEY:** Those are my humans. There’s no room at the  
33           inn, so they must sleep in the stable with us.

34       **GOAT:** Well, that’s just terrific. Just what we need, a bunch  
35           of smelly humans in our stable. Probably snore, too.

- 1 MULE: No creature snores as loud as you, Goat.
- 2 CHICKEN 1: None!
- 3 CHICKEN 2: None!
- 4 CHICKEN 3: None!
- 5 GOAT: Quiet, Chickens!
- 6 MULE: Oh, fine! Go ahead, sleep in the hay. That's just our  
7 dinner for the next week.
- 8 GOAT: See? This is what I'm saying. Humans in the stable  
9 are nothing but trouble.
- 10 MULE: (*Ignoring GOAT*) So, kid, where are you from?
- 11 DONKEY: Nazareth.
- 12 MULE: Nazareth! That's quite a journey.
- 13 DONKEY: Yes, I'm very tired. I've traveled many days with  
14 the woman on my back.
- 15 GOAT: You carried *her* all the way from Nazareth? No  
16 wonder you're tired. She must weigh a ton.
- 17 DONKEY: She's going to have a child.
- 18 GOAT: Yeah, I can see that. She looks ready to birth any  
19 moment.
- 20 COW: It's a shame she must travel at this late stage.
- 21 DONKEY: She is more weary than I am. It was a hard  
22 journey for her.
- 23 MULE: Well, kid, welcome to Bethlehem. Time to hit the  
24 hay. (*The ANIMALS settle in to sleep.*)
- 25
- 26 SONG: "O Holy Night"
- 27
- 28 CHICKEN 1: Look!
- 29 CHICKEN 2: Look!
- 30 CHICKEN 3: Look!
- 31 GOAT: What is it now, you lousy chickens?
- 32 MULE: The humans! The woman is about to give birth!
- 33 GOAT: Ewwww!
- 34 COW: You hush, Goat. This is a beautiful moment.
- 35 DONKEY: I wonder if it will be a boy or a girl. It's their

- 1 first, you know.
- 2 MULE: How exciting!
- 3 DONKEY: Come on, Mary! You can do it!
- 4 COW: She's almost there ...
- 5 CHICKEN 1: It's a boy —
- 6 CHICKEN 2: Boy —
- 7 CHICKEN 3: Boy!
- 8 COW: He's beautiful.
- 9 MULE: They named him Jesus.
- 10 COW: That means "Savior" in the human language.
- 11 GOAT: (*Imitating COW*) "That means 'Savior' in the human  
12 language." Aren't we just soooo smart. He looks awful  
13 small to be a savior.
- 14 COW: Size isn't everything.
- 15 MULE: He looks cold.
- 16 GOAT: That's another problem with humans. Not enough fur.
- 17 DONKEY: They're wrapping him in swaddling clothes.
- 18 GOAT: Oh, don't put him there! Ugh ... I have to eat out of  
19 that manger!
- 20 COW: He's just a baby, Goat.
- 21 DONKEY: Yeah, leave him alone.
- 22 MULE: I don't mind letting him use the manger.
- 23 GOAT: What a bunch of softies. Well, he'd better be out  
24 before breakfast, that's all I can say. (*A bright light, if  
25 available, appears from above.*)
- 26 MULE: What's that?
- 27 COW: It looks like ... a star.
- 28 CHICKEN 1: Star!
- 29 CHICKEN 2: Star!
- 30 CHICKEN 3: Star!
- 31 DONKEY: But it's so bright.
- 32 COW: What could it mean?
- 33 GOAT: I'll tell you what it means. It means I'm not getting  
34 any sleep at all tonight.
- 35 COW: Keep it down, Goat. You'll wake the baby.

1 **GOAT: Bah!**

2 **DONKEY: He's so cute.**

3 **COW: And well-behaved. My first cried nonstop.** (*They all*  
4 *watch the baby and make faces at him, except for GOAT who*  
5 *tries to sleep.*)

6

7 **SONG: "Away in a Manger"** (*May be sung by COW.*)

8

9 (*A commotion sounds from Off-stage.*)

10 **MULE: What now?**

11 **GOAT: Great. Just as I was finally falling asleep.**

12 **DONKEY: It looks like some shepherds.**

13 **GOAT: Don't tell me! First humans and now sheep?**

14 **COW: There's only one, and he seems to be hurt, poor dear.**

15 (*SHEEP enters, limping.*)

16 **SHEEP: Hello there.**

17 **CHICKEN 1: Hello!**

18 **CHICKEN 2: Hello!**

19 **CHICKEN 3: Hello!**

20 **GOAT: Quiet. Animals sleeping here.**

21 **COW: Don't mind him. What's going on?**

22 **SHEEP: It's the most amazing story!**

23 **GOAT: And I suppose you're going to tell it.**

24 **SHEEP: I'd be delighted.**

25 **GOAT: That's what I was afraid of.**

26 **COW: Please go on, Sheep. The rest of us are interested.**

27 **SHEEP: Well, we were sleeping in the hills, like we do every**  
28 **night. The shepherds were gathered around their fire,**  
29 **talking. They let me sit with them because I'd hurt my**  
30 **leg. It was the silliest thing. I was trying to reach a**  
31 **bush across this tiny little crevice ...**

32 **GOAT: Get to the point!**

33 **SHEEP: Oh, right. Where was I?**

34 **MULE: Sitting around the campfire.**

35 **SHEEP: Yes, we were sitting around the campfire when**

1           there was a blinding light in the sky. It was an angel!  
 2           It was the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen. Even  
 3           more beautiful than the lake by the mountains at  
 4           sunset, which is saying a lot because ...

5   **GOAT:** The point, Sheep.

6   **SHEEP:** Right. The angel said, "Fear not: for, behold, I  
 7           bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to  
 8           all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of  
 9           David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall  
 10          be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in  
 11          swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:10-12).

12 **DONKEY:** Hey, like Jesus!

13 **GOAT:** Duh!

14 **SHEEP:** Wait, I'm not done yet. Then a whole bunch of  
 15          angels appeared and they all were singing. They said,  
 16          "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good  
 17          will toward men" (Luke 2:14).

18 **GOAT:** Peace among humans. Not likely!

19 **COW:** Quiet, Goat. What happened next?

20 **CHICKEN 1:** Yeah, what happened next —

21 **CHICKEN 2:** Next —

22 **CHICKEN 3:** Next?

23 **SHEEP:** The shepherds ran all the way here. One of them  
 24          carried me because they didn't want to leave me alone  
 25          because of my leg.

26 **COW:** Do you realize what this means?

27 **GOAT:** I'm going to be very tired tomorrow?

28 **COW:** No. It means this is a holy child.

29 **CHICKEN 1:** Holy.

30 **CHICKEN 2:** Holy.

31 **CHICKEN 3:** Holy. (*The ANIMALS watch the baby quietly.*)

32

33 **SONG:** "The First Noel"

34

35 **SHEEP:** Oops. The shepherds are calling me. Looks like it's

1           time to go. It was nice meeting you all.  
2   **GOAT:** Yeah, whatever.  
3   **COW:** It was nice to meet you, too.  
4   **CHICKEN 1:** Good-bye!  
5   **CHICKEN 2:** Good-bye!  
6   **CHICKEN 3:** Good-bye! (*SHEEP exits.*)  
7   **GOAT:** Well, now that that's over, maybe I can finally get  
8           some sleep. (*GOAT closes his eyes.*)  
9   **DONKEY:** Wow. My people have a holy baby.  
10   **MULE:** He does seem to have a kind of aura about him.  
11   **COW:** Isn't it beautiful? He has his whole life before him.  
12           Imagine all the possibilities. All the things he might do.  
13   **DONKEY:** I bet he changes the world.  
14   **MULE:** Yeah. (*They all watch the baby. Finally GOAT opens his*  
15           *eyes and watches as well.*)  
16   **GOAT:** You know, I'm beginning to think this human child  
17           is very special. I wonder if any of the bonehead  
18           humans will realize it.  
19   **COW:** Quiet, Goat. It's time to sleep.  
20   **GOAT:** Humph.  
21  
22   **SONG:** "Silent Night"  
23  
24           (*If lighting is available, the lights slowly fade out until the*  
25           *overhead light of the star is all that's left. Finally, that fades*  
26           *too.*)  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32           *NOTE: The numerals running vertically down the left margin*  
33           *of each page of dialogue are for the convenience of the director.*  
34           *With these, he/she may easily direct attention to a specific*  
35           *passage.*



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