

The Shepherds Play

(A Christmas Comedy)

*A translation and adaptation of
The Second Shepherds Play
by the Wakefield Master, circa 1450*

by
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THE SHEPHERDS PLAY

1st SHEPHERD (Andy)
2nd SHEPHERD (Marv)
3rd SHEPHERD (Spence)
MACK (A ne'er-do-well)
JILL (His wife)
ANGEL
MARY
JOSEPH (Silent)

[Up stage left in full audience view is the manger where the Nativity scene will take place. Up stage right is Mack and Jill's hut. The placement of the cradle in the hut mirrors the manger itself.]

[A stormy day with a high wind. The first shepherd struggles on stage and addresses the audience.]

1st SHEP: Jimminy Christmas!
It's coming up cold. I shouldn't a dozed,
My leg's like to fold, my fingers are froze.
I'm a sight to behold, all covered with woes.
I'm gettin' too old. My long-johns got holes.
So sorry.
With storms I been blessed.
Out the East, out the West,
Cain't get no rest
Today nor tomorry.

Us dumb shepherds out on the range,
I give you my word, we got cause to complain.
It's dashed-blame absurd how we work here in vain.
The price of my herd goes right down the drain.
Not worth squat!
'Cause we're lamed,
Sales-taxed and maimed,
Humbled and shamed,
By them that's got.

Does me right good to amble out here on my own.
To talk and to ramble, this here world to bemoan.
While my sheep eat their brambles and grass that is grown.
They play and they scramble or sit flat on a stone
To munch.
I swear a streak blue,
If my buddies be true,
We'll get more of a crew
For lunch.

[The second shepherd fights through the storm. He doesn't see the first shepherd.]

2nd SHEP: Cheese and rice! What can this mean?
The world's pulverized like I never seen.
The cold's just like ice, the wind is so keen
It brings tears to my eyes, my breath looks like steam.
No lie.
The sheep bray and they bleat,
In the snow, in the sleet.
When my shoes freeze to my feet,
I ain't too spry.

Though bad is this chill, and bad it is very,
Much worser still, is the fact that I'm married.
My wife is a pill, she worries and harries.
Her voice like a drill, I'll do hari-kari.
No baloney.
She's big as a whale,
She drives me like he-ll,
It reminds me of jail,
Bless'd matrimony!

1st SHEP: God save this audience from this ignernt bombaster.

2nd SHEP: God give you some sense, you walking disaster.
Where the heck's Spence?

1st SHEP: Out in the pasture.
He lacks common sense, but he's more steadfast
Than us.

2nd SHEP: Ssh!

1st SHEP: Howcome?

2nd SHEP: Yonder's our chum.

1st SHEP: He'll say something dumb.
I trust.

[Enter 3rd shepherd. He doesn't see the first two.]

3rd SHEP: I swear by the Grail and by Saint Nick'laus
But to no avail, it gets worse than it was.
From hill down to dale, the world is as it does.
It's ever so frail, and flimsy as gauze.
It's irrefutable.
We're in for a change,
And marvels so strange,
Good and Bad rearranged.
All is mutable.

Us that walks in the night, out tendin' our sheep,
We see spooky sights, while other folks sleep.
It can give you a fright, in the woods dark and deep.
It scares me a mite. It makes my skin creep.
Aah! Monsters!
They don't look like no men.
They're abominable snow-men!

Huge Pillsbury dough-men!
With red noses like lobsters!

Oh it isn't but Marv, and Andy my boss.
Say, I'm like to starve, pass a sandwich across

1st SHEP: Oh har-dee-har-har. I don't like being joshed.

2nd SHEP: You've gone way too far; you're makin' me cross,
Bub.
You mosey in late,
You'll just have to wait.
'Cuz we've already ate.
So no grub.

3rd SHEP: You're right inflexible, not to say cheap.
I'm paid so pitiful; as ye sow ye shall reap.
Put this in your skull: You never did keep
My belly so full that I couldn't watch sheep
Anymore.
Where do I complain?
I'm held in disdain,
But "You get" goes the sayin'
"What you pay for."

1st SHEP: You'll be no fun, when you go a-wooin',
With your companion, whining and mewling.

2nd SHEP: By the Father and Son, you'll be our undoing,
You simpleton. With your clowning and fooling
And jokes.

Where are our sheep, boy whom we scorn?

3rd SHEP: Sir, this very morn
I left 'em in corn
Just as dawn broke.

In pasture they're strewn and can't go astray.
1st SHEP: We'll take a nap soon, it's been a long day.
Let's sing us a tune 'fore we go on our way.

2nd SHEP: We'll see how we croon, a little horseplay.

3rd SHEP: Okey-dokey.

1st SHEP: The bass-line, I'll try.

2nd SHEP: Me, the tenor so high.

3rd SHEP: I'll sing too, 'cept I
Sing sometimes off key.

*[They sing a verse of a peppy Christmasy song like,
Let it Snow. *]*

[Enter Mack]

MACK: Dear God who made man, and make him you did,
I can't understand my part amid
Your master plan, for my purpose you hid.
I wisht there was a land where I can't hear my kids
Holler.

1st SHEP: Who is that grumbling?

MACK: In the dark here I'm stumbling.
Just a feller right humbling
Without a dollar.

2nd SHEP: Mack! Well I'll be. So tell us what's up.
3rd SHEP: Is it really he? Keep your eyes on your stuff.

MACK: [*putting on airs, he pretends not to know them*]
I say, pardon me. Don't treat me so rough.
I've a business degree. I'm important enough,
So scram.
Keep your hands off, citizens,
Or my suit I must cleanse.
I've got a Mercedes Benz.
Do you know who I am?

1st SHEP: Why so high falutin'? A banker you ain't.
2nd SHEP: You ain't got no suit on, I'll laugh till I faint.
3rd SHEP: Ain't he just a cute one? Like to pretend he's a saint.
MACK: You'll lose this dispute when I file a complaint.

With one word,
I'll have you hung.
1st SHEP: Mack, are you done?
Take out that citified tongue
And put in a turd.

2nd SHEP: Mack, you dumb chimpanzee, I don't mean to demean you.
3rd SHEP: Mack, don't you know me? I'd sure like to bean you.
MACK: Well, looky here at you three! I thought that I'd seen you.
Here's some fine company.

1st SHEP: How long have you been you?

2nd SHEP: Be damned.
As late as you're out,
Can we be in doubt?
You're known hereabout
For the stealing of lambs.

MACK: I'm more honest than some, as all will avow.
I've a pain troublesome, it won't stop anyhow:
My belly's worrisome, it rumbles and growls.

3rd SHEP: He's playing possum, he's out on the prowl.

MACK: If I may.
I'm not feeling plumb.
May God strike me dumb
If I've had even a crumb
These many days.

1st SHEP: How's the wife, reappraise me, now what's she up to?

MACK: She lies around lazy, just watching the tube.
It's enough to amaze me. She drinks and gets stewed,
While the kids drive me crazy. Our house is a zoo!
What to do?
She eats all I got.
Every year on the dot
She has one more tot.

Some years, two.

Any a' you hicks like to play rummy?
 2nd SHEP: Count me in the mix.
 MACK: How 'bout for money?
 1st SHEP: None of you tricks, I ain't no dummy.
 2nd SHEP: We'll play just for kicks.
 MACK: Just tryin' to be chummy.
 3rd SHEP: I sure hope I win.
 1st SHEP: *(examining hand)* Lemme see. Geeze!
 2nd SHEP: *(drawing a card)* Oh, please-please-please-please!
 MACK: Where are the threes?
 3rd SHEP: Gin!

[General moans and groans as Third Shepherd lays out his cards.]

1st SHEP: You had all the twos.
 MACK: There's the jack I require.
 2nd SHEP: I'd like a quick snooze, I'm startin' to tire.
 3rd SHEP: I'm turning bright blue, I'd like a nice fire.
 1st SHEP: I've watched lambs, I've watched ewes, I'm exhausted entire.
 Keep a watch out! *[lies down]*
 2nd SHEP: I b'lieve I'll lie here,
 I could sleep past a year. *[lies down]*
 3rd SHEP: I've as much right to rest my rear
 As you louts. *[lies down]*

(suspiciously)
 Mack. There's a good spot. Yonder, by Andy.
 MACK: Hmm. I'd rather not. It looks way too sandy.
 Now this little plot will do me just dandy.
 A-hem.
 Now I lay me down to sleep,
 But I have promises to keep,
 And miles to go little bo-peep.
 Amen.

[He gets up while they sleep.]

Now's the time for a man to go out and grab hold
 Of a cute little lamb there out in the fold.
 As smart as I am, I'll not be too bold,
 Or I'll wind up in a jam, a sight to behold
 In prison.
 Now I've got to move quick,
 This ain't no picnic.
 I must pull it off slick
 With precision.

[He casts a spell on them]

Around you a circle as round as the moon.
 Inside you must stay till I've fetched up my boon.

And lie there stone-still in a very strange swoon.
 While I do what I will, you'll sleep like raccoons.
 The spell:
 "O'er your heads my hand I lift.
 Your eyes are dark, your minds adrift!"
 I'll go pick out my gift,
 Then run like hell.

Lands, they sleep hard. They snore like a band.
 I ain't no shepherd, but I'll try my hand.
 The flock's gettin' scared, and I risk gettin' rammed.
[He catches one]

Gotcha there pard! I'll eat you with mint jam.
[To the sheep] I'm sorry.
 A fat sheep I dare say.
 I'll thank Andy someday.
 I'm dead-set to repay
 This that I've borried.

[Goes to his cottage]

MACK: Honey, open the door and see what I brung.
 JILL: I'm doing the chores. Don't track in the dung!
 MACK: Don't you worry no more, I'll wait out here till you're done.
 JILL: I'll have parties galore once you're properly hung.
 MACK: All right!
 You'll change your tune, I bet.
 For when it counts, I can get
 More than them that work and sweat
 The whole damn day and night. *[Shows the sheep]*

JILL: It fell from the sky, I'm such a lucky young goose.
 You'll look one sorry sight, your neck stuck in a noose.
 MACK: I always keep shy of any abuse.
 JILL: "If somethin' can go awry," you silly caboose,
 "It will,"
 It's a sayin' people say.
 MACK: Yes, I hear it every day.
 Just don't you say it, okay?
 Now, come help me Jill.

JILL: I wished he was skinned, I'd sure like to eat.
 It's a year since I grinned over such juicy meat.
 MACK: Ssh! We can't butcher him, someone might hear the bleat.
 JILL: I'll be in trouble agin, 'cuz I'm just a dead-beat.
 JILL: Hurry, Mack!
 Bolt the door! Set the lock!
 They won't stop to knock,
 To replenish their flock.
 MACK: I'm having a panic attack.

JILL: Try to stay calm, we need us a plan.
 MACK: It's just like in 'Nam. Stuck in the sand.
 Dodging napalm. Give me that lamb!

I'm gonna call Mom.
 JILL: Act like a man!
 MACK: I'm st-startin' to st-st-stammer.
 JILL: We need us a plot,
 'Cuz if we get caught
 With a sheep that's this hot
 We'll land in the slammer!

[They think hard with much humming and so forth.]

JILL: I've thunk up a trick, *[aside]* I'm the brains, he's the brawn.
 We'll hide him real quick till after they've gone,
 In the cradle so slick. It's a beautiful con.
 They're pretty darn thick, they'll never catch on.
 MACK: Get in bed.
 JILL: We'll say I gave birth.
 MACK: We've a new child on this earth.
 JILL: It makes it seem worth
 The life that I've led.

MACK: This'll be a good ploy and awful darn clever.
 JILL: You should be overjoyed I've helped your endeavor.
 Hurry back, boy, 'fore you're seen by whomever.
 MACK: They'll smash me to soy sauce if I'm not back whenever.
 I'll go sleep. *[Returns to shepherds]*
 Here they still snooze.
 It's been a good ruse.
 They'll never know who's
 Done stoled-up their sheep.

[The shepherds wake up]

1st SHEP: Bless'd are the meek! Where the heck is my ma?
 The Godhead unique. My leg feels like straw.
 My foot's dead asleep. I'm in need of some chaw.
 I'd a dream, oh so bleak, we were all in Utah!**
 2nd SHEP: Really?
 I slept like an eel,
 Like someone genteel.
 As light, I do feel,
 As a leaf on a tree.

[Third shepherd wakes from a nightmare.]

3rd SHEP: Save us from sin! I'm nearly shakin'
 Right outta my skin. My heart, it's still quakin'
 Like gelatine. There ain't no mistakin'
 I need me some gin. Hey guys, get wakin'!
 We were four.
 Where the heck's Mack?
 1st SHEP: Don't have an attack.
 2nd SHEP: The kleptomaniac's
 Here, señor.

3rd SHEP: I dreamed as we napped, he grew wolf-like teeth.

1st SHEP: He's finally snapped.

3rd SHEP: The man is a thief!

I swear we been sapped. It's my firm belief
A fat sheep was trapped out here on the heath.

2nd SHEP: Ah, heck!

You're actin' all tetch'd,
Your 'magination's been stretched.

1st SHEP: Let's wake up the wretch.

Don't fret.

[They wake Mack.]

2nd SHEP: You're sleepin' too long! Get up off the deck.

3rd SHEP: Hey there, ding-dong!

MACK: Ow! I feel like a wreck.

Everything's wrong. I can't walk a speck.
My coordination's all gone, I slept with my neck
All skee-wumpus.
It hardly seems fair,
I had a nightmare.
Gave me a scare.

1st SHEP: You're makin' a rumpus.

MACK: I dreamt, it was bad, Jill went into labor.
And delivered a lad, a little jackanaper.
I can't be the dad! Must be our neighbor.
It's just a dream I had, but it made me quaver.
That's all I need!
Still more kids
To clean out my fridge
Just a bunch of midge—
—ets full of greed.

I must take my leave, Jill waits in the wings.
Look up my sleeve, I ain't takin' a thing.
I wouldn't deceive this fine ev-en-ing.

[exits]

3rd SHEP: I can't seem to believe that ding-a-ling.

2nd SHEP: Let's count
Up all our beasts.

1st SHEP: Perhaps they've increased.

3rd SHEP: I'll start in the east.

1st SHEP: We'll meet at the mount.

[They go in search of the sheep. Mack arrives at home.]

MACK: Open the door! Is anyone there?

JILL: It's that same old bore who's losin' his hair.

MACK: Wife I adore, 'tis Mack, your teddy-bear.

JILL: My bold troubadour, who'll wind up in the chair.
I'm busy!
You crawl back with a smirk,

Interrupting my work.
 You shifty jerk.
 MACK: Don't have a tizzy.

(to audience) She claims it's a drudge, she barely survives.
 But then she don't budge watchin' Days of Our Lives.
 JILL: Who're you to judge? I can tell you that I've
 Done the wash, made the fudge. Little Susie's got hives.
 Again.
 The housework's all mine.
 I yell and I shine.
 You do nothing but whine.
 Men.

Now, what's the word with the shepherds, dear Mack?
 MACK: The last thing I heard as I turned my back
 They went after the herd to count the whole pack.
 Soon they'll infer that one sheep they lack.
 Oh, gee.
 They'll hue and they'll cry
 When they find they're one shy.
 They'll get blood in their eye
 And think it was me!

JILL: We'll do like we planned. Okay?
 MACK: I suppose.

And if they demand our child to expose?
 JILL: You don't understand. Look, I propose
 We cover his brand with swaddling clothes.
[She swaddles the lamb]
 The lower, the upper.
 Now, I'll lie in bed.
 And moan like we said.
 That there quadruped
 Is supper.

Prick up your ears, they'll be here real soon.
 I'll stay in here, you go outside, buffoon.
 You sing so they'll hear, while I groan in a swoon.
 I'll clamor and jeer like on our honeymoon.
 MACK: Oh, tush.
 JILL: Sing a mite faster
 When they come from the pasture
 MACK: *[to audience]* You can't put it past her.
 JILL: Now, shush!

[The shepherds gather at their rendezvous]

3rd SHEP: Howdy there, guys. What's going on?
 1st SHEP: I'm mortified! A fat sheep is gone
 From the hillside.
 3rd SHEP: Mother Mary and John!
 2nd SHEP: From under our eyes, who'd do such a wrong?
 1st SHEP: Some punk.

Up and down did I slog
 With my faithful dogs.
 I searched hills, I searched bogs
 And found one damn skunk.

3rd SHEP: Listen man, chill! I know where it went.
 It was Mack, maybe Jill who stole while we dreamt.

1st SHEP: Mack slept here until we woke, he's exempt.
 Your slanders are silly. You oughtta repent
 With good speed.

2nd SHEP: I might be real dim,
 But I'll go out on a limb
 And bet it was him
 That done this here deed.

3rd SHEP: He gave us the slip. Let's go get him fast.
 But first a quick nip. Pass me the flask.

1st SHEP: We'll not drink a drip, till we finish our task.

2nd SHEP: Get the horsewhip. We'll go and unmask
 That varmint.
 Right here I avow
 On any sacred cow:
 We'll catch him somehow,
 Lickety-split.

*[As they approach Mack's cottage, Mack begins to
 sing an up-beat Christmas carol. Something like
 Felize Navidad*, and Jill begins to groan.]*

3rd SHEP: What's that caterwauling? He sings like a loon.

1st SHEP: It's simply appalling, so far out of tune.
[Mack hears them and sings faster.]

2nd SHEP: Stop that there squalling! Or use a spittoon.

MACK: Who's out there calling by the light of the moon
 That wanes?

3rd SHEP: Mack, it is we.

2nd SHEP: The unhappy three.

1st SHEP: Come here to see
 Your ill-gotten gains.

MACK: Ssh. Come on ahead on tippy-toes.
 My wife is abed. She's sick, indisposed.
 She's practic'ly dead.

JILL: Are you buffaloes?!
 Each step that you tread pounds in my nose
 Like a hammer!

1st SHEP: You're wife is unwell.
 We'll try not to yell.

MACK: Come set a spell
 And yammer.

You've run through the mire; lordy, you're sopped.
 I'll make us a fire. You could pass for three mops.
 My wife's pretty tired. Look what she dropped.

Another young crier. I wish that she'd stop
 Gettin' preggers.
 Remember my dream?
 It came true, it would seem.
 To add to my team
 Of beggars.

2nd SHEP: Can I get you some Pringles? Some Coke or some Sprite?
 We're in no mood to mingle. We've no appetite.

MACK: Why? Is there a wrinkle in your pleasant night?

3rd SHEP: We're missing a single sheep. It's downright
 Unfair.

1st SHEP: We believe it was rustled.

MACK: Why the thief should be tussled.
 He'd a been thoroughly muscled.
 If I'd only been there.

2nd SHEP: Mack, you little louse, some thinks you were.

3rd SHEP: Or maybe your spouse. Don't act so demur.

MACK: Clearly you're soused. You can't accuse her!
 Come rip up my house, you'll have to concur
 That the sheep isn't here.
 If something got took
 By some kinda crook ...
 And my poor wife, look.
 She ain't moved all year.

Thus I testify.

1st SHEP: We won't be beguiled.

MACK: I swear to Him on High and His mercy mild,
 If ever I lie, I'll eat this here child.

2nd SHEP: Let's ransack this sty in the meanwhile.

JILL: I'm not well.

[She faints. They begin search. She jumps up.]

Stop! You ignorant slobs!
 It's my house that you rob!
 Do you hear how she sobs?
 Your hearts should melt.

MACK:

[They come near the cradle.]

JILL: Stay away from my boy, for all that you're worth!

MACK: He's her pride and joy. It was a difficult birth.
 You shouldn't annoy such a new soul on earth.
 Her labor held no joy: a child of such girth!

JILL: Ow! My middle!

1st SHEP: By the Flesh and the Blood,
 He's a cute little bud.

2nd SHEP: Look, he's chewin' his cud.
 In his little cradle.

[Jill cries out]

MACK: Please, Jill, in your pain, don't cry out so!

Try to restrain your whimpers of woe.
 2nd SHEP: Our sheep's already slain; we got here too slow.
 3rd SHEP: We've searched here in vain. We might as well go.
 But hatters!
 I don't hear no bleat.
 I can't find no meat,
 Nor nothing to eat.
 But empty platters.

1st SHEP: No livestock but this, (goo-goo, ding-dong!),
 And none, by my bliss, smells nearly as strong.
 JILL: Let me give him a kiss and sing him a song.
 2nd SHEP: Nothing's amiss, I guess we was wrong.
 1st SHEP: How's his behavior?
 MACK: The child is a dove,
 Filled with joy and with love,
 Sent from heaven above,
 The lad is a savior.

2nd SHEP: Friends let us be. By our God above.
 MACK: Okay by me. (They bit, turtle-dove.)
 So long you three. (I'll give 'em a shove.)
 3rd SHEP: Nice words have we, but not any love
 This year.

[They leave Mack's.]

1st SHEP: Did you give him a gift?
 2nd SHEP: We mustn't be thrifty.
 3rd SHEP: I'll be back in a jiffy.
 Wait for me here.

[He runs back to Mack's.]

Now we're re-befriended, there's this that I had —
 MACK: I thought we'd amended, you're makin' me mad.
 I'm downright offended.
 3rd SHEP: You're one touchy dad.
 You ain't comprehended, I'll give the poor lad
 A nickel.
 MACK: Don't! He's sleeping.
 3rd SHEP: Oh, I see him peeping.
 MACK: You'll set him to weeping.
 3rd SHEP: I'll give him a tickle.

[The other shepherds return.]

The kid's much too warm, let's loosen these clothes.
 As I was born! He's got a big nose.
 1st SHEP: The boy is deformed, we shouldn't impose.
 2nd SHEP: He looks right forlorn. My, look at those!
 Oh!
 Take a peep!
 3rd SHEP: Hey! That's our sheep!
 1st SHEP: Mack, you're a creep,
 Foolin' us so.
 2nd SHEP: What a great con! We nearly got took.

1st SHEP: I knew all along. You just had to look.
 3rd SHEP: We'll right this here wrong and hang this here crook.
 2nd SHEP: The boy seemed too blond. They sure tried to rook
 Us.
 1st SHEP: Stop all yer twaddle.
 Did you see how he's swaddled
 So off he can't toddle?
 And won't cause a fuss?

MACK: Have you no shame? You're bein' unfair.
 I'm the father, I claim, and his momma's right there.

1st SHEP: What the Sam Hill's his name? God, I declare.

2nd SHEP: I sure hope he's tame. Look at Mack's heir:
 A calf!

JILL: A pretty child is he
 As sits on my knee.
 A cute chickadee
 To make a man laugh.

3rd SHEP: I know the ear-mark. We see through your hoax.

MACK: Take back that remark. His nose, it was broke.
 He fell in the park. This ain't no joke.

1st SHEP: You're some patriarch, this time you folk
 Ain't escapin'.

JILL: He was cursed by an elf.
 I saw it myself
 When the clock struck twelve
 He was misshapen.

2nd SHEP: You're two peas in a pod. I been right entertained.

1st SHEP: We won't spare the rod: you'll have to be hanged.

MACK: No more will I rob.

3rd SHEP: So you've maintained.

MACK: I swear by our God.

2nd SHEP: Well, I'll be danged.

He sure rants!
 1st SHEP: Instead of the noose
 For this silly goose
 We'll tickle these two
 Till they wet their pants.

[They tickle Mack and Jill until they both flee.]

1st SHEP: Lord, now I'm sore. I here now attest
 I can't do no more. I need me some rest.

2nd SHEP: We've settled the score with he that transgressed.
 Time for a snore, we're done with that pest.

3rd SHEP: *[calls off]* Run away!
 Take a nap I advise.

2nd SHEP: I'm still mad at those guys.

3rd SHEP: It was good exercise.
 Let's hit the hay.

[They sleep]

[An angel enters singing "Gloria in exelsis"]

ANGEL: Rise herdsmen, hark! For now is He born.
 To redeem from the Dark what Adam hath lorn
 God behests you embark, to this be foresworn,
 He, your patriarch, will protect you this morn
 From danger.
 To Bethlehem go,
 See the child all aglow
 Between cattle that low
 In a manger.

[The angel disappears.]

1st SHEP: That's the purtiest voice that ever I heerd
 I'd like to rejoice but I'm kinda sceered.
 2nd SHEP: Of heaven's boy's birth, she sang so near.
 3rd SHEP: A bright flash with no noise, made everything clear
 Like a flare.
 3rd SHEP: She wants us to guard
 A child born afar.
 1st SHEP: See yonder star?
 Let's look for him there.
 2nd SHEP: What was that song? Did you hear how she sang it?
 So clear and so strong?
 3rd SHEP: She knew how to clang it.
 Not a single note wrong; it was perfect, gosh-dang-it.
 1st SHEP: Too bad she's gone. We should try to twang it
 Like she can.
 2nd SHEP: Let's hear how you croon.
 Can you bark at the moon?
 3rd SHEP: *[Of audience member]* I'll make this gal swoon.
 Listen up, ma'am.

[They try to sing "Gloria in exelsis" but get side-tracked onto something like Patti Smith's "G-L-O-R-I-A" or Harry Belafonte's "Day-O".*]*

That was a blast!
 2nd SHEP: It's a wondrous ditty.
 We'll have joy everlasting, it makes me feel giddy.
 3rd SHEP: She said to go fast out to Bethlehem city.
 We better dash, it'd be a great pity
 To be late.
 1st SHEP: We better run,
 See the mother and son.
 It's all just begun
 On this date.
 2nd SHEP: Prophecy tells us, since time begin,
 That we should be zealous while waiting for Him.
 Now Good has befell us, He born of virgin
 Has come to propel us away from our sin

And make it
 Pure as new snow.
 To release us from woe
 Upon us is bestowed
 A child that is naked.

3rd SHEP: Full glad are we that on this same day
 So lovely to see, so good to obey,
 How happy I'll be, and here do I pray,
 To kneel on my knee for one word to say
 To that child.
 The angel relayed
 In a crib is He laid
 Right poorly arrayed
 So meek and so mild.

1st SHEP: Oracles of old and prophets of yore
 Longed to behold this infant of lore.
 It so unfolds that they are no more.
 But it was foretold that three shepherds so poor
 Should be awoken,
 And to them, it be revealed.
 In my heart do I feel
 That it's true as steel
 What the prophets have spoken.

2nd SHEP: It's a wonder to me that He would appear
 To folks poor as we, lost way out here.

1st SHEP: Hold on, let me see. [*Looks up at the star.*]
 The place is right near.

3rd SHEP: We've got faith in thee, though we go in fear
 To the manger.
 Lord, thy will done be;
 We are unlearned, we three,
 Thou grant us great glee
 To comfort thy little stranger.

[They enter the barn.]

1st SHEP: Hail, Lord of mine. Hail, little one.
 Hail, child divine, our Maker's son.
 Thy birth is a sign that Good shall be done.
 Our souls shall be thine. Hail, little chum.
 Look. He's merry.
 There, he laughs.
 He's cute as a calf.
 On our behalf,
 Here, have a bob of cherries.

2nd SHEP: Hail, sovereign Savior, the child that we've sought.
 Hail, heaven's favor who all things hath wrought.
 Hail little shaver, you won't be forgot.
 I kneel and I quaver. A bird have I brought
 From afar

To you in your cot.
Hail, little tot.
By our Lord begot.
Little day-star.

3rd SHEP: Hail, our Redeemer, bringer of mirth.
You'll shine like a beam all over this earth.
It breaks my heart clean to see such humble birth.
You'll reign here supreme and all our souls' worth
Replenish.
Though you be small,
And can't hardly crawl,
Take this here ball
To play tennis.

MARY: Our Father above, God omnipotent,
To show us His love, His son has He sent.
He appeared as a dove then made His ascent.
A child from above, a blessed event.
Here is He born.
Go tell this tale
In the hills, in the vales,
Recount without fail
What has happened this morn.

1st SHEP: Farewell, dear lady, so fair to behold
With the child on your knee.

2nd SHEP: Joy to you untold!
[They leave the manger.]
Well, I'll be! We'll tell this where we go!

3rd SHEP: It seems already this story's been told
A whole bunch of times.
[They think this over.]

1st SHEP: My grace, that was fun!

2nd SHEP: Our tale has been spun.

3rd SHEP: We're still not quite done,
Till we sing something sublime.

[They lead the audience in "Silent Night"]

[End of Play]

* The rights to include listed songs in performance is not intended or implied.

** Each production should invent a group of rhymes for it's own location. For example, one production used:

1st SHEP: Bless'd are the meek! What do they want!?
The Godhead unique. I'm weak and I'm gaunt.
My foot's dead asleep. My hair's all bouffant.
I'd a dream, oh so bleak, we were all in Vermont!