

**Grandpa Donkey's
Very First Night
Before Christmas**

**A One-Act Play
By Anne Bressert**

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The Characters:

GRANDPA DONKEY, an adult man or older teen (speaking part)

MAMA DONKEY, an adult woman or older teen (speaking part)

JUNIOR DONKEY #1, a child (speaking part)

DONKEY #2, a child (with one line)

ADDITIONAL DONKEY FAMILY MEMBERS, (optional parts for children)

NARRATOR, an adult or older teen (speaking part) As an option, the Narrator parts can also be done by Grandpa Donkey.

MARY, a child

JOSEPH, a child

ANGEL, could be a child, an adult, or an older teen

EXTRA ANGELS, (optional parts for children) accompanying the main angel in the manger scene only.

INNKEEPER, an adult or older teen

MAIN SHEPHERD, an adult or older teen who supervises all the child shepherds and sheep

ADDITIONAL SHEPHERDS, children

SHEEP, children

3 WISEMEN, children

CAMEL, an adult or older teen who supervises the Wisemen and Star

STAR, an adult carrying a baby dressed in a soft star outfit, or a child walking ahead of the wisemen, carrying a pole with a star hanging from the end of the pole.

ADDITIONAL MANGER ANIMALS, children

The Setting:

Five minutes before the play begins, Grandpa Donkey goes to the front of the church (stage right) and sits on a large comfy chair or a rocking chair and begins reading his book. He does not engage with the congregation but keeps his head bowed and eyes on his book. *(Inside the book is a copy of the script.)*

See “Performance Notes” for more details.

THE PLAY

(A bell tolls 8 times)

(When the bell begins to toll, Grandpa Donkey stops reading and stands up, checks his watch and looks out in the distance. Then he sits back down and resumes reading his book.)

MAMA DONKEY

(Mama Donkey, after the last bell tolls, enters from the back of the church with the donkey family following her and holding Junior Donkey #1's hand, begins to walk down the aisle. Mama Donkey calls out loudly to the donkey family.)

Come -on kids, we're running late!

(Halfway up the aisle, Junior donkey #1 stops and begins to pull at Mama Donkey's hand and pulls backwards towards the back of the church.)

Come -on Junior, stop being so stubborn.

JUNIOR DONKEY #1

(whining)

But Mom! I don't want to go to Grandpa Donkey's house. He always tells the same old story every year!

(Junior lowers his voice to try and sound old like Grandpa Donkey. He gestures like Grandpa Donkey, picking up hay and bringing it to his mouth, then begins to quote the beginning of Grandpa Donkey's story, starting with a loud chomping sound)

There I was just chomping my hay. IT'S...SOOOOO...BOOOOORRRRRRING!

MAMA DONKEY

(Sympathetically Mama Donkey reaches over to gently touch Junior ears)

Oh, Junior...it only sounds boring because you are using your outside donkey ears to listen to Grandpa Donkey's story. You must use your inside ears to really hear what the story is all about.

JUNIOR DONKEY #1

(whining even more)

Inside ears?

MAMA DONKEY

Yes, your heart,

(gestures the drawing of a heart with both hands in the center of her chest about 4 inches away from her body)

has ears.

(cupping both hands, the way we use them to cup our ears to hear, and cup each side of the heart just drawn in the air)

Use these ears tonight to listen to Grandpa Donkey's story.

JUNIOR DONKEY #1

(Junior drops his hands down, rolls his eyes up, and with an open mouth, turns his head back and forth in a "no." He then begins to trudge along behind Mama Donkey as she begins again to proceed to the front of the church.)

DONKEY #2

(As the donkey family begins to walk down the aisle again, Donkey #2 calls out loudly from the back of the group of donkeys)

Mom! Are we there yet?

MAMA DONKEY

(Mama Donkey does not even look back but calls loudly to the back of the pack by lifting her head up and answers the question with the same answer she always says to the same donkey who always asks the same question)

We'll... be... there... when... we... get... there!

(Mama Donkey and her family arrive at Grandpa Donkey's house)

Hi Grandpa Donkey!

(The donkey kids all call out different hellos at the same time (i.e. Hi Grandpa Donkey. Merry Christmas Grandpa Donkey, or little hee-haws)

GRANDPA DONKEY
(Grandpa Donkey stands)

Merry Christmas! I'm glad to see you all.

(Grandpa Donkey gestures for everyone to sit down)

Now grab your hot chocolate and Christmas cookies and get settled so I can tell you the story of our very first donkey family's Christmas.

(Mama Donkey pretends to be handing out food, and the other donkey kids sit down around Grandpa Donkey as he sits back down in his chair. Option to have the youngest kid donkey sit on Grandpa or Mama Donkey's lap)

As you all know, this story did not start with me. It started with my great, great, great, great, great.... many, many, many.... great, great, great, great.... many, many, many Grandpa Donkeys ago. The very first Grandpa Donkey!

Now, there was a very special baby born over 2000 years ago named Jesus and the very first Grandpa Donkey was there when He was born. Our first Grandpa Donkey loved Baby Jesus with all his heart and cared for Him and His family. The night before Jesus' first birthday, Grandpa Donkey gathered his family to share all he remembered about Jesus' birth, calling it "the miracles of Jesus' birth." So, just like my grandpa told me, and his grandpa told him, and his grandpa told him, all the way back to the very first Grandpa Donkey, I'll tell you the story just exactly like our very first Grandpa donkey told it.

(Grandpa Donkey looks up as if to be remembering the story. Mary enters stage left with a dish towel in her hand and pretends to be washing

dishes. Grandpa Donkey pretends to pick up some hay and begins to munch on the hay and make loud chomping sounds.)

There I was, just chomping my hay and watching young Mary through the kitchen window, washing the morning dishes after eating breakfast with her mom and dad. She was standing there by herself, when suddenly! WOW!

(The Angel enters stage left bent over, then stands up straight next to Mary)

A flash of light, so bright it hurt my eyes to look, but look I did, indeed! And there, standing in the kitchen, was an angel! The angel says, "Hello Mary!

(Angel waves to Mary with a smile)

You are full of God's love,

(Angel reaches arms out to make a big circle in front of themselves, then pulls their hands to their heart)

and Father God

(Angel points up)

has chosen you

(Angel points to Mary)

to be the mother of His son Jesus.

(Angel moves arms as if to be rocking a baby. Mary acts surprised)

Mary said back to the angel, "Me? Really?"

(Mary points to herself looking puzzled)

The angel tells her "Yes, you"

(Angel points twice to Mary, once on each word)
So, Mary said, "Okay"

(Mary shrugs her shoulders and nods yes. Angel and Mary exit stage left.)

And sure enough, eight months later, when Mary was getting things ready for her baby's birth, the Governor of their country commanded everyone to travel to their hometown to be counted, and to pay taxes. Mary was worried because her hometown Bethlehem was a great distance away, and she did not want to travel, as the baby was due soon.

NARRATOR

(Narrator enters stage left and stands behind a podium.)

Now, Mary was engaged to this young man named Joseph, who was a wonderful carpenter in the town where she lived. So, Joseph said to Mary, "Don't worry Mary. I'll take care of you and take you to Bethlehem so we can pay our taxes together, and you can ride on your donkey all the way there." So, Mary and Joseph set out for Bethlehem. They traveled for several days, and when they finally got there, they couldn't believe their eyes!

(Innkeeper enters and stands center stage with his arms folded across his chest looking stern.)

The town was so noisy! and so full of people coming there to pay their taxes, that they couldn't find any rooms anywhere!

(Mary walks behind Joseph as they enter from stage left and approach the Innkeeper. Mary stops as Joseph walks closer to the Innkeeper and pretends to knock on a door)

Now Joseph was starting to get worried because Mary told him that it was time for baby Jesus to be born.

(Innkeeper opens the door and Joseph gestures as if he is talking to the Innkeeper and points to Mary)

So, at the next inn they stopped at, Joseph told the Innkeeper about Mary needing a place to stay because she was about to have a baby.

(Innkeeper crosses hands back and forth in front of himself, then points his thumb over his shoulder several times to signal a stable out in the backyard).

Of course, the Innkeeper tells him they had no room for anybody in the inn, but if they wanted to, they could stay in his stable where he kept his animals.

(Joseph grabs the Innkeeper's hand and shakes it eagerly as he nods "yes")

Joseph told the Innkeeper, "I'll take it!"

(Mary rolls her eyes as her mouth gapes open and she shakes her head "no" in disbelief)

Oh, you should have seen Mary's face! So, off Mary and Joseph went on their way, to the stable.

(Mary, Joseph & the Innkeeper exit the stage)

GRANDPA DONKEY

(This section of the play has been performed in two different ways. Let your Grandpa Donkey decide what he is comfortable with and do it that way. Option one, Grandpa Donkey stands and talks directly to the congregation, encouraging them to sing along. Option two, Grandpa Donkey stays in character and stays sitting, singing the song with his family, holding a mic up to donkey kids as they make animal noises and sing along. Written below is Option one. Grandpa Donkey can certainly adlib and make this section his own words and style.)

Now if you thought the Bethlehem was crowded and noisy, you should have seen the stable! It was a cold, starry night, and every creature and their cousins were in that small stable, trying to stay warm.

(Grandpa Donkey begins his "Old Mac Donald" song. As Grandpa Donkey sings, the Innkeeper walks on stage and places a wood manger on center stage. Any additional Manger Animals enter stage left and sit near the manger (not next to it) leaving lots of room for Mary, Joseph, Shepherds and Wisemen as they come to the manger area. The Innkeeper can help the animals get to their places, then moves to the back of stage left and stays on stage until the end of the play.)

(Grandpa Donkey stands up and stretches his arms out and begins to sing a long "OOOOOOOOOOOOOOO" as he stretches. He is singing to the

congregation, and points to them, gestures as if making a point when singing the words “Bethlehem’s stable” each time it is sung. Donkey family sings along with large waving motions and loud animal noises)

OOOO..... Bethlehem’s stable was full that night, E I E I O...
And in that stable, there were some

(calls out “cows” without singing the word)

Cows! E I E I O...With a MOO, MOO here

(Grandpa Donkey stops singing, puts his hand behind his ear and says)

I CAN’T HEAR YOU! ...and a MOO, MOO there

(Grandpa Donkey stops singing again and puts his hand behind his ear and says)

I STILL CAN’T HEAR YOU! Here a _____

(puts hand behind ear to hear)

MOO, There a _____

(puts hand behind ear to hear)

MOO

(Grandpa Donkey gestures “2 thumbs up” to congregation and continues singing)

Everywhere a Moo, Moo

(Grandpa Donkey addressing the congregation)

Please help me sing, I think I’m starting to become a little horse!

OOOO.....Bethlehem’s stable was full that night, E I E I O...

And in that stable there were some

(calls out “sheep” without singing the word)

SHEEP! E I E I O...With a BAA, BAA here

(Grandpa Donkey continues the song until the end. Joseph and Mary carrying the baby Jesus, come on stage and stand behind the manger as Grandpa Donkey is about to end the song. Grandpa Donkey sits down after singing and takes a big sighing breath and makes rocking arm movements as if to be rocking a baby)

I can still see Mary's smile as she sang for the first time to her new baby boy.

MARY

(Mary sings as she rocks baby Jesus in her arms. At the end of her song, she lays the baby in the manger)

GRANDPA DONKEY

(speaking softly and slowly after Mary places the baby in the manger)

And don't you know, just about the time I was thinking we were finally going to get some sleep.... because the whole stable was quiet.

SHEPHERDS AND SHEEP

(Shepherds and sheep enter from the back of the church, jumping up and down as they make their way down the aisle and stand in front of Mary and Joseph. They keep jumping the entire time until Joseph motions for them to calm down.)

NARRATOR

Then...BANG! The doors of the stable flew open and the loudest bunch of guys I'd ever heard came busting in that stable, yelling all at once, and jumping up and down as they ran in. They told Mary and Joseph that they had been asleep that night out on the hillside with their sheep and then an Angel appeared up in the sky, right above their heads, and told them, "Don't be afraid. I have great news for you. Today, in Bethlehem, a Savior is born, and He is Christ the Lord!" The Angel went on to tell them, "And this is how you will know you have found Him; He will be wrapped in a blanket, laying in a manger." Then the shepherds said,

(At the word “suddenly” all the shepherds burst their arms out above their heads, and looking up, they start wildly pointing upward while they keep jumping)

Suddenly! the sky was filled with thousands of Angels! They were everywhere! The angels began praising God, and it sounded like the roar of a million thunders as they shouted, “Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill to men.

(Joseph gesturing with his hands the “sit down” hand wave)

Joseph tried to calm down the Shepherds,

(Mary picks up the baby out of the manger and shows the shepherds)

but then Mary, picked up baby Jesus and showed Him to them.

(shepherds kneel before Jesus)

The shepherds bowed down and knelt before Jesus, because they knew, He was Father God’s very own Son.”

(Mary places the baby in the manger. The Shepherds and sheep stand up and move to the left of the manger and sit down opposite of Grandpa Donkey.)

GRANDPA DONKEY

(Grandpa Donkey speaks soft and slowly)

And don’t you know, just about the time I was thinking we were finally going to get some sleep, because the whole stable was quiet again.

WISEMEN, CAMEL & STAR

(Following the Star, the Wisemen come down the aisle with the first Wiseman holding the reins to the Camel)

GRANDPA DONKEY

(speaking louder and with excitement)

But, then, outside the manger, up on the road by the inn, a whole crowd of excited people were talking to each other, and asking questions like “Who are they?” and “Why have they come here?” and “I wonder if they are going to spend any of their money in my store?” And as the crowd approached the stable, they got louder and louder, and I heard, and felt, the heavy pounding of camel’s hooves as they got closer, and closer to us.

(Grandpa Donkey and the donkey family stomp their feet together in rhythm. Mary is concerned and startled and picks up baby Jesus.)

NARRATOR

(Joseph steps down in front of the stage to meet the Wisemen. When the Wisemen arrive, they point to the Star. The Star walks on stage and stands behind Mary and the manger. The Angel comes on stage and stands to the left of the Star. Any Additional Angels fill in the area around the Angel and the Star. Joseph comes back on stage and stands next to Mary)

Joseph told Mary to stay in the stable while he went outside to see what was happening. When he came back in, he told Mary that three wealthy wise men, dressed like kings, had traveled all the way from their country in the far east, to Bethlehem, by following a star God had put up in the sky.

(Joseph points up to the star and Mary looks up at it and looks surprised.)

They told Joseph they were looking for a baby boy, chosen by God to be, “The King of the Jews.” Then, they told Joseph the star stopped moving and shined its light down onto the roof of our stable! The three wise kings told Joseph they knew they had found Him and called Him “The King of Kings.” Joseph told Mary that the kings were asking for permission to come see Jesus, so that they might worship Him.

(Mary nods her head “yes”)

Mary said, “Yes, of course, let them in.”

(Joseph steps to the edge of the stage and waves the Wisemen to come in)

GRANDPA DONKEY

So, Joseph opened the door to the stable, and in walked the three finest looking kings I had ever seen.

(Grandpa Donkey slows down his speech and takes his time, emphasizing words to create reverence, wonder and awe and give the Wisemen time to present their gifts.)

(The Camel stays in front of the stage to the right of the manger. The Wisemen take turns, walking up to the manger to look at Jesus. They each kneel and lay their gift in front of the manger, bow their head and hold their hands together in a pointed prayer position for a moment. After they stand, each Wisemen decides what he would like to do (i.e. lean over the manger and touch or kiss the forehead of the baby Jesus; pick up the baby and hold Him up toward heaven; or hug Him; or just hold Him out and gaze into His face.) After their moment with baby Jesus, they join the Camel.)

They were dressed from head to toe in gold chains and jewels, wearing long robes of embroidered silks and furs, and their clothes had the fragrance of expensive perfumes and spices. The stable grew quiet as we watched each king gaze into the face of Jesus, then lay presents of gold, frankincense and myrrh at Jesus' feet. We listened as they filled the stable with soft whispers of blessings and worshipped Him. *(PAUSE)* They knew, He was Father God's very own Son...their King...and their Savior...sent by Father God, to bring God's love to everyone in the whole world." *(PAUSE)* In the Bible, it is written, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him, shall not parish, but have everlasting life.

(After the last Wiseman finishes, everyone in the manger scene freezes and stays frozen until directed, by the Innkeeper to go to center stage and bow before they leave by walking down the aisle. Grandpa Donkey closes his book and stands up. The donkey family also stands.)

Good night my donkey family, I love you, and Merry Christmas.

KID DONKEYS

(Kid donkeys say good-byes to Grandpa Donkey all at once.)

Good-night Grandpa Donkey. Merry Christmas, we love you too," (etc.)

(Grandpa Donkey sits back down on his chair. Mama Donkey takes Junior Donkey's hand as the donkey family goes to center stage. Junior stops on center stage and tugs on Mama Donkey's hand to stop her.)

JUNIOR DONKEY #1

Mama, Mama, I listened to Grandpa Donkey's story with my heart ears! The story is not about what Grandpa Donkey did a long time ago, it's about what Father God did a long time ago. He gave us His Son, Jesus. I'm so happy I want to tell everybody!

MAMA DONKEY

I think we should do just that!

(Mama Donkey starts singing "Go Tell It On the Mountain" and the donkey family sings along as they exit, hopping and skipping down the aisle together.)

INNKEEPER

The Innkeeper walks to center stage and waves at Grandpa Donkey to come to center stage. The Innkeeper holds his arms and hands out towards Grandpa Donkey as if to be "presenting" Grandpa Donkey to the congregation. The Innkeeper tells Grandpa Donkey to take a bow. After he bows, he walks down the church aisle and exits. The Innkeeper then motions the Shepherd and Sheep to come and take a bow, then they walk down the aisle. The Innkeeper then does the same for the Angel, then the Star, the Wisemen and Camel. Then the Innkeeper bows and walks down the aisle.

MARY & JOSEPH

Joseph and Mary with Jesus in her arms, walks to center stage and stops there. They stay in character and they Do Not bow because they are presenting to the congregation the real star of the show, Jesus. Joseph touches the face of baby Jesus and smiles at Him. Mary kisses baby Jesus on the forehead. Music begins to play (a rendition of Mary's lullaby either played by an instrument or sung by Mary without accompaniment, or whoever did the song in the play). As they stay in character and continue to look at baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph walk down the aisle and exit.