

No Room at the Inn!

A one-act play

By Tracy Wells

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DEDICATION

For the Great Acts Theater Company

STORY OF THE PLAY

Starlight Inn – a small, quaint hotel with a lot of charm, but not a lot of guests – is struggling to make ends meet. In fact, business has been so bad that on this snowy Christmas Eve, Emily – the owner – has decided to finally break the bad news to the staff: The inn is about to be sold to a local condo developer and torn down. As they lament the impending doom of their beloved hotel, a major snowstorm hits the area, forcing travelers to pull off the road and seek shelter. Suddenly, the hotel has to make room for several unexpected guests: a newlywed couple, a Hollywood diva and her entourage, a traveling church choir, a rock band, a weary family, and a group of business travelers. As the Starlight fills up with strangers, the klutzy and comical bellhop, Baxter, frantically tries to get all the travelers settled, while Chef Vicki works on a new menu fit for a picky Hollywood star. But when a sudden power outage deprives the hotel and its guests of modern conveniences, Emily realizes that while she won't be able to join her family in church to witness the story of the Nativity, the story of Jesus's birth may have found its way to her instead. This realization reminds Emily, her zany staff, and the outrageous visitors about the true meaning of Christmas. Approximately 50-60 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 m, 6 w, 13 flexible, 14 or more kids.)

EMILY BETHEL: Owner and manager of the Starlight Inn; female.

BAXTER: Klutzy, upbeat bellhop; male.

VICKI: Chef of the Starlight Inn who is easily irritated; female.

CLAIRE: Maid; female.

LIZZY / LUKE: Guest who is scared of everything; male or female.

MRS. CARPENTER: Bride; female.

MR. CARPENTER: Groom; male.

VERONICA: Hollywood actress and diva; female.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT: Veronica's entourage; male or female.

BODYGUARD: Another.

DOG WALKER: Another.

KATE / KEN: Choir director; male or female.

CHOIR KIDS: 10 or more; male or female.

SPIKE: Member of rock band "The Barnyard Animals"; male or female.

SHREDDER: Another.

THRASH: Another.

GEORGE: Another.

JIM SHEPHERD: Frazzled father of four; male.

NANCY SHEPHERD: Mom who just wants a spa day; female.

LISA / LEO: Shepherd child; male or female

MAYA / MARK: Another.

OLIVIA / OLIVER: Another.

CHARLIE: Another.

GOLDIE: Guest on a business trip; male or female.

FRANK: Another.

MURIEL: Another.

MAYOR STEPHENS: Mayor; male or female.

MR. / MS. DODGE: Condo developer; male or female.

SETTING

Interior of the Starlight Inn.

TIME

Modern day. Please feel free to update references in the script as they become dated.

SET

This is a simple set but can be as elaborate as the director chooses. A large desk decorated for Christmas is center stage, with a board with room keys behind it. A computer monitor, bell, ledger, and display with pamphlets are on the desk. A Christmas tree is near the desk, as is a luggage cart (*which can be made simply with a small square base with wheels and painted PVC pipes*). Two wing chairs and a small table are stage right, flanking a fireplace.

TECHNICAL ELEMENTS

Optional snow falling outside of the windows could be added as budget allows. This can be accomplished by placing a television monitor behind window frames and running a DVD or power-point of snow falling. If possible, snow falling should increase throughout the play.

LIGHTING/SOUND

Blackout occurs toward the end of the play. Each character needs a battery-operated candle. Additional battery-operated candles could be passed out to the audience. A supplementary soft glowing stage light is needed following the blackout once all characters have their candles. Music can be played when choir sings. There is an optional guitar music sound effect, or the character can verbally make a guitar noise.

*See additional notes at the end of the script.

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(AT RISE: Early afternoon. EMILY is standing behind the desk, looking at computer as BAXTER enters, carrying boxes. As he enters, he trips, nearly dropping boxes.)

EMILY: *(Looking over her desk at BAXTER.)* Baxter! Are you alright?

BAXTER: Here are the boxes you asked for, Miss Bethel.

EMILY: Thank you, Baxter. And I've told you many times ... please call me Emily.

(SHE takes boxes that BAXTER is handing her.)

BAXTER: Alright Miss Bethel ... I mean Emily. Is there anything else I can help you with?

EMILY: I think I've got everything covered here. I sent Claire to finish cleaning the empty rooms ... Vicki is in the kitchen trying to figure out some sort of meal to serve our one and only guest for Christmas Eve ... *(Crossing to Christmas tree with boxes.)* And you have been so helpful by bringing me these boxes. Now I can start taking down the Christmas tree. *(Starts to take off ornaments and put them in the box.)*

BAXTER: *(Aghast.)* What are you *doing*?

EMILY: What does it look like I'm doing?

BAXTER: *(Appalled.)* It looks like you're stripping the Christmas tree of all its holiday magic!

EMILY: It's Christmas Eve and the inn is nearly empty, as usual. Our fiscal year is coming to the end and our reservations this year have continued to go down. And to top it off, I'm missing the Christmas Eve service at my church. So, I'm sorry, but I just can't look at these decorations any more.

BAXTER: *(Dramatically.)* But the tree will be *naked*!

EMILY: *(Chuckling.)* No, it won't. I'm going to take the tree down when I'm done putting the ornaments away.

BAXTER: You're going to *what*?!!

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(HE rushes over to the tree and throws himself in between the tree and EMILY, nearly knocking the tree down in the process. He must stabilize it with his hands and then stands in guard of it, with his arms outstretched.)

BAXTER: *(Cont'd.)* I can't let you do this, Miss Bethel. It's not even Christmas Day.

EMILY: It's Emily. And if the Starlight Inn is going to close in a few weeks, we might as well start putting things away now.

BAXTER: The Starlight Inn is going to close? You must be joking! The inn can't close, Miss Bethel! It's been around for years.

EMILY: Generations, actually. My great-grandfather opened it nearly seventy-five years ago. Back then a small boutique hotel was just what this area needed. And the guests loved the small but elegant restaurant and the tastefully decorated rooms.

BAXTER: *(Looking around.)* It really is quite a place. And for those of us who have worked here for years, it's a home away from home.

EMILY: Unfortunately, a home away from home is exactly what everyone wants these days. *(Walking around, touching furniture, mantel, etc.)* No one wants the old-fashioned charm of gathering by the fire in the hotel lobby, traditional maid service, or eating a gourmet meal prepared by a four-star chef. *(Patting BAXTER on the shoulder.)* Or having their bags brought to their room by a real-life bellhop.

BAXTER: *(Proudly.)* That's me! Baxter the bellhop.

EMILY: What they want are condos or Airbnb's with full kitchens where they can prepare their own meals and bring in their own bags.

BAXTER: *(Dramatically.)* Why would someone want to bring in their own bags? It's a vacation, for crying out loud!

EMILY: The Starlight Inn has tried to change with the times. We offer an online reservation system, we have deals with local Uber drivers ... We added a small spa to try and attract guests — but we've had no luck.

End of Freeview

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