



JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH AND THE WEE DONKEY...

BY RACHEL GOTOBED

Characters

- + Seth Strong - Detective Chief Inspector, Temple Police (DCI)
- + Sarah Sharp - Detective Sergeant, Temple Police (DS)
- + Temple Guards (TG)
- + Isaac Innkeeper (I)
- + Shepherds: Nat (S1), Matt (S2), Pat (S3)
- + Wise Men: Casper (C), Melchior (M), Balthazar (B)

Nativity Tableau

- + Mary
- + Joseph
- + Donkey
- + Angel Gabriel and Angels
- + Star

SCENE 1

Temple Guards enter bringing the Innkeeper with them and making him sit at the table. DCI and DS enter and sit down opposite

- DCI Good evening. My name is Detective Chief Inspector Seth Strong of the Temple Police and this is my assistant, Detective Sergeant Sarah Sharp, and for the benefit of the tape, we are about to interview the owner of the Bethlehem Tavern in our investigation of the strange happenings in said town over the last few nights.
- DS Now Mr Innkeeper, please can you confirm your full name and your permanent place of residence?
- I Yes my name is Isaac Innkeeper and I am the proprietor of the Bethlehem Tavern on the High Street.
- DS And can you tell us, in as much detail as possible please, what happened over the weekend?
- I Indeed I can. On account of the Census called by Caesar Augustus, the town was full to bursting with people coming home to register. The Inn was full - every nook and cranny possible had a sleeping body in it - and once we knew all the guests had settled down for the night - the wife and I were all set to do the same when there was a loud knocking at





the door. I wasn't going to answer it on account that we had no room but they just wouldn't stop banging so I had to because I didn't want them waking everyone else!

DCI And then what happened?

I Well when I opened the door - I saw them there - this young couple - looking totally lost and forlorn. They started begging me for a room, him saying that his wife's baby was due any time, but I just didn't have anywhere.

DS So what did you do?

I I tried explaining to them that we didn't have an inch to spare - that I'd already got people sleeping in cupboards - even in my own bed - but even as I'm saying all this I could see the desperation in their faces and something in the pit of my stomach just wouldn't let me turn them away. I felt bad suggesting the stable out the back - but it was all I had left - and it was dry and warm - and to my utter astonishment they accepted as if I'd offered them the Penthouse Suite (not that we have one of those!)

DS Please go on.

I I led them out back and made sure they were comfortable, spreading some fresh hay on the ground. The animals just shuffled around a bit to make room for the extra guests including the donkey they'd travelled on. They told me their names were Mary and Joseph and my wife brought them some supper and other bits and pieces for the young girl before we left them to rest.

DCI So Mary, Joseph and the wee donkey were all settled for the night in the stable and that was that. Nothing untoward happened? No funny business you need to tell us about?

I None whatsoever Sir, although as we headed back to the Inn I did point out to the wife an extremely bright star shining in the night sky - don't think I'd ever seen one quite that bright before.

DCI A star you say? The brightest you've ever seen? That's quite a claim!

I Nothing but the whole truth Inspector - the brightest ever!

DS Any further questions Sir?

DCI No more for now.

Innkeeper gets up to leave

But remember this is only the start of our investigation so we may need to visit your premises at some point.

I *On exiting*

Sir, as this story shows, our door is always open.





SCENE 2

Temple Guards enter bringing in 3 shepherds

- DS Hello there - I'm Detective Sergeant Sarah Sharp and this is the Senior Investigating Officer Detective Chief Inspector Seth Strong of the Temple Police - and you are?
- S1 I'm Nat
- S2 I'm Matt
- S3 I'm Pat
- DCI Nat, Matt and Pat? Well how about that!
- DS And you're shepherds out on the Bethlehem hills - is that right?
- S1 That's correct Sergeant - we are.
- DCI We're investigating the strange happenings here in Bethlehem over the last few nights and we have reason to believe that you shepherds can help us with our lines of enquiry - is that correct?
- S1 We can do better than that Sir - we can give you an eye witness account of exactly what happened!
- S2 Indeed we can - although I have to confess that I'm still not quite sure that I can actually believe my own eyes.
- S3 Me neither - I still keep thinking it's all been just a dream.
- DS Well please can you keep to the facts and tell us what you saw?
- S1 We saw angels!
- DCI Angels? Celestial beings with wings?
- S2 That's them!
- S3 Just one at first though - telling us not to be afraid.
- S1 But we weren't afraid - we were petrified!
- S2 He told us that he had good news to share about a special baby - the Messiah no less! That he had been born right here in Bethlehem and that WE could find this baby lying in a manger





S3 And then that one angel became a sky full of angels and they were singing

All S "Glory to God, Glory to God, Peace on earth, Peace of earth"

DCI So not only do you expect me to believe that an angel spoke to you, you also want me to accept that an angel choir sang to you too?

S1 You asked us what we saw and that's it!

DS But did you see the baby?

S2 Yes we did! We rushed down to the town not really sure where to begin looking but then Pat remembered there was a stable at the back of the Bethlehem Tavern.

S3 I knew it was there because when I was a boy I had a hay delivery round and Isaac was one of my regular customers.

DCI And it was there that you found the baby?

S1 It was - just as the angel had told us. And they'd named the baby Jesus because that's what the angel had told them to do.

DS So they'd seen an angel too?

S2 Mary, the mother had - he'd told her she would have a baby - God's Son.

DCI So the man - Joseph was it - he's not the father?

S3 No Sir - this is the promised Messiah, God's Son sent to save the world.

DS And after you'd seen this baby Jesus, what did you do then?

S1 We went back to the hills to look after our sheep

S2 But not until we had told everyone about what we had seen and heard.

DCI So I'm to believe that Jesus, Joseph, Mary and the wee donkey were all staying in the stable and that you - Nat, Matt and Pat - heard an angel tell you that this baby had been born - the Saviour of the World! (*Shakes head in disbelief*)

S3 Yep that's it in a nutshell Sir.

DCI In a nutshell? I thought it was in a stable! Interview terminated

S1 Does that mean we're free to go?

DS Yes you are - but be certain we'll be back in touch if have any further questions

Shepherds exit chanting "Glory to God, Glory to God, Peace on earth, Peace of earth"



SCENE 3

Temple Guards enter bringing in 3 wise men

- DCI My name is Detective Chief Inspector Seth Strong of the Temple Police and this is my assistant, Detective Sergeant Sarah Sharp, and for the benefit of the tape, we are interviewing 3 foreign nationals of a wise variety as part of our continuing investigation of the strange happenings in Bethlehem town in recent days.
- DS For the record, we appreciate your cooperation with our enquiries as we recognise you are not subject to our temple law but we are hoping that you will be able to shed some light on this complex case.
- C We are very happy to cooperate with your enquiries as we ourselves are only here because we believe something of world shattering significance is happening.
- DCI World shattering significance you say - happening right here in Bethlehem - are you sure?
- M In our study of the heavens we witnessed the rising of a new star that we perceived to herald an important event and so we quickly packed our things and set off to follow it.
- DS A star? Didn't someone else mention a star?
- DCI The Innkeeper fella said he'd seen one - brightest ever he claimed!
- B He is not mistaken - it was indeed extremely bright - and we followed it for weeks to get here.
- DCI Now hang on there - that's not quite correct is it? My enquiries tell me that you visited the King first.
- C Yes we did. We mistakenly presumed that if the star signified the birth of a new king that he would be born in the palace but he wasn't there and I'm not sure King Herod was thrilled to hear our news.
- M I think that's an understatement my friend! He did get his scholars to investigate on our behalf and it was them that advised we should come to Bethlehem but the King's face was not one of welcome at this news at all.
- B We left as quickly as we could and continued following the star until it led us here - well to the stable - and there we saw the child and presented our gifts.
- DS Gifts? What did you bring?
- C Gold
- M Frankincense





- B Myrrh
- DCI Strangest gifts for a baby I've ever heard! And what are your plans now?
- C Herod asked us to return to his palace to tell him what we'd discovered but I had a dream last night that warned us not to so we will go back another way.
- DS And do you always follow your dreams?
- C No - sometimes I follow stars!
- DCI We are well aware that we have no jurisdiction to hold you here so thank you for your help with our enquiries - you are free to return home but please leave your contact details at reception in case we need to follow this up.
- M It is our honour to be of assistance in such a historical case
- B We wish you adieu.

Wise Men bow and exit

- DCI This investigation just get's weirder by the minute! Jesus, Joseph, Mary and the wee donkey staying in the Innkeeper's stable. Nat, Matt and Pat heard an angel tell them that a baby had been born! Angels, stars, dreams, Kings! A baby born to save the world! I just don't know what to think.

SCENE 4

DCI and DS sat at table with files spread across

- DCI Right then Sarah, let's look at the facts - if you can call them that - they all seem a bit fuzzy to say the least - and yet everyone we speak to is utterly convinced of what they heard and saw. Can so many people be colluding to make this up or could we possibly be hearing the greatest story ever told?
- DS I get what you mean Sir. It does all seem a bit fantastical but then again, if this is the birth of the Messiah, why wouldn't it be a bit out of the ordinary?
- DCI I know, I know! I am just trying to get my head round it all because we need to be certain that nothing untoward has happened here - I won't stand for corruption on my patch.
- DS So why don't we go through the evidence again to try and get a full picture of it all?
- DCI Indeed - nothing gets missed when the Temple Police department are on the case!

As the Detectives piece together the evidence, a Nativity Tableau forms up to make a picture.





- DS Well Isaac Innkeeper told us that a young couple called Joseph and Mary arrived looking for a room (*enter the Innkeeper, Joseph and Mary*) and that he allowed them to find shelter in his stable.
- DCI Don't forget the wee donkey Sergeant! (*Enter donkey*)
- DS Yes Sir - and the wee donkey (*Donkey takes a bow.*) And it was there in the stable, that Mary gave birth to a son who they called Jesus. (*Mary takes baby Jesus out of the manger to hold*)
- DCI Shepherds from the Bethlehem hills, Nat, Matt and Pat (*enter shepherds*) said an angel (*enter Angel Gabriel*) told them good news that a special baby, God's Son, had been born and they would find him laid in a manger (*Mary places Baby Jesus back in the manger*). And then more angels appeared (*enter angels*) and chanted, "Glory to God, Glory to God, Peace on earth, Peace of earth"
- DS Wise Men from the East followed a star (*enter star followed by Wise Men*) believing it to announce the birth of a king and, after a wrong detour via Herod's palace, they found the baby and gave him some special gifts - gold, frankincense and myrrh. End of enquiry.
- DCI As hard as I'm finding it to get my head around the details, as I look at this picture I've a feeling in my heart that there is something about this story that is bigger than we can see right now and it is in no way the end of anything.
- DS Do you mean we're missing something Chief Inspector?
- DCI No not missing something as such... more like we're witnessing a mystery unfolding...
- DS So what do we do now then Sir?
- DCI I don't think we can do anything more for now but I do think we should leave the case open pending further investigation.
- DS But is that really necessary Sir?
- DCI All in the line of duty, Sergeant, all in the line of duty.... and mark my words we haven't heard the end of this baby, (*Donkey "Ee-Aw"*) or that wee donkey!