

We Two Kings

by David Radcliff

A Christmas skit for two readers in which the wise men reflect on their visit with Jesus and their encounter with King Herod. Typical Christmas play attire (or at least a robe or a crown) suggested as dress for actors.

Reader 1: Yeah, there we were—a bit overdressed for the occasion.

Reader 2: What were we supposed to wear? All the signs were pointing to the birth of a king—

Reader 1: And was that not a king that we visited?

Reader 2: Well, yeah....but you'll have to admit he wasn't your "typical" king. I mean, we've seen some kings in our day, eh? Remember the guy over in Syria—that palace with the marble floors and the four-donkey garage? Now that's living like a king!

Reader 1: But there was still something...royal...about this little dude. Maybe it was his mother—she was just a teenager, but so calm. It was almost like she knew something the rest of us didn't. And the place itself—Bethlehem—just a little village in the middle of nowhere, but the way the star rested right over that little shed where they were staying...

Reader 2: Speaking of which, I thought you were never going to ask for directions. I mean we come all the way from Persia, across Iraq, into Judea—all places we've never been before—hoping to find a little baby with our only clue being the bright star we had seen on the horizon. And Triple A was no help at all. It was like they'd never mapped a route following a star before.

Reader 1: Hey, I did finally stop and ask someone, didn't I?

Reader 2: Yeah. Great choice too. You ask the very person who wants to see the kid dead.

Reader 1: How was I to know Herod would be so upset about the birth of one little baby!?! Who would have thought this kid would ever be a threat to someone like Herod and the Romans, for goodness sake. Born in that cow barn, teenage mother, working class father, the only other visitors who came besides us were a bunch of scruffy shepherds.

Reader 2: Yes, their aroma still lingered. But you're right--why should someone like this be a threat to someone like that? What did Herod have to fear from that little baby?

Reader 1: We should be able to figure this out. After all, we're wise men.

Reader 2: Yeah, they don't call us that for nothing! Why was this little tyke a big threat to ole King Herod?

[both rub chins and scratch their heads for a few moments]

Reader 2: I give up.

Reader 1: You know, what does a ruler depend on to rule?

Reader 2: A big army.

Reader 1: That's one thing. But what's even more important than military force for getting people to accept you as their leader?

Reader 2: People wanting you to be their leader...hmmm...

Reader 1: *[starts humming "76 trombones led the big parade"]*

Reader 2: Trombones! 76 trombones! Trombones??

Reader 1: Yes! Well, sort of. You need people to want to follow you—to think that you've got what they need—that your plan is the right plan to get them where they want to go!

Reader 2: I used to play the trombone...

Reader 1: Focus. Let's focus here. Herod has the military power, right? No one can deny that. But if someone else came along with a better idea about how to get people where they want to go, they might start following this person.

Reader 2: And all the king's horses and all the king's men—are no match for a good parade.

Reader 1: Now we're getting somewhere! So if Herod thought that this little kid might grow up one day to be like those Jewish prophets in the old days—challenging the king, talking about justice and righteousness—things that regular kings don't usually care too much about but which regular people do care about—then things could start coming apart for ole King Herod.

Reader 2: And once Humpty Dumpty has a great fall...

Reader 1: ...you've got one big omelette.

Reader 2: What made Herod think that this baby could be the end of Humpty Dumpty?

Reader 1: Well, first of all, rulers are just born nervous about things like this—that somebody will come along with other ideas, making people think they don't need the king and all his military might anymore. And as we heard there in the palace, Herod's own people could tell him that the birth of a king was going to take place in Bethlehem.

Reader 2: And then we show up—big shots from the East—stopping in to ask directions to the home of some “king of the Jews” that we've heard is being born nearby.

Reader 1: And Herod puts two and two together...and the kid's got to go.

Reader 2: So that's why he wanted us to come back to give him a little “report” about what we found. *[moment of realization]* He didn't want to come and worship the baby—he wanted to...to...

Reader 1: Who said you weren't a wise man! That's why the angel warned us to "return home by another way."

Reader 2: And I thought Triple A just messed up our routing again. We were part of a covert operation! Giving the king the run-around. Taking another way home. Little baby Jesus, your secret's safe with us. King Herod, don't mess with the wise men!

Reader 1: I am still a little worried about the kid. After all, he's only a baby. And his parents are no match for the power of angry and insecure kings. And from all I can tell, there's a lot riding on this little child.

Reader 2: Well, the way I look at it, he's in good hands. The great God of the heavens led us to see him, and then made sure we didn't lead Herod to him. God will find a way to protect him until he's had a chance to do what he came to do.

Reader 1: So what do you make of all this? What's going to become of this child?

Reader 2: He's got his work cut out for him. Lots of people would rather be in Herod's parade—it's the one they're used to. But we've been following leaders like that and plans like theirs for centuries—and look where it's gotten us. People will soon start to see through all that....won't they?

Reader 1: Guess it all depends on what the child does when he becomes a man. If he has the courage to speak out for a better way, and if he lives what he preaches—who knows what impact it might have. Of course, it would probably get him killed...

Reader 2: But it might also get him followed...

Reader 1: Well, fellow wise guy, that was quite a trip. It was great traveling with you.

Reader 2: Same here. And too bad Prince Shalazar couldn't make it. Then there would have been three of us to carry all that gold, frankincense and myrrh. My back was killing me after a while.

Reader 1: I thought about renting a couple of camels to carry the gifts.

Reader 2: We could have taken camels?! I didn't have to lug all that stuff?!

Reader 1: Wait, wait. Think about it—where would they get camels for all those Christmas plays they'll be doing about our little trip? It'll be enough of a challenge coming up with cool outfits like these.

Reader 2: You've got a point there. You are a wise man indeed.

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