

## AN UNEXPECTED VISIT.

‘We’d better get going!’

‘Hold your camels. I’ve only just woken up.’ came the irritated reply.

‘Would you please stop complaining, Mel? We’ve got a long way to go and we haven’t got long.’

‘You’re such a control-freak. Can’t you please just give me a break? I’m not actually getting paid for this you know.’

At that moment a third man walked in, ready for the journey and with a superior smile that irked Mel to the core.

‘I can see the camel isn’t the only thing with the ‘ump’,’ said the new arrival, his grin getting bigger as he reflected on the glory of his own wit.

Not to be outdone, Mel rolled out of bed and rearranged his beard, before putting together sufficient clothes and food for a journey that could take anything up to twelve days.

Mel’s problem was that his camel was the laziest of the three and, and, as his two compatriots moved at great speed across the desert, Mel’s camel, Melanie, appeared to be focussed on searching the ground for a shrub to sate her hunger.

The other two men led the way, exchanging wry smiles, as Mel and Melanie struggled onward. Being of the high status that he was, Mel had not had to work so hard before. He had had other, less privileged people, to do the transporting for him.

‘It’d better be worth it, that’s all I can say,’ muttered Miserable Mel to himself as Melanie trudged onwards.

Things were made even worse because the other two men insisted that they sleep during the day so that they could better navigate their way during the night.

‘It’s the way it’s meant to be,’ the two of them explained.

‘Sleeping in the desert in the middle of the day is ridiculous,’ was Mel’s under-the-breath comment, but his lips remained sealed.

That didn’t stop him from saying something, which, if the others had been less patient, could have cost Mel his place in history.

‘Look, why are you two so keen on getting to this place, wherever it is, in such a hurry? Can’t we slow down?’

‘There’s a deadline, Mel, that’s why,’ came the retort. ‘History will never forgive us if we don’t get there on time.’

Twelve days and nights passed, before the other two announced that their destination, a small stable, was in sight. Not to be outdone, Mel leapt down from Melanie and raced

towards the stable door. Yes, the others might laugh at him behind his back, but Mel was determined he was going to win this one – all the glory would be his!

Crashing through the stable door, gift in hand, Mel was shocked to discover that there, gathered right in front of his eyes, were some shepherds, mere common folk by Mel's standards.

He had been beaten, and by those of lower status, to boot.

'Where is the justice?' Mel asked himself.

Perhaps that was a question of greater significance than Mel realised at the time.