

NATIVITY 2024
AT THE GATES OF BETHLEHEM

Written by

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AT THE GATES OF BETHLEHEM NATIVITY (2024)

CAST

Local 1

Local 2

Wise Man 1

Wise Man 2

Wise Man 3

Officials

Mary

Joseph

Shepherd 1

Shepherd 2

Angels, shepherds, officials

SCENE 1

The desert.

A wise man enters, holding a candle. Using a small telescope he searches the sky. Nothing. He shivers and puts on an extra cloak. Looks again to the sky. Is disappointed.

Another wise man enters. He looks up at the sky, medium telescope under his arm.

WISE MAN 1
Much to see?

WISE MAN 2
Not tonight. It is very - dark.

Wise Man 2 searches.

WISE MAN 1
Very dark.

WISE MAN 2
Not even a speck of light in the
sky tonight.

WISE MAN 2 (CONT'D)
(shouts!)
Where are you moon?

The moon doesn't answer.

WISE MAN 2 (CONT'D)
A land of darkness.

WISE MAN 1
Total darkness.

SCENE 2

The city. Two poor locals sit by the gates.

LOCAL 1
What are you reading now?

LOCAL 2
(reading Holy Book)
Aw it's brilliant. I'm on
The book of Isaiah.'

LOCAL 1
What's 'Isaiah' got to say today
then?

LOCAL 2
(reading)
On those living in the land of
darkness a light has dawned...'

Local 1 is unimpressed.

LOCAL 2 (CONT'D)
'You have shattered the yoke that
burdens them...

Local 1 shakes his head.

LOCAL 1
Does it mention shekels?

His tummy rumbles.

LOCAL 1 (CONT'D)

Or food?

Some census officials pass by.

LOCAL 1 (CONT'D)

Shh. Some people are coming.
Welcome to Bethlehem. Can I help?

OFFICIAL

We're here for the census.

LOCAL 1

My brother's card. The best hotel
in Bethlehem. Turn right by the
grumpy camel and left by the well.

They take it and leave.

LOCAL 2

You don't have a brother.

LOCAL 1

(rubbing hands together)
No but i get a shekel for every
customer I send his way.

SCENE 3

The desert.

Wise man 1 enters, holding a candle. Using his telescope, he
searches the sky. He is pleased, and makes interested noises.

WISE MAN 2

Much to see?

WISE MAN 1

Not bad. Sky's clear.

Wise Man 2 looks through his medium telecope, then does a
double take.

WISE MAN 2

Oh my.

He is open mouthed.

WISE MAN 1
What is it?

Wise man 2 passes his telescope. Wise Man 1 looks.

WISE MAN 1 (CONT'D)
Oh my.

They look at each other.

WISE MAN 2
I've never seen anything-

WISE MAN 1
Like it.

WISE MAN 2
What should we do?

WISE MAN 1
Get another pair of eyes?

They exit.

SCENE 3

The city.

The locals sit, Local 2 making gleeful noises as he reads his book. Local 1 gets increasinly annoyed.

LOCAL 1
Go on then. What's the prophet
saying today?

LOCAL 2
(reading happily)
..no more gloom for those in
distress.

LOCAL 1
Promises, promises.

LOCAL 2
No really! One day the Messiah is
coming. Maybe even one day soon!

LOCAL 1
Yeah right. (spotting some people
in the distance)
(MORE)

LOCAL 1 (CONT'D)

Now if you'll excuse me. Some of us
have work to do.

Mary and Joseph pass by with Donkey.

LOCAL 2

Welcome strangers. You're not from
these parts?

JOSEPH

Good afternoon. No, we have
travelled from Nazareth. Are we
near to Bethlehem?

LOCAL 2

Just a mile into town.

JOSEPH

My wife is with child

LOCAL 2

We're broke not stupid.

MARY

Do you have something to drink?

Local 2 offers a drink.

LOCAL 1

In case you're after somewhere to
stay..

They nod keenly.

LOCAL 1 (CONT'D)

..My brother has an inn just past
the gates. Turn right past the
grumpy camel and right by the
broken down well.

MARY

Thank you. Blessings.

LOCAL 1

Hang on. take a shekel for the
baby.

Local 2 does a double take.

MARY

Thank you both for your kindness.
And we'll try your brother.

They leave.

LOCAL 1
(wacking poor man 1)
Why'd you do that?

LOCAL 2
I don't really know. I just knew
that baby is gonna be special.

LOCAL 1
Like the one in your book?

LOCAL 2
For to us a child is born. To us a
son is given
And the government will rest on his
shoulders.
...and he will be called Wonderful
Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting
Father, Prince of Peace.

LOCAL 1
When was this written?

LOCAL 2
Maybe six hundred years ago?

LOCAL 1
Look. I hate to break it to you.
But if it's not happened in 600
years in aint happening today is
it?

SCENE 4

The desert.

Wise Man1 and Wise Man 2 return with Wise Man 3 with an even
bigger telescope.

Wise Man 2 points and Wise Man 3 looks through his telescope.

WISE MAN 3
How can that be?

WISE MAN 2
That's why we found you. It doesn't
make sense. It's not on any of the
charts.

WISE MAN 3
It must mean - Something huge.

WISE MAN 2
And it's moved.

Wise Man 1 shows him the chart.

WISE MAN 3
Something, someone, the world has
never seen before.

WISE MAN 1
A king above all kings, above the
whole world?

They consider.

WISE MAN 2
So what now?

WISE MAN 3
We'll go where it leads. And
welcome this king.

SCENE 5

The City.

Local 2 is reading. Poor man 1 arrives cheerfully holding
shekels.

LOCAL 1
Innkeeper's made a packet and I've
been paid too. Every room sold out.
He's even got some couple sleeping
in the stable.

LOCAL 2
Lucky them. I didn't get a wink. I
had a weird dream. About that baby.
Did you hear singing?

LOCAL 1
Hang on is that more customers..

Shepherds arrive.

LOCAL 2
You're a bit late for the census.
Everywhere's booked up but my
brother's got a camper van...

SHEPHERD 1
We can't stop. Angels appeared to
us in a great light. They told us
the Messiah has been born today!

Local 2 stands.

LOCAL 2
The messiah?

SHEPHERD 1
And that we'll find him in a manger
wrapped in cloths.

SHEPHERD 2
Come with us?

LOCAL 2
I told you! It was just a matter of
time. And it's happening now.

He rushes off then pauses and turns back.

LOCAL 2 (CONT'D)
You coming?

LOCAL 1
No.

The shepherds and Local 2 exit leaving Local 1 alone.

Suddenly Angels stream by. Local 1 open mouthed.

LOCAL 1 (CONT'D)
Did you see that?

He turns to where Local 2 usually stands but remembers he's
alone.

Wise Men enter with telescopes. They admire the star (on
screen) Local 1 sees it too.

LOCAL 1 (CONT'D)
What is it?

WISE MAN 2
Something special.

WISE MAN 1
We brought gifts.

WISE MAN 1 (CONT'D)
For a king. Perhaps even greater
than a king.

WISE MAN 3
We don't know where to find him.

LOCAL 1
I do.

WISE MAN 1
Will you take us?

LOCAL 1
What would I bring?

He remembers.

LOCAL 1 (CONT'D)
I have a shekel.

WISE MAN 2
Just bring what you have.

Local 1 leaves with them.

FINAL TABLEAU

A carol is sung and all the nativity characters take their
place in the tableau.

READING OVER NATIVITY

Isaiah 9:6-7