

What if....

By John Fewings, amended by Chrys Tremththanmor

Summary

What if the three wise men and the shepherds had had very different reactions to the signs of the birth of Jesus?

Characters

(Note: Ideally, this short sketch should be performed by only two actors, one taking the part of the NARRATOR, the other playing ALL the other parts. To emphasise the silliness of the piece, this second actor could make "lightning" changes of costume behind an appropriate screen: costume could consist merely of different colour cloaks and headgear for each part. He should also use a variety of different voices. A modicum of props might help.)

Narrator

All other characters

Script

NARRATOR: Once upon a time, a long time ago in a far-off land (because all good stories start like that) three kings met together for a deep philosophical discussion; about the ontological meaning of life, the escatological significance of entropic decay, the existential interpretation of naturalistic phenomenology, and why was the coffee so expensive? - heavy stuff like that. Suddenly there appeared a bright new star shining really bright in the evening sky. For a while they didn't know what to think - until the first of the kings worked out why it was important and explained it to the others.

KING 1: (Patrick Moore voice?) It's obviously an intergalactic quasar and it's over a million million miles away - the temperature at the surface is a trillion times hotter than our sun and its light is incredibly intense. One day, people will go up in ships to explore the stars... By the way, is there any coffee left?

NARRATOR: The other two kings thought about this. It was all very well knowing WHAT it was, but what did this new star MEAN? The second of the kings consulted his reference books- and shared what he'd found with his colleagues.

KING 2: (Russell Grant voice?) The moon is in its second phase and resides in the third house of Aquarius. With Mars in the ascendancy I could be lucky in love. I will meet a tall, dark, handsome stranger. I may have problems with money but can overcome these difficulties with wisdom. Lucky number 5. Hey, could either of you lend me a fiver?

NARRATOR: Neither of them could. Despite what his two friends had said, the third king was not happy with either of their suggestions. He'd spent the whole evening thinking long and hard about the bright star. Finally, thoughtfully, he said ...

KING 3: (Total panic!) It's a UFO! It's probably full of little green men! They'll

take over the earth! We'll all be eaten! Don't just sit there - let's run away and hide! Help!

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, on the hillside outside Bethlehem were a number of simple, peaceful shepherds watching over their sheep. All at once, the sky shone with a brilliant light and a shining angel appeared, saying ...

ANGEL : Fear not - for I bring tidings of great joy. Unto you this day in the City of David, is born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And you shall find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

NARRATOR: The shepherds were startled, amazed, flabbergasted. They had never seen anything like it. It wasn't long before one of them made up his mind what to do.

SHEPHERD 1:(Aside, to audience) I must be going crazy; completely flipped. I thought I saw an angel! If I say anything to the other two they'll have me carted off to the "funny farm". I'll just pretend nothing's happened. Er nice evening isn't it?

NARRATOR: Of course, they couldn't all deny what they'd seen, and one of the other shepherds soon realised what was going on.

SHEPHERD 2:Did you see that shimmering light? I reckon it was something "weird". A ghost maybe, or a spook! A ghoulie! A ghostie! A long-leggedy beastie! ooh! I'm not all right: I should be at home, safely tucked especially as it's Christmas.

NARRATOR: But the third shepherd did not believe in witches and spooks - nor "things that go bump in the night". He did not scare so easily. Well - not much ...

SHEPHERD 3:(Total panic!) It's a UFO! It's probably full of little green men! They'll take over the earth! We'll all be eaten ... in shepherd's pie! Don't just sit there - let's run away and hide! Help!

NARRATOR: What if it HAD happened something like that? What if the kings had explained away the star ... instead of coming to worship the baby Jesus? What if the shepherds had thought it best not to get involved ... instead of humbly seeking out the Son of God? What if ... no, it's silly ... What if ... YOU turned down the invitation to come to Jesus? But then, of course, you wouldn't ... would you?