

The Wise Men Pantomime

You'll need two Camel puppets behind a screen to work with the actors

Saluman Ottoman my old friend how nice to see you, what have you been doing with yourself?

Ottoman Well I've got a new hobby learning Greek

Saluman Really how interesting, what have you learnt?

Ottoman I'm just doing the alphabet at the moment, you know alpha, beta, gamma, delta – those are the first few letters

Saluman How impressive!

Ottoman Isn't it, but I have to practise to remember it, so I'm starting at the beginning and saying 'Alpha' as often as I can. Anyway enough about me, what have you been up to?

Saluman I've taken up astronomy, looking at the stars, there are some really interesting things up there.

Ottoman Really like what?

Saluman Well for example there's Andromeda the Ethiopian Princess - did I tell you I went for tea with the Queen on one of my African journeys? It was a hot day and I'd slept well on my rush mat on the door step of

Ottoman I thought we were talking about stars?

Saluman Sorry yes, there's Ursa Major and Ursa Minor, the great and little bears, Canis Major and Minor, the great and little dogs and the Camelopardalis

Ottoman The camels?

Saluman No giraffe (to audience) Seriously folks look it up. Then there's this one..

Ottoman What is it?

Saluman It's 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. And there's a triple conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Pisces.

Ottoman So it's a new star then?

Saluman Yes and incredibly bright and a bit low in the sky for this time of year. Shall I tell you about some more constellations?

Ottoman No 'Alpha get' it all anyway. But that extra shiny one is very interesting. What do you think it means?

Saluman Well according to my charts it means there's a new king going to be born.

Ottoman A new King, that's exciting isn't it?

Saluman It is and what's more, there was a prophecy written about him 500 years ago.. Isaiah 7:14 The Lord himself will choose the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel--God is with us.'

Ottoman A prophecy eh? Well maybe we should go and see this King for ourselves, if that star really is the sign of God coming to earth to be with us then we ought to go and say hello!

Saluman You're right but first we'll have to prepare for the journey. What shall we take to eat?

Ottoman Alpha lfa (Saluman looks at him strangely) It's a sort of lettuce...

Saluman Look we'll sort the food out later, we need to get the camels ready first, you go and look for them.

Ottoman I'll be back in 'Alpha' minute Ottoman looks around set for camels Saluman I can't find them anywhere. I think they must be hiding, I tell you what, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, we'll get on with packing and will you tell us if the camels appear?

Saluman and Ottoman busy themselves around the set, camels pop up and down, plant a few people to shout 'behind you' and the camels can pop back down when Saluman and Ottoman turn round. After a few goes both end up standing near puppet screen...

Saluman I tell you what never mind the camels lets have a look what the weather's going to be like and then we can sort out the transport. If it's bad we may have to think about hiring a chariot, I like the Ford Galaxy myself.

Ottoman Yes but an 'Alpha' Romeo would be better.

Saluman Here I've just got a new mobile (holds up a scroll) let's just see what the weather site says.

Ottoman Yes we better had – it's an Alph a long way you know.

Saluman For the first day it looks like it's going to be windy

Camels blow Ottoman and Saluman's hair with fans

Ottoman (Looks over Saluman's shoulder) and then it looks like it's going to snow...

Camels blow white paper or silly string over

Saluman Yes but look then that gives way to rain

Camels squirt with water pistol

Ottoman D'you know it's marvellous what they can do with technology nowadays, it was almost as if that weather was happening here and now. Have you had any more thoughts about food?

Saluman Sorry I can't hear you....

Ottoman Shouting ... I said have you thought what sort of food you want yet?

Saluman I like custard pies personally...

Camels appear with shaving foam pies

Ottoman It'll take too long to bake. We need to be setting off soon, when I find those camels, I'm going to thump their humps for being so naughty.

Camels look at each other shake heads and disappear

Saluman Well I tell you what, lets get something on the way, we'll call in at a Little Chef

Ottoman Yes lets, they serve Alpha betty spaghetti there. Anyway lets get some presents you always take presents to a new born baby. I know he's a king so let's take gold (Picks up each present as he talks about it.)

Saluman It is a bit chilly, I think it was the snow and rain...

Ottoman and he's God come to earth so we should take Frankincense because God likes the smell of incense

Saluman To be frank I'm a bit incensed about those camels too

Ottoman and myrrh because I have a feeling there's more to this story than meets the eye...

Saluman yes I've heard murmurings myself...

Ottoman Murmurings, I'm not sure you've heard a word I've said.... look let me clean your ears out for you

(blows a bit of sparkle behind Saluman's head so it looks like dust has come out the other side)

Saluman That's better... Oh that's a good idea, taking presents, let's see what you've got. Gold, because he is a king, Frankinsence because he's God with us, and myrrh for the burial.

Ottoman What burial?

Saluman Oh that's more of the prophecy in Isaiah It was our weaknesses he carried; But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all.

Ottoman I see, so one day this baby is going to give his life up so that we can have a proper relationship with God.

Saluman That's right, and instead of having to sacrifice goats and sheep so that we can visit the temple once in a while, he will have paid the ultimate sacrifice so that we can talk to god any time we want, and he can be our Father too.

Camels reappear

Ottoman (Puts hand on Saluman's arm) Don't turn round, but I've spotted humps behind...

Saluman You should see a doctor

Ottoman Alph orgive that joke... no it's the camels. We're all ready to set off now but we'll have to take them by surprise, ready 1,2,3

Run quickly behind screen and pull camels down by noses...