

HEROD THE HORRIBLE

(By Rod)

Based on Matthew 2: vv 13-23 and this is read within the sketch by the various characters.

CAST

<i>Narrator</i>	<i>Tells most of the reading</i>
<i>Narrator 2</i>	<i>Interrupts 'for clarification'</i>
<i>Angel</i>	<i>A few words to say</i>
<i>Hosea</i>	<i>A few words to say</i>
<i>Jeremiah</i>	<i>A few words to say</i>
<i>Herod</i>	<i>No words to say</i>
<i>Archelaus</i>	<i>No words to say</i>
<i>Joseph</i>	<i>No words to say</i>
<i>Mary</i>	<i>No words to say</i>

Two narrators are either side. Mary and Joseph are on stage asleep. Baby in crib.

Narrator	The reading is taken from Mathew Chapter 2 verses 13 to 23. "When the Magi had gone..
Narr 2	Who is this May Guy?
Narr	Not May Guy, but Magi. It means the wise men. The ones who came from the East to look for Jesus.
Narr2	The wise men who brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh that we heard about last week?
Narr	That's right.
Narr 2	OK, that is clearer now.
Narr	When the <i>wise men</i> had gone, an..
Narr 2	Gone where?
Narr	Gone home, to their own country. Back to the East.
Narr2	Right, thanks.
Narr	May I continue?

- Narr 2 Be my guest.
- Narr When the wise men had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream.
[Enter Angel, prepares to speak, but is stopped by Narr 2. Looks annoyed. Joseph has woken up and is looking at Angel]
- Narr 2 Joseph who married Mary, the mother of Jesus?
- Narr Yes, that's right.
- Narr 2 What did the angel say?
- Narr You'll find out if you stop interrupting and listen.
- Narr 2 Ooh, pardon me for breathing.
- Angel *[To Joseph]* Get up. Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.
- Narr 2 That doesn't sound like a dream, it sounds more like a nightmare.
- Narr It certainly wasn't good news.
- Narr 2 This Herod sounds horrible to me. I think we should get the people to Boo whenever his name is mentioned.
- Narr Good idea. Let's try it again. The angel said..
- Angel Get up. Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod (*Narr 2 holds up BOO sign*) is going to search for the child to kill him. *[Angel goes to stand behind.]*
- Narr 2 That's better. It adds extra meaning to the story.
- Narr So Joseph got up, took the child, Jesus, and his mother, Mary, during the night and left for Egypt. *[Joseph wakes Mary. They get up take the baby and exit 'to Egypt']*
- Narr 2 Nightmares wake me up too. No wonder Joseph got up straightaway.

- Narr ..for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. *(Narr 2 holds up BOO sign)* And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet.
- Narr 2 What prophet?
- Narr Hosea.
- Narr 2 *(Puzzled)* Well all the people are here. *(Enter Hosea. Narr 2 turns round and points at him.)* And he's here.
- Narr Not who's here, or he's here - but Hosea. That is his name - Hosea.
- Narr 2 Oh right, what had he said?
- Hosea Out of Egypt I called my son.
- Narr 2 But that's not right. It should be 'into' Egypt I called my son. Hosea was wrong. *(Hosea looks angry. Goes to stand behind.)*
- Narr Ah – just wait and see.
- Narr 2 OK, what happened next?
- Narr *[Enter Herod wearing crown and holding sword]* When Herod *(Narr 2 holds up BOO sign)* realised he had been outwitted by the wise men..
- Narr 2 How had they outwitted him?
- Narr They had returned home without reporting back to him where they had found the baby Jesus. *[Herod looks at watch. Looks around. Indicates Wise Men not coming.]*
- Narr 2 Kings don't like being outwitted. *[Herod stomps about]*
- Narr No, and so.... Herod *(Narr 2 holds up BOO sign)* was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its neighbourhood who were two years old and younger, in accordance with the time he had learned from the wise men. *[Herod makes cutting actions with his sword.]*
- Narr 2 That's horrible. He really was a nasty murderous king.

- Narr Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled. [*Enter Jeremiah*]
- Narr 2 Another prophet? I hope he was better than the first one, Hosever his name was. *Hosea steps forward*)
- Hosea Hosea. (*Steps back. Still angry.*)
- Narr 2 Yea, whatever.
- Jeremiah A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning.
- Narr 2 Where is Ramah?
- Narr It is a town close to Jerusalem, and in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem.
- Jeremiah Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted because they are no more.
- Narr 2 Who is Rachel? Is she the one from Friends?
- Narr No, it is the prophet's way of saying the nation of Israel. Rachel was the wife of Jacob, the father of the twelve brothers after whom the tribes of Israel were named.
- Narr 2 Oh, so Jeremiah was right; the mothers in Israel were very sad because their babies had been killed? (*Jeremiah looks pleased. Moves alongside Hosea looking smug. Hosea is still angry.*)
- Narr Yes – but not the baby Jesus. (*Herod moves to side of stage as if looking for Jesus. Mary and Joseph reappear, as if in Egypt. They go back to sleep.*)
- Narr 2 No – because he had fled into Egypt. (*Looks at Hosea. Hosea looks cross*) What happened next?
- Narr After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in another dream to Joseph in Egypt. (*Herod collapses. Archaleus appears to nurse him.*)
- Narr 2 Another angel!
- Narr It might have been the same one. It certainly saves finding another actor. (*Angel steps forward*)

- Angel *(Joseph looks at angel)* Get up, take the child and his mother, and go back to the land of Israel because those who tried to kill him are dead.
- Narr 2 Much better news in this dream than the last one.
- Narr *(Joseph and Mary + baby get up and return to Israel)* So Joseph got up, took the child and his mother and went back to Israel.
- Hosea *(Stepping forward)* See.
- Narr 2 See what?
- Hosea He went back to Israel out of Egypt. Just as I said.
- Narr 2 Oh, so you were right all along?
- Hosea Yup.
- Narr 2 Whoops, sorry Hosea.
- Hosea I should think so to. Calling into question the word of a prophet. I ask you. I should sue you for libel or defamation of character or slander or..*(Returns to place muttering)*
- Narr *(Archelaus takes crown and sword from Herod)* But when Joseph heard that Archaleus had succeeded his father Herod *(Narr 2 holds up BOO sign)* as king of Judah he was afraid to go there.
- Narr 2 He was afraid Archelaus might be like his dad? A chip off the old unpleasant block?
- Narr Yes, but Joseph was given more instructions in a dream. *(Joseph and Mary asleep again)*
- Narr 2 Not another dream! I know his name is Joseph, but this is getting ridiculous. Was that angel back again? *(Angel goes to move forward)*
- Narr *(Angel stops. Disappointed)* No. It doesn't say so. It was probably just a normal dream.
- Narr 2 It is not like any normal dreams I have. What was he told to do?

Narr ..so he went to the province of Galilee, and made his home in a town named Nazareth. And so what the prophets had said came true.

Jer & Hos He will be called a Nazarene.

Narr 2 Nazarene?

Narr You have heard of Jesus of Nazareth? Jesus the Nazarene? (*Joseph holds up sign Nazareth*)

Narr 2 Oh yes, of course. So the prophets were right.

Jer & Hos (*Prophets step forward*) Again.

Narr Yes, remarkably accurate in all detail.

Narr 2 That is astounding.

Jer & Hos Not really, after all we had a bit of help. (*They point upwards.*)

Narr Here ends the reading.

THE END