



A Star in the Sky - [a Christmas Story]

Cyrus leaned back on the throne of Babylon as the words swirled in his mind. The scribes record he 'inclined his face to the heavens as in transport.' All the satraps and diviners, the wise men and captured princes stood at nervous attention, while the old prophet of the Jews noisily rolled up the old scroll and returned it to its ornate ark. The lid lowered and the hasp swung closed. All seemed to hold their breath.

A great sigh came from the Conqueror on his conquered throne. A slower intake of breath answered from a hundred chests.

"So this 'Isaiah' prophet of yours calls to me by name from generations past?"

"No, your Glory. The One God above All, Who's name we dare not speak, calls to you in praise from the lips of His true prophet."

This ancient prophet and 'Prince of the Wise' stood before the Great Cyrus with equal measures of royal bearing and holy humility. It unsettled the King.

"And this 'Jeremiah' - He proclaims - **70 years in advance** - what I have just decided?"

"Yes, your Grace."

Daniel stood unflinching and calm.

A great awe and unsettling churned within the King's chest.

"So it is decided, and a new glory is chosen for me. May the God of the Israelites be praised. I hereby declare: The glory of the temple of this Great God shall be returned. A temple is the throne of a God. May his throne forever be, and His great wonders be known throughout the Earth. Furthermore: I establish this day a new order of Holy Seers in our holy mountains, to seek the signs of this great God and proclaim the day of His coming."

The King rose. The people bowed with foreheads to pavement. All except for Daniel, who raised his hands to heaven in great exultation, exclaiming: "To the Glory of God He has raised up a Messiah. In

the midst of the people, a Savior. May His people be forever blessed and the Reign of King Cyrus glorify the God who Was, and Is, and Is to Come!"

The King found himself on His knees with arms uplifted, hardly knowing how he got there. Such a weightiness. Such a perfume! Such a glory!

The others lowered themselves further in submission, prostrate before the Prophet; the King; the God of All.

"And THAT, my dear boy, is how WE came to be."

Melchior adjusted his robes and reached for the flask between him and the fire. His young servant, the keeper of the scroll, sat in rapt attention.

The Seer quenched his thirst and turned to the young man - boy, really - and with a twinkle said "There was much more Cyrus had to say, of course. But most importantly, he had the ancient scrolls copied to a new library and set our forefathers as the keepers of this knowledge. The Sumerian texts; Hammurabi's Code; The Hebrew Prophets. And, of course, the finest scrolls of our Supreme Zoroaster. ALL the "Great Lights."

The boy looked back to the western horizon from their high vantage, above the oasis where the herd of pack camels had filled their veins, and were now chewing cud into fat for their humps. A thousand miles of deserts and draws lay ahead. The packs filled the foreground in the deep star shadow of great palms. Hidden among the supplies, a great treasure of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Melchior took in the splendor of the strand of milk that stretched to both horizons. Soon the lines of those three peculiar stars would arrive in tandem in the Jewish constellation of the Ram.

"How do you know tonight will be the night?" asked the boy.

"With much thought, divining and maths, my son. And you can clearly see how they rush to each other."

Melchior almost mentioned the truth - that his dreams had grown more and more clear, revealing and concrete. Now was the time. Soon the others would rise to witness the convergence; the confluence; the confirmation. He could not have slept if he had tried so he had spent the night answering the boy's many questions.

"How do you know it will be a king? How do you know what gifts to bring this king? Why are we the ones to go?"

"My boy, what did you see as we studied each of the stars and their spectra?"

"I recall different colors."

"That is correct. When we raised the great glass and the eyes of the varza caught the light, what did you see on the sands below?"

"The light spread out in a swath like the shimmer of silk on a bright day. Within the colors a strong band of one."

"That is correct, my son. Do you remember the colors of each?"

The acolyte pondered for a while. He recounted how the Wise Men had carefully lined up the series of curved glass on iron posts, driving them deep into the sands where they held steady, one series for each of the stars converging on the spot in the head of the Ram. One after the other the varza was moved between the beams as they came into focus. Brighter with each night's measurements and retelling of the legend.

"Blue... no, Indigo or Purple, is one."

"Correct, my son. And what does that signify?"

"Royalty."

"Yes," said Melchior. So we know this great star to be a king. And next?"

"Gold, with a line of Green."

"Yes. And that means?"

"Divinity - and Holy Fire. And New Life."

"That is correct. A God-King who gives new life. And finally?"

"Red, with a darker line of maroon."

"Yes, and what does THAT signify?"

The boy thought for a few moments.

"I believe it to be for atonement, but the maroon would signify great suffering that would seem to outlast the offering itself."

"You are correct on both counts, my son. The stars would tell us this great king will make atonement through suffering that will never be forgotten."

It was quiet for a few minutes. The fire lowered to coals, as Melchior intended. The black of the heavens grew deeper; the stars the more intense for it. The others began to rise. With quiet efficiency and a soft swishing of silk and wool, the other star gazers went about preparing their observation posts. Melchior and his servant had prepared theirs hours ago and quietly watched the others go about their business.

"With your permission, sir, I do not understand the gifts."

“What is it you do not understand?”

“I understand that the myrrh must be for the suffering that is Red and Maroon. It is used in all great funerals.”

“Yes.”

“Gold for a King, I suppose, which is the royal purple. But what of frankincense? Does that not signify high holiness? Is not its color White? Not Red, Purple or Gold?”

“You are correct. All three of these stars will arrive in the Ram as ONE. They are truly set apart from all others, and their light increases as they draw near to one another. What do you suppose will happen when Three become One?”

The boy was not sure if Melchior meant scientifically or philosophically. Perhaps they were the same thing on some level. “I’m not sure...” was all he could muster.

“Come, child. You’ve seen the experiment numerous times. When the lights of Red, Blues and Greens are combined, what would you expect to see?”

Not wanting to disappoint his teacher, the boy assumed the posture of deep thinking. Mostly to buy time until some stroke of genius invigorated him. After the discovery of these stars, during the weeks of interpretation and preparation for this journey, he had seen the channeled light of many stars pooled into the center of the great observatory. So many paintings of light on the fine marble. The mauves, and teals, and oranges and smoky ambers. What was it about the three pure lines and their complements? Ah, yes...

“White.”

Melchior nodded with confidence in the answer to an experiment that was soon to commence. His post being the highest and farthest east, the path expected would crest in the lenses of his post first. Another young servant made his way up the dune as swiftly as his sinking legs would carry him, bearing the varza with its bull’s head and prismatic eyes. Melchior smoothed the white sand behind the line of lenses and mace and held steady as the glint of starlight began to catch the edge of the second lens. Looking up with bare eyes he could no longer see the separation of orbs. They had merged. The focal point crossed the threshold of the bull’s nose and into crystals. The sand behind Melchior and the boy erupted into a bouncing rainbow of lights that intensified, then merged into a solid line of White.

A holler went up from the hill. Melchior quickly handed the varza to the second servant cutting off the beam and sent the boy rushing to the second post. As he ran a shower of stars streaked from East to the West lighting the six hills beyond the camp, and straight in the direction of the Ram. All the men gasped at the sight. Yet the great sign of these falling stars didn’t extinguish as Melchior expected, alighting at the six summits as holy flames. The very desert trembled at their presence, vibrating with some otherworldly energy.

Melchior stood agape for moments not comprehending. Then he saw a figure stir from within the closest flame.

“The Amesha Spentas,” he whispered in stunned awe.

“Vohu Mano - the Word.”

“Asha Vahishta - the Highest and Lord of the Fire.”

“Khshanthra Vairya - the Beautiful.”

“Spenta Armaiti - the Holy and Devoted.”

“Haurvatat - the Healing Waters.”

“Ameratat - the Immortal.”

“MY BOY! All the Archangels - Do you see them??”

But the boy was nowhere to be seen. Melchior furtively glanced in every direction, not wanting to waste a moment away from this glorious vision. His robes quivered. He looked down to see the boy cowering with the folds around his ankles.

“Do not be afraid, child! These are the ones who encompass the throne room of God. Where they are, Holiness is near.”

A great heavenly exultation arose from the peaks, impossible for human words.

And then, just as suddenly, a shift to the West and they were off like a shot - an arrow straight to the heart of the land under the Ram.

Human shouts took the place of the angelic roar. Melchior’s eyes readjusted to the beams of white streaming to the sides of the other Astrologers. The servant with the varza ran to the third station with all he had in his legs and will to do. The rest of them simply danced within their slippers from an electric excitement. The ground around the third station lit up with a pure white light from the eyes of the varza.

With three witnesses, a confirmation. And then a spontaneous prophecy.

“A SON!” shouted Melchior.

“A KING!” called Balthasar.

“A SAVIOR!” answered Gaspar.

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