

## The Biggest Risk

D. Hopwood 2013

Two heavenly bureaucrats walk on and meet for a meeting. 2 has a handful of papers.

1. So let's get down to business.
2. Well there's just one item on the agenda really - this proposal of a trip to earth.
1. Right. What's the story there?
2. Well – it's about a trip - that's being proposed - to earth.
1. Yes I think I got that the first time. How many involved?
2. Just the one.
1. Just the one! (Sharp intake of breath) We'll have to do a serious bit of risk assessment on that. Who are we talking about?
- 2 shows 1 a piece of paper.
1. Oh! Right. Well... I guess if he were to go with a full cohort of angelic warriors in reserve he should be fine.
2. No, he doesn't want that. He wants to go alone.
1. Alone? Well, all right. It's possible - if he takes an invisibility cloak and a light sabre.
2. Nope. None of those either.
1. Really? How long does he want to go for? I guess an hour might be okay.
2. Longer.
1. (Another intake of breath) Okay, half a day could be doable, if he keeps his head down.
2. How about thirty three years?
1. Thirty three years!
2. Thirty three years.
1. Hmm. Only if we can send him somewhere safe, peaceful, tranquil. Say New Zealand. Or Oxford.
2. Can't send him to Oxford – have you never seen *Lewis* – three murders a week.
1. How about a little Yorkshire village?
2. How about Israel?
1. Israel? Without backup and a light sabre? With everything that's going on there? You're kidding!
2. Nope. That's the plan. Thirty three years in Roman occupied Israel, climaxing with a trip to Jerusalem at Passover.
1. Oh perfect. The place'll be full of soldiers and revolutionaries, all armed to the teeth. He won't last three days. (He sighs) All right, enough talking, I think we'd better get this down in black and white. So you have a risk assessment form there? Thanks. Right. (reading) Point one - *Description of Hazard*.
2. Son of God entering occupied country. Occupying force famous for violence and murder. Oh and very straight roads.
1. Right. (reading) *Full Name of Person in Danger*.
2. Yeshu ben Yehosef - Jesus son of Joseph.

1. Doesn't sound very grand, couldn't we do him a t-shirt with *Messiah* embossed on it. And maybe some wristbands for his friends. WWYBYD. You know - *What would Yeshu ben Yehosef do?*
  2. No – it's a covert operation. And wristband's will never catch on.
  1. Fair enough. And I guess he'd better not go telling any of his stories. Those parables of his are enigmatic – they could be seen as offensive and antagonist. Especially towards the religious community.
  2. Communal meals?
    1. Oh no – he'd better eat alone, or with one or two close friends at most. For one thing we can't protect him in a public place, and secondly you know what he's like. He'll be breaking bread with all the wrong people – criminals, prostitutes, collaborators. Food could be a minefield.
  2. Miracles?
    1. Keep them to a minimum and strictly on the quiet. Otherwise the crowds'll come running. All he needs do is cure someone with a limp and everyone with a touch of man-flu will be desperate for a piece of him. And there's no way we can cover our backs there. People get all kinds of crazy ideas when you get them all together. Whatever you do don't let him feed a crowd – he won't wear sterile gloves when he hands it out, and there'll be no special diets on offer.
  1. All right. Next - (reading) *Potential Harm*.
  2. Oh not much. Just verbal abuse, beatings with fists and rods, 39 lashes with a lead-tipped whip, and protracted execution on a Roman cross.
  1. There isn't enough space to write all that. Shall I just put *Death*?
  2. I suppose so.
  1. (reading) *Existing Systems of Safe Controls*. What do we have in place to protect him?
  2. All kinds of things. Divine power, thousands of angels, burning swords, a skipload of fire from heaven... but he doesn't want any of them. Won't touch them with a celestial barge pole. Says he wants to be more vulnerable. More human.
  1. That's just asking for trouble.
  2. You're telling me.
  1. (reading) *Suggested Safe Systems Required*. Hmm. Can you tell me - are any others likely to be affected if there's an incident?
  2. Yes.
    1. Ah good, that'll strengthen our case. Give me some names.
    2. That'll be difficult. If there wasn't enough space to describe the potential harm then you've got no hope with this one.
  1. Why? How many are we talking about?
  2. Three hundred million. And that's just at the moment. Give it a couple of thousand years and we'll be looking at 7 billion. I doubt you'll get all the names in that little box there.
  1. Oh this is ridiculous. (reading) *Recommendations*. (Writes) Highly unsafe. Won't pass any of the health and safety regulations. Recommend calling the whole thing off. Immediately.
  2. Right. Brilliant. Excellent idea. Just one snag. You're too late, he's already gone.
  1. Too late?
  2. Yes, he said he knew this would happen, so he left early. (Looks at watch) should be pitching up in Bethlehem in a few months from now.
- 1 shakes his head and rips up the paper he is holding. Both exit.