

Joint Custody – The Second Coming

by tommy klehr

A little boy sits at the table. He hears a knock at the door.

“Mo-om!” the boy calls out. “Door!”

His mother comes from the kitchen, wiping her hands on her clothing.

“Jesus!” she says. “Would it kill you to answer the door?”

“I’m busy.” He’s playing with sticks and stones on the clay table.

His mother goes to the door and opens it.

“Oh,” she says. “It’s you.”

“Hi, Mary,” the booming voice says.

“What are you doing here?” she asks.

“I see some things don’t change, do they Mary. Listen... I was in the neighborhood on business. Thought I’d stop by and see my son. Is he here?”

“You know the order. You’re supposed to pick him up on Saturdays. You can’t just stop in whenever you want.” She looks pissed, but turns to the dining room. “Jesus!” she calls out. “Your father’s here.” She disappears back to the kitchen.

The boy comes to the door.

“Hi, Dad,” the boy says.

“Jesus Christ! How many times I gotta tell you, call me Father. Everybody calls me Father.”

“Yes father,” Jesus says, rolling his eyes. Then returns to the dining room. God follows him.

“What are you doing, my son?” God asks, as he puts his hand on the boy's shoulder.

“Oh, nothing.” He shuffles sticks and stones around on the table.

After a moment of awkward silence hangs in the air, God asks, “So... Do you like puzzles?”

“Yeah.” Jesus looks up with a smile.

“Here's one,” God says as he pulls a small bag from his satchel. He opens the neck of the goat bladder bag and dumps the contents on the table. The bones of an animal scatter.

“It's a cat. Her name was Fluffy. See if you can put her together again.”

“Cool!” Jesus says, as he shoves the sticks and stones to one side, then starts to play with the cat parts.

“So, son...” God says quietly. “Where's Joseph? I didn't see his old ass in the driveway.”

“He had to travel to Jerusalem for business,” Jesus says without looking up.

"How long's he been gone?"

"About a week."

"Hmm," God says, rubbing his chin. "You know what? I'm thirsty. I'm gonna go get a drink." He goes into the kitchen.

Jesus hears the faint talking of his parents from the other room. The talking gets louder and clearer as they exit the kitchen and enter the dining room where Jesus is playing with his puzzle.

"I told you," God says to Mary. "I'll send you a cow next week."

"I don't want a cow next week!" she says. "I want the three goats, seven chickens, and the lamb you owe me for the last six month's support."

"I didn't bring anything with me," God says. "I left all my livestock at home. There's only so much room on my new camel. It's only got one hump, you know."

God pauses, as he notices Jesus looking at them.

"Jesus," he says, "go outside and play. I've got to talk to your mother privately."

Jesus ignores the latest commandment from his father. He sits at the table while his parents go into another room.

In a few minutes, he hears noises. Strange noises. But the usual *discussion* noises. They have these *discussions* when Joseph is away on business.

"Oh, God! Oh, God!" he hears his mother.

Then his father. "Yeah! Say my name, bitch!"

Then he hears a crash.

"Mom!" Jesus calls out.

"It's okay Jesus," she says. "The sundial fell off the table."

"Jesus!" God says. "I thought I told you to go outside and play!"

Jesus goes back to the table, collects his cat pieces, and goes outside, shuffling his feet as he goes. He sits on the ground and attempts to recreate Fluffy. After a while, the sky grows dark as massive storm clouds move overhead. The wind gusts, blowing the cat bones across the sandy yard. A bolt of lightning disintegrates a nearby tree; the crack of thunder is so loud, it knocks little Jesus on his back. The ground trembles.

Jesus looks up in the sky to see small dark blobs raining down on him.. The blobs grow as they descend, and in a few moments, Jesus realizes that it's not raining, but rather it's hailing scorpions. The scorpions quickly scatter after hitting the ground, and by the time they have all disappeared, the once blue sky has returned, as if none of it had ever happened.

Jesus gets up, dusts off his clothing, shakes a straggling scorpion from his loincloth, and goes back into the house, where he finds that the *discussion* has just ended. His parents emerge from the other room. His mother's hair is disheveled and strewn with hay. His father's tunic is miss-buttoned.

"So," God says to Mary as he finishes adjusting his belt, "I'm glad we could agree. I'll send you that cow next week."

"And the three goats, seven chickens, and the lamb," she adds, raising an eyebrow. Mary returns to the kitchen, while pulling the hay from her hair.

God goes to the table, where Jesus is sitting once again with his sticks and stones.

"Hey Jesus!" God says. "Great seeing you again, but I gotta go now. See you on Sunday, 'kay."

"What about the stoning?" Jesus whines. "You said you'd take me to the stoning on Saturday."

"Um... yeah... about that... I can't do the stoning on Saturday. I got a committee meeting. You know how it is. Heaven can't run itself." Sensing the tension, God quickly changes the subject.

"Where's the cat? You finish Fluffy already?"

"No," Jesus says. "It blew away."

"Oh. Sorry about that. Tell you what... I'll get you another one. Maybe a dog next time."

"Cool." His face lights up again.

And then God leaves.

And that was the second immaculate conception, for nine months later, Pedro, Jesus's lesser known brother was born.

