

"There were shepherds...." Chris Shelley

- Narrator (1) There were shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night....
- Narrator (2) What are you doing?
- Narr (1) I'm practising my reading. I've been asked to do a reading at this year's Carol service.
- Narr (2) Oh, OK. Would you like me to help you? I could listen and sort of tell you how it's coming across.
- Narr (1) That would be great – thanks very much.
- Narr (2) No problem!
- Narr (1) Right....well....I'd, erm, better start again then. "There were shepherds abiding in the fields..."
- Narr (2) "Abiding"?
- Narr (1) What?
- Narr (2) I said, "Abiding"?
- Narr (1) Er, yes, that's right, "...shepherds abiding in the fields..."
- Narr (2) Sounds a bit funny doesn't it? "Abiding". What does it mean?
- Narr (1) I'm not sure really.....I think it must mean that they had their abode in the fields.
- Narr (2) "Abode"? What's a bode when it's at home?
- Narr (1) No, no,no. Not 'A Bode', it's 'an' abode. Abode is just one word you see. It means where you live.
- Narr (2) Oh, I see. An abode. Like a house you mean?
- Narr (1) Erm, yes, I suppose so.
- Narr (2) So it should say, "There were shepherds living in a house in the fields'.
- Narr (1) I suppose you're right really.
- Narr (2) Well, you'd better alter it then.
- Narr (1) Oh, OK.....let's see then, "There were shepherds, living in a house in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night."
- Narr (2) "Flock"?
- Narr (1) Pardon?

- Narr (2) "Flock"! You said, "Flock". What does that mean?
- Narr (1) Erm...I'm not really sure. Maybe they had flock wallpaper. My Granddad had flock wallpaper in the living room. Sort of soft and furry. I used to like stroking it when I was little.
- Narr (2) Well, you better explain that then....the congregation won't understand this bit at all.
- Narr (1) Right. Let's see now.....How about, "There were shepherds, living in a house in the fields, watching over their flock wallpaper by night."
- Narr (2) No, that doesn't sound right. Why would they do that anyway? Unless it was very expensive wallpaper and they thought someone was going to try and steal it. Perhaps they were just admiring it...you know, sort of appreciating it now that they'd put it up.
- Narr (1) Ah, yes, I see your point. OK. "There were shepherds, living in a house in the fields, admiring their flock wallpaper by night."
- Narr (2) Excellent!
- Narr (1) Thank you very much.
- Narr (2) Not at all. Right – go on then....
- Narr (1) "...admiring their flock wallpaper by night. When suddenly, an Angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them and they were sore afraid."
- Narr (2) Well that's very confusing isn't it? Angel? Lord? Glory? What's that all about?
- Narr (1) I don't know. There must be a logical explanation. The Lord.....now that would probably be their employer. The Lord of the Manor, you see.
- Narr (2) Yes, that sounds right.
- Narr (1) And the angel....I think they must mean a messenger. Someone sent with a message from the Lord of manor. And the glory shining round them, well, he must have had a very bright torch and he shone it in their eyes and they were scared stiff.
- Narr (2) Well you would be, wouldn't you? I mean, it was night time, and they were admiring their wallpaper, and suddenly this messenger comes in and shines a torch in their eyes. Enough to give you heart failure I would have said.
- Narr (1) You're right! Well I'd better re-write that bit. How about, "...admiring their flock wallpaper by night. When, suddenly a messenger from the Lord of the Manor came in and shone a torch right in their eyes, and they were scared stiff.!"
- Narr (2) That's really good....Loads of atmosphere.

- Narr (1) I think I'm getting the hang of this now. Right, what's next? " But the angel said unto them...." . Right, let's change that at once. "But the messenger said to them.... "Fear not!"
- Narr (2) "Calm down dear!"
- Narr (1) Oh yes! Very good. "Calm down dear...." Oh, but there was more than one of them. Better make it, "Calm down dears..." "Calm down dears, I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all people." That's very complicated.
- Narr (2) I think he was just telling them he'd got some good news. How about, "Good news everyone!"
- Narr (1) Yes, that's really clear. "Good news everyone....." "To you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."
- Narr (2) It's not very good grammar is it? "A Saviour *which is* Christ the Lord. " And it sounds a bit rude doesn't it? You can't say, "Christ!" like that. Especially not in Church! I think I'd have a word with the minister if I were you....see if he can give you an easier reading.
- Narr (1) Maybe – I'll just press on, we've nearly finished actually. "And suddenly there was with the angel, (that's the messenger from the Lord of the Manor...) " A multitude of the heavenly host....."
- Narr (2) The host means someone who invites you to dinner. Maybe the Lord of the Manor had got a new baby son, who would be Lord of the Manor after him.....so he sent for all of his employees to tell them the good news!
- Narr (1) Hang on....I think you're right because the messenger then tells them where they can find the baby and they all go off to a place called, Bethlehem to see the baby.
- Narr (2) Well, there you are then. All very straightforward.....and the baby must have been called David and that's why the messenger called it 'David's town'!
- Narr (1) Brilliant! Wait a minute though!. There's something a bit odd here. The angel, sorry, messenger, tells the shepherds that they will find the baby lying in a 'manger.' Well that can't be right can it...I mean, not if the baby was the son of the Lord of the Manor.
- Narr (2) Perhaps it's a spelling mistake.....they meant to write Manor, and it's come out as 'Manger'. After all, it's only one letter isn't it?
- Narr (1) Oh, yes...that's what it is. OK, we've got it now. Listen, I don't think I'll bother the minister, I'll just re-write it with our corrections and do it like that. It'll be much easier to understand and we'll have got rid of all the unbelievable bits.
- Narr (2) Great! Tell you what, let's go down the pub and I'll help you re-write it.
- Narr (1) Thanks! I'll get my coat.