

STRANGERS IN TOWN

By Rod

Based on 1 Peter 2 vv 11-25

Especially the reminder that we are 'strangers and aliens' so should expect suspicion, but can aim to win people over by our good deeds even if they accuse us falsely.

CAST

Arthur Long standing village resident

George Long standing village resident. Chairman of fete committee

PC Bert Village policeman

Arthur and George are sitting on a village bench. Perhaps reading a paper.

Arthur Beautiful day.

George You're not wrong there, Arthur.

Arthur You know, George, sitting here reminds me of a story.

George Oh yeah?

Arthur Yes. There were these two Americans sitting on a bench.

George Just like us now.

Arthur Yes. One was a Chinese American and the other was a Jewish American.

George It's a multicultural society all right in 'the land of the free'.

Arthur Anyway the Jewish American says, "I blame the Chinese for Pearl Harbour".

George It certainly wasn't much of a film.

Arthur No, he meant the real Pearl Harbour.

George Oh, got you.

Arthur So he says "I blame the Chinese for Pearl Harbour" and the Chinese American replies, "I think you'll find it was the Japanese and not the Chinese." But the Jewish American says, "Chinese, Japanese, Taiwanese... they're all the same to me."

George Well he's got a point - all them takeaways taste much the same to me.

Arthur Anyway there was a pause in their conversation and then the Chinese American says, "I blame the Jews for the Titanic."

George Now that was a rubbish film. And it was four hours long.

[Type text]

Arthur No, he meant the real sinking of the Titanic.

George Oh.

Arthur So he says "I blame the Jews for the sinking of the Titanic" and the Jewish American says, "I think you will find it was an iceberg."

George That's certainly what I've heard.

Arthur But the Chinese American says, "Iceberg, Goldberg, Glassberg, Rosenberg.. they're all the same to me."

George Oh, it was definitely an iceberg. And what's a Goldberg anyway? *[Arthur is exasperated. Pause]* Hey, did you see the accident this morning on the road down by the meadow?

Arthur No, but I heard about it. Quite nasty I gather.

George Yes, I happened to be driving past. Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance all in attendance.

Arthur Folks were saying at the Bull at lunchtime that two people injured, one of them very badly indeed.

George Of course I blame them Gypsies.

Arthur You mean Travellers.

George Gypsies, travellers, Romanies.. they're all the same to me. Anyway, the accident was right by their campsite and I saw the police talking to one of them.

Arthur "Helping them with their enquiries" was he?

George Yes. He looked guilty as sin.

Arthur They bring nothing but trouble. That campsite will look like a tip in no time at all. There'll be mess everywhere.

George Yes, and what right do they have to camp there anyway? I'm sure that's common land, they are trespassing. I can't stand the way they sponge off society, paying no taxes. Doing what they like, when they like.

Arthur And we can expect a crime wave. I must remember to put an extra padlock on my shed or all my tools will mysteriously disappear.

George There will be no fish left in the river once they know where to go poaching. Masters of the 'rural arts' they are!

Arthur We'll have to work out a way of persuading them to move on.. if you get my drift, George.

George I do indeed Arthur. We don't want their sort spoiling our nice village.

[Type text]

[Enter PC Bert]

Arthur Oh look, here comes our local bobby. He should be able to give us the lowdown on the accident. Hello Bert.

PC Bert Hello Arthur, hello George. How are you this fine afternoon?

George Not so good now those Gypsies have moved in down by the meadow.

Arthur Yes, George was saying that they have already been causing trouble.

PC Bert How do you mean?

Arthur He saw you talking to one of them after that accident. What did he do? Throw stones at the car or something?

PC Bert Oh no, I was thanking him. His name is John. He was first on the scene. He dialled 999 and gave first aid to the driver. He almost certainly saved the man's life.

George Oh.

PC Bert Yes, he is ever such a friendly fellow.

Arthur Maybe, but when will they be moving on. It's never good for the village when Gypsies arrive.

PC Bert Oh they plan to stay for a good while. They have actually bought the land down by the meadow.

George Bought it. Oh no. That means we will never get rid of them. The meadow will be turned into a local eyesore. A blot on the landscape.

PC Bert Oh, I don't think so. They are keen to do their bit to keep things nice. In fact, do you remember those floods we had a year or two back?

Arthur How could I forget. My house has only just dried out. What a nightmare.

PC Bert Well, one of the things that made the flood so severe was that the culverts and drains were all blocked with debris so the water couldn't run away.

George I do recall something along those lines being said.

PC Bert Well, yesterday John and his family cleared out all the culverts running down to the river. He said they had all got blocked again. And he promised to make a point of checking them regularly so our flood protection is always in place.

Arthur Well good for him. Perhaps this John might be a good chap after all.

George I still don't like the idea of having Gypsies in the village. John may be all right, but his children will be roaming all over causing mischief.

PC Bert Oh, no. They are all signed up for the local school. And what is more, John's wife, Mary, is going to help in the school teaching handcrafts.

[Type text]

Arthur Talented is she?

PC Bert Yes, it seems she is an expert in traditional crafts like basket-weaving and the like. In fact, here is something that should interest you, George as Chairman of the Fete Committee, she wants to provide a stall selling traditional handmade craftwork.

George We don't allow that sort of thing I am afraid. It's a charity event not a market.

PC Bert Mary realises that; she wants all the proceeds to go to Fete funds.

George Really? Well that's a different story. I think I would like to meet her. What do you think Arthur?

Arthur I agree. If what you say is true, Bert, John and Mary will be very welcome in the village. What say you that we go and introduce ourselves right away, George.

George Good idea. Bert do you mind leading the way.

PC Bert I'd be delighted.

THE END