

Day 16

The three wise men had completed the myrrh-seller's puzzle in record time- they were well practiced by now. Balthazar wrote in the last answer with a flourish, and handed the scroll back to the myrrh-seller. Privately, he congratulated himself. He'd got this myrrh-buying business finished far quicker than he'd hoped, and perhaps they would even reach Bethlehem with a few days spare for sight-seeing.

"There you are- one completed puzzle. Now, we'd like some myrrh that comes in a gift box, if you have any..."

"Just hold on a minute there!" exclaimed the myrrh-seller. "I don't go selling myrrh to just anyone. First, you have to prove your worth".

"I just don't understand you myrrh-sellers!" blurted out Melchior. "How do you ever make a profit? What if someone wants to buy myrrh, and you want to sell myrrh, but they can't do the puzzle?"

"Never mind that now," said Balthazar. "We did prove our worth! We did those little questions with the words in brackets, and the answers were definitely right. Even Caspar agreed, and he loves telling us when we're wrong".

"Ah, but I never asked you to do the puzzle" said the myrrh-seller, wagging his finger at Balthazar. "You came into my shop and said 'Give us a puzzle', and I pride myself on my excellent customer service, so I thought I'd give you one. No no no, giving prospective purchasers puzzles to complete is more the style of the myrrh-sellers back towards the East. Round here, if you want to buy some myrrh, you just have to show us a really impressive party trick."

Silence descended in the myrrh-shop. The magi were stumped- the long years they had spent poring over books and charts and ancient manuscripts really hadn't furnished them with the skill set required for this situation. Each of the three wise men wracked his brains for something within his capabilities that could reasonably be termed "impressive party trick".

Minutes ticked past. A very uncomfortable silence had descended in the shop. The magi were starting to feel panicked. Outside, the camels were growing restless. They had done rather too much hurrying around that day for their liking, and were hoping to reach an inn sooner rather than later. In the hope of getting this point across, Kevin the camel yawned very loudly, then folded his legs under him and collapsed down on the ground with a sonorous thudding sound.

Inside the shop, the sound echoed around, making the awkward silence seem somehow more silent and more awkward. But then Caspar, who sometimes really was the cleverest of the three wise men, hit upon an idea.

"Gosh, I am sorry my dear myrrh-seller. We can't seem to come up with a single party trick between us", he said apologetically.

The other two magi stared- hearing Caspar admit that he couldn't do something was an unexpected turn indeed.

“...however,” Capsar continued, “we do have, just outside this shop, a troupe of camels who have learned a dance routine!”

These grids show the camels’ dance steps. Which box, a-e, should go in the empty square?

1

a b c d e

2

a b c d e

3

a b c d e

4

a b c d e

Yes- another camel dance, because it is really hard to get Non-Verbal Reasoning into the story! Buy some Non-Verbal Workbooks from www.sarahbeswick11plus.co.uk – they are at least fifty times more fun than endless games of charades with relatives you don't like.

Answers: 1- c 2- b 3- b 4- e