**Rumour monger**

*The narrator is Dave, who sells newspapers on the streets of Jerusalem around the time of the visit of the wise men. The scene is not far from the royal palace during the evening rush hour. We only hear what he says, so have to imagine the other side of each of the very brief conversations.*

Standard, Standard, read all about it! Good evening madam. There you are, madam; there’s some shopping vouchers in there too for you, madam.

Standard, Standard. Good evening minister, what do you make of the rumours, sir? ….. Well sir, they’re saying, between you and me, sir, that King Herod’s dangerously ill. ……. No sir, there’s nothing in the paper about that sir, the King can rely on us sir, to stick to the official version sir…..Very well sir, good evening sir.

Standard Standard. Good evening sir, have you heard the rumours sir? ..... Well sir, the minister came by sir, and he didn’t deny it sir, so it must be true, eh sir?

Standard, Standard. Good evening doctor, been to the palace, have we sir? ….. Don’t worry sir, my lips are sealed sir.

Standard, Standard. Good evening madam, have you heard? The doctor came past from the palace looking worried madam, so it can’t be long now madam.

Standard, Standard. Hi there John, good to see you…….What was that? …. Very strange, I’ll keep my ears open.

Standard, Standard. Good evening sir. Have you seen anything of these mystics sir? No sir, sometimes better not to know sir.

Standard, Standard. Good evening madam, let me just slip that into your push-chair madam. They asked you what madam? No madam, I’ve not heard that one either madam.

Standard, Standard. Good evening matron, no royal babies delivered recently madam? …. No madam, I’ve not seen any official announcements madam.

Standard, Standard. Good evening sir, yes sir, that star does seem unusually bright sir. No sir, there’s nothing in the charts about it sir.

Standard, Standard. Good evening, young man. No, I’ve never followed a star, you’d probably end up going round in circles. Good thing there’s no clouds tonight.

Standard, Standard. Good evening, officer. Ask a policeman, they say, but if you ask me, officer, they’d have done better to keep their mouths shut. No officer, we don’t want no rumours going around, do we?

Standard, Standard. Good evening madam. No madam, nothing in here about a Messiah madam. Sounds a bit dangerous to me madam, not the sort of thing King Herod would approve of madam, always assuming he’s well enough to approve of anything madam.

Standard, Standard. Good evening reverend, what’s this I hear about a Messiah sir?...... Well sir, there’s people going around asking questions sir……… I quite agree sir, we don’t want no trouble.

Standard, Standard. Good evening sir…….. Well sir, if it’s a royal baby you’re looking for sir, you could try the palace sir. Mind you sir, King Herod’s getting a bit past that sort of thing sir, and I’ve not heard of any of the princesses having a baby sir. Yes sir, you just keep going up the street this way sir, you’ll see it in a couple of minutes sir. Good luck sir, I think you might need it sir.

Standard, Standard, read all about it!