



THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Mark 11:1-11

A Selection from
A Death of Splendid Daring

JERRY CAMERY-HOGGATT



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PETRONIUS

FOR PETRONIUS, THE TRIP UP FROM OSTIA WAS MARRED BY ONLY ONE DISTRACTION, a minor one at that. Caralea's memory may have been faltering, but her eyes were still sharp as spear points. One stretch of the *Via Ostiensis* was punctuated by a series of acacia trees that had been planted at such regular intervals that they appeared to stand sentinel over the road to Rome. In the third tree, Caralea spotted a large owl sleeping on one of the branches,



and she began shrieking that they should stop the wagons, that the owl was an omen, that the journey was cursed. It didn't help that they had failed to make the customary libations to the *Lares Compitales* at the highway's major intersections.

Petronius ordered the caravan to pull off to the side, and they ate their lunch of cheese and bread while he tried to figure out what to do about the owl. If it turned out to be nothing, no harm done, but if the bird really was an omen, it wouldn't hurt to treat it with respect.

The crisis was solved during the lunch, when a boy in a passing wagon threw a stone at the owl, waking it into flight and according to Caralea drawing the venom of the curse down upon himself. She spat. "Stupid boy. Not long for the world." The look on her face, and anguish and fear in her voice sent a shudder down Petronius' back.

They cleaned up their picnic and resumed their trek to Rome.

THEY APPROACHED THE CITY LATE IN THE DAY, from the west, coming up along the long level approach of the *Via Ostiensis*. This approach to Rome never failed to thrill Petronius, and he found himself remembering his own "triumphant" arrival back from the campaign in Britannia. The glancing light across the rooftops of the city brought it all back, but even

now, twenty years later, the thrill was soured by the recollection of his shame at having lost his hand; then the shock of finding Messalina in the arms of that drunken Sebianus; then the killing, about which he felt no remorse at all; and then the troubles that came from his bad marriage to Olympas. For twenty years he had watched his life slowly crumbling beneath him like an aqueduct with badly made mortar.

At such times he did what he always did, what no one knew about: He breathed in deeply, and smothered the memories by imagining he could reverse time, go back to that rainy night. Do it all over again, properly this time. In his mind's eye, everything turns out differently. Messalina welcomes him home with her arms open and her virtue unsullied; his children are there, too, and proud of him, despite his missing hand. His friends gather to watch his arrival at the head of a long column of soldiers. There's a feast.

He swallowed hard and reminded himself that this was now, not then. In two days they would begin the *Ludi Romani*, the games in honor of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, four days after the Nones of September, in the Year of the City 820.¹ He sat up a little straighter in the saddle.

THE ARRIVAL AT THE *DOMUS* WAS DISCRETE, quiet, unaccompanied by fanfare. Æolus slipped into the city to find Yakov, and to see if there were any more stories of the manuscript.

That evening, excitedly, he pulled from his satchel a large sheaf of papers. "There are more," he said, "but I had to leave them for later. I didn't have time to copy them before dark." After supper, the family gathered in the *triclinium* to resume their discussion.

Ampliatius read:

Mark 11:1

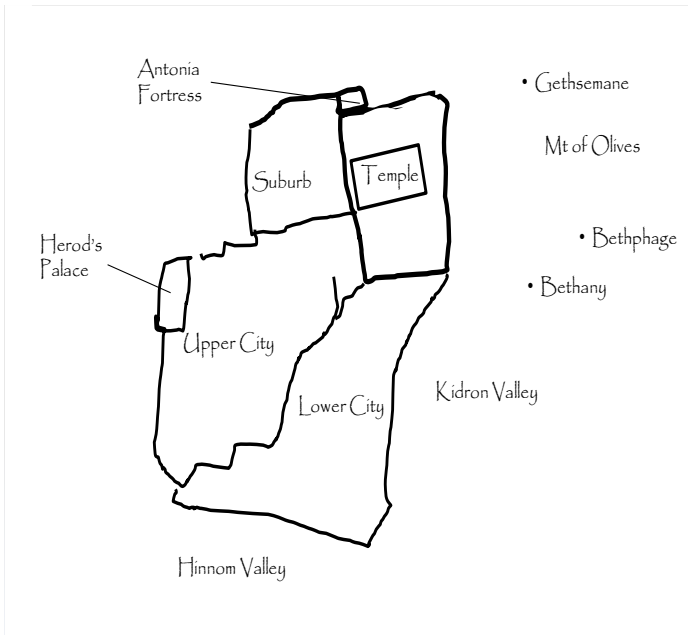
"And when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives"

"Wait," said Olympas. "Tell us where we are here."

Ampliatius took down a pen and some paper and drew a rough

¹ 67 CE

map.



“Bethphage is here”—he made a mark—“about two miles east of the city. Bethany’s about half-way, right here.” He made another mark. “The tradition says that during his last days in Jerusalem Jesus stayed in Bethany at the house of a leper named Simon.”

“Is that significant?” asked Olympas. “That the man was a leper?”

“Maybe,” said Ampliatius. “At the very least, Simon would have been an outcast.”

Lucius picked that up: “Politically, it would’ve been to Jesus’ advantage to seek out some well-placed patron to serve as host.”

“Jesus just didn’t do that sort of thing,” said Olympas. “But he did heal people. Why didn’t Jesus heal Simon?”

“We don’t know that he didn’t,” said Æolus. “It’s not what the story focuses on.”

“That aint it,” said Caralea. “The situations dicey see what Im sayin? The last place them Pharisees is gonna look is in the house of some leper.”

“What does that mean, Grandmother?” Æolus asked.

“Means hes hidin out,” Caralea said.

Petronius: “We’re getting ahead of ourselves.”

At a nod, Ampliatus returned to the reading:

Mark 11:1b-3

“. . . he sent two of his disciples, and said to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat; untie it and bring it. If any one says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’”

“There’s a clever turn of phrase,” said Æolus.

“How’s that?”

“Well, it could mean, ‘Its owner needs it.’ Or it could mean, ‘The Lord’—you know, capital L—‘God’—‘The Lord God wants to use it.’”

“*Baruch ha-shem*,” added Ampliatus, supplying an apparent omission in his student’s diction. “But of course, this second meaning includes Jesus within it.”

“Maybe Jesus borrowed the colt from someone in the crowd,” Olympas said. “The *kyrios* is the man who owns the colt.”

“But why would someone who lived in Bethany and owned a colt be coming up from Jericho on foot?”

“What if the owner went out to meet Jesus? Or what if he was riding a different colt?”

“In that case, Jesus would’ve just borrowed the one the man was riding.”

Ampliatus interrupted: “The point is that this particular colt is unbroken. According to the tradition, the *Messiah* arrives on a colt that had never been ridden.”

“So . . .” said Æolus. “What happened next?”

Ampliatus found the place in the manuscript:

Mark 11:4-7

“And they went away, and found a colt tied at the door out in the open street; and they untied it. And those who stood there said to them, ‘What are you doing, untying the colt?’ And they told them

what Jesus had said; and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and threw their garments on it; and he sat upon it.”

“Wait!” said Æolus. “That’s odd. Is that a Jewish custom?”

“Let’s say it’s the way we Jews celebrate a triumphal entry,” said Ampliatus. “It’s happened before, a lot like this. There’s a story that the crowds did the same thing when Simon Maccabee entered Jerusalem. May I send the boy?” He gave Æolus instructions about which manuscript to bring. “There was an old prophecy that the messianic king would come into the city on a colt. Said something like,

Zechariah 9:9

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he,
humble and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass.’*

Lots of little details of Passover have come to have messianic significance,” he added. Then he returned to the reading:

Mark 11:8-10

“And many spread their garments on the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed cried out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is coming! Hosanna in the highest!”

“These are from what are called the *hallel* psalms, the ‘*psalms of ascent*,’” said Ampliatus. “It’s traditional that when the pilgrims go up to the Passover, they sing these old songs. Remember I said that Jerusalem’s on the top of a hill, so we always say ‘going *up to* Jerusalem,’ or ‘going *down from* Jerusalem,’ which is why we call these the *psalms of ascent*.”

“What you’re saying is that these would’ve been sung anyway.”

“That part, yes,” agreed Ampliatus. “But quoted here, in this context, the words have a different meaning. Here, listen to this. It’s from one of the psalms.” He shuffled among his manuscripts until he had found the correct passage:

Psalms 118:26

*“Blessed be he who enters in the name of the Lord!
We bless you from the house of the Lord.”*

Normally, the one who ‘enters in the name of the Lord’ is the pilgrim—any pilgrim—but here, the crowd seems to be celebrating Jesus’ arrival in the name of the Lord. So this is a sort of ‘Triumphal Entry,’ if you will. The reference to the Kingdom of David which is coming cinches it.”

“They must’ve gotten that part about David’s kingdom from that blind man. In Jericho, remember? Didn’t he address Jesus as ‘son of David?’”

“So did that blind man earlier,” said Æolus.

“What blind man?”

Æolus turned the scrolls of the manuscript. He said he remembered something about Jesus leaving someplace called Jericho—Æolus couldn’t picture where that was—and a blind man had interrupted him. When he found the place, he read aloud:

Mark 10:47-48

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

“But here they all claim to be children of David” said Ampliatus
Listen:

Mark 11:10a

‘Blessed is the kingdom of *our* father David that is coming!’”

“So this wasn’t so ordinary after all,” said Olympas.

Ampliatus pondered for a moment. “I think what makes it different is the way Jesus put all the parts together. The Writer wants us to see this as an extraordinary event, but he blends the details into something very common. It’s not ordinary to single out just one pilgrim like that, lay down palm branches for one particular person like that. And it’s not ordinary to ride into the city on a colt. So as far as this crowd is concerned, this is the real deal.”

“You’re being very quiet,” said Olympas, who sat beside Petronius on his left. “Surely you have some position on this story!”

Petronius looked at her. “I was thinking about how much this is like a Roman Triumphal return,” he said. All along the ride up from Ostia he had been thinking about his own disastrous return to the city from Britain, and how Octavius Sebianus had made a dog’s breakfast of that one. But the Emperor’s return had been something else altogether. Lucius had returned early to prepare, and the Emperor had named his new son Britannicus to mark the event. And only last year, Nero had entered the city in Augustus’ chariot. When Nero entered Naples, part of the city wall was torn down, a public declaration that that city held itself captive to the “conquering” king. Events like that are always carefully stage-managed for maximum effect. In the weeks prior, the streets are cleaned up, the buildings and statues are painted, and the city is draped in garlands. Accounts are brought up to date, and reports filed. The military cleans its equipment and drills for the parade. In Rome, triumphal entry parades always followed the same route, entering the city from the *Campus Martius*, through the *Porta Triumphalis*—the Triumphal Gate—and then along a meandering path through the sacred precincts of the city to the Capitoline Hill, arriving finally at the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus.

“It wouldn’t have been like that,” Ampliatus said. “For one thing, the crowds were there for the Passover, and a lot of them wouldn’t have known or cared about Jesus. He would’ve entered the city from the east rather than the west. And he would’ve arrived late in the day.”

“How do you know that?”

“He’s coming up from Jericho, right?”

“Right,” said Æolus.

“That’s an uphill climb, more than seventeen miles, and it’s very desolate. No villages or towns. Just a long dirt road, with switchbacks up the backside of the mountain range near Jericho. You don’t start a climb like that late in the day; you start early to give yourself time to get into the city before sundown. There would’ve been other pilgrims, maybe thousands of other pilgrims, so you don’t hurry, either. He’s on foot, not riding.”

“How do you know that?”

“Because he has to borrow a colt once he gets to the top. I can see him arriving mid-to-late afternoon.”

“So what’d he do next?” said Petronius. “Where does the parade route end?”

“He went to the temple,” said Ampliatus, “which was quite close. Listen to what the manuscript says next:

Mark 11:11

‘And he entered Jerusalem, and went into the temple; and when he had looked round at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.’”

“I’d expect him to offer sacrifice,” said Æolus, “or a prayer of some sort.”

“He wasn’t a priest,” said Ampliatus, “so sacrifice was out. A prayer, though. That would’ve been good.”

“Except that the whole thing was a kind of prayer,” said Olympas. “A kind of dramatically acted out prayer. You know, the way study is a prayer for knowledge. The way drilling your troops is a prayer for victory in battle. It’s a prayer that puts its money where its mouth is.”

“It aint no prayer,” said Caralea. “Hes marchin right into the lions mouth. Hes gotta know them Pharisees aint happy, he knows its dangerous. Heck, hed had trouble with them right from the start all the way up in that Galilee, and they been followin him, been houndin him on this trip too.”

“How do you know that?”

“They tried to get him strung up by that Herod fella, tried to tie him down on the same sort o issue got that Baptists head cut off, so he knows theys lookin for some way to take him out. He knows them Pharisees probly got spies all over the place now, so whats he do when he gets up to Jerusalem? He rides in like a conquering genral, right in the middle o that feast. You cant tell me he dont mean to poke em in the eye like that. You cant tell me that. He meant that.” She turned to her son: “Aint that right, Sulla?”

Petronius hesitated, then replied as gently as he could, “Sulla’s gone now, Mother. I’m Petronius. I’m your son.”

Caralea rose and left the room. Olympas followed after.

“SHE’LL BE ALRIGHT,” Olympas said, when she returned to the room. “She’s just tired, that’s all.”

“Know what I don’t get?” said Petronius, returning to the manuscript. “I don’t understand why the military authorities didn’t arrest him on the spot.”

“I’ve thought a lot about that,” said Ampliatus. “I think there were two or three factors that would have prevented them from recognizing what was taking place. The first was the size of the crowds. Say Jesus is with, I don’t know, maybe ten thousand people. I heard once that in Jerusalem at Passover there are more than three million people, and I believe it. That’s more than the population of Rome. The Sanhedrin passed an ordinance that temporarily extended the boundary of the city to accommodate all of the pilgrims. The custom is to celebrate the feast within the city boundary. A group of ten thousand people would’ve been a drop in the bucket.

“The second thing is that pilgrims all over the city were singing the same songs, waving branches, things like that. Almost the same parade is happening in other entrances to the city. Say you’ve got sentries stationed all over the city looking for trouble. Jesus and his crowd of ten thousand wouldn’t have stood out to them.

“The third factor is that they wouldn’t have understood the symbolism of a man riding a colt into the city, anyway. To them, this was probably just part of the whole Passover thing, and so they wouldn’t have known that it had any special significance.”

“The temple authorities might’ve told them,” said Lucius.

“I’m not so sure. This isn’t their normal garrison. Their normal garrison’s in Caesarea Maritima, and they only come up to Jerusalem during Passover to keep the peace. Bottom line is, they don’t trust the Jewish authorities. Just look at what’s going on right now. Gessius Florus is in trouble now because he crossed the Jewish leadership. The Sanhedrin’s in bed with the procurator, but let’s not pretend it’s anything other than a marriage of convenience.”

“Then what about the Herodians? Didn’t we read they had it in

for Jesus?”

“Sure,” said Ampliatus, “but the Herodians wouldn’t have had any clout here. Not in Judaea. If I were procurator, I’d watch my back around the Herodians.”

INTERLUDE

SUMMARY

ÆOLUS

THE NEXT DAY, ÆOLUS SLEPT UNTIL QUITE LATE. He was still tired by the journey from the Campania, and by the festivities of the *Ludi Romani*, and it didn’t hurt that at last he was sleeping in his own bed. He rolled out, ran his fingers through his hair. Slipped into a fresh tunic.

His mother was in the garden, clipping a bouquet of flowers for the table. Despite the large staff, this was something she insisted on doing herself, especially on fine summer mornings like this one. She said the morning air invigorated her. It was still cool even though the sun was near its nadir and the garden was washed in sunlight.

A servant girl he had never seen before handed him a goblet of honeyed *mulsum*, and he wandered out into the *peristyle* garden, near the place where his mother was exploring her options among the roses. A tiny white butterfly landed on one of the horns of the dying bull in the Mithras statue that marked the western end of the garden.

“Æolus!” his mother said. “I’m glad you’re up! I wanted to talk about tonight.”

“What about tonight, Mother?” He took a sip from the goblet, set it down on one of the empty herms, then stepped out to kiss her lightly on the cheek.

“I thought we might go to theater,” she said. “There’s a company visiting from somewhere in Tuscania, and they’re doing Oedipus the King.



It's an old story. Very tragic. Your grandfather saw this same company perform before he came out to the farm, and he says it's very moving."

"Can we bring Ampliatus?"

"Why?"

"He's my teacher," Æolus said. "Afterward we discuss. May I bring him?"

"We'll see," said his mother.

IN THE END, THEY ALL WENT, ALL WHO WERE ABLE, including Ampliatus. Caralea was left in the care of Seliana.

The following morning, Ampliatus and Æolus met in the library to talk about the play. At times like this, the vocabulary they used was from Aristotle's *Poetics*, which focused on emplotment, but everything was grist for the mill—the play's structure, its plot complications, its use of character. The applause-lines. The power of the acting. The tones of the actor's voices. The masks.

"So," said Ampliatus. "What'd you think?"

Æolus found that puzzling. "There were women weeping behind us. Did you hear them? I thought that was disgusting."

"Do you know why they were weeping, though?"

"That puzzled me," said Æolus. "They already knew how the story would come out, so why did they get all worked up over it?"

"It's a common strategy in tragic literature," Ampliatus said. "I think the Writer's doing the same thing with Jesus' story."

"What do you mean?" asked Æolus. "I can't see any connection between a tragic story like *Oedipus Rex* and the *Good News of Jesus Christ the Son of God*. Except maybe Teiresias." In the play, Teiresias was a blind prophet who correctly foretold Oedipus' future, though in a series of veiled prophecies. He thought of the man he had met near the bath at Ostia—born blind—whose father had named him Teiresias after the prophet in the play, and then he remembered the odd, disturbing warning the man had issued, that his father was in danger and should watch his back.

"What about Teiresias?" asked Ampliatus.

"Teiresias is blind, and he somehow 'sees' the truth about Oedipus, and Bartimaeus is blind, too, and he seems to have been the only

one—or the first one—to see Jesus as ‘Son of David.’ That, and the fact that Oedipus’ ‘father’ wasn’t his real father. That was true about Jesus, too, remember. I can’t imagine anything else, though.”

“That’s because we’ve been reading the Jesus story a little at a time,” said Ampliatus. “Every few days, a new episode or two. Something gets lost between the readings.”

“That’s wrong? To read it slowly like that? I thought we were learning a lot that we might have missed if we’d just hurried through it.”

“Let’s just say that reading slowly is limited. It makes it possible to see some things clearly, but it blinds you to other things. The story wasn’t intended to be read that way, a little at a time. It was intended to be read all at once. Or maybe better, to be *heard* all at once.”

“How do you know that?” said Æolus.

“Because I’ve been asked to serve as *lector*,” said Ampliatus. A *lector* was someone who had been designated to read before a group.

“When? How?”

“Yesterday. In the forum. I saw Yakov. He asked about you, by the way. Then he said the Writer wanted to know if I would read it for the Church. In a kind of closet drama.” Closet drama was a little like readers’ theater, in which a dramatic narrative was read before a listening audience.

“And you said . . . ?”

“I said that with your father’s permission, I would. I’ve already started working on it.”

“You said that when you read it all chopped up, something’s lost. That means when you read it all together, something’s gained, right?”

“There’s an accumulating effect. The parts pile up on top of each other. Later parts remind you of earlier parts, so the story builds in intensity and depth. I had a sense that that was happening with the manuscript, but I didn’t realize what it was until the play last night.”

“The play?”

“Remember how the play filled you with a sense of pity and dread? The dread comes from two conflicting emotions. On the one hand, you cared about Oedipus. He was likeable, even admirable, so you cared what was happening to him. On the other hand, you knew he was marching into disaster.”

“But he didn’t know about the disaster,” said Æolus.

“That’s how irony works,” said Ampliatus. “The protagonist behaves as he believes he must—to preserve his honor, his integrity, like that. But the very actions he takes bring catastrophe down on his head. The audience can see that. We watched as Oedipus marched stolidly toward disaster. So we had these conflicted reactions, see? Admiration on the one hand, and pity mixed with dread on the other.”

“Even though we knew how the story would come out?” said Æolus.

“It’s worse when we know how the story comes out,” said Ampliatus. “Didn’t you want to go up on the stage and shake him and say, ‘Look out! You’re running off a cliff here.’ But of course, you can’t do that, so you sit on your hands and watch in horror.”

“You see that in the Jesus story?”

Ampliatus nodded. “There are other strategies interwoven with this one. The playwrights work in a couple of extra twists and turns to deepen the horror. For example, they’ll work in hints about the disaster to remind the audience that it’s coming, and those hints become stronger and more strident as the plot thickens. Then, just before the catastrophe, there’s a moment of hope. It’s like a drum-beat in the back of your mind. *Boom*. Then after a little while, *boom* again. Then again—*boom*. Then—*boom*, *boom*, *boom*. Then silence. A ray of hope. Then all at once, *BOOM!!!* and the story’s over. That ray of hope is called *hyporcheme*, and it deepens the emotional impact of the catastrophe.”

“The Jesus story does that?”

“I didn’t realize what it was until I was watching the play last night, but I checked this morning. I thought the best way to prepare to read the Jesus story for Church was to start by reading it straight through, and sure enough, that’s what it does.”

“Show me,” said Æolus.

“Alright, listen,” said Ampliatus. He took out the Jesus scroll from its niche in the library shelves, and opened to the beginning, then read as quickly as he could along the lines, running along with his finger.

“Here’s a place, really early in the story,” he said. “Remember when John the Baptist was ‘handed over’? Remember how we said that

might mean ‘handed over’ to the executioner?”²

Æolus nodded. “*Boom.*”

“There was that controversy about the Jesus not fasting like John and the Pharisees. What’d the manuscript say? ‘Can the wedding guest feast while the bridegroom is with them? But the day’s coming when the bridegroom will be taken away.’”³

“Here’s another one: After Jesus heals that man with the withered hand, the Herodians and the Pharisees hold council against him, ‘to destroy him.’”⁴

“*Boom,*” said Æolus again.

“Then his family thinks he’s crazy,⁵ and the authorities say he’s in league with the Devil,⁶ and he gets rejected in his *patris*, his hometown.”⁷

“*Boom.*” Then after a pause, “*boom, boom.*”

“Then John the Baptist gets put to death.⁸ There are clear connections and parallels between Jesus and John, and those throw a cloud over the narrative. Like a storm cloud, really. If we had the story of Jesus without the death of John the Baptist, the whole thing would feel different.”

“That story sent a shudder down my back,” Æolus said. Then he added, “*Boom.*”

“Then, not very long after that, Peter finally realizes that Jesus is the Christ,⁹ and what does Jesus do but tell them outright that he’s going to Jerusalem to die,¹⁰ but Peter won’t hear it, or can’t hear it.”¹¹

“*Boom,*” said Æolus. “*Boom* again.”

Ampliatius nodded. “Jesus tries to tell them a second time¹²—

² Mark 1:14

³ Mark 2:19

⁴ Mark 3:6

⁵ Mark 3:20

⁶ Mark 3:22

⁷ Mark 6:16

⁸ Mark 6:17-29

⁹ Mark 8:29

¹⁰ Mark 8:31-33

¹¹ Mark 8:34-35

¹² Mark 9:30-32

boom—but—*boom*, again they just don't get it.¹³ He tries a third time—'I'm going to Jerusalem to die'¹⁴—but, *boom*, they absolutely fail to understand."¹⁵

"So it builds," said Æolus.

"It builds like a dirge," said Ampliatus. "Like the drumbeat of catastrophe we saw in *Oedipus Rex*. He tells them, and he tells them, and they don't get it."

"But we do," said Æolus.

Ampliatus smiled. "How can we not? The story's filled with it. And there are all those little controversies and ironies, and tongue in cheek remarks that throw it up to us again, and then again after that. What does Jesus hear at the baptism? 'Thou art my beloved son.'¹⁶ But that reminds us of the sacrifice of Isaac. On top of that, we knew how it would come out even before we started reading. Because we're Christians, we knew about the cross all along. We knew it would end in disaster—or at least that it would end in a cross."

"So where's the *hyporcheme*?" asked Æolus.

"The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem," said Ampliatus. "When you read the story as a whole narrative, rather than in bits and pieces, it builds in intensity—in dread, the way *Oedipus Rex* built in dread—*boom, boom, boom*, then all at once, the Triumphal Entry. Everything's suddenly reversed. Jesus' rides into the city like a returning king, seated on the back of a colt, the crowds go wild with enthusiasm. They're waving palm branches. They're singing—shouting—loud *hosannas*. 'Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the kingdom of our father David which is coming.' After the building dread, the Triumphal Entry creates a sense of relief. It's almost a shock. There's dancing in the streets. The clouds roll back, and the sun breaks through. There is no shadow here."

"And this is taken over from tragic literature, then?"

"At least it works like tragic literature," said Ampliatus. "In some ways. Not entirely though. In tragic drama, the hero doesn't know he's

¹³ Mark 9:33-35

¹⁴ Mark 10:32-33

¹⁵ Mark 10:35-45

¹⁶ Mark 1:11

marching into disaster, but here, Jesus seems to be the only one who does know. Still, I think the audience's reaction will be similar. When they hear the story read all at once, I mean. The Triumphal Entry provides a flash of light, a moment of hope, at which the cloud parts and sun streams in. Perhaps something will happen to change what looks inevitable. The tensions are resolved. And then, with a crash, the catastrophe will come anyway. The audience is blind-sided, and the response is deeper and more emotionally devastating."

"Which is why the women were weeping at last night's show," said Æolus.

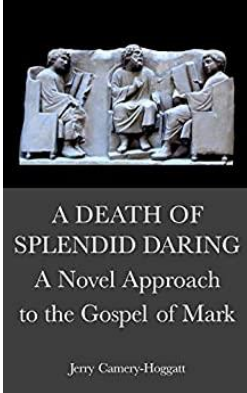
Long pause.

"Know what Teiresias said to me while my father and grandfather were in the bath at Ostia?"

Ampliatius looked up, puzzled.

"He said my father was in danger and should watch his back."





This selection has been taken from the novel, *A Death of Splendid Daring: A Novel Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, published in 2021 by Amestoy Hill Publishers.

For more about *A Death of Splendid Daring* and for a comprehensive downloadable study guide, please visit my website at JerryCH.com

Jerry Camery-Hoggatt holds a PhD in Early Christian Origins from Boston University. He is the author of two books on the Gospel of Mark, two on interpretive method, and one on the role of narratives in the spiritual journey. His research involves the narrative paradigm as a mode of theological reflection. His published works also include an historical novel set in 1st Century Rome, a novel set in 13th Century Wales, two Christmas novellas, a collection of short stories, and an illustrated children's book.



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