

## Missed Miracle

*Hypocrites!*

Ben threw himself angrily on to the ground beside Sara, who was sitting under the shade of their weary sycamore tree. Through the open door he could still see some of the small crowd dispersing. The elders had left before anyone else.

*They try to tie us up in dos and don'ts about the Sabbath, he exploded. Then they think nothing of inciting young lads to murder a man on the holy day!*

*I didn't think it was a very large crowd who were arguing with him when they left the synagogue, said Sara.*

*It wasn't then, Ben replied. That was just Jacob and Ethan's cronies, and a few others who were afraid not to be there, but it never takes Ethan long to rouse a mob. Most of them probably hadn't a clue why they were there, except to be sure of next week's pay.*

*What was it all about anyway? Sara asked. Jesus said nothing really controversial in synagogue did he?*

*Nothing controversial?! Ben roused himself on his elbow and stared at his wife. You must have been asleep, or got your mind on something else - or some body else more likely. He said, and Ben sat upright now so he could use his hands to gesticulate. He said he was the one who was going to bring about the Kingdom of God! He said he was filled with the Spirit of God! That's as good as saying he's Messiah!*

*I **was** listening. There was a slight indignation in Sara's voice. I thought he spoke very well.*

*But don't you see, Ben persisted. That's what they didn't like. They wouldn't believe him, but they don't want anything disturbed. There's no trouble happening in Nazareth unless it's of their making. They won't allow anything that'll lose them income or popularity. They think themselves so important - they think they're the Kings in Nazareth. The thought of a younger man - and an artisan at that - preaching to them about a Kingdom of God - about justice and freedom - scares them stiff. They would have got rid of him there and then if they'd had their way. They got the mob to take him right to the cliff edge. I felt sure he was going over. They'd never have done that if Joseph had been alive, or if his brothers had been here!*

Sara gasped, *Did he get away from them?*

*Yes, he got away. He was amazing!* Ben paused, seeing in his mind all the detail of what happened. *If I had to choose a king out of all those on the hillside today, it would have been Jesus. They took him right to the edge. You know it's a sheer drop just there. If he'd gone over he wouldn't have stood a chance. But he was fearless. He shrugged them off, turned right round and just stood there looking at them. You should have seen his face. It was truly regal and powerful. They all stood back, even Jacob and Ethan, and let him walk slowly past them and away up the hill. He kept looking at them but no-one could meet his eye.*

*You saw all this?* asked Sara.

*Yes.*

*And you didn't say anything, or do anything to help him?*

Ben was silent and at last mumbled, *He didn't need my help.*

*It's his mother I feel sorry for. Sara knew when it was wise to change the direction of their conversation. She's such a lovely woman. She's been a real friend to me and lots of others in town. She looked so proud this morning when she came to synagogue with Jesus. Though as I looked at her I felt then there was a touch of sadness about her. She probably had a good idea of what might happen.*

Neither Sara or Ben spoke for a while until Sara asked, *There were no miracles then? You know, like they've been talking about in the villages?*

*No way!* Ben was glad to be included again. *That lot wouldn't have believed it if Jesus had grown wings and launched himself off the edge of the cliff! There was one miracle though.*

*What's that,* Sara looked down at him.

*The way he walked past Jacob and Ethan! They were speechless! Now that's a miracle!*