

Six Shades of Purple

by Dean Nadasdy

Lent 6: What Do You Mean, “He’s Here Already?”

For Lent 6, based on Luke 19:28-40

Focus:

Jesus comes in ways unexpected. His is not the way of proud glory and strutting honors. He chooses instead the quiet path of humility and service.

Characters:

Kingmaker - front-man for the President of the United States; hurried; bossy; in control

Kelly - subservient secretary

President - a voice on the phone heard only by Kingmaker

Setting:

An office. Kingmaker sits at his desk, which is covered with papers. He speaks on the telephone. Kelly stands in waiting at his desk.

Kingmaker: *(on the phone)* You had promised the limo for 3:30. Now what’s going on over there?! This is the President of the United States we’re talking about, you know, not some 17 year old kid renting a limo for the prom. Now we need that limo at the airport at 3:30 sharp for the secret service people to run their checks. *(pause for response)* We’ve been through all that. Standard procedure. And no slip-ups. *(pause)* 3:30. Right. *(pause)* Right. *(hangs up phone; phone rings immediately again)*

Kingmaker: *(reads from paper from desk as he listens; pause for response)* Yes, sir. As far as I know, the hotel is cleared through security. ETA is set for 4:00 p.m. at the airport. We’ll follow Route B for travel to the downtown convention center. *(pause for response)* No, sir. The President has not talked to me on that. Can you hold a second? *(puts caller on hold)* *(to Kelly)* Kelly, any word on flight plan?

Kelly: Air Force One has not called yet, sir. We expect a call within the hour.

Kingmaker: *(back to caller)* Now word yet on that, sir. We expect confirmation from Air Force One by 0900 hours. *(pause for response; condescendingly)* Nine o’clock! *(covers phone; to Kelly)* Where did they get these guys in the White House? No military background at all. *(pauses a few moments)* We’ll call you immediately. *(pauses)* Right. *(hangs up phone; back to Kelly)* Got your list? Let’s run down it one more time. Color guard?

Kelly: Check, Chief.

Kingmaker: Band?

Kelly: Check, Chief.

Kingmaker: Room service?

Kelly: Check, Chief.

Kingmaker: Chuck the “Check, Chief,” will you, Kelly? *(thinks a moment)* Buses for demonstrators?

Kelly: Six Greyhounds will leave the demonstrators off three blocks away. They’ll walk to the hotel with the signs.

Kingmaker: What did we settle on for signs?

Kelly: “We love you, Mr. P;” “Run again, Mr. President;” “Four more years!”

Kingmaker: Scratch that one, Kelly, right now.

Kelly: Check, Chief.

Kingmaker: *(looks up in frustration at Kelly)* Babies?

Kelly: Excuse me?

Kingmaker: I said, "Babies." Will there be any babies in the crowd?

Kelly: I suppose.

Kingmaker: What do you mean, "I suppose"? Get me babies.

Kelly: How do I do that?

Kingmaker: Call your relatives. I don't know. But I want young families with babies in the picture. Got it?

Kelly: Check, ah-h-h, Mr. Kingmaker.

Kingmaker: Get on it, right now. *(Kelly exits) (dials phone; pauses for ring)* Bill? Kingmaker here. It's go for Route B from the Airport. *(pause for response)* Right. *(hangs up phone; shuffles paper; phone rings again)* Kingmaker. *(pauses for response; sits up in chair as he discovers who it is)* Yes, Mr. President. *(pause)* Yes, Mr. President. *(pause)* She's fine, thank you. *(pause)* We're ready to go here, Sir. We've got a welcome planned that will set the town on its ear. Good media stuff. Great cooperation from the locals, too. *(pauses and takes on shocked look)* Oh. I see. Yesterday already. *(pauses again)* You did? *(pauses)* Yes, Mr. President. *(pause)* Oh, that's okay. We'll call everyone concerned. *(pause)* I'd be honored, sir. *(pause)* Yes. Till tonight. *(pause)* Goodbye, sir. *(sits in wonder; calls for Kelly)*

Kelly: *(enters)* Yes, sir.

Kingmaker: You won't believe this, Kelly.

Kelly: What?

Kingmaker: It's off.

Kelly: It's off?

Kingmaker: He's here already.

Kelly: What do you mean, "He's here already?"!

Kingmaker: The President drove down in his son's VW.

Kelly: You're kidding. No one saw him, did they?

Kingmaker: Just a few friends who met him at the hotel.

Kelly: But the demonstration...the limo...the welcome...the band!

Kingmaker: He's here already. *(in disbelief)* He arrived yesterday. In a VW. Ditched the Secret Service and all. *(in stream of consciousness)* What a risk! And tonight Maggie and I are supposed to have supper with him. That's what he said. I heard him. Imagine it. The President showing up in town like that. I've seen everything now. Not military at all. *(pauses to think)* Not at all. Not safe. Not smart. *(reconsiders)* But, Kelly, tonight Maggie and I will have supper with the President. And you should have heard how kindly he made his invitation. *(thinks again)* He may lack class, but the man has heart. *(Both Kingmaker and Kelly freeze, then exit.)*

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