

*The Case of the
Missing Portraits:*

*A Shurkey Holmes
Whodunnit?*

MYSTERY



Blessed Are Who?

Episode Five: Case Closed

The curator was straight to business on the kids' last day at the museum.

As the kids arrived, the curator immediately introduced Miss Purple, "It's time for our final performance by Miss Purple. Today she is playing the part of Miriam."

Miss Purple entered as usual through the curtain in front of the portrait wall.

She introduced herself, "I am Miriam and I am a fearless prophet. I lived long ago in the land of Egypt and my people were enslaved by the Egyptians. I remember that when I was very young all of my people's little boys were taken away, but my mother put my little brother in a basket on the Nile River. I followed that basket down the river and into the palace of the princess. When she found my brother I ran up to her and asked if I should go get a servant to take care of him. I secretly brought my mother so that he could be raised by his family and still become a prince of Egypt. That little brother was Moses and I am his sister Miriam. As a prophet I listened to God and helped the people escape slavery and find the promised land."

"Miriam really did do all of that," the curator added.

Miss Purple flung the curtain aside to make her exit and discovered the final portrait missing and said, "Another portrait is gone! This is the last one. What are we going to do?"

Shurkey jumped forward, "We are going to solve this case. I'm not waiting around. Let's find a clue right now! There has to be something out of the ordinary here that would give us a clue."

"There's a note right here," said Miss Purple.

"That was fast," said the curator.

Shurkey reached out her hand for the scrap of paper and Miss Purple gave it to her so she read it aloud, "This one says, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.' It's another beatitude from Jesus! What do all of these things mean?"

"We don't know. You're the detective," Miss Purple replied.

"I think if we get on with our day, the solution might simply appear," said the curator.

"I suppose that might be true, but shouldn't we—," Miss Purple was not even able to finish her question before the curator was ushering her and the kids out of the portrait gallery.

She thought Shurkey might protest but she just stood staring at the empty portrait wall.

Later that day...

The kids had a great time in the Ancient Egypt Experience. They got to see mummies, giant statues, and a replica of a pyramid that they could even climb on. The kids' favorite part of the exhibit seemed to be the giant wall of hieroglyphs. These were the special drawings that Egyptians used as their language. They looked wonderful and mysterious on the wall. The kids enjoyed using the guidebooks nearby to try to translate what the wall said. The curator was even there to help them.

The curator also had a clipboard and was asking the kids a question, "What is your favorite book?"

Each answer was written down on the clipboard. The curator even asked Miss Purple.

"*Hamlet*, of course," she replied. "Why are you asking everyone for their favorite book anyway?"

The curator turned to her with a big smile and said, "I'm part of a special team starting a new library here in town. We already have lots of old books here at the museum that I'm willing to let go of but we don't have any books for kids. A special donor has offered to buy the children's books; we just have to come up with the right list of books to get."

"Curator?" Miss Purple keenly asked.

"Yes, Miss Purple?" the curator replied.

"Are you the special donor?" she asked.

"Let's just say that a couple of the mystery museum statues have been sold to another museum, and they just happen to be the same price as a 1,000 kid's books."

A few of the kids heard this whole conversation. They hadn't realized how much the curator cared about kids like them. These kids also noticed the weird painting hanging by the "favorite book" clipboard station. It featured a woman wearing sunglasses and holding a speaker. The painting's plaque read, "Blarem."



Even later that day...

The curator led the kids from the Ancient Egypt Experience back to the portrait gallery at the entrance to the museum. Some extra guests were there for the week's finale. They included the museum's art, science, music, story, and games experts. Shurkey Holmes was already there looking

intently at the odd painting by the wheelchair entrance with the plaque that said, "Treester."

Shurkey waited until all the kids came in and then said, "I've solved the case."

Everyone was surprised.

Shurkey continued, "That's right. I've solved *The Case of the Missing Portraits*."

Everyone watched as Shurkey reached up to the painting. Some of the kids even gasped as she pulled off the hat and the axe. Finally Shurkey removed the "Treester" plaque revealing that it was covering up an original plaque that read, "Esther."

"This is the missing Esther portrait," Shurkey stated confidently, "I even know where all the portraits are located. You'll find them hidden throughout the museum with fake disguises and plaques like this one."

"How could that be?" asked Miss Purple.

"That could be because the mastermind of the whole plan place them there, and that mastermind is—."

"Stop," a new voice rang out across the room. It was the museum's art expert confessing, "I did it!"

"No I did it," said the museum's science expert.

"It was me," said the museum's storytelling expert.

"I took the portrait," said the museum's music expert.

"I'm the one who did it," said the museum's games expert.

"What in the world is going on here?" exclaimed Miss Purple, "Did everyone do it?"

"Not everyone," said Shurkey, "But the whole museum staff did work together to pull it all off. My only question is why?"

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. That's why," said the art expert.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. That's why," said the science expert.

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth," said the story expert.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," said the music expert.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God," said the games expert.

"Of course! It all makes sense now," said Shurkey, "These leaders took these portraits because they were inspired by the Bible characters in the portraits."

"Oh I see," said Miss Purple, "I got to be each of those characters for a just a little bit. Esther, Mary Magdalene, Deborah, Tabitha, and Miriam all inspired me to be like them. These museum experts just moved the portraits to the places in the museum where they really belong."

"And the mastermind of the whole thing... was the curator," said Shurkey.

"The curator, but that's not possible," said Miss Purple, "Each painting has gone missing during one of my performances. The curator was right in front of everyone during each of those performances."

"How true," said Shurkey, "That's the brilliance of this plan. Let's consider the clues. We discovered a note on the accessibility plan pamphlet. We found a note with the phone that had invisible hero trailers. We found a note with the vacuum filled with garden soil. We found the note with the stinky sock. And today we found another note."

"There wasn't anything special with that note," Miss Purple pointed out.

"That's what I thought at first," Shurkey replied, "But I had a suspicion, so I went and checked the note against the "favorite book" clipboard. They're using the same type of paper!"

"That's the clipboard that the curator was using," said Miss Purple, "In fact, the curator also had smelly socks in the new clothing room by the Ancient China Area. The curator had soil in the Medieval Europe Encounter's garden. The curator even had building bricks at the "free therapy" station in the Hall of Inventions. And now that I think of it, the curator was pretty proud of the special accessibility plan too. The curator did do it! But how? Nevermind how, arrest the curator!"

The curator stood in silence for another moment then finally said, "How could I do anything else after I learned about Jesus' beatitudes? I had to get out into the world to be the sort of person that Jesus said was blessed. These characters and Jesus' beatitudes teach us that being blessed means making yourself a blessing to others through including others, sharing God's love, protecting others, serving others, and making peace! I had to make the museum share that same message."

The curator looked sadly at Shurkey, "I guess you'll have to arrest me now."

"Actually," said Shurkey, "I don't have to arrest you at all. The portraits are still in the museum, and as the curator you're in charge of the portraits and all the exhibits which means you can put them wherever you like. No crime has been committed. In fact, I think you've done a really good thing."

"Do you really think so?" asked the curator.

"I sure do!" Miss Purple chimed in.

"That's a huge relief," said the curator. "I've been nervous all week long about you solving the case."

"It was my pleasure to solve this case, even if it turned out not be a crime I was solving but instead a mystery of faithfulness," said Shurkey, "This might be my greatest case of all. *The Case of the Missing Portraits*, where the portraits weren't really missing, they were telling the amazing story of God's love. Case closed."