

BOOK REVIEW



Christmas Mystery

By Jostein Gaarder

Phoenix Paperbacks

0-75380-866-8

I haven't had an Advent Calendar for some time now, it is not the thing 'Adults' have is it? The Christmas Mystery is set out in 24 short chapters leading up to Christmas eve, as with other Gaarder novels she sets out stories with in stories in an easy to read manner that will engage most ages. It is the story of a pilgrimage to Bethlehem, not only through Europe, from Norway, where the Story is set, to Israel, but a pilgrimage through time, through the history of Christian faith, with an ever increasing party of Angels and other nativity characters. But this story is within that of a young boy who discovers an Advent Calendar, and the disappearance of a young girl Christmas Eve nearly 50 years ago. Casper one of the Wise men muses on how to be wise,

"There are two ways to become wise. One way is to travel out into the world and to see as much of the God's creation. The other is to put down roots in one spot and study everything that happens there in as much detail as you can. The trouble is that it's impossible to do both at the same time"

Gaarder gives us the opportunity to share in the Christmas preparations of the boy as he does remain in one place but is moved through history to discover the Mystery of the missing girl and Christmas. A book for young and old indeed even for the whole family to share. Perhaps for next ADVENT????

Neil Eldridge