**Bob: A seeker after truth**

(Disembodied voice with American accent in the style of Star Trek voice over):

*‘Many billions of light years away in the far reaches of the multiverse outside our own time and space continuum a seeker after truth – having nothing better to do and a few milliseconds to spare - stumbled in Twitipedia upon an ancient file named ‘The Earth’. Our seeker after the truth - whose name was zingzingwhizzwhizzgurragurralooploop, known to his friends as Bob – was intrigued by the mention of this tiny, backward planet. Despite a zero out of 10 score on Multiuniversal Trip Advisor he persevered, scrolling through the alphabet – backwards as it happens – until he had read the entries for Strictly Come Dancing and Great British Bake Off but hadn’t reached the letter ‘C’ for Christmas by the time he touched down at 10 Cypress Gardens at 1pm on the 25th December 2016….’*

(Christmas table: A family sitting round about to raise champagne glasses. Screams and one or two stand up as ‘Bob’, an alien in a space suit, appears…)

*Posh Dad*: What on earth..!

*Overwrought Mum*: Who – who – are you?!

*Bob (cheerfully in a stilted way):* ‘My name ‘zingzingwhizzwhizzgurragurralooploop’ is – but you call me ‘Bob’ can…

*Stroppy daughter (to the others, indicating that Bob is mad and moving as if to go for help):* Shall I call the police?

*Bob (ignoring all this):* I see that you having a party are!

*Mum (squaring up to him):* I said: who are you?! I demand to know what you want and how you got in! You’re not the new gardener, are you? Sebastian didn’t tell me you were coming today!

*Dad:* Don’t be ridiculous! The gardeners have their annual day off on Christmas Day!

*Bob* (*puzzled but cheerful looks from one to the other*): I understand do not…

*Child (excitedly*): Did you come down the chimney?! Are you Father Christmas?

*Bob (very puzzled):* Chimbley??

*Daughter* *(sarcastic*): Perhaps he’s from outer space!!

*Mum*: Don’t be ridiculous!

*Dad* *(joining in with the joke):* I suppose you left your time machine in the drawing room, did you!!

*Mum*: Algernon: please don’t humour him!

*Bob (puzzled but serious):* No: it in the street is. You the front door open left…

*Mum (wagging finger severely, to child*): How many times have I told you not to do that!

*Child*: But I was looking for the sledge and the reindeer…!

*Dad (worried but not unkindly):* For the last time: who are you and what do you want? Can’t you see we are having our pre-Christmas canapes?! This Dom Perignon will go flat very soon…and I have a nice little single malt to try out afterwards. This really is quite intolerable!

*Child*: Have you got any Christmas presents for me??

*Bob (sounding out each syllable slowly):* Chris-mus? What is that, please?

*Daughter*: What do you mean? What is that? It’s *Christmas* you…

*Dad (quickly intervening):* OK. No need for rudeness, darling. It’s Christmas day, remember!

*Bob (Now really baffled*): But, dear earthlings: I a seeker after truth am – and have a few milliseconds to spare – so about this ‘Chrisimus’ I really want to know. It is what, please?

*Mum*: Algernon! This has gone on long enough….

*Child (crossly now):* Where are my presents?

*Dad (aside*): Poor man; he’ s obviously lost it. Let’s just humour him! *(aloud as if speaking to a total idiot).* Well, Bob, Christmas is a celebration we have every 25th December! It’s a time of giving, of joy and family togetherness….

*Mum*: Do shut up, Algernon, and call the police! He’s clearly a burglar. And stop whining, Seraphina!

*Child*: But I want a present!

*Daughter*: Stop being so boring, you little brat!

*Bob*: A ‘celebration’? *(The penny drops)* Ah! A party! Yes, I see! And this for what reason is? To celebrate the end of Off Bake? Or Dancing Come Strictly?

*(Everyone except Mum laughs nervously, looking at each other.)*

*Mum (impatiently):* Oh really! Do stop this ridiculous façade! As you very well know, it’s just for the children these days.

*Child (jumping up and down):* Yes, we get presents!! Where are my…

*Mum (interrupting)*: Be quiet and sit down!

(*Child sits down. Crossly.)*

*Bob*: Presents? Ah! Gifts.. Why gifts you do give, please?

*Daughter (impatiently):* Something about kings.. Pour the champagne, Dad! This is getting boring. Can’t you just throw him out?

*Bob (alarmed, looking around wildly):* Where are your kings? I have no special clothing fit for kings!

*Child (giggling):* Not here, silly! It’s in the Bible!

*Bob*: Bible??

*Daughte*r *(dismissively; bored):* It’s just a story. A story in an old book which no one reads any more. OK? It’s an excuse for spending money and eating too much…Pass the stuffed mushrooms, Dad!

*Dad (placatingly):* Well, there ARE some people who still believe in Jesus...

*Bob:* Jesus? Is who?

*Mum (losing it completely):* Oh for goodness sake! You must have heard of Jesus! The baby born in a stable? Shepherds? Kings? Peace on earth and good will towards men…(*Starts to shout*) So get out! And (*furiously to child)* I told YOU to sit down! (*Child starts to wail - quietly!)*

*Bob (unperturbed)*: Where is this baby? This Jesus?

*Dad (uncomfortably):* Well, he’s obviously not here now. We don’t go in for that sort of thing much in England, you know...It’s just a nice story.

*Child* *(wailing):* And we get presents!!

*Daughter*: Oh shut up! I’m hungry! Can we get on with lunch now!

*Dad*: Well, I don’t think we should be quite so dismissive. It’s important to show respect to these cultural traditions…

*Mum*: I haven’t slaved for 4 hours on the Waitrose Essentials sea kelp and caviar stuffing for the turkey to get cold….

*Child*: I want a present!

*Daughter*: And I want my lunch!

*Dad*: We could just invite him to stay...

*All the others together*: What??!!

*Mum*: Don’t be ridiculous!

*Daughter*: Invite some weirdo to lunch! No thanks!

*Child*: Not until he gives me a present!

*Mum*: The dinner’s getting cold; it’s the same thing every year…! Just throw him out, Algernon!

Dad: It’s all very well for you to say, but…

*(All stand up and mime shouting at each other, pointing etc..Bob wanders off, unnoticed, looking all around, up and down.)*

Bob: But where this baby is? Where IS this Jesus? I must find him! I, after all, a seeker after truth am – and I still have two milliseconds to spare….