

The Angel's Tearoom. This is a four act simple drama. It is narrated by the angel whose words are in red, who sits at a table with some mugs on it. This angel introduces other angels in turn. You can separate the acts if you wish by interspersing them with carols.

This is the first draft so it might need tidying up – feel free to do so.

When I ran this I made occasional noises such as “ah ha” during the other angel's bits so as to make it seem more natural. Apart from Gabriel you can make your own name up for the other two angels.

Welcome to the angel's tearoom. It's rather quiet at the moment but sometimes it's a hive of activity. A lot depends on what the Master has given us to do. Sometimes there are jobs all over the earth. Actually there has been something special on over the past few months and I've asked some of the team to meet up and share their reports. It's been a bit like a jigsaw. It's only when all the pieces come together that it makes sense.

Ah good! Here's Gabriel now, so I can make a start. Right, Gabriel, what has been your part in the mystery.

[Gabriel walks in and sits down, speaks with an air of surprise]

So that's what this is all about. You want to get the big picture, do you?

Well my part started about 15 months ago. The first job I had to do was to go to a couple who were getting on in years and give them a special message. It was a sad story really. They were a nice couple and so righteous it made a pleasant change from what usually goes on there on earth.

What was sad about that?

Well the problem was they were desperate for a child but it just hadn't happened for them. Both the man and the woman longed for a little one, and they had been praying so often and it must have seemed as if God was deaf. But they never blamed God. I had to let them know that God had heard their prayer.

That was nice of God to send you. After all she could have just found out the usual way when she did get pregnant.

Ah, but you haven't heard the half of it.

Now the first thing was that I had to get the potential father when he was on his own. He was one of the priests and he was on duty in the temple in Jerusalem. Well, it so happened that he was scheduled to burn the incense on the alter in the Holy Place, which would mean he would be on his own while all the worshippers were waiting outside. So I slipped in quietly as usual and stood right in front of him, next to the alter. Poor man, he nearly jumped out of his skin when he saw me. Then he looked panic stricken.

I said, “Don't be afraid, Zechariah” - I thought it would help him to know that I knew who he was. Then I told him that God had heard their prayers and how he and his wife, Elizabeth, would have a son and that they were to call him John. I also had to tell them that he would give them great joy and cause many more to be glad that he was born.

John's a funny name for someone who's the son of someone called Zechariah!

Yes, of course. But you know it means that the Lord bestows favours, so it was suitable. But there was more to it than that.

Go on.

I had to tell them that he was never to drink wine or other alcohol. He was going to be great in the sight of God, and get this... He was to be filled with the Spirit even from the time he was in the womb.

Ah! He must be destined to be some great prophet when he grows up then?

Absolutely right! He is going to be the prophet that Malachi spoke about all those years ago. He is going to be just like Elijah and turn the people back to God. And all this was to get them ready for something more wonderful.

He must have been over the moon when you told him all this.

Actually, would you believe it – he doubted! There am I, an angel, who has suddenly appeared in front of his eyes, and all he can think of was that what I had told him was *impossible*, because both he and his wife, Elizabeth, were getting on a bit. I mean, when will people understand that with God all things are possible?

So I told him. Because you doubted I'm going to give you a sign. From now until the baby is born you will not be able to speak.

That would have made his job difficult – I mean a priest needs to be able to speak.

Too right! By the time I had finished, the people outside were getting anxious as he had taken such a long time. But when he went out to them he couldn't talk so he stood there waving his arms around trying to explain he had been talking to an angel.

[Narrator laughs and tries to mime I've been talking to an angel]

That would have been funny! So how did things work out?

He finished his period of duty in the temple, and when he moved back home he and Elizabeth did what they do and sure enough she got pregnant. But they were rather embarrassed and for the next five months they never told a soul.

Now that doesn't surprise me. After all you had told them it would take five months for them to get their heads around it!

Part 2

Now then, Gabriel, you told me how you went to that old couple who were going to have a son who would be a great prophet, but I heard that there was another job you had to do. What was that all about?

That took place six months later. I had to go to Elizabeth's cousin in Nazareth. She was just a young woman and had only just got engaged to be married. Well, I slipped into their world like we do, and went to her when she was on her own and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured, the Lord is with you."

So you didn't do that thing about mentioning their name from the start, like you did with that priest?

No, I had to greet her in that way. But it did upset her rather. She looked sought of worried and puzzled at the same time. Well, she was still young, and it takes some understanding when an angel greets you like that.

Go on.

Well then I *did* use her name. It was Mary. I told her... "Mary", I said, "you have found favour with God and are going to be with child and have a son, and he is to be called Jesus." That means 'the Lord saves', you know. I told her that he would be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and his kingdom will never end.

My word, that's absolutely amazing. How did she take to that news?

Well, her first response was to point out that she was a virgin and had never been with a man. She was still in the betrothal period and the wedding would be a few months later on. So that was when I told her the next bit.

Next bit? What was that?

I told her that the Holy Spirit would come upon her, and the power of the Most High will overshadow her, so the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

You mean that the child she will have would not be conceived in the usual way? But she was still relatively young, you say. So how did she handle *that* piece of news?

I told her that nothing was impossible with God and that her cousin, Elizabeth who was old and thought to be barren was now six months pregnant.

And she simply said, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said."

Wow! What a response! [repeats slowly and thoughtfully:] "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said"! What happened next?

I left and she packed up some things and headed off to her cousin's home

Part 3

Gabriel and narrator are sitting at the table with their mugs of tea when a third angel arrives. You can give him/her any name.

Ah, Albert! You're just in time. Gabriel here has been telling me about two of the special jobs he has been carrying out for the Master. It's all about babies being born that are rather special. But I heard that you had a part to play in this as well.

That's right but I think what *he* did was more important. Though I dread to think what might have happened if I hadn't done my bit.

OK. Tell all. Tell all!

Well, has Gabriel told you about the message he gave to Mary?

Yes.

And the bit about how the baby was to be conceived?

Yes, yes.

Well, Mary had gone off to visit her cousin and stayed there for three months until young John was born. So when she got back to Nazareth it was beginning to be obvious she was pregnant. Joseph, the man who was going to marry her was in a real state. You see, according to their custom they were committed to marry. But since he knew they had not had sex¹ there was no way the baby was his. Even though Mary insisted she was still a virgin, the evidence suggested something else.

Now Nazareth is a pretty small place and it was bound to get about that she was in the family way. So dear old Joseph, he was planning to do what he could to protect her from disgrace. But he was planning to divorce her – you know - to break off their betrothal period.

Poor man! What a dilemma! If he publicly denounced her he would hurt the woman he loved. In his mind he must have been convinced she had been unfaithful to him.

Yes, and that was where I came in. I had to talk to him in his sleep, in a dream. I told him that it was true that she had become pregnant miraculously by the Holy Spirit, and that the child was to be called Jesus and would be the promised saviour. I reminded him of some of the great prophecies including the one in the book of Isaiah where it says that a virgin shall conceive and give birth to one whose name would be Emmanuel, which you know means 'The Lord is with us'.

So I told him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife.

And I guess he did.

Yes, almost as soon as he was up the next day he went off and found Mary, and he married her straight away but never slept with her until the baby was born.

Ah yes! The baby was born. I know about that part of the story...

¹ Alternative wording if needed: "... to marry and he knew he wasn't the father of the baby. Even though..."

Part 4

A fourth angel arrives for his tea break. Adjust the name if you wish (but this is the Harold Angel who sings according to the carol! Sorry!!!)

Hi Harold! You've just turned up at the right time. Come over and join us. I have been hearing the bits of the story that went before the bit I already know. But you come and tell us the story in your own words.

Where shall I begin? [thoughtful for a moment] As you know there was a real buzz going on in heaven over those days. Some of the angels had been keeping an eye on the situation with Zechariah and some were keeping an eye on Mary on Joseph, while the rest of the angels were deployed on various tasks around the world and here in heaven. Then some of those keeping an eye on Mary started talking about the fact that she and Joseph were on the move, having to take a long journey despite the fact that she was full term and likely to have the baby any day.

That journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem must be all of 100 miles and parts are quite mountainous. No wonder they arrived after everyone else had taken up the best lodgings in town. They must have been exhausted and they gladly accepted the offer of some stabling under a house. You should have seen the fussing around that their angels were doing to try to make sure they were alright.

Go on! Go on!

Well they hadn't been there long before her labour pains started and the baby was born right there in that place. Joseph held her hand and some women came to help the delivery. At that moment you could have heard a pin drop in heaven. And then the baby Jesus cried. Wow! It seemed as if all heaven had gone crazy. Angels were dancing around and singing. We knew that what was happening before our eyes would be part of the greatest story ever to be told, and one of the great moments in human history. This was the plan of salvation coming into action! Boy was it party time in heaven!

So what did you do?

Well you can't keep good news to yourself so I had a peep into the area around where the baby had been born and found some men looking after sheep on the hills just outside the town. Well it was the middle of the night and most folk were tucked up in bed. So I opened up a bit of heaven and slipped through to talk with them.

I must have left the way open because the glory of the Lord was shining out all around me.

He, he! I guess that was about the last thing they expected to see that night.

So I told them not to be afraid, and that I had good news for them and for all humankind. I told them that there in Bethlehem, the city of David, a Saviour had been born who was the Lord and the Messiah. Then I told them that the sign that what I had said was true was that they would find the baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.

And that was where I and a whole bunch of other angels came in. We came to join you and brought a bit of the party with us. We couldn't stop from praising God. Do you remember that song we sang? [all the angels join in together] "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to those on whom his favour rests." You know, I can feel a song coming on even as I think about that night! [You could get the congregation to sing 'Joy to the world']

