

THE PRAYER
A play for Christmas

God Angela

Angela Yes, God?

God I've a wee job for you

Angela OK, will I need my wings and halo?

God No, not this time. It's Christmas again, and I've had so many prayers this week, I would like you to go and visit some people for me.....and eh, give them this message

Angela Anyone in particular...

God Oh you'll know who they are

Angela I'd maybe better take a coat and hat - its cold down there.

Angela arrives on the streets of Belfast all decorated for Christmas. People are busy doing last minute shopping. She sees a man sitting in a doorway surrounded with bottles and cans, just staring.

Angela Hello

Man Hmmm what, who are you?

Angela A penny for them

Man What?

Angela Your thoughts

Man I wasn't always like this you know... (He cries, bitterly. Angela gives him a hanky to blow his nose). No, I was not. I had a wife

an' a son. Do ye want to see a photo of them? (Pulls out a photo)
That's her, my Gladys and our Billy. She died four years ago
now. He's in Australia - never wrote. I don't know what's
happened to me. I used to be a navigator with the royal navy -
knew the stars better than any. But who cares now? I just got
so low an' gave up looking after myself or paying the rent and
here I am... one of Belfast's homeless people... who'd have
thought it, eh?

Angela James, I have a message for you.

James You havefor me? Who from? How do you know my name?

Angela Read it ...It's from God. He knows you right well and has heard
your prayer. (Angela leaves while he reads the message.)

James Tell me, who are you? Hello (gets up and goes looking for
Angela)

Angela notices a teenage girl pushing an old woman out of her way. She
stops to watch.

Girl Oh, hurry up you silly old bag. Can't you see I'm in a hurry?
(Sees Angela) And what are you looking at? Do you want a
bunch o' fives?

Angela Alice

Alice What, how do you know my name?

Angela I have a message for you

Alice Oh no, my mum didn't send you did she? She's always moaning
about something - wants me to look after our guests, suppose?
Or dad, probably looking me to work in the bar - it's so busy and
crowded coming up to Christmas..... Oh, you're not from the
school are you? I don't care if you are. So there...Just see if I
care. I'm going to leave that old school anyway O.K, an' I'm

leaving home too - I'm fed up. I can manage without any of them. Who'd miss me? Nobody loves me anyway.

Angela The message is from God.

Alice God - what does He want? (Alice takes the message and reads it as Angela moves on) Here what's your name? Who are you anyway?

Angela stops to watch a man looking in a window

Angela Hello

Man Oh, hullo there. Terrible prices the things are now. And I can't afford Christmas this year, with the way things are back at the farm. I've just sold half o' me sheep an' I haven't enough out o' that to even clear a third o' my debt. I don't know why I'm telling you this. My wife thinks we're doing great - how am I going to tell her?

Angela I've a message for you, Sam

Sam How do you know my name? Is this from my wife? Do you know her? Has she found out? Is she leaving me?

Angela So many questions...This is from God

Sam What? (Angela leaves as he reads)

James Strange....Hello there (speaking to audience)....Do ye know something? A most wonderful thing has just happened to me...Do you want me to tell you? Do you promise not to laugh? ..Do you know what I've just seen? Ye do? What? An angel, aye that's right. I thought I was dotting, but she gave me a message, an I was so filled with hope for the first time in years, I asked myself what if my son has been writing to me? So do you know what I did?....I went to the returned letters place in Tomb street, showed them me name and old address,

asked them had they anything for me from Australia - an' there it was.....a parcel from my son...just in today. He's been worried about me, sorry he never wrote much after Gladys died, and has sent me a ticket to go over an' see him! What do you think o' that? I'm away to ring him to let him know I'm coming (exit)

Alice Mum, dad?

Billy Alice, is that you....Come here girl we've been worried sick about you, your mother an' me. We've been on to the school, and your friends....We're that sorry we shouted at you this morning - it's just the strain of running this place at Christmas time. Don't mind us love.

Alice Oh dad (gives him a hug)Dad do you know something - promise you won't laugh....I saw an angel...She gave me a message so she did. That's why I came home. I was going to leave you all, but I just felt loved an' I couldn't do it anymore.

Billy Thank God, Alice - Come on in, your ma's been saying her prayers an' she's just about to phone the police. (Exit Alice and Billy)

Sam Here, (to audience) have you seen that angel? Have you?You know I thought that's what she must have been for she give me a message from God. It gave me the courage to say to my wife what I've needed to say for a long time. An you know something the wife was great about it - in fact sharing our problems has just brought us closer together so it has. This is going to be the best Christmas ever. (Exit)

Angela Well I delivered God's message to the stargazer, the innkeepers and the shepherd. The message is old and simple and is for all of us at Christmas. Do you want to know what it is? ...Do you? There... read it yourselves
"I love you, signed God.' Don't forget will you? Happy Christmas