

THE TEN O'CLOCK ANGEL

A Play

by

GRAHAM WALKER

SchoolPlay Productions Ltd

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

THE TEN O'CLOCK ANGEL

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SchoolPlay Productions Limited,
15 Inglis Road,
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CAST

Storyteller

Archangel Michael

Archangel Gabriel

Junior Angel Peter

Sergeant Angel Smith

Mephistopheles

Bathan

Junior Devil Ian

Messenger Annie

Messenger Maggie .

Brother Aloysius

Abbot

Cook

Brother John

Dorothy Blissington Marchbanks *T.V.Presenter*

Oliver Crikey *Cool Camera Man*

Nause Gleamworld *Game Show Host*

Agatha *Nause's Assistant*

Mr. Jolly

Mrs. Jolly

Brent Trotter

Wayne Slade *Game Show Contestants*

Major Overkil

Captain Bligh .

Stage Audience *For Quiz Show*

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SCENE 1

The lights come up to reveal a strange character sitting at the side of the stage beside a fire. This is the STORYTELLER.

Storyteller: Good evening. I am told that these days, in your time, people do not spend much time considering the world of the spirit. If you can't see it or touch it or smell it, it can't be there, can it? Hmm. Tell that to the people of Hiroshima. Some things that do not measure to the senses are very much there.

We used to accept the mysterious so much more easily, but we were never clever like you. We knew our limits and we feared the unknown just in case.

Up there was God, all seeing, up in His Heaven, surrounded by the souls of the blessed. If you were good, you joined them - if you weren't, well there was Hell, commanded by the Prince of Darkness, who would surely drag you down to spend an eternity in unspeakable torment. Nowadays, that would be a month in Benidorm.

Get my drift? It was all nice and simple. We all knew where we were. But you don't believe in all that, I'm told. YOU know better. Science proves it's all impossible.

Well, listen to my story. Once upon a very recent time, there was an angel. Well, he wasn't much more than a cherub really and he had a rather poor track record. To be honest with you, his behaviour was a bit less than angelic at times. Oh, he tried, but things just seemed to get away from him.

One day he was called before the Board of Archangels for some serious straight talking

(The lights come on to reveal two ANGELS sitting at a desk).

Sergeant Angel Smith: All right, let's be 'avin' you. Double march. Left, right, left, right. 'Alt! Left Tahn! 23585105 Junior Angel Peter Plain, SAH!

Archangel Michael: Thank you Sergeant Angel. *(He shakes his head, deaf).* Well Peter, what have you done now? Your Heavenly Choirmaster is very displeased.

Peter: Oh, I'm so sorry, sir, I had a slight misunderstanding with one of the other juniors.

A. Michael: A misunderstanding that involved pulling his halo down over his head and almost throttling him.

Peter: That was because I slipped and grabbed hold of it to stop myself falling.

Archangel Gabrielle: How did you come to slip during a heavenly choir practice? It isn't a P.E. Period.

Peter: I fell off what I was standing on.

A. Michael: All right, I've got to ask. What were you standing on at that precise time?

Peter: mumble, mumble

A. Gabrielle: I'm sorry, I didn't quite catch that. What did you say?

Peter: Junior Angel Timothy.

A. Gabrielle: Do I understand this aright? You were standing on another angel who had the temerity to move, causing you to fall, dragging the other angel's halo down.

Peter: Yes, well, more or less, sir.

A. Michael: I doubt if it would be wise to ask just why you were standing on a fellow choir member in the middle of such an occasion. However, I am curious

Peter: It's a bit complicated

A. Michael: I'm sure it is, but indulge me anyway.

Peter: Well, sir, I didn't know he was there. It seems he was looking for his contact lens on the cloud we were on and I was just moving forward so I could see the choirmaster better, when I trod on Timothy. He thought I'd done it deliberately, but

A. Michael: (*interrupting*). All right, all right. I know I shouldn't have asked. It's my own fault.

A. Gabrielle: It won't do, Peter, it won't do at all. Your behaviour is most unheavenly. There was that other incident only the other century, when you made chips by slicing potatoes on your harp.

A. Michael: Not to mention sticking the pearly gates shut with super-glue. We had people backed up for months. In the end we had to use St. Peter's shepherd's crook as a lever.

Peter: I'm so sorry. I try to be angelic, but sometimes things seem to get the better of me. (*He brightens*). I'll try harder!

A. Gabrielle: It won't answer, I'm afraid. We have spoken to you before and there have been regular complaints.

A. Michael: This time it's gone too far. You must return to basic training for a while.

Peter: Basic training?

A. Michael: Yes. You will return to Earth. You can carry out a simple job for us and we'll monitor your results.

A. Gabrielle: It will sharpen you up. Your finals are coming up in a thousand years or so and, quite honestly, I can't see you getting into the public mansion of your choice. So, no unfortunate 'misunderstandings'. All right, Peter?

Peter: Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. (*looks away*). Three bags full sir

A. Gabrielle: What was that?

Peter: I said I must be a fool, sir.

A. Gabrielle: Quite. Now you will be given a blessing to award. Use it wisely and remember

A. Michael: We'll be watching you.

A. Gabrielle: Now, here's your assignment. St. Graham's Abbey.

A. Michael: Every hundred years, an angel appears and gives a blessing, according to their legend.

A. Gabrielle: Very primitive, some of these orders. They'll believe anything. Well, this year, we have decided to give them a surprise. You will appear and bless someone. All right?

A. Michael: Let's hope sending you won't be too much of a surprise.

Peter: Oh, you can rely on me, sir and sir. Gosh, this sounds fun. When can I get started?

A. Michael: Oh, right now. Draw some clothes from the property department and get a travel voucher and off you go.

Peter: (*turning to go*). Oh thanks. You won't regret it. (*Exit*).

A. Gabrielle: I certainly hope not, Peter, I certainly hope not.

A. Michael: He's a good boy really, pity if he went wrong. This could be the making of him.... a little responsibility. Not much chance for advancement in the choir. Singing 'Holy, Holy, Holy' for ever is all very well in its way, but not very stimulating for a bright lad.

A. Gabrielle: True enough. It's just that he's so accident prone. Remember the lost chord was around until he got his hands on it.

A. Michael: Well, that's that, we've done our bit. Still, we'd better keep an eye on him.... just in case.

A. Gabrielle: Yes, we'll send Annie the Angel. She's a mind-reader so she will be able to keep an eye on things. Sarn't Angel Smith!

S-A Smith: (*appears*). Sah?

A. Gabrielle: Sarn't Angel, we need to speak to Angel Annie. Do you think you could find her for us, please.

S-A Smith: Certainly, Sah, just saw her in the Seraphim Common Room. I'll give her a call.

(The door opens and ANNIE appears. She is all in white).

Angel Annie: You almost called for me, gentlemen?

A. Michael: Yes, Angel Annie, we want you to

Annie: Go to St. Graham's and look after young Peter. Of course.

A. Gabrielle: We just want to be sure

Annie: Of course, Archangel Michael. And yes, I will report back regularly. *(She looks at S-A SMITH).* I don't understand, Sergeant Angel, what do you mean, 'Everyone hates a smartiepants'?

A. Gabrielle: Well, thank you, Angel Annie. *(She exits).* We won't detain you

A. Michael: I must say it IS difficult having a conversation with that girl! However, she'll keep an eye on the young man and I can't see any problems. Cup of ambrosia, gentlemen?
(They exit).

SCENE 2

The spotlight returns to the STORYTELLER.

Story: Well, while all this was going on, in the 'other place' you know.... down THERE, a rather similar problem had arisen. This young imp, Ian, wasn't being a very IMPressive devil. He just couldn't seem to be bad enough. Well, of course, that was totally unacceptable, so he was invited to attend at a disciplinary hearing to explain his eccentric behaviour.

(We see two DEVILS at the same table with IAN, the IMP standing before them).

Mephistopheles: Now, this is very disturbing, Ian. Your performance has been far too good lately. What under Earth are you thinking of?

Ian: I'm sorry, sir. I just can't seem to get it wrong.

Bathan: A sorry excuse. What about the exams? Did you cheat?

Ian: *(indignantly).* No, sir!

Bathan: Exactly. You didn't cheat. Pathetic. How can you be a proper devil if you're honest. What about a few deadly sins. Are you gluttonous?

Ian: Well, I had seconds of rice pudding yesterday.

Meph: Oh, don't be so ridiculous! What about sloth. Now you are slothful, aren't you?

Ian: Not since I had my alarm clock

Meph: Avarice?

Ian: I don't think so.

Bathan: Jealousy?

Ian: Not really.

Meph: Well, what have you got to say for yourself, you silly little devil? Nothing good I hope.

Ian: I do do my worst, but it doesn't seem to work out.

Meph: I'll say. Look at your last assignment. You were sent to that town to speed up parking meters and slow down traffic signals and what happens?

Bathan: The traffic flows better than ever and there is plenty of parking space for the first time in years. A disaster!

Meph: You're soft, Ian, soft. Devils need to be tough, ruthless, pitiless. You're as tough as a buttered muffin. You'd probably help old ladies across the road, if you had half a chance!

Ian: It was only once and she might have been a witch.

Bathan: By Satan, this is more serious than I thought! I am afraid a major re-education course is necessary.

Ian: Oh please sir, I'll try much less hard. I'll give it my worst shot

(The two DEVILS silently shake their heads).

Ian: I'll become a lager lout, I'll eat crisps at Covent Garden, I'll smile at a traffic warden, I'll

Bathan: It's no use, boy, it's re-education for you.

Meph: Back to Earth for a bit of hard work for a change. Oh yes, I know all about you roasting chestnuts on the fires down below.

Bathan: You can start here. *(He produces a piece of paper, handing it to IAN).*

Ian: *(looking at it).* St. Graham's Abbey. What's that, sir?

Bathan: It's a religious establishment where they believe they get an angel's blessing every hundred years.

Ian: An angel, sir? *(gulps).*

Meph: Oh, don't worry. The story isn't true. The Angels have got something better to do than visit out of the way places like that. Anyway, our information is, that half the inmates are on our side. You'll have no problem making mischief there. Right, off you go and be sure there are no embarrassments.

Ian: Right, sir.

(He exits).

Meph: I hope we haven't made a mistake. I'd hate to have to explain to the boss why we didn't just send him to stoke for a hundred years or so.

Bathan: Oh, no, it'll be all right. His heart's in the wrong place, I'm sure of it. It's just a question of practice. He'll be much worse for the experience.

Meph: Well, I hope so ah, here's Maggie.

(MAGGIE enters. She is identical to ANNIE, except that she is all in black).

Maggie: Greetings, Lords of darkness, epitome of all evil, supreme repository of wickedness, loathing and hatred!

Meph: Yes, yes, all right, there's no need to go through all that.

Maggie: What is your bidding, oh faithful followers of the Prince of the Underworld?

Bathan: *(to MEPH).* She's trying for the acting cup.

Meph: Listen, Messenger. You are instructed to follow that imp and see that he doesn't let us down. I mean we do have certain standards to maintain. Make sure he doesn't bring Hell into disrepute.

Maggie: It shall be as you command, oh hideous one.

Meph: Steady on

Maggie: From the soaring skies of the tropics to the icy depths of arctic seas, I shall follow wherever he goes.

Meph: Well, you won't need to worry about all that. He's going to Sussex.

Maggie: Sussex? Oh, boring!

(She goes).

Bathan: Good, that's taken care of. Can I offer you a glass of rat-poison and a slice of toadstool pie?

Meph: What, with my ulcer?

(They exit. THE STORYTELLER appears again).

Story: So, there we have it St. Graham's, a small monastery in rural Sussex, where the strange legend of angel-manifestation is rife is to be the training ground for one failed angel and one dubious devil.

All this would have been bad enough, but a further confusion was to be added to the equation. Well watch, and you will see

SCENE 3

(St. Graham's. There is a knock on the door. A MONK crosses to open it to reveal a T.V. Presenter, DOROTHY BLISSINGTON MARCHBANKS and OLIVER CRIKEY, a Cameraman).

Aloysius: Good morning. I am Brother Aloysius and you are Miss Blissington Marchbanks. I have seen you on television. I am a great admirer, if I may say so.

Dot: Of course you may, you funny little man. You may call me Dorothy.

Aloy: Oh!

Dot: Yes, and this is my cameraman. He's rather super. He is Oliver Crikey. As you know, Satellite Networks have bought the rights to this angel thing from your boss, so we shall be recording its arrival. My colleague, Nause Gleamworld will be arriving soon.

Aloy: Nause Gleamworld! The host of 'Double Spin Quiz'!

Dot: Yes, that's him. The network want to make this angelic appearance a real fun, family affair.

Aloy: Oh, it's a great honour.

Dot: To have an angel? Yes, I suppose it is.

Aloy: No, no, to have you and Mr. Gleamworld here. *(to CRIKEY).* By the way, this is my best side, I'm told.

Crikey: Oh, yeah. Like yes, man. Right on. Why the drag gear, man?

Aloy: Drag? Oh, you mean my habit.

Crikey: I don't mind your habits, man. I got habits too.

(STORYTELLER appears).

Story: Right, that's got that joke out of the way, now we can get on

Crikey: But why the dress, man?

Aloy: I'm a monk. We all wear this. It's called a habit.

Crikey: *(losing interest).* Too cool, man. *(He starts to roll a dubious-looking cigarette).*

Aloy: No smoking, I'm afraid. *(CRIKEY shrugs and eats the cigarette).*

Crikey: Cool. Well, cool!

Aloy: Allow me to direct you to your rooms. This is a very exciting time for St. Graham's.

Dot: Yes, we understand, brother, we'll freshen up and then perhaps conduct a few interviews, just to get the background.

Aloy: Certainly, certainly. When you want me, I'll be available for interview.

Crikey: Cool, man. (*They exit*).

(*There is a timid knock at the door. A MONK crosses and opens it to reveal two Boys, PETER and IAN*).

Peter: Excuse me, is this the Abbey of St. Graham's?

Aloy: It is. Where else would it be? How many abbeys do you think there are in this valley, miles from anywhere?

Peter: I just wanted to be sure. You see, sir, I'm here to be trained as a monk like you.

Ian: So am I.

Aloy: Really? So you want to be monks do you? Seems a rather limited ambition to me. But come in, come in. You're making the place cold standing there in an open doorway. What are you called?

Peter: Oh, sorry. My name's Peter Plain - Peter after Saint Peter, you know. And Plain er after Peter.

Aloy: (*looking at him suspiciously*). Is it - ? Well, mine's Brother Aloysius and I don't like jokes. This order doesn't like jokes. The Abbot especially doesn't like jokes. God doesn't like jokes.

Ian: I never make jokes, Brother Aloysius.

Aloy: Good. You might fit in here.

Peter: I'm sorry. I didn't realise.

Aloy: Oh, well, I'd advise you to remember. We do not laugh at St. Graham's. Now, I'll go and notify the Abbot. He likes to greet all novices as they arrive.

Peter: Oh, that's nice of him

Aloy: to put them right on a few things before they unpack. (*PETER sits*). Don't sit down, boy. (*PETER leaps up again*). This order doesn't like sitting down. The Abbot hates people who sit down. God abhors sitting down. I suggest you imitate this young man. (*He indicates IAN*). He seems very sensible.

Peter: Yes, sir. Don't sit down. I can see why. All these golden thrones must be very uncomfortable.

Aloy: (*Looking very suspiciously at him*). Are you being sacreligious? This order

Peter: Doesn't like people being sacreligious. No, sorry. Gosh, it's going to be hard learning all the rules, (*aside*) and finding anything they do like.

Aloy: Just obey. Since you are the most humble, obey everyone. Keep your mouth shut. Observe from your betters. Remember, you are the lowest form of life that this building houses. Even the cockroaches in the kitchen outrank you.

Ian: Yes, brother, we realise that. Thank you for explaining to us.

(Enter an elderly MONK with a broom).

Brother John: Can I sweep up in here, Brother Aloysius?

Aloy: No, wait, you old fool. The Abbot is coming. He doesn't want your dust everywhere. Watch these novices for a moment. Make sure that one *(He indicates PETER)* doesn't steal anything. You can tell them where the kitchen is. You'll make a good trio ... the newest additions to the community and the oldest and most doddering. *(He exits).*

Peter: He wasn't very polite, was he? I rather expected monks to be nice to each other. My name's Peter, by the way. This is Ian. We've come to learn monkery.

John: How nice. My name is Brother John I think.

Ian: What do you mean, you think? Surely you know your own name.

John: Well, I'm almost sure, but you see, I never get called by my name any more. I'm just 'Hey you' or 'You old fool'. I AM old and I am rather a fool too. I forget things rather easily you see.

Peter: Well, we shall call you Brother John, won't we Ian?

Ian: *(shrugging).*

Peter: Since the doorman said we were junior to everyone, we ought to call you 'sir'.

John: The doorman, eh? *(He laughs like a man who has almost forgotten the art).* He's not the doorman. He's very senior in the order. HE probably thought it was the angel of St. Graham's. I'm the doorman, and the sweeper up, and the scullery help and lots of other things.

Peter: Why on earth should he think it was an angel? Does he believe in all that?

John: You mean you don't know? Everyone knows of the Angel of St. Graham's.

Peter: I'm afraid I don't.

John: Well, legend has it that every hundred years on the tenth hour of the tenth day of the tenth month, an angel comes here and blesses the deserving folk within the abbey. Well, it might be the eleventh hour. I get confused.

Ian: The tenth hour of the tenth day of the tenth month.

Peter: Oh, you know about it, do you?

Ian: It is the duty of all novices to acquaint themselves with the traditions of their orders.

Peter: So we all get a blessing do we? That sounds fun.

John: Well, I wasn't here a hundred years ago, quite, so it could all be a mistake. But lots of people have arrived already. We even have T.V.!

Peter: T.V.! Gosh.

John: Oh, we shan't be appearing on that. It just means more potatoes to peel and more plates to wash. But, it is the Lord's work. It is my place to serve my

God in the kitchen. It is what he wants of me.

(The inner door opens and the ABBOT sweeps in. He is closely followed by ALOYSIUS. IAN kneels down).

Peter: Good day, sir.

Abbot: *(ignoring him)*. He is standing, Brother Aloysius. He is standing in my presence!

Aloy: Kneel, boy. At once.

Peter: *(kneeling)*. Oops! Another hiccup! Good day again, sir. Is that better?

Abbot; *(ignoring him again)*. He spoke without permission. He spoke!

Aloy: You NEVER speak to Father Abbot until he favours you by addressing you. Cast your eyes down. You may not stare at him.

Peter: Oh? *(He pauses)*. Before I look away and shut up, could I point out that Father Abbot's habit is on fire?

Aloy: What an absurd remark *(looks down to where smoke is emerging from the Abbot's habit)*. Father! Father! Quick! *(A lot of shouting and slapping follows. IAN gives PETER an odd look)*.

Abbot: *(to IAN)*. What is your name, boy?

Ian: Ian, Father Abbot.

Abbot: Welcome to St. Graham's, boy. *(To PETER)*. And you, worm. What is your name?

Peter: Peter, sir.

Abbot: I am addressed as 'Father Abbot'.

Peter: Yes, Father Abbot sir.

Abbot: *(after a pause)*. This order, the order of St. Graham of the Angels, is a disciplined order. It is a hard life. We find salvation in hard work, hard prayer, hard attitudes. Do you understand?

Peter: I am trying HARD, sir Father.

Abbot: You may not be suitable. You do not look suitable. There is something definitely unsuitable about you. I don't think you have the look of a follower of the holy life. Well, the rules here are simple. Work hard so you may live well; pray hard so you may die well. You will start with three hours sleep a night. The remaining hours will be filled with work and prayer. It will be an uphill struggle to save your souls, though you *(He indicates IAN)* may do well enough. You have a saintly look about you somehow. Remember, both of you. God may be merciful, I never am! *(He sweeps out)*.

Aloy: You *(to JOHN)* sweep up. You two, help him. *(He exits)*.

John: Oh dear, that was funny. However did his habit catch fire, do you suppose?

Ian: Yes, I wondered about that.

Peter: Odd, wasn't it? But, if this order doesn't like people making jokes or talking or sitting down, I wonder what they say about Abbots setting fire to themselves? Especially in front of novices. I mean, it's no sort of example is it?

(The door bursts open to admit a large cook-type MONK).

Cook: Ah, there you are, you idle old man. How long do I have to wait for you? Go and slice the onions for supper.

John: I am so sorry, brother cook. I was delayed in my sweeping.

Cook: Well, get along to the kitchens immediately or you won't eat tonight. What's that? *(He points at PETER with his knife).*

Peter: I'm Peter. I've come to study here. Shall I help?

Cook: *(to JOHN).* Tell this pathetic excuse for a human being that I don't speak to novices. Tell them both to go to the kitchens before I flay them alive inch by nauseating inch.

John: I think brother John would value your help in the kitchen, boys.

Peter: Righto, come on Ian. I say, it's jolly hard having a chat around here, isn't it. We're not allowed to talk to anyone.

Ian: It doesn't seem to stop you.

Cook: This order doesn't like idle chatter. The Abbot doesn't like idle chatter and I don't like idle chatter.

Peter: Oh well, that clinches it. Wait brother John, lead me to the onions. No-one should cry alone.

(Exeunt all).

SCENE 4

PETER is sweeping. It must be the cleanest room in the world. There is a knock on the door. PETER opens the wrong one, then as a heavy knock comes again, opens the right one).

Peter: Hello, got the wrong door, I'm afraid.

(In the doorway is NAUSE GLEAMWORLD. He is dressed extravagantly).

Nause: Better late than never, I suppose. Well, lad, is this where that angel-thing does its stuff for the cameras?

Peter: I think so, sir. It's what they keep saying.

Nause: Well, that's just wonderful. Take me to your leader.

Peter: I'm awfully sorry. I'm not allowed to. I'm too junior. If you'd like to wait here, I could get a more senior brother.

Nause: Listen, kid. Nause Gleanworld doesn't wait for anyone, least of all some crummy monk. I don't care what the rules are, take me to the managing director of this establishment.

Peter: Well

Nause: I know. You're a looney.

Peter: I don't think so.

Nause: Then your father is head of my network?

Peter: No.

Nause: The King?

Peter: No.

Nause: A bishop, perhaps? A Field Marshal.?

Peter: No.

Nause: Then, you're in a lot of trouble unless you move yourself right now.

(Enter ABBOT).

Abbot: Nause Gleanworld! This is indeed a great honour, sir, a great honour. Welcome to St. Graham's. I am the Abbot, Father Drax.

Nause: A pleasure, Abbot. A pleasure to meet someone half sane at last.

Abbot: *(staring hard at PETER).* You have had cause to complain at your welcome?

Nause: That guy was deliberately obstructive. I hope you will discipline him.

Abbot: I am so sorry. He is new here. He won't be staying long. You! *(to PETER).* You will wear a hair shirt for two days and think yourself lucky to have escaped a flogging.

Peter: Oh I do, but the shirt thing sounds pretty hairy!

Nause: Right, I want at least three rooms. I need my meals served in my rooms. My assistant will give you the menu. Come on! *(This to a struggling GIRL who is carrying about six suitcases).*

Aggie: Oh, Mr. Gleanworld. They're so heavy.

Nause: Oh, all right, give that one to me. *(He takes the smallest attache case and puts it on the ground beside him, leaving AGGIE to struggle. While no-one is looking, PETER waves a hand at the case, apparently increasing its weight).*

Abbot: *(to PETER)*. Well, help the lady. Don't just stand there. I hate idleness. This order hates idleness.

Peter: Right, miss, here. Let me give you a hand. This way.

(They exeunt).

Abbot: I'm so sorry about him, but these days there is a marked lowering of the standard of novices. Perhaps we could discuss the form your little promotion will follow. Why don't you come to my office and we can talk about it over a glass of sherry.

Nause: I only drink single malt whiskies.

Abbot: Well, perhaps I could find a drop maybe in the medicine cabinet. Come

....
(NAUSE goes to lift the bag and it doesn't move, causing him to fling himself on the ground).

Nause: My God! What happened?

Abbot: My dear Mr. Gleanworld. Are you all right?

Nause: *(getting up)*. Yes, yes, but what happened?

(PETER appears briefly and waves a hand at the bag).

Nause: I'd no idea it was so heavy. However did Aggie manage? *(He puts enormous effort into lifting it. There is no resistance and he flies onto the floor again).*

Nause: AAAAH!

Abbot: *(helps him up)*. Oh my, this is dreadful. What is happening? Are you sure you shouldn't have something a bit weaker than whisky?

Nause: I'm not drunk, you idiot! There's something wrong with that bag. Wait till I see that Aggie! It's some sort of practical joke.

(Enter DOT and CRIKEY).

Dot: Why, hello Nause. Please don't get up darling. Just lie there and rest.

Nause: *(getting up and dusting himself down)*. Well, well, the sweetheart of the masses. Still fronting garbish, my dear?

Dot: Yes, certainly, my sweet, still making it?

Nause: *(angrily)*. Well, come on, Father Drax, I think you and I had business to discuss. *(noticing CRIKEY)*. Couldn't they find a proper camera man?

Crikey: Love yer, man.

(NAUSE and ABBOT exeunt).

Dot: Set the camera up over there Ollie, I'll do the introduction. Now, what we need is a bit of local colour. Hello, here comes a bit

(Br. JOHN hurries in chased by the COOK, wielding a huge knife).

Cook: You stupid, doddering old buffoon. I'll teach you to *(suddenly becomes aware that they are not alone)* I'll teach you to cook a souffle *(He throws his arm round Br. JOHN)* you dear man! Why look, it's Miss Blissington Marchbanks.

Dot: Yes, it is. Now I want you two to stand over there and look holy. Why don't you put that knife away, chubby? Look more homely. Right, let's try it. *(She faces the camera).* "Good evening, today Satellite Network brings you a truly remarkable event. We hope to bring you actual pictures of an extra-terrestrial being. We also expect to bring you a really exciting game in which the winners' prize will be a real live blessing, straight from Heaven. More news of this World first after the break". How did that look, Ollie?

Crikey: Cool, man.

Dot: Right, we'll put that in the can. Now I'll just go and get a short interview with these two, just to set the scene "I have with me here two of the senior members of the Order of St. Graham. Now, sir *(to JOHN)*. what do you expect this Angel to be like? Will it have wings and a white dress? What do you feel like, being here ay this time? Is this the most important moment of your life?

John: Well, I'm not a senior member

Dot: Well, thank you very much. Most interesting. So, you see, all the people here are really excited about the prospects and these amazing moments will be brought to you by 'Angel Moments', "the sweet that's too big to eat between meals!" Cut, Ollie. I hope some of the contestants have got a bit more sparkle than you have, dad. We won't sell many bars of chocolate talking to you.

John: Oh, is that what I was doing? I thought you were talking about our angel.

Dot: Well I was, but this angel is all about choc bars. That's what Satellite Network is here for, not some everyday angel. We'll scrub that bit, Ollie. Let's find someone else.

Cook: What about asking me a few questions?

Dot: How can I tell him, Ollie?

Crikey: Too fat, man. Like wrong image.

Cook: Oh, right. Hey, you, you ancient moron, get back in the kitchen and sort

out those apples.

(They exeunt).

Dot: This place is full of screwballs. I've seen lunatic asylums with less lunatics. Now, here's a likely candidate.

(IAN enters).

Dot: Let's try again. If we can't find someone interesting, we're dead in the water. Excuse me, sir

Ian: Do you mean me?

Dot: Yes. Come over here in front of the camera and answer a few questions. O.K.?

Ian: Sure. Ask away.

Dot: Now er

Ian: Brother Ian.

Dot: Now, Brother Ian, are you looking forward to the appearance of this angel?

Ian: Not really.

Dot: Oh, why is that, Brother? Is it that it will interrupt your devotions?

Ian: Not for a moment. But if we allow the existence of angels, where will it end? It means there must be devils. Perhaps one of them will appear next.

Crikey: Hey, Dot, man, there's something wrong with this camera!

Dot: Oh, for goodness sake, *(IAN shudders)* we were just getting going!

Crikey: Yeah, O.K. but I got no picture, man.

Dot: Well, rewind and fix it, Ollie.

Crikey: Don't see how I can fix this. Come over here. *(DOT goes over to the camera and looks through. She starts back).*

Dot: Well, thank you brother. I'm afraid we have a technical fault. I'll catch you when it's fixed.

Ian: All right Miss Blissington Marchbanks. *(Exits).*

Dot: Did you see that?

Crikey: No, man, like I didn't see anything. You were interviewing open space. Like no-one there, man.

Dot: Exactly! Ollie the camera showed only me. You know what this means?

Crikey: New camera. One of the 3SP567's.

Dot: No, Oliver Crikey. It means we've found the angel. Brother Ian is the angel of St. Graham's!

SCENE 5

The Stage is dominated by two huge wheels. DOT is centre stage with CRIKEY.

Dot: *(to camera).* Good evening and welcome to the Abbey of St. Graham's deep in the heart of rural Sussex. Tonight, according to legend, is the night when the Angel of St. Graham's will appear to shower blessings on the deserving. Satellite Network Broadcasting have devised a quiz and invited our regional winners to St. Graham's to participate in a final, the winner to receive the blessing. This magnificent prize is brought to them courtesy of Angel Moments, the sweet you can't eat between meals. And now, let me introduce your host for this evening your friend and mine, the genial pal of the people Nause Gleanworld!

(NAUSE bounces in, in true gameshow style. DOT mutters as he passes).

Dot: break a leg, darling *(He smiles)* or an arm.

Nause: Good evening, good evening. Well, you great folks at home, have we got a show for you tonight! Well, I hope so, or there's going to be an hour of silence Ha, Ha. Just joking people. This is the most sensational quiz show in the history of television. Thanks to Angel Moments, that great choc bar, that's a meal in a wrapper, we bring you an actual encounter with an angel! And who will get to meet it and receive a genuine heavenly blessing? Why our winning contestants, of course. We have some wonderful people for you to meet tonight, all regional winners who you've seen before and, in addition, we have a team from the Abbey itself. So, all the ingredients for an enthralling evening.

Just before we meet our wonderful guests, let me run through the rules once more in case there are any naughty people out there who haven't seen the World's most popular quiz show. Well, as you see, we have two wheels. We spin the first to get the contestant who gets to answer and we spin the second to find the degree of difficulty of the question. Anyone who fails to answer three times in a row goes out *(groan)*. The score will be kept by the beautiful Agatha Trivet. Put your hands together for Aggie! Right! Let's waste no more time, but let's meet the first two people who want to play Double Spin Quiz!

(Enter MR. and MRS. JOLLY).

Nause: Hello sir, hello my love, and who are you?

Mrs. J: (*who is utterly boring*). I'm Doris Jolly.

Mr. J: (*who is equally boring*). And I'm Jim Jolly, Nause.

Nause: Well, how jolly jolly. Just a joke. You're wonderful and it's great to know you. What do you do for a living, Jim?

Mr. J: I'm a social security clerk in Milton Keynes.

Nause: How about that! A clerk! Great, fascinating (*Aside to AGGIE*). How did you allow these creeps on the show? And you, my love, have you got a job?

Mrs.J: No, Nause, I'm just a housewife.

Nause: JUST a housewife! That's just the most moving thing. This lovely lady is JUST a housewife, folks,. Well super. Do you have any children, Doris?

Mrs.J: Yes, we have a boy and a girl, 6 and 8.

Mr. J: 8 and a half, **my love**.

Mrs. J: That's right, 8 and a half.

Nause; Just marvellous, and are they watching at home?

Mrs. J: Oh, yes. Hello Janet; hello Boris.

Nause: Terrific. Right, take your places, please while we meet the next two who want to play Double Spin Quiz!

(*Enter BRENT TROTTER and WAYNE SLADE*).

Nause: (*consulting cards*). And here we have Brent Trotter. Now you're a football manager, right?

Brent: Yeah, s'right Nause. Tyne United.

Nause: How's the season going, Brent?

Brent: Well, the lads haven't got it all together yet. We're still looking for a result.

Nause: That's too bad, Brent. But this is the captain, Wayne Slade.

Brent: Yeah, he's the captain.

Nause: Well, Wayne, when are you going to win, do you think?

Wayne; Well, me and the lads just do as the boss says. Just go out there, you know, do the business, enjoy ourselves and just play to our skills and that.

Nause: Wonderful. Great to see the spirit. What are you going to do if the blessing goes to you?

Wayne: Well, you know, Nause, hopefully we'll win a few rounds maybe you know just going to relax and enjoy ourselves. You know

Nause; Yes indeed great! And now for our third pair of contestants, and they are from the Army.

(*Enter MAJOR OVERKILL and CAPTAIN BLIGH*).

Nause: Let's hear it for our brave warriors. Now you're Major Overkill, and you

must be Captain Bligh.

Major: Yes, that's right old boy.

Nause: Wonderful. Isn't that something. Where are you from, Major?

Major: Aldershot actually.

Nause: Aldershot. What a beautiful place. What about you, Captain?

Capt: Aldershot, actually.

Nause: Aldershot too. Well, amazing. What a co-incidence! Well, if you'd like to take your places, we're just about ready to start. Oh, I nearly forgot our special guests. Satellite Network has invited two of the monks here to take part and here they are Novices Peter and Ian!

(They enter, looking rather uncomfortable).

Nause: Aren't they just wonderful? Let's have a round of applause for the holy pair. *(CRIKEY draws back from the camera, shaking his head. He points at it and DOT goes across and looks through too).* So we have four teams, all ready to go. In just a moment we are ready, with the greatest Double Spin Quiz of all time, join us after the break.

Dot: It's amazing, Ollie, the camera really doesn't show Ian.

Crikey: Like ghosts, man. Creepy.

Dot: This quiz should be really something. Great start, Nause

Nause: Why, thank you, darling.

Dot: Half the audience managed to avoid being sick.

Peter: *(to IAN).* Thank you so much for volunteering me. I don't know a thing about general knowledge.

Ian: Well, neither do I, but look at this lot. We've got to be in with a chance. Don't you want an angel's blessing?

Peter: What angel? There won't be an angel and if there was, do you think it would bless their crummy winner?

Aggie: 30 seconds, everyone! *(She powders NAUSE).*

Nause: Get off, woman! Right, everyone, look as if you care! Welcome back, viewers. Welcome back to Double Spin Quiz, the night we give an angel's blessing as the star prize So, we are ready for round one. Spin the wheel! *(The wheel spins and stops at the JOLLY'S number 1).* Number 1! The Jollys. Spin again! *(The wheel spins and stops on 1).* Lucky, lucky! Listen carefully. Here's the easy question. What country has a flag with a red dragon on it?

Mr. J: Oh, well, I don't know. What do you think, Doris?

Mrs.J: I think I know, I think I know. It's it's Red China!

Ian: Pathetic!

Nause: No, I'm afraid that's wrong. It is wonderful Wales, look you, so - oh no! You lose a life! Spin again! (*The wheel spins and settles on 3*). It's the Army's turn. Watch the wheel. (*It spins and settles on 2*). Two it is! Here's the question. What two metals make up pewter?

Major: Oh I say, old boy! What do you think, Bligh?

Capt: Tin and lead isn't it, sir?

Major: No. It's silver and gold.

Nause: I'm sorry, it's tin and lead. One failure against you. Next spin. (*The wheel settles on 3*). So it's the footballers. Let's see how hard your question is going to be. (*It is 1*). Your question is this: What was the home town of the Chaldees?

Brent: Well, kick it about, lad, what do you think?

Wayne: Um, er

Nause: That's right! Ur! Well done. How about that? So, score please, Aggie.

Aggie: Brent and Wayne leading with one point, Nause. No-one else has scored and Doris and Jim and the Army Team are one life down.

Nause: Wonderful, thank you Aggie. We'll take a break, but we'll be back!

Ian: We've got to do something, or we're history.

Peter: Do something? Like what?

Ian: Oh, come on. I didn't come in with the washing. You are from my department. You've probably been sent to keep an eye on me. We want to win, don't we?

Peter: Well, I really don't care. It's an awful affair.

Ian: Yes, tasteless and embarrassing. It's great. Let's win.

Major: Bligh, it's time to instigate Plan B.

Capt: Plan B, sir?

Major: Yes, Bligh. Did you put the magnet in place?

Capt: Well, I did, sir. but it's a bit unsporting, don't you think? A bit un-British?

Major: Yes, definitely. Get ready to push the button, Bligh. Honour of the Regiment, you know.

Brent: Now, son, do you want to spend the rest of your life in the Vauxhall Conference?

Wayne: Of course not, boss. I'm as sick as a chicken about where we are.

Brent: Parrot, Wayne. Sick as a parrot. Chickens don't get sick. Well, what do you suggest we do about it?

Wayne: Well, I could pass round those sweets you gave me. The ones you say make people feel ill.

Brent: Good thinking, son. Why don't you do that?

Wayne: All right boss. Sweet?

Brent: Oh you

Wayne: (*getting up*). Sweet, anyone?

(*They all refuse until he gets to IAN*).

Ian: Oh, no thank you. Have one of mine.

Wayne: Thank you. (*He puts it in his mouth and goes rushing out*).

Nause: Where's he gone?

Aggie: Back on air in ten seconds.

Nause: Welcome back to Double Spin Quiz. Now there's been a dramatic development, folks. Wayne Slade of the footballers' team has been taken unfortunately ill and so, according to the rules, his team is disqualified. Sorry, boss, the red card for you. It's terribly hard luck, but here is your consolation prize of a Satellite Network ballpoint and one dozen bars of Angel Moments the sweet you can't eat between meals. (*He shakes BRENT by the hand and shows him out*) Give him a big hand, folks. And now, on with the show. Spin! (*The wheel stops on 2, rather firmly*). Two! It's the military again. Lucky, lucky, lucky! What are you planning to do with the blessing, if you should win?

Major: Military secret, I'm afraid, old boy.

Nause: Great, super. Right, difficulty it's 2! What sport do they play at Hurlingham?

Major: Well, that's easy. Polo. Played there myself a few times, I can tell you.

Nause: Two points to the army. The church yet to score! Spin! (*The wheel spins and stops on 2 again*). Two again! This is sensational! Spin again! One! What is the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street?

Major: He can't mean my mother-in-law, can he?

Capt: The Bank of England.

Nause: Right. Scores, Aggie?

Aggie: Major Overkill and Captain Bligh 3 points, Ian and Peter no points, the Jollys no points and one life lost.

Nause: All right. Spin that wheel. (*The wheel stops firmly on 2 Ian and Peter look at each other and then both point at the wheel which starts moving again, coming to rest on 4*). Well, how odd. However, it seems to have stopped now. Spin the other! (*It stops on 3*). Third degree of difficulty. Wow! Can they handle it? What was the name of the horse belonging to Philip of Macedon's son?

Ian: Who the heck was Philip of Macedon's son when he was at home?

Peter: Alexander the Great. I know him quite well.

Ian: Well, what was his horse called?

Peter: Um, er, Red Rum no, Black Bess, no I know Bucephalis.

Nause: (*not happy*). Yes, three points. Into joint lead! Spin again!

Major: What went wrong, Bligh?

Capt: Can't think, sir. Signals said it couldn't fail.

Major: Well, wind the power up a bit.

Capt: Yes, sir, but it'll take a minute.

Peter: I'm rather sorry for the Jollys.

Ian: Are you? I'm not. It's against regulations.

Peter: Let's see where it stops.

Nause: Number one at last. It's Doris and Jim and your degree of difficulty is three. Oh dear, never mind. Here goes Who broke David Hemery's 22 year old hurdles record at the 1990 European Championships? I say what a stinker!

Mrs. J: Well, I don't know, I'm sure, Mr. Jolly and I don't agree with sport.

Mr. J: I was never any good you see, neither was Mrs. Jolly and it never did us any harm.

Nause: Is that a "don't know"?

Mrs. J: Yes, Nause, we don't know.

Mr. J: No, we don't know.

Nause: Hard luck, my loves, aren't they just wonderful people? Two lives lost I'm afraid. You must get the next one right.

Ian: Want to bet they don't

Major: Ready with that thing yet, Bligh?

Capt: Nearly, Major Overkill. (*The wheel spins and comes up on 1 after a wave by IAN*).

Nause: One again! We wait. (*It spins again and IAN makes it stop at 5*) Oh no, it's 5. And your question is: What is the square root of 2079? I'll give you a moment.

Mr.J: Well, that's a poser, isn't it Mrs. Jolly?

Mrs. J: Yes, my dear. I don't know anything about trees.

Ian: These guys aren't real I wouldn't like to meet the people they beat to get here.

Peter: Hard luck getting a 5, wasn't it?

Ian: Not specially. I stopped it.

Peter: You shouldn't have done that.

Ian: Why not? They're pathetic. We want to win, don't we? Let's get rid of the opposition.

Mrs.J: We don't know, Nause. We think it's something to do with numbers.

Ian: Brilliant! The brain cells are still holding hands.

Nause: I'm so sorry, but I'm afraid time's up. We have to lose you, but you take with you Double Spin Quiz Pens and a box of Angel moment bars.

Ian: The sweet you can't eat at any time.

Dot: Sshh

Nause: Let's have a round of applause for the two unlucky players. Now, time is running out. Score please, Aggie.

Aggie: Ian and Peter 3 points, Major Overkill and Captain Bligh, 3 points.

Nause: And how long do we have?

Aggie: Time for one more question, Nause.

Nause: So, this is the crunch moment. Both teams need to win to win our star prize, an angel's blessing, brought to them courtesy of our sponsor. Spin! (*The wheel spins, stops on 2, firmly*). Number 2! What (*The wheel now moves on and stops on 4*). It's number 4! (*The wheel turns slowly back to 2, then to 4, then to 2 and so on. Eventually it flies off*). Well, folks, I've never seen that before. It's unbelievable. Right, I'll ask a question and the first team to put up their hand gets the question. If the answer is wrong, the points go to the other side. This is thrilling but before we ask the vital question, we'll take a short break. See you in just a minute when we'll play, Double Spin Quiz! What's happened to that damned wheel, Crikey?

Crikey: It's like bust, man.

Nause: I know that, you idiot. But why did it go backwards and forwards all the time?

Crikey: Weird. Funny place, man.

Capt: How are we going to answer, sir? We can't get a 5-question right.

Major: Oh, can't we, Bligh? Sandhurst men can do anything. I have this (*He indicates an ear plug*). It is linked to the British Museum. I think we'll get our answer.

Ian: They're cheating.

Peter: Well, so are we.

Ian: Yes, but now they're cheating more. He's pretending to be using a hearing aid and it's a radio.

Peter: Oh dear.

Ian: Never mind oh dear. I'll get on his wavelength, just you see.

Dot: Getting a picture of that one yet, Ollie?

Crikey: Like just a hole in the air, man. Superincredible.

Dot: Well, if he is our angel, it's not going to make much of a picture, is it, when our gallant winner goes to collect his reward. The camera won't show anything. We may need a substitute.

Aggie: 10 seconds!

Nause: Right, seconds out. Let's wrap this up. Welcome back, viewers, to the climax of our show. The final question is about to be asked. It is a 5 difficulty question. Contestants ready? Here we go then: It is a five part

question and every part has to be correct. Understood? Name five conspirators against Julius Caesar!

Capt: Anything coming through sir?

Major: Not yet, Bligh. This Julius Caesar was some sort of Italian chappie, wasn't he? Never heard of one of them being bumped off, too far away from the action.

Peter: What's the answer, Ian?

Ian: I seem to remember Brutus was one, wasn't he?

Peter: Oh, yes and Cassius and and

Ian: Looks as if their answer is coming through.

Major: We've got it, Question Master.

Nause: The army's got it. O.K., Major. Go ahead. For the big prize, give us the five conspirators.

Major: Casca, Brutus. *(Suddenly his earpiece goes dead. He shakes it).*

Nause: I must hurry you *(Suddenly the message seems to be coming through again).*

Major: Winnie the Pooh oh, no, no.

Nause: I'm afraid I must accept your first answer and Winnie the Pooh was definitely innocent, I'm afraid.

Major: Curses. What did they say that for?

Nause: So, I pass the question over to Peter and Ian. Can you supply the other 3?

Peter: Cassius

Nause: Yes?

Ian: *(suddenly).* Trebonius.

Nause: We must have one more. I must hurry you.

Ian: I think I've met him, so he must be a sinner.

Nause: Cinna! Yes, quite correct. Peter and Ian are the winners! So, viewers, we have the two who, very appropriately, will receive the angel of St. Graham's blessing at ten o'clock tonight. Be with us then and remember, this show was brought to you by Angel Moments, the sweet you can't eat between meals. But from Double Spin Quiz and your host, Nause Gleanworld, goodbye. Right, cut. Well, how you two little monsters won, I'll never know. Here, *(to IAN)* have an Angel Moment.

Ian: No thanks. Have one of mine.

(NAUSE takes it, puts it in his mouth and gives a yell and rushes out).

SCENE 6

(Later. Enter ABBOT, BR. ALOYSIUS and DOT. BR. JOHN is tidying up behind).

Dot: So you see, Abbot, we have reason to believe that this 'Angel' is Brother Ian.

Abbot: I can hardly believe it. Why should an angel disguise himself as a boy, and a novice at that?

Dot: I don't know but there can't be any other explanation. Why else would he not show up in a camera? He is supernatural.

Br. Aloysius: Well, I suppose we shall find out soon. It's only an hour to go.

Abbot: Find out, Brother Aloysius. Oh that will not suffice at all. We want to be in a position to gain the blessing, if one is being handed out.

Aloy: But surely, that objectionable boy, Peter, was the other winner. Ian is hardly likely to bless himself, so it will all go to the wretched boy, Peter.

Dot: Speaking for Satellite Network, we want to be sure that the angel, whoever it might be, does its work on time in front of camera.

Abbot: But you say that it doesn't show up on your film. How are you going to overcome that?

Dot: Angels can do anything, can't they? Let's have him in and persuade him that it is in everyone's best interests to stick to the plot.

Abbot: Very well, but I am the one who should receive the blessing. It is my abbey and the angel obviously wants to go to the top. Hey, you old fool, go and tell the novice Ian to come here.

Br. John: Tell? Father Abbot?

Abbot: Oh, all right then, ask him. Well, hurry up.

Br. John: Excuse me, Miss Dorothy, but I don't think Brother Ian is an angel, you know.

Dot: Oh, why not?

John: Well, you should see what he's like in the kitchen. He told

Abbot: Stop rabbiting on, you old idiot. Do as you were told.

John: Yes, Father Abbot. At once.

(He exits).

Abbot: He'll have to go. He gets the best of the kitchen scraps, and he rewards us with rebellion.

Aloy: I'll make sure he leaves, Father Abbot.

Abbot: Do that.

(Enter IAN and JOHN).

Ian: I understand you wish to see me, Father.

Abbot: Er yes, Brother. Miss Blissington Marchbanks wants to have a few words, with my approval, I might say.

Dot: Yes, Ian. Now, let's not beat about the bush. You are an angel.

Ian: Oh, am I? Head Office won't like this. What have I done to make you say that, then?

Dot: It's more what you haven't done, Ian. You see you don't appear on our television camera. Therefore, you must be the angel. Everyone else shows up.

Ian: Oh

Abbot: Well, what do you say?

Ian: I didn't know I was in "stealth" mode. I admit it. I am an angel.

Dot: I knew it!

Aloy: The thing is, we want to arrange the blessing properly.

Dot: Satellite Network have gone to a lot of trouble to set this project up and we want it to go smoothly. Firstly, can you make yourself visible?

Ian: Yes.

Abbot: We have decided that Peter is not suitable for a blessing.

Aloy: The network are going to disqualify him from his prize because you helped him. We want you to bless Father Abbot.

Ian: Great idea. Looks like he could do with it.

Abbot: Good, that's settled then.

Ian: Yes. (That's what you think, buddy). No problem.

Dot: Right. When 10 o'clock strikes, we want you to appear in that window. You enter, pronounce a blessing on the Abbot, who will be here, smile at the camera and leave the rest to us.

Ian: Don't you want me to endorse Angel Moments or something like that. Help sales, wouldn't it?

Dot: Well, if you could, that would be fantastic. Are you sure er you know who wouldn't mind?

Ian: Oh, no. I know who wouldn't mind at all.

Dot: Right. Well, if you would come with me, I will show you how we plan to do it exactly.

Abbot: Ian, my good friend. I do hope you tell them where you came from, that I deserve to join you, in time.

Ian: Oh, I'll do that all right. I never met anyone so deserving.

(He and DOT exeunt).

Abbot: This is all very satisfactory, Brother Aloysius. One could say that things are turning out well. We have the Television Company's money to make improvements to my living quarters and make a few adjustments to yours. We are going to be famous. I'm getting a blessing and I've been promised a place in paradise. Not bad for an evening's work, eh?

Aloy: No indeed, Father Abbot.

(The door opens and ANNIE appears).

Annie: Good evening. I'm looking for Brother Peter.

Abbot: Brother Peter is a novice. He isn't allowed visitors, especially

Annie: female visitors. Well, I much regret that I haven't time to argue with chauvinists. I'm a busy er person.

Abbot: I'm afraid

Annie: you must insist. Quite. Well, in that case, I'll just have to put you both to sleep.

Aloy: What did you say?

(ANNIE puts them to sleep with a wave of the hand and goes to the door and calls).

Annie: Peter! Peter!

(PETER comes in).

Peter: Hello, Annie. What are you doing here?

Annie: Keeping an eye on you for the board of Archangels. And what do I find? You taking part in a quiz show. What the Archangels would have said if they'd seen the programme, I dread to think. Fortunately for you they were watching 'Neighbours'.

Peter: I was volunteered for it. I couldn't avoid it without blowing my cover.

Annie: Who volunteered you?

Peter: Ian. He's meant to be another novice, but I think he's from our department.

Annie: Well, I can assure you he's not.

Peter: Where is he

Annie: From the opposition, I'm afraid. This could be serious.

Peter: Well, at 10 o'clock I'm supposed to be popping out like a cuckoo from a clock to bless someone. Heaven knows who. Most of the people in this place are sadists. That awful T.V. Company seem to think that the angel has been hired by them.

Annie: We'd better go somewhere quiet and discuss the options. Come on.

(They exeunt. The ABBOT and BR. ALOYSIUS wake up just as MAGGIE comes in).

Maggie: I wish to speak to Brother Ian.

Abbot: Ian? I thought you said Peter, just now.

Maggie: Peter? Never heard of him. I want to see Ian, Friar Tuck!

Abbot: We just explained to you that novices do not receive visitors, of either sex and especially not of the female persuasion.

Maggie: No you didn't.

Aloy: Didn't what?

Maggie: Explain anything to me. Anyway, I couldn't care less. *(She waves her hand and they are asleep again).* Right, now to find Ian and see what's going on.

(Enter IAN and DOT).

Maggie: Ian. We must have words!

Ian: Well, I'll have to ask my agent. *(He points to DOT).* Do you think I should talk to anyone?

Maggie: What is all this nonsense? My department have instructions to keep you under surveillance and report back. At the moment that report could be really GOOD.

Ian: Oh, sorry, Maggie, just joking. But seriously I am a bit busy just now. I've promised to do a bit of blessing at 10 o'clock.

Maggie: Blessing! Blessing!

Ian: Yes, Maggie, as the ANGEL OF ST.GRAHAM'S, I shall be busy for a bit. Perhaps you would make an appointment to see me afterwards.

Maggie: Appointment! Listen, sonny, I'll make an appointment for you and you'd better bring your shovel and don't arrange any social events for about a thousand years!

(She storms out).

Ian: Oh dear, do you think she was annoyed?

Dot: Well, I don't know her usual behaviour, but I'd say yes, probably. Who is she anyway? -

Ian: Oh, she's from Head Office. I shouldn't have upset her.

Dot: Well, never mind her. You're all, right for 10 o'clock?

Ian: Yes.

Dot: All right. I'll see you soon, then.

(She exits. Re-enter ANNIE. IAN thinks it is MAGGIE).

Ian: Oh, Maggie.

Annie: You're sorry. All right.

Ian: Yes, but I had to make it look good for her. She thinks I'm the angel, you see.

Annie: Does she indeed. And how are you going to take advantage of that?

Ian: Well, I'm going to arrive at 10 o'clock, pretend to bless the Abbot and then tell everyone to buy their disgusting chocolate bar. This will prove I'm really devilish because the blessing won't work, of course, and I shall say the chocolate is awful and no-one will believe in angels afterwards.

Annie: What if a real angel turns up?

Ian: Oh it won't. Dot as good as told me the whole thing was a publicity stunt for Satellite Network.

Annie: Sounds a BAD scheme. The bosses should be pleased. Well, you go and get ready. I've got a bit to do here.

Ian: Righto. *(Exits).*

Annie: So that's the ploy, is it, young Ian. Well we'll see, won't we? *(As an afterthought she snaps her fingers at the MONKS who wake up).* Bye!

SCENE 7

Storyteller: So as the hands of the sundial slowly creep round to 10 o'clock on the tenth day of the tenth month, excitement grips the ancient abbey.

(Enter BR. JOHN, yawning. He does a little gentle dusting).

Storyteller: Yes. well. The question is, is it all true? The millions gathered round their television sets will soon know. Will it be a real angel from Heaven? Is it all a television stunt? Will Brother John stay awake long enough to find out? Well, we shall soon know.

(Enter DOT, microphone in hand. CRIKEY follows).

Dot: That's where it will appear, Ollie. I shall stand here and make the introductions. Have you finished yet?

Br. John: Oh yes, I was just making sure it was all smart for the angel. He is a messenger from our Lord, you see.

Dot: Don't start bringing religion into it, for goodness sake, let's keep this purely commercial.

Br. John: I don't think a real angel would make an agreement with a television company, do you?

Dot: Sure, if the money's right. Anyway, the deal's done, so that answers you, old man.

John: Oh yes, to be sure, well that's that then, I must go and start preparing the vegetables. I am not allowed to be here, unfortunately.

Dot: Too bad. Well, don't let us keep you if you're busy.

(Enter ABBOT).

Abbot: Where shall I stand? *(to Br. JOHN).* Go away, don't want you spoiling the picture.

Dot: If you go over there, the camera will be here. All right Ollie?

Crikey: O.K., man. Wicked!

(Enter MAJOR O. and CAPTAIN B.).

Dot: Over there, please gentlemen.

Major: If it hadn't been for your bungling, we'd have been over there. I shan't forget this, Bligh.

Capt: *(miserably).* No sir, I'm sure you won't, sir.

(Enter MR. and MRS. JOLLY).

Mrs. J: Oh, we're over here. Isn't that nice.

Mr. J: Very nice, dear.

Mrs. J: It's nice when things are nice, isn't it my dear?

Mr. J: Very nice, dearest.

(Enter BRENT TROTTER and WAYNE SLADE).

Brent: If you hadn't got the red card, we'd have got a result here, you know.

Wayne: Sorry, boss. I'm not too strong on the brainpower, at times.

Brent: Oh, what times are you strong, then?

Wayne: Well, I think with my feet really.

Brent: That, son, is why we're at the bottom of the Vauxhall Conference not at the

top of Division One.

(Enter COOK and BR. ALOYSIUS).

Br. Aloy: This is a great honour for the Abbey, brother Cook.

Cook: So you say, Brother. Personally I don't believe in angels. I believe in potatoes and turnips. I can see them. I can't think what an angel would be doing here.

Aloy: Well, between you and me, this isn't going to be a real angel. The T.V. Company have got an actor of some sort.

Cook: I knew it!

(Enter NAUSE).

Nause: Well, if it isn't Satellite Network's favourite anchor-person, Dorothy. If I may say so, you're looking fairly wonderful.

Dot: You can say anything you like, Nause, darling, no-one takes any notice of you at the network, do they? Right, everyone. Counting. 5, 4, 3, 2, Action. Roll. Good evening. This is Dorothy Blissington Marchbanks for Satellite Network Television, bringing you a true - Angel Moment. In a few minutes, at exactly 10 o'clock, that door will open and an angel will step into this very room. Yes, a real angel. It brings a blessing, but for whom? There have been sensational developments since this evening's quiz to decide the blessee. It was to have been the two novice monks, Ian and Peter, but they have been disqualified in a Network enquiry. So, who will it be? Will it be the Army team, Aldershot's finest, Major Overkill and Captain Bligh? or perhaps Mr. and Mrs. Jolly, that delightfully charismatic couple from downtown Milton Keynes? Perhaps the footballers from the Tyne will get their hearts' desire to see the green stripes at Wembley, instead of behind the pigeon sheds in suburban Newcastle who knows? Will the blessing of Heaven descend upon this holy abbey with its philanthropic Abbot and his cheerful brothers in Christ? Maybe. But the hour is approaching. Listen.

(Ten o'clock starts to strike as MAGGIE comes in from one side, ANNIE from the other, with PETER. At the end of the ten, there is a pause, then the window flies open to reveal BATHAN, a full-grown devil).

Bathan: So! This is the dross of humanity that craves a blessing! Look at you, the sweepings of the back streets of the city of greed.

Dot: *(shaken).* But, you you're not the angel.

Bathan: Oh, yes, I am, an angel of death. Ha! Ha! Ha!

Dot: But Ian; where is Ian?

Bathan: Ian! Ian is an imp. He is IMPotent. I am a serious devil, not an apprentice. Nothing is too bad for the media. You want the organ grinder not his monkey!

(IAN enters, flustered).

Ian: I heard that! I was doing some real bad here and you've grabbed all the attention.

Bathan: Silence, fool. I, Bathan, am here. Watch and learn.

Peter: Who is this prat, Ian?

Ian: One of the leading devils, Bathan. He's so awful, some of the others have noticed.

Dot: Well, viewers, this is an unexpected turn of events. Sir, who have you selected for blessing?

Bathan: Everyone! All of you will receive a blessing. It's bargain day for blessings. Grab all you want. You. *(indicating WAYNE)*. What does your mean little heart desire?

Wayne: Well, boss, at the end of the day, I mean, you know what I mean? I'd be over the moon to make it to the fourth division.

Bathan: Fourth division! You mannikin. I'd be sick as a parrot not to make it to the Premiership. Ask something worthwhile, worm.

Wayne: Oh, well, Premiership, if you say so.

Bathan: Of course I say so, but first the team must sack the manager. I'll appoint one.

Wayne: Premiership. We'll sack him.

(During this scene BATHAN hands out suitable hats for the jobs).

Bathan: Excellent. I see hope for you. See how easy it is. *(Indicates MR. JOLLY)*. What is your heart's desire, boring little person?

Mr. J: Oh, well, I mean to say, I don't quite think

Bathan: You desire money, a Ferrari, holidays in the South of France, taken perhaps with that Miss Sayer from the typing pool no?

Mrs. J: Who is Miss Sayer, Jim?

Mr.J: Oh mind your own business, Doris!

Bathan: And you, pretend soldier, what do you wish? Perhaps to be a colonel.

Capt: Well, that would be rather nice.

Major: This is mutiny, Bligh!

Bathan: You shall have it, Colonel Bligh.

Major: I forbid you to accept. The staff college would never agree to you being superior to me.

Capt: Be quiet, Overkill. I give the orders now.

Bathan: Who else?

All: Me! Me!

Bathan: Oh, this is good. You (*indicates ALOYSIUS*). You can be Archbishop. Nice to have another one on our side.

Abbot: I protest. It's not fair. I want to be Archbishop. I'm senior here.

Aloy: Well you can't be. He's given it to me. So there!

(ABBOT snatches mitre from ALOYSIUS and a scuffle breaks out).

Bathan: (*to MAJOR O.*) You can be a General.

Major: A word with you, Captain.

Dot: Well, viewers, I don't quite know what is happening. It seems that the Angel we all expected has turned out rather differently.

Bathan: Silence, woman. This is MY party! Everyone, everyone, can have whatever they desire. (*to CRIKEY*). Take over the Network. (*to COOK*). Take over the Dorchester kitchens. And you, Gleamworld, sickening as you are, you're my kind of person. You can go on doing what you do so well, encouraging greed and envy. All you have to do is vote for the Devil. That's not so hard is it?

Mrs J: Well, I don't know what the WI would say

Bathan: Here. All for you! For my friends! (*He flings a huge pile of paper money in the air*). Help yourselves. (*Suddenly he looks round in alarm*). I smell goodness. It can't be any of you lot, surely. (*PETER and ANNIE come forward*). You! You work for the lot upstairs. Listen, sonny. How about joining us. It's much more fun, the pay is good and the hours are just great. Bathan offers you power!

Peter: Sounds all right, doesn't it Annie. (*to BATHAN*). Where's Ian by the way?

Bathan: Oh, him. (*reaches behind and pulls him in*). He was IMPOSSIBLE. He's going to be fired. Rather literally, I'm happy to say. I enjoy a good eternal roasting. Saves fuel too. He couldn't handle being properly evil, you see he didn't want to use power like mine.

Peter: Oh, you mean like this. (*He flings waves of invisible energy at BATHAN, who wilts at first and then comes back, fighting*).

Bathan: Not good enough, angel, not good enough.

Annie: Go on, Peter, you can do it. Go for it!

Peter: He called me an angel! Did you hear that, Annie? I'm a real angel. O.K.

Overdrive!

(More zapping and BATHAN is defeated).

Bathan: All right. You win, angel. But don't think these people will thank you. They're mine. They want power, money, position. They won't go with you. AAAAAAH!

(Exit BATHAN, crushed).

Crikey: Like zapped, man.

(The PEOPLE start to get up, looking a bit shame-faced).

Dot: You. You were the angel all the time.

Peter: Yep!

Dot: So we have another twist in this astonishing tale. It seems that this young novice was the angel all along. So, let us see who will receive the blessing promised by legend.

Abbot: What about the job of Archbishop. Do I get it or not?

Wayne: Yeah. What about the Premiership? When do we start to move up? -

Major: He promised me I could be a general.

Peter: Oh, be quiet all of you. There's only one person on this place worthy of a blessing. The rest of you are greedy, self-seekers or bullies exploiting your positions. The blessing goes to

All: Yes?

Peter: Brother John, of course. Annie, will you call him? *(ANNIE gets JOHN)*. Brother John, using the powers invested in me by the Board of Archangels, I solemnly offer you a blessing from Heaven.

John: Oh, Peter, there must be someone more deserving.

Peter: No-one. You will take over as Abbot of St. Graham's, to the infinite benefit of all in the order. Bless you.

Dot: Viewers this is the most incredible moment. For the first time in history, you are watching an angel blessing a human being on Earth. Remember who brought this to your screens Angel Moments.

Peter: They didn't

Dot: Didn't what?

Peter: Bring it to their screens. *(He takes off the lens cap)*. Here.

Dot: *(to CRIKEY)* You stupid, moronic excuse for a half-witted clown!

Crikey: Too cool, man, seriously cool.

Abbot: This is outrageous. I most strongly protest at your behaviour. I shall speak to your superior.

Peter: Yes, you should do that. It's been a while since you did. Well, I have to fly. *(suddenly)*. Ian, are you going my way? You have no talent for this devil-business, you know.

Ian: I think I might, if you'll have me. I don't seem to be bad enough to make the grade.

Maggie: Oy, Junior. How dare you throw away all that expensive education. How can you expect to get on in death if you work for the other side?

Ian: Well, I'm tired of working for losers. Look what happened to Bathan just now. I'm going to join the winning team. Sweet, Maggie? *(offers her a bag)*.

Maggie: Oh, you you little goodie, goodie. I hope you come crawling back. I can think up some hell for you.

Peter: Oh, go away. *(zaps her)*. Any of you lot coming our way?

(No-one moves. They start to drift across the stage away from PETER).

Maggie: We won that lot, see?

Annie: Rubbish, you had them already.

Brother John: Come on, all of you. Can't you see that we have all received a blessing here tonight. We have seen the power of evil defeated by good. We have all been exposed to soft rewards without effort. Does any one of you believe that the devil's promises will come true? When did the Devil ever keep his word?

Nause: The old gentleman's right, We've been greedy and blind.

Dot: You have, darling.

Nause: Right. Point taken. But no-one has done any better. Let's all do something sensible for once.

Major: Right! All those in favour over here. Move! *(They all cross back to PETER)*.

Peter: Great. Thanks, Mr. Gleamworld, and thank you, Brother John. I think you're going to make a very good Abbot. Time to be going. Well done all of you. See you later!

Storyteller: So, there it was. A whole monastery full of lost souls converted at the stroke of ten well, soon after, anyway. All those people saved by a whisker from Satan's wiles. But keep your eyes open he is still out there believe me. *(Lights fade)*.

CURTAIN

