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The Bishop's Wife

By Robert E. Sherwood

Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King
Peace on earth and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled
Joyful, all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
With th'angelic host proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem
Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King
Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace
Hail the Sun of Righteousness
Light and life to all He brings
Ris'n with healing in His wings...
- Oh. This is very kind of you.
- It's a privilege.
- Which way are you going?
- Over there. The Mutual Building.
- My doctor is in there. I have hopes.
- Fine.
- I'm all right now.
- Good luck to you.
- Thank you. Merry Christmas to you.
- Merry Christmas.
Mother, please lift me up! Please.
All right then. Just for a minute.
Look at that doll. Look at
the funny choo-choo train.
Come on now, darling. We have to go.
Oh, my baby! Oh, my baby!
Oh, my baby. Oh, you saved her.
Oh, thank God you saved my
baby. How can I ever thank you?
- Don't try. Just don't let it happen
again. - I promise I won't.
- Remember that. Now on your way.
- Yes.
It closely resembles its noble cousin
- the California red fir.
It's botanically dissimilar.
Pay me heed, Maggenti.
This is a specimen of the white fir
- Abies concolor.
Surely you, a native

Roman, know your Latin?

You wanna buy or not?

- Well, if it isn't my dear, beautiful

Julia. - Hello, Professor.

- What are you doing in this part of town?

- Buying a Christmas tree.

- Hello, Mr Maggenti.

- Mrs Brougham.

How much do you charge
for this miserable weed?

- \$1.85. - \$1.85! For
this half-hearted twig?

I shall pay you ten cents a
branch or take my trade elsewhere.

- What can I do for you, Mrs Brougham?

- You can save me that tree.

- The big one right by the door.

- OK.

Every Christmas for the past 18 years,
Maggenti and I have been
re-enacting the same argument.

I didn't know you celebrated Christmas.

I thought you had no religion.

That's true, my dear, but I
like to have a Christmas tree
because it reminds me of my childhood.
I feel, for some reason, that this is a
good time of year for looking backwards.

Can you imagine me ever
having been a child?

How's Henry? I haven't
seen him for some time.

Oh, he's well, thank you.

He's terribly tired and worried.

Is he having difficulty
raising money for the cathedral?

Yes. It's slow work.

- How's your book coming?

- Oh, splendidly.

Greatest history of Rome since Gibbon.

But, of course, nobody will read it.

Now, my good man, I do not choose to
prolong this tawdry bickering any further.

All right. Ten cents a branch.

- It's \$1.40.

- Very well, my venal friend.

Here is your blood money.

Mr Maggenti, will you send
the tree up on Christmas Eve?

- But I don't want my daughter to see it.

- Don't worry.

I send it when the bambino
goes to bed. Merry Christmas.

- Merry Christmas!

- Merry Christmas! Come on.

There's something I'd like you to
give Henry for his cathedral fund.

That has been my lucky piece - not that
it's brought me luck, except knowing you.

It's an old Roman coin. I picked it up
years ago in Brindisi. It has little value.

- It's a wonderful contribution.

- Nonsense.

It might be called the "widow's mite" if it
weren't for the fact that I'm not a widow.

Why, Julia, this is
no occasion for tears.

It's stopped snowing.

If only we could spend Christmas
back here where we were so happy.

- With you and all of our old friends.

- Now, now, now.

Good night, Professor. I'll
see you again very soon.

It can't be soon enough.

Good night, Julia.

Why, Professor! How fine to see you again
after all these years. How well you look.

- How are you?

- Never better. And you?

Quite well also, thank you.

- I don't think you remember me.

- Of course I do. Where did we meet?

- Professor, after all these years...

- Just a moment.

- It wasn't Vienna, was it?

- Beautiful old Vienna.

The university. When I was

lecturing there on Roman history.
And what great lectures they were. And
what a one you were with the ladies.
Fancy you remembering that.

- I must confess, I had my moments.
- And still have.
- Where are you going?
- That car.

I couldn't help noticing your
tender parting from Julia.

- You know Julia?
- In a way, yes.
- Poor child.
- She's unhappy?
- When were you in Vienna?
- Oh, I've been there many times.

I'm interested in Julia and Henry.
What seems to be their trouble?

I never see Henry any more. He
has no time for riffraff like me.
He now consorts with the
vulgar rich, like Mrs Hamilton.
You know she had me fired from the
university here? Said I was a radical.
I, who have never taken any interest
in politics since the death of Nero.

Look at that. Henry's old
church, perishing from neglect.

- It's such a nice little church.
- Too little, I'm afraid.

It can't stand up against
the march of progress.

Well, I must be pushing on.

- Delighted to have seen you.
- A pleasure.

We must have a drink to
those old days in Vienna.

By all means!

- Good evening, Professor.
- Oh, Pat?

Have you any idea who that man is?

No. He's a stranger to me.

- Good evening.
- Good evening, Matilda. Hello, Queenie.

- Is Debby in bed yet?

- Yes, ma'am.

Mrs Hamilton and the committee
are in there with the bishop.

The dinner's been waiting a long time.

We didn't know what to do about it.

- We'll have dinner as soon as they leave.

- But what about the chicken?

Don't worry about it,

Matilda, please. Thank you.

Oh, Matilda. My bag.

Thank you.

Oh, I'm terribly sorry I'm so late.

Good evening, Mrs Hamilton. I
was delayed Christmas shopping.

Good evening, Mr Perry, Mrs
Trumbull. Hello, Mrs Ward.

I hope you've been

having a good meeting.

We have not. I've never in my life
encountered such fuzzy thinking.

- Do you think we've made any progress?

- No.

- Mr Perry was about to tell us something.

- Merely a suggestion.

If Mrs Hamilton approves,

we can place the George B Hamilton
Memorial Chapel here on the north-east.

It will be out of sight

there. I won't stand for it.

Mrs Hamilton, this cathedral cannot be
designed for the glory of an individual.

- It has to be created for all the people.

- I'm very displeased at your attitude.

I was instrumental in making you Bishop,
although others thought you too young.

- Is that an exaggeration?

- Oh, yes, Mrs... I mean, no.

- You were the guiding spirit.

- I distinctly remember...

I had confidence in you when you were
a poor little parson in the slums.

I confess my confidence is weakened.

I regret I've been a disappointment.

Regrets are no good whatsoever.
You give me the impression of being
confused, indecisive and ineffectual.
That is not the kind of
leadership we expect of our bishop.
You'd better remember one thing.
You will build that cathedral as I
want it or you will not build it at all.
That's all I have to say.

- Someone get this dog out of the way.

- Julia?

Queenie.

- Goodbye, Mrs Hamilton.

- Good evening, Mrs Brougham.

- Good evening, Mrs Brougham.

- Good evening, Mrs Brougham.

- Can we serve dinner now?

- Yes, Matilda.

- The chicken will be burned to a crisp.

- We'll be right in.

Julia, you knew Mrs Hamilton
was expected this afternoon.

I know, Henry. I'm sorry I was late.

What a ghastly afternoon.

What a ghastly woman.

I have no intention of being
strangled by her purse strings.

I was proud of you.

I had a most un-Christian impulse to give
her a good whack over the... mink coat.

I thought you stood up
to her magnificently.

I appreciate your appreciation
but what about my cathedral?

May I make a suggestion, Henry?

Why not postpone the
cathedral till after Christmas?

Impossible. The House of God can't
be put off. This cathedral must rise.

Plenty of rich people
in this town. I'll have
to take advantage of
their Yuletide spirit.

I can see it all now.

The McWhirters, the Hornes, the Van Deusens, the lunches, the meetings and you there flattering them.

- Kowtowing to them, begging.

- It's got to be done.

Oh, Henry. If you could see your poor harassed face.

- You haven't done very much to help it.

- Miss Cassaway, what is it?

- Mr Trevor on the phone, Bishop.

- Tell him the bishop will call him back.

Yes, Mrs Brougham.

Henry, what's happened to you?

What's happened to our marriage?

We used to have such fun, you and Debby and I.

We used to be happy and make other people happy.

Henry, that was your gift.

You're no financier or promoter.

Julia, I want this cathedral to stand like a great beacon. I want its light...

Oh, never mind. Keep that for your next committee meeting.

- Here's a contribution I collected.

- What's that?

It's an old Roman coin. Professor Wutheridge sent it. Wasn't that sweet?

Old fool. What does he think I can do with that?

Well, it's a beginning.

Now all you need is another four million.

Julia, don't be flippant about this!

- Is dinner ready?

- Yes.

Let's go in and get it over with. I have a lot of work to do.

For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful. Amen.

- Julia?

- Yes?

I was just thinking... tomorrow maybe we could go out together.

Where?

Well, just walk around
the way we used to.

We could go and call on the professor,
go to the park and watch the skaters
- that sort of thing.

Maybe we could have lunch together.

At Michel's. Do you remember that?

Michel's. Oh, it's been
years since we've been there.

Forgive me. I've been trying
to explain to Mr Trevor,
but he insists upon speaking
to you personally, Bishop.

Excuse me, darling.

Matilda, keep the soup warm. The
bishop's been called to the phone.

- And we'll be out for lunch tomorrow.

- Yes, ma'am.

Of course, Mr Trevor. Yes, but...

I appreciate your difficulties,
but... Very well. I'll be there.

10.30 tomorrow morning,

then on to the board meeting.

All right. Yes. Goodbye.

Mr Trevor's office, 10.30, then the board
meeting in the Banker's Club at eleven.

- Yes, sir. Tomorrow. Thursday.

- You might as well go home.

- But there's a great deal to do.

- You must be tired.

Thank you. Don't forget tomorrow
you speak at the Junior Assembly.

- What time is that?

- One o'clock.

You made the appointment
over a month ago.

- Good night, Bishop.

- Good night.

Oh, God, what am I to do?

Can't you help me? Can't you tell me?

Oh, God, please help me.

Yes?

- Good evening.

- Good eve...
- What can I do for you?
- That isn't the question.
Well, what is the...?
What can I do for you?
I must ask you to telephone my
secretary. I'm in the middle of dinner.
I know, Henry. Your soup will
keep warm. You asked for help.
I? I... Who told you I asked for help?
Well, you were known to be a good
man, Henry, and you were heard.
I was instructed to come
here in answer to your prayer.
- Who are you?
- I'm an angel.
- I beg your pardon?
- I'm an angel.
- No wings at the moment, but...
- You're an angel.
I knew it. I've been working too hard.
I understand, Henry. It's
hard to believe, even for you.
I'm not one of the
more important angels.
I just happen to be assigned
to this district temporarily.
You see, we're everywhere,
helping people who deserve to be...
...to be helped.
As you're walking through the city,
you may look into a strange face.
It may be the face of a murderer
or it may be the face of an angel.
You have some problems with
the building of this cathedral?
- Yes.
- It's a fine cathedral.
Ought to look magnificent up
there on top of Sanctuary Hill.
Well, Henry. Do you believe
I am what I say I am?
How can I? I've only
got your word for it.

But you're a bishop. You can trust the word of an angel.

I'd like to.

What do you propose to do?

- Perform a miracle?

- If necessary.

Why don't you? Create the cathedral with one wave of your hand.

- How would you explain it?

- Well, I...

Tell the world you're being visited by an angel?

You can't do that.

Henry, is anything wrong? I...

- Oh. I'm sorry. I didn't know you had...

- Julia. If you don't mind...

How do you do, Julia? I'm Dudley.

Henry is engaging me to help him with his work.

- You're going to be his assistant?

- That's it.

I'm going to help Henry to rest and get some relaxation.

- That's what I've been praying for.

- You too?

Henry. I'm so relieved. Isn't it wonderful you've found someone to help?

- Yes, but...

- Where do you come from?

- All around.

- Yes. But where?

Julia, to tell you the truth, he says that he's an a...

I've been doing some social service work down town.

Now you'll be with Henry permanently?

For as long as may be necessary.

Julia, if you don't mind. I must talk to this gentleman alone. I'll

see you in a moment.

We were just having

dinner. Won't you join us?

That's very kind of you, but I

have a number of things to do.

You can understand, Henry. So many people making mistakes.

- Yes. I see.

- Then we'll see you tomorrow?

- Oh, yes. Bright and early.

- Good.

Whenever you're ready,

Henry. Good night, Dudley.

Good night, Julia.

Are you sure you're an angel?

I know it isn't easy, but you've got to take me on faith.

- Yes, but for how long?

- For just long enough.

Until you can utter another prayer and say that you have no further need of me.

Then I'll be gone and forgotten.

But now Julia's waiting for you at the dining table. You must go to her.

Yes.

But I don't...

- Henry?

- Yes?

What's the rest of Dudley's name?

- I don't know.

- Oh.

Are you nervous, dear?

No.

- The bishop didn't eat his breakfast.

- No. He took only his prune juice.

Prune juice? Is he sick?

He looked perfectly awful. He said he had a very bad sleepless night.

Passing up a breakfast like that. It just ain't normal.

Nobody expects him to

be normal. He's a bishop.

- Could I get you something, sir?

- No, thank you, Matilda.

- Maybe just a cup of tea?

- Nothing, thank you.

- Good morning, Miss Cassaway.

- Good morning, Bishop.

Did anything come for
the Cathedral Fund?

Mr and Mrs J Thurston
Ward. No contribution.

- Mrs Gerald Wilmarth. \$15.
- 15? We had her down for ten thousand.

There's a letter
explaining that this year...

I know. The same letter they all write.
I've put your personal mail on the
desk. The rest I'm taking to the office.
I'll be there after the meetings.

Oh. Matilda, I think
there's someone at the door.

Yes, sir.

Good morning, Matilda. I'm
Dudley, the bishop's new assistant.

Good morning, Henry. I'm
afraid I'm a little late,
but I stopped to chat to a traffic
policeman who was worried about his wife.
Thank you, dear. So I directed the
traffic while he telephoned the hospital.

- I see.

- She's doing fine. So's the baby.

Why, you must be Mildred
Cassaway. How do you do?

- How do you do?

- We're going to be working together.

That's very nice. Oh, thank you.

- Thank you very much.

- See you later, Mildred.

Well. Ready for duty.

Completely at your service.

- No, no.

- I feel that...

No.

- Good morning, Julia.

- Good morning, Dudley. It's a lovely day.

- Lovely.

- Henry and I are going out.

- I'm sorry, but I have some appointments.

- You what?

There's Mr Trevor, then the board

meeting and the Junior Assembly.

- But, Henry, you promised.

- I know I did.

Well, Dudley could represent you
at those meetings, couldn't he?

Could I?

No. They expect me. It would never
do if I sent an a... assistant.

Excuse me.

Now...

Oh.

- The trouble is I can't explain.

- You needn't try to explain.

This is the way it is and
the way it will always be.

We've just got to get
used to it, that's all.

I'll tell Matilda she can have the
day off and I'll take care of Debby.

I see that Mrs George B
Hamilton has pledged \$1 million
- but has not yet sent her cheque.

- Never mind.

That's work for a bookkeeper, not
an ange... Work for a bookkeeper.

Aha. So you're beginning
to believe in me?

I don't know who you are, where
you came from or who sent you.

I just wish you'd make haste.

- Because the cathedral must be built?

- That's the most important thing.

Or because Julia must be happy?

It's going to be difficult to help
you until I'm sure what you want.

Well, I've got the...

Then there's... Oh.

Would you mind telling me
what you intend to do now?

This card index file is in an
awful mess. I'll reorganise it.

You're wasting time
on unimportant details.

Nothing's unimportant. We are

interested even in the lowliest sparrow.

- Hello, Debby.

- Are you Dudley?

- Yes. How did you know?

- Mummy told me.

She said you came to help Daddy.

- That's right.

- Mummy said you were very nice.

Well, that's extremely kind of Mummy.

Mummy said that maybe with you here

we will get to see Daddy sometimes.

- Maybe we will.

- That'll be enough out of you, Debby.

I asked Matilda to put

your lunch on a tray.

- Thank you, Julia. I'll get along very

well. - I'm sure you will. Come on.

- Goodbye, Dudley.

- Bye-bye, Debby.

- Goodbye.

- Bye.

Oh.

- Oh. Thank you, Matilda.

- Aren't you going to wear a hat?

- I never use one.

- It's very cold out.

- Oh, the cold never affects me.

- I think you should wear this.

I bought it for the bishop last

Christmas, but he's never worn it.

It's a lovely scarf. I'm sure the bishop
will appreciate it when he sees it on me.

- Thank you. Goodbye.

- Bye.

Goodbye.

- What's the matter, honey?

- They don't want me.

- Why not?

- I guess I'm too little or something.

Oh. Now, now.

Why, that's the most ridiculous
thing I've ever heard.

Why, Dudley.

Come on, Debby. We'll show

them how wrong they are.

Hey, fellas. Hey, fellas!

Who's the head man around here?

- I am.

- I am.

- What's the idea of this game?

- This isn't a game. This is a battle.

We attack the fort and

they try to defend it. See?

I see. Well, this young lady

would like to get into it.

- Who, her?

- She can't fight. Her father's a bishop.

What difference does it make? Are you

high-hat? You like her on your team?

She couldn't throw a snowball

as far as I could spit.

Oh, couldn't she? Come on, Debby.

You show them what you can do.

- But it's true. I can't throw.

- Nonsense. Of course you can.

Pack it tight, put it in that hand,

throw the arm back, aim it and let it go.

- Hey!

- Beautiful! A bullseye.

- She pitched a curve.

- Did you see that?

Come on, kid. You're in our

army. We've broken their morale.

Charge!

- Will she get hurt?

- Probably, but she'll love it.

- May I?

- Surely.

Dudley, what are you doing out here?

- I'm just admiring the scenery.

- But aren't you supposed to be working?

I always take a walk before lunch.

A good idea - relaxing.

Oh. I wish you could

persuade Henry to do that.

I'll try.

By the way, I told Miss Cassaway to go

home and Delia not to bring me a tray.

What will you do about lunch?
I thought I'd go to
Michel's. Ever heard of it?
Michel's. That's a lovely place.
We used to go there. That was years ago.
Well, how about you
and I going there today?
You and...? To Mich...?
Oh, no, I couldn't.
Why not? Surely you don't
think Henry would mind?
- I'd explain to him that we just...
- No, it isn't that, but...
Matilda's off Christmas shopping
so I have to look after Debby.
Well, here's Matilda now.
- Hello. If you wish... Oh, hello.
- Hello.
- If you wish, I'll take Debby home.
- But, Matilda, your shopping...
I finished it. I finished it so
quick it was just like a miracle.
Mummy! We won!
Oh, Debby, that's
wonderful! Congratulations.
- Come on! We're giving out the medals.
- Put up your hood, dear.
- Madam, welcome.
- Oh, Michel.
- It's been a long time.
- Much too long.
- But you know my husband's work.
- Yes.
He doesn't come to see us
any more, but we understand.
We understand. This way, please.
- Is this satisfactory, monsieur?
- Fine, thank you.
- Friends of yours?
- Yes.
They're members of the
Cathedral Committee.
- Madam. Monsieur.
- No, thank you, Michel.

Julia, don't bother
to look through that.
Michel, just bring us the
best lunch you can think of.
I see monsieur is a gourmet.
Perhaps you would be interested
in a guinea-hen la Michel?
- J'ai les truffles Franaises. Exquise!
- Je prfre les Italiennes.
Prfre les Italiennes? Quel sacrilge!
Please, Michel, let's
leave heaven out of this.
Je prfre les Italiennes surtout
pas de cayenne, du paprika.
Du paprika? Du paprika.
You speak French beautifully.
I've had quite a bit
of work to do in Paris.
- Dudley, I've been wondering about you.
- Wondering about me? Why?
You know so much. Makes
me feel uncomfortable.
Well, in that case, I'm
sorry I learned anything.
But I'm glad you knew about Michel.
Oh, it's so nice to be
back here again. So nice.
You have memories of this place, Julia?
- Did you and Henry come here often?
- Yes.
This is where we became
engaged to be married.
Ah. Then I can understand
why you love it.
- Oh, hello.
- Pardon me.
Thank you. What about that?
My. Would you care to
have your palm read?
Oh, no, thank you. Would you?
No, thanks. I know too
much about myself as it is.
You are different. I know
so little about myself.

Really? May I look at your hand?

- Can you do that too?
- It's not too difficult.
- You can read the future?
- Within limits.

He's holding her hand.

Well, what do you see?

Well, I never noticed.

Your eyes are green.

I see a great deal of happiness.

I see a woman who's adored.

I see a rich, full life.

- Do you see Henry's new cathedral?
- No. There's a fuzziness about that.
- Oh. And Debby?
- No need to worry about her.

Just thinking. The world changes
but two things remain constant.

- What?
- Youth and beauty.

They're really one and the same thing.

- Yes. The trouble is people grow old.
- Not everybody.

The only people who grow old
were born old to begin with.

You were born young.

You'll remain that way.

- Oh, I wish I could believe you.
- You may.

You haven't looked at my hand once.

I never know what to make of you. I never
know whether you're joking or serious.

I'm at my most serious when I'm joking.

Excuse me, Julia. Gotta
do something about that.

Do forgive me coming to your
table. My name is Dudley.

I believe you're all friends of
Julia's. Would you care to join us?

- Oh, no, thank you.
- Well, join us for some coffee?

How about that? Do come over.

Julia would be delighted.

- All right.

- Well, that'd be lovely.

- That's very nice.

- Just over here.

Hello, Mrs Caster. How
are you? Nice to see you.

Hello. How are you?

Michel, bring us three Benedictines.

- No, no. Make it three Stingers.

- Oui, monsieur.

Julia?

Julia!

Julia!

- Matilda, is lunch ready?

- We thought you were out for lunch.

I cancelled my appointment.

Is Mrs Brougham home?

- Debby's here, sir.

- And Mrs Brougham?

Why, sir, she went out
to lunch with Mr Dudley.

- With Dudley?

- Why, yes, sir.

I thought you knew, sir.

Yes, of course.

That's awful. Merry Christmas.

Santa Claus doesn't
really look like that.

- You know Santa Claus?

- Certainly. Nice chap.

You must tell Debby about him. She's just
beginning to be a little bit doubtful.

- You like that hat?

- Yes, I'm crazy about it.

- Well, let's go in and buy it.

- Oh, no, I couldn't.

- Why, it's much too...

- Too what? Too attractive?

- My old friend, the professor.

- Hello, Professor.

- Julia! Are you with this man?

- Yes, of course. It's Dudley.

The professor knows me
well. University of Vienna.

I've been thinking about that. I don't

believe you've ever been to Vienna.

He always pretends he's

never seen me before.

I don't know who he is,

but I don't trust him.

- Professor, he's Henry's new assistant.

- Oh.

- You know this fellow?

- Of course I do.

Well, in that case, how about dropping

in for a bit of Yuletide cheer?

No, no. I have to go home. I...

Well, perhaps just for a few minutes.

Good. Come along.

There's a little sherry left. It's

rather inferior grade, but potable.

Professor, I see you're a religious man.

- What makes you think that?

- You have an angel on your tree.

Julia gave me that years ago.

- Your tree is beautiful.

- It's disgraceful.

However, it gives me the illusion of

peace on earth, goodwill toward men.

- To a charming lady.

- Lovely.

- You've noticed?

- Isn't it remarkable that you have?

Remarkable? When you want to know

about a woman, ask the old men.

They know.

Why don't you show us the

manuscript of your book?

- My book?

- Yes.

- Oh, no, no.

- You're writing one?

Yes.

- You didn't know?

- You didn't tell me.

I described that book in detail at the

lectures I gave at the

University of Vienna.

All my pupils heard me. Now I'm

certain this fellow's an impostor.
That book? I thought you'd
finished that years ago.
I'll tell you... I'll
tell you about my book.
For 20 years I've been talking about it
and promising the publishers
it'll be delivered next spring.
The funny part is that I
haven't written one word.

- Not one word.

- Why not?

I couldn't think of anything original to
say. Just the same old monotonous history.
Dry as dust.

That's the whole story
of my life. Frustration.
It's a chronic disease
and it's incurable.

Once I was madly...
Once I was madly in love with a girl.
My friends, she was a vision
of delight. A pure enchantress.

- You never told me about it.

- That's the trouble.

I never told her about it
either. I couldn't find the words.
So she married an athlete.
A great hulking oaf who never
even reached the eighth grade.
But he knew how to say "I love you. "
Same trouble with my
book. Can't find the words.
Even when you had this
coin to inspire you?
Why, that's the one
that you gave to Henry.

- Yes. I stole it off the table.

- You wasted your time. It's worthless.

On the contrary, this is one of
the rarest of all antiquities.
Only one hundred of these coins were
minted by Julius Caesar 2,000 years ago.
That was when Cleopatra visited Rome.

Presumably, these were
used to pay her hotel bill.

- I never knew that.
- Nobody knew except Caesar's wife.
- She was suspicious?
- Definitely.

She did not share her husband's
admiration for Cleopatra.
So she had these coins destroyed

- melted into ornaments.

This is the one she missed.

It's an unwritten chapter in history
and you, Professor, will write it.

- Do you know any more stories like that?
- Any number of them.
- You're a curious fellow, Dudley.
- Have you just begun to notice?
- What's your background?
- My background?
- Where do you come from?
- Well...

And don't tell me more about
Vienna because I won't believe it.

All right. If I told you I came from
another planet, would you believe me?

- I don't know.
- I'd believe you, Dudley.

And you'd be right, Julia, as always.
We all come from our own little planets.
That's why we're all different.
That's what makes life interesting.

We don't seem to be making any headway.

First star I see tonight.

You must make a wish, Julia.

Oh, it's getting dark. Must be late.

Henry will be worried. We must be leaving.

- Oh, no.
- Yes. I'm sorry, Professor, but we must.
- Dudley?
- Yes, my friend.
- There's one thing that troubles me.
- What's that?

I'm an old man. That
history is a tremendous task.

I wonder... will I
have time to finish it?
You'll finish your history,
Professor. You'll have time.
I believe you, Dudley.
For quite a while now, every
time I passed a cemetery,
I've felt as if I
were apartment hunting.
Goodbye, Professor.
You've given an old man
a very happy afternoon.
- God bless you both.
- Thank you.
I'll pass that recommendation along.
My, that's pretty.
Why don't you take some of that
pink stuff and make little curlicues?
I hope the dinner won't be spoiled.
No, sir. I had a feeling
they might be late.
Yes... Very considerate of
you. What's that cake for?
- What cake?
- That cake behind you.
That cake. Oh, for anybody
who might like cakes, sir.
But neither Mrs Brougham nor
myself like elaborate desserts.
But we've baked you an egg custard, sir.
Hello, dear. I'm sorry
we were late for dinner.
- Good evening.
- We've had a marvellous time.
- I wish you'd been with us.
- Debby told me about the snow fight.
Did she? We went to see Professor
Wutheridge and we had lunch at Michel's.
- Is Debby in bed?
- No. She's waiting to see you.
Good. I'll just go
up and say good night.
I won't be a minute. I just
want to see if she's all right.

- I trust you spent a profitable afternoon?

- Oh, yes.

Did you have a profitable afternoon?

Not very. I'd like to see you... for a moment.

Certainly.

Excuse me.

Can you prove to me that you are an angel?

Proof? You mean a document?

Surely you of all people should know that an angel needs no passport.

I want to see you perform a miracle.

- What kind?

- Well...

Make this desk fly around the room.

Please. I didn't come down here to do silly tricks. I'm surprised at you.

I don't believe you're an angel.

- I think you're a demon right out of...

- Oh, Henry. Don't say that.

- Well, anyway, you know how I feel.

- Yes.

Wait a minute. There's another thing.

Oh. Dinner is served, Bishop.

Thank you, Dudley.

For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful. Amen.

Pass the celery, Henry, please.

- Hm?

- The celery.

Thank you.

Thank you.

What's that you're humming?

I don't know, dear. Is it anything?

- It's rather gay.

- Well, I feel gay.

I like to watch you brushing your hair.

Thank you, dear. Is that a compliment?

Yes. You do it so... so capably.

Thank you.

In fact, now I come to think of it, everything you do is capable.

I pride myself on the fact that we lead

a well-ordered life. The family, I mean.
Of course, the credit for that is
due to you much more than to me.

- I think you're an excellent wife.
- Thank you.
- Do you think I'm an excellent husband?
- Of course.

We're having an early supper so
we get to St Timothy's on time.

- St Timothy's?
- The rehearsal for the benefit.
- Oh, yes.
- You've been looking awfully tired lately.

I hope you're going to take it
easier now that Dudley's here.

- I think that he's very able.
- You do?
- Yes. He knows so many things.
- What, for instance?

You should have seen him
with Professor Wutheridge.

He knows more about
history than the professor.
He's been at it longer.

- Let's do that again.
- No. Tell me a story.
- What, now?
- Don't you know any stories?
- I know hundreds of stories.
- Tell me one. Please.

All right. Let me think. This
happened many, many years ago.

That's not the way to begin.

Stories start "Once upon a time".

Yes, that's true.

Once upon a time there was a little
boy and he lived in a little town.

- What was his name?
- His name was David. He was a shepherd.

The town was called Bethlehem.

I know Bethlehem. That's
where the star was.

That's right. Only David
lived long before the star.

One night, David was out in
the hills tending his sheep.

- He was playing the harp and singing.

- Was he singing "Jingle Bells"?

No, no. "Jingle Bells"
hadn't been written then.

David was singing songs
that he wrote himself.

Suddenly, an angel came
down and spoke to David.

- How did David know it was an angel?

- He didn't know.

And that's the way it always is.

Angels come and put
ideas into people's heads
and people feel very proud of themselves
because they think it was their own idea.

This angel said to David "One
of your lambs has strayed. "

So David put aside his harp and went
into the darkness to find the lamb.

The angel guided him.

And when David found the lamb,
he saw a great big ferocious lion.

Oh!

So David said to the lion

"You get away from that lamb. "

And the lion said "You get away
from me or I'll eat you too. "

- Did David run away?

- No.

You know why? Because the angel
put another idea into his head.

So David took out his
sling and he hurled a stone
and hit the lion right between the eyes.

I bet that lion was surprised!

Yes. And so was David because he
didn't know an angel had helped him.

Well, he picked up the lamb
and took it back to the fold.

Then he felt so happy that he made
up another song. It started out:

"The Lord is my shepherd.

I shall not want. "

"He maketh me to lie
down in green pastures. "

"He leadeth me besides
the still waters. "

"He restoreth my soul... "

You can tell the rest of this, Henry.

- Some other time.

- Hello, Daddy.

Miss Cassaway, will you get
Mrs Hamilton on the telephone?

- Miss Cassaway? Mrs Hamilton.

- Yes, Bishop.

- Good morning, Julia.

- Dudley.

I'll see you in a few
minutes. I have to see Matilda.

- Bye, Debby.

- Goodbye, Dudley.

- Thank you.

- Oh. Pretty.

Are you expecting a letter?

One never knows. If I should get
one, the stamp will be worth saving.

I'll have Mrs Hamilton in a moment.

- Are you seeing Mrs Hamilton?

- I hope to.

- May I come along? I'd like to meet her.

- Mrs Hamilton? Bishop Brougham.

Hello, Mrs Hamilton. How
are you? I'm glad to hear it.

Mrs Hamilton, I'd like to see you
today. This afternoon, if possible.

Yes, it is. It's very urgent.

- Oh, that's too bad.

- Terrible.

You can? Oh, that's
splendid. Thank you so much.

I'll be there. Five o'clock this
evening. Thank you, Mrs Hamilton.

Henry, you didn't make an
appointment for this afternoon?

Yes. It was the only time.

You can't do this to Reverend

Miller. The rehearsal's just for you.

They'll get along without me. There are other things more important.

- Mr Miller will be delighted to see you.

- But it's not the same. You're his bishop.

I don't like going alone.

It's the big house at the end of this street, driver.

Dudley, I take it that... that you have the money for the taxi.

No. What makes you think I have money?

Oh, I just thought

that you being an a...

Oh, goodness!

- I'm sorry.

- I'm sorry.

That's all right.

Thank you.

- I won't be late. I may even join you.

- Please try.

I'll see you in front of St Timothy's in one hour.

- Try.

- I will be there.

- Good.

- This is it, driver.

- Good evening, Bishop.

- How are you, Stevens?

- Mrs Hamilton's in the drawing room, sir.

- Thank you.

Well, Bishop Brougham.

My dear Mrs Hamilton,

I've come to tell you...

- You've come to apologise, I trust.

- Exactly.

Upon consideration, my objections seem petty compared with the generosity of your gesture.

I'm very much relieved.

Sit down, Mr Brougham.

What hurt most was to think that my instinct had betrayed me in recommending you for your position.

I'm unceasingly grateful.
Now, I'm taking it for granted
that the George B Hamilton
Memorial Chapel shall be located...
Just where you specified.
You no longer feel the effect will be
that it was built in my husband's honour?
That was said in dispute. What
matters is the cathedral be built.
Good. I will not have his name on
some horrid little brass plaque.
No. It'll be incised in
marble. Large letters. Gilded.
That large window depicting
St George and the dragon.
I should like that the countenance
of St George suggests my late husband.
Yes. Who do you see as the dragon?
- Oh. Any dragon. Let's get the blueprints.
- Oh, Mrs Hamilton.
As we're in agreement, would you mind
if we postpone discussing the details?
Julia's waiting at St Timothy's.
Very well. We can go over the
plans when we transfer the funds.
Thank you. And I'm so glad
we've settled our differences.
- Is anything the matter?
- Well... It doesn't seem quite right.
Oh. Stevens. There's something
wrong about the bishop's chair.
Madam, it must be the new varnish.
The finisher should have warned us.
- I do hope I'm not harming the chair.
- No, no, not at all.
Send to a furniture shop or a plumbers
or... Turpentine. Do something.
Yes, madam. Oh, dear.
- I wonder...
- Would you give it a pull at the back?
Thank you.
It's been a long time since Henry's
been down here. I wish he had come.
You know, when he was here, he was so

close to people, so loved by everybody.

Uh-huh. And how does

it seem to you now?

That he's moved away

from the people he loved?

Yes. It's going to be a disappointment

for Reverend Miller not to see him.

Well, he doesn't have

to be disappointed.

- Hello, Mr Miller.

- Mrs Brougham, so good of you to come.

I'm delighted to be here. This is

Mr Dudley, the bishop's assistant.

- Mr Dudley, a pleasure.

- Thank you, Mr Miller.

The bishop will try to get here later.

- Oh. Of course. He's a busy man now.

- Yes.

- This is Mrs Duffy.

- I know Mrs Duffy. How are you?

- It's always an honour to have you here.

- Thank you. This is Mr Dudley.

- Mrs Duffy is the organist.

- I'm sure she plays enchantingly.

- Hello, Mrs Duffy.

- I'm afraid some of our boys are late.

We really should begin, but I don't

see how we can. It's quite embarrassing.

But it is a little difficult to

compete with basketball and Christmas.

- They're all good boys at heart.

- I know they are. They'll show up.

I hope so.

- Hello, Bobby.

- Hello.

- What do you sing?

- First soprano.

- Are you good?

- I don't know.

- How about giving out?

- Me alone?

- You've got George. Hello, George.

- Hello.

- What do you say?

- OK.

- Are you ready, Mrs Duffy?

- Yes.

Hit it.

? O, sing to God your hymns of gladness

? Ye loving hearts your tribute pay

? Your Lord is born this happy day

? Then pierce the sky

with songs of gladness

? Disperse the shades

of gloom and sadness

? Your Lord is born this happy day

? O, sing to God your hymns of gladness

? O, sing to God your hymns of gladness

? Ye loving hearts your tribute pay

? Your Lord is born this happy day

? Then pierce the sky

with songs of gladness

? Disperse the shades

of gloom and sadness

? Your Lord is born this happy day

? O, sing to God your hymns of gladness

? O, word of God for us incarnate

? O, word of God for us incarnate

? By faith we hear thine angels sing

? By faith we hear thine angels sing

? O, God, we hear

thine angels sing their

? Hymns of praise to thee, their King

? We join with them in adoration

? We join with them in adoration

? We pour, we pour to thee

? Our supplication

? That thou wouldst

? Grant us, Lord,

? Salvation

Boys, that was beautiful.

Really beautiful.

You've all grown up so since the
bishop and I lived in this parish
that I hardly recognised any of you.

But I'm so proud of you and
I know he's going to be too.

Oh, thank you. Mr Miller,

that was wonderful.

I can't thank you enough, Mrs Brougham. And you, Mr Dudley.

Oh, I'm so sorry the bishop couldn't have been here.

- Are you all right?

- Yes, thank you.

Whatever is keeping Stevens?

Oh, Stevens. There you are.

I'm sorry, madam, but the furniture shop is closed until after New Year, I can't find a plumber and we're out of turpentine.

- This is preposterous!

- Would some witch hazel be of any use?

- Might I use your telephone?

- Of course. It's over there.

Matilda, this is Bishop

Brougham. I'm at Mrs Hamilton's.

Will you bring me

another pair of trousers?

What difference does it make? Just bring me another pair of trousers.

I'm so very sorry this has happened.

If only I could get in

touch with Julia or Dudley.

Now don't be nervous, Bishop.

- Have a chair.

- Thank you. I have one.

He isn't here.

Perhaps the meeting was more important than he thought.

I suppose. We'd better go on home.

- You know, Dudley, it's a strange thing.

- What's strange?

You're able to make me feel as if everything's going to be all right.

- Well, it could be if...

- If what?

If people could only learn to behave like human beings.

Hey, taxi.

Here's a cab, Julia.

- Will you please wait, Sylvester?

- OK. Sure. I'll wait. Sylvester?!

Good evening. I'll be right with you.

Now this is one of our most exclusive models.

Oh, it's lovely, just simply ravishing.

- So chic. So young.

- It is sweet, isn't it?

Stunning.

Not everyone could wear such a daring hat, but it was made for madame.

Say, how did you know my name was Sylvester?

It's up there on your card.

Oh.

Sylvester, could you drive through the park?

- That's way out of your way.

- Are you getting bored with us?

Oh, no. I'll drive you by way of Mexico City if you want.

Thank you.

Dudley, I'm having so much fun.

- Are you, Julia?

- Yes.

I feel as if I were doing something wicked.

- Why?

- I don't know.

Somehow it seems wrong to have so much fun, but...

I can't figure out what's wrong about it.

You folks know what the main trouble with this country is?

Oh, I've heard several versions of that.

- Do you know, Sylvester?

- I think I do.

There are too many people who don't know where they're going and they wanna get there too fast.

Take you two. I'd call you unusual.

Thank you. You're very perceptive.

First, you know your destination, but you're in no hurry to get there.

You wanna enjoy some scenery en route
and you're not reluctant to spend an extra
four bits for a detour with Mother Nature.
Hey, look where you're goin'!
Well... Well, my goodness. Did you
see the way I missed that truck?
- It was just like a miracle.
- Yes, but don't overplay your hand.
Oh.
Sylvester, pull up here.
Come on. We're going skating.
No, we mustn't, it's late. We
couldn't. Do you think we could?
Henry's waited this long. He can
wait a little longer. Stop the car.
- I am wicked. - If you are, so am I,
and that's impossible.
- Can you skate, Sylvester?
- I used to, but I'm too old now.
Come on. You'll find
out how young you are.
Ooh! I'm not quite so sure of myself.
Now relax. That's right.
- Oh!
- That's right.
Oh.
Pretty hat.
- Why, Dudley!
- Now you.
- Oh, no.
- Come on.
- Dudley, this is heavenly.
- You found the perfect word.
Look! Look what I'm doing.
You're a beautiful skater,
Julia. In fact, you're beautiful.
Oh, look! Look at Sylvester.
Go on, Sylvester!
Oh, my God!
- Excuse me.
- Surely.
Keep cool, Sylvester. Keep cool.
Relax.
That's right. Come on. Give

me the other one. That's it.

All right. Now relax.

Don't collapse. Just relax.

Hang on to me now.

Oh! Don't leave me!

Don't! Ooh!

How am I doing, Dudley?

Wait for me, Dudley!

Thank you.

- How much do I owe you, Sylvester?

- Not a cent, my friend.

My pockets are just bulging with
the coins of self-satisfaction.

- You wanna know why?

- I'd love to know.

Because you and the little lady have
restored my faith in human nature.

Good night, Dudley. Good night, Julia.

- Good night, Sylvester.

- Good night, Sylvester.

Sylvester is a noble soul.

His children and his children's children
will rise up and call him Blessed.

Dudley, this has been the most
wonderful evening I've had in years.

This has been the most wonderful
evening I've had in centuries.

- I hope I haven't left the key home.

- It's open.

Thank you, Dudley. Hello, Queenie.

- Hello, Queenie. May I help you?

- Yes, please.

- Oh! You took off my shoe.

- Hello, Henry.

Henry, what happened? I thought you
were going to meet us at St Timothy's.

- What happened to you? It's very late.

- Thank you. You'll never guess.

We went skating. There you are.

See you in a minute, Henry.

- Skating?

- Yes. Dudley's a marvellous skater.

He even made me imagine that I was good.

You should have heard those boys

sing at St Timothy's. It was heavenly.

- I'm sure.

- Did you have a successful meeting?

- Did you?

- Satisfactory.

Good. I want to see Debby
before she goes to sleep.

Oh. You haven't said a word about it.

- About what?

- My hat. My new hat.

- What do you think?

- Charming.

Thank you. I'll be right down.

One thing I know, Julia
is absolutely blameless.

- Of course she is.

- You stopped me from joining you.

Julia had a very good time.

- Well, I didn't.

- Hm.

If you'd sent me to Mrs
Hamilton, I would have gone.
You didn't. So I represented
you with your wife.

Is that part of the
normal duties of an...?

...of an angel?

Sometimes, Henry, angels must
rush in where fools fear to tread.

I haven't the faintest idea what that
means and I don't want it explained.

- You can go now. I've solved my problem.

- Have you?

Mrs Hamilton is giving the
money for the cathedral.
That was a foregone conclusion
if you were willing to
sacrifice your principles.

Don't you think it's worth
it for this glorious edifice?

I'm not sure of its
glory at a time like this.

- Oh, you're not?

- No, Henry, I'm not.

These are lean years for the world.
So many people need food.
So many people need shelter.
That big roof could make
so many little roofs.
We're dealing with a materialistic,
selfish woman. She wouldn't listen to that.

- Did you try?

- It's all arranged. It's finished.

You came so I could have a
cathedral and now I want you to go.

I want you to get out of
my life and away from Julia.

Suppose you pray for that? It was
your prayer that brought me here.

Mm-mm. Henry, that was no prayer.

It was right from my
heart. I want you to go.

- Julia doesn't.

- Julia.

Get out! Get out!

Julia's ready to come down the stairs.

Don't let her see you like that.

Try to calm yourself, Henry.

Dudley? Debby wants Dudley to come up
and say good night to her. Where is he?

- He's gone.

- Where?

- How should I know?

- Why did he leave so suddenly?

- I told him to go away. I fired him.

- Why?

He's incompetent, he's no good at his
job and I cannot stand the sight of him!

Mummy, I'm sure that
Dudley's never coming back.

Darling, you must never say never.

But where is he?

Come here, dear.

Now listen to me.

Dudley wouldn't leave
us without saying a word.

Besides, he was going to
tell you about Santa Claus.

He knows Santa Claus very well.
But it's almost Christmas Eve.
Soon I'll have to go to bed.
He wouldn't leave us without
saying a word. Would he, Matilda?
Oh, no, no. That wouldn't be
like him. Not like Mr Dudley.
Come along, Debby. I'll
get you ready for dinner.
Will you come see me
when you get back, Mummy?
Of course, dear.
Here is a list of your calls.
Ending at Mrs Hamilton's.
Thank you. Miss Cassaway, here is
the manuscript of my Christmas sermon.
I shall want the original and five
carbons for issuing to the press.
If you get the typing done before
I come back, leave it on my desk.
I'm sorry to keep you
so long on Christmas Eve.
Of course, sir. I
understand. It must be done.
Henry, I'm ready to start out now.
We go first to the
Trubshawes, then the...
- Then we go to the Vandovers.
- Goodbye, Miss Cassaway.
Sylvester!
- Hello, Julia.
- Hello. What are you doing here?
I've been waiting around hoping
there'd be another skating party
and I didn't want to miss it. Where's
Dudley? Oh, you got a preacher with you.
- This is my...
- Oh, I know!
There's gonna be a wedding
ceremony. You and Dudley.
Sylvester, this is my
husband, Bishop Brougham.
- How do you do?
- Oh.

- Oh.
- 247 North Maple.
247 North Maple.
- Mildred?
- Oh!
Oh, why, Dudley, it's
you. I didn't see you...
Where have you been? We've
been worrying about you.
- And poor Mrs Brougham...
- What about Mrs Brougham?
She's been popping in and out of here
all day asking "Have you seen Dudley?"
- Where is she?
- She and the bishop had some calls.
Finishing at Mrs Hamilton's.
- Let me type that sermon for you.
- No.
You go on. It's almost Christmas
Eve. You must have shopping to do.
- Oh, well...
- Go on, Mildred.
Thank you, Dudley.
- Merry Christmas, Mildred.
- Merry Christmas, Dudley.
Merry... Oh.
Take a sermon.
Tonight, I want to tell you
the story of an empty stocking.
Once upon a midnight clear
there was a child's cry.
A blazing star hung over a stable
and wise men came with birthday gifts.
Have you got that? Good. We haven't
forgotten that night down the centuries.
We celebrate it with stars hung on
the Christmas tree, bells and gifts -
especially with gifts.
We buy them and wrap them
and put them under the tree.
You give me a tie. I give you a book.
Aunt Martha always
wanted an orange squeezer.
Uncle Harry can use a new pipe.

Oh, we forget nobody

- adult or child.

All the stockings are filled.

All, that is, except one.

Oh! Oh...

- I'm sorry, Matilda.

- Oh, Mr Dudley. I knew you'd come back.

- I knew you hadn't walked out on us.

- Of course not.

Debby's been so worried

and as for Mrs Brougham...

Well, run upstairs. Tell

Debby I'll see her later.

- First I have some work to do.

- I'll tell her.

One moment, please. Mrs

Hamilton expecting you?

No, but she'll wish to see

me. I'm the bishop's assistant.

The bishop is expected,

but not the assistant.

I told you, Stevens,

she'll wish to see me.

Yes.

Yes.

"This was composed for you, my
darling, and you only. Allan. "

Her husband's name was George.

Good evening.

That music you were playing.

No one living but me

knows that composition.

It's a shame that only you and I appreciate
the lost genius of Allan Cartwright.

- You know about Allan Cartwright?

- Oh, yes.

The world lost a brilliant young
composer when he was... when he died.

That was nearly 40 years ago.

You couldn't have known him.

I'm much older than you

think. Come, let's sit down.

- What is your name?

- My name is Dudley.

But tell me about Allan and you.

Tell me.

Allan Cartwright was the only man I ever loved.

We were engaged to be married and I got frightened.

He had nothing and I was afraid of poverty.

He went away.

I never saw him again.

I never loved George Hamilton.

He was very much in love with me and he was wealthy.

I've spent a fortune honouring his memory in empty monuments.

The Hamilton mansion.

Never took a call here.

- What do I owe you?

- No charge. I got nothing better to do.

- Thank you, Sylvester.

- I'll be seeing you, Julia.

There's someone at the door. It's Henry and Julia.

Oh. The bishop. No, I won't. I can't see him now.

- Oh, yes, you will.

- No... Yes.

That's right, Agnes. Just go out and greet them in your usual warm-hearted manner.

- The bishop and Mrs Brougham, madam.

- Yes.

Oh. You'll stay for dinner, Dudley?

I'm afraid I can't, Agnes. I have a great deal of work to do.

But don't keep Henry and Julia waiting.

- Julia.

- How do you do, Mrs Hamilton?

How nice of you to come and see me.

And Henry. A merry Christmas.

A merry Christmas. Come, let's go into the drawing room.

- Henry?

- Yes, Mrs Hamilton. Merry Christmas.

Come, Henry, we're very old

friends. You must call me Agnes.

- And you too, Julia dear.

- Yes. Yes, of course.

Oh.

- But he's gone already.

- Who?

Dudley.

- He was here?

- I should have known it.

- Where did he go?

- He said he had so much work to do.

- You must make him take some rest.

- I've been trying to.

I can't thank you enough for
sending him to me. Do sit down.

My dear, meeting Dudley has been the
greatest spiritual experience of my life.

- I'm so glad.

- How did you ever find him, Henry?

- It was an accident.

- It was a miracle.

Indeed it was. Talking with this
wonderful understanding man has...

Henry, I've changed my
mind about the cathedral.

I'm going to give my
money to those who need it.

To the poor and the homeless and
the unappreciated people in the city
and all over the world.

And I want you to direct
the spending of the money.

- You see what Dudley has done?

- Yes, I see.

- Now you understand...

- Thank you, Mrs Hamilton.

I'll be home later for dinner or
something. I don't know what time...

Goodbye.

- Hello, Professor.

- Henry.

Come in, my dear fellow, come in.

- Sit down. Let me take your coat.

- No, thanks.

Not there. Here. This is
the only reliable chair.
Well, this is a surprise. And an
honour. We must have a glass of sherry.
- No, thanks.
- I insist. I want to show you something.
You see this bottle? You note
that it is full? Now watch.
It's something that
even you can't explain
with all your vast
ecclesiastical knowledge.
You will observe that it is still
full. How do you account for that?
And the sherry itself
- it stimulates, it warms, it inspires,
but no matter how much you
drink, it never inebriates.
I think I can account for
it. Dudley's been here.
Yes. And that bottle isn't all.
He told me things about
history that opened my eyes.
Today I went up to
the university library
and looked into some ancient texts which
no scholar has been able to decipher.
Suddenly, I found that
I could understand them.
And look. This is what
I've done thanks to Dudley.
My history. I'm actually writing it.
Let's face it, Henry. This Dudley
is no mortal man like the rest of us.
- Is he?
- How did you know?
Well, I can't tell.
Who is he? What is he?
- He says he's an angel.
- An angel?
Nothing stopped me from saying it.
- From heaven?
- That I'm not sure about.
An angel.

Too bad. He's such a nice fellow.
I should have known it. Nothing less
than an angel could have put me to work.
I'm glad he's done some good. He's
brought nothing but disaster for me.
That's absurd. He and Julia
were in here the other day
and she seemed happier
than she's been in years.
Quite like her old delightful self.
She's a different person
when she's with him.
He's made her despise me.
Are you sure he has done that?
- You think it's my own fault?
- I didn't say that.
This is a mystery beyond
my powers of comprehension.
I suppose I am to blame for everything.
I asked for this in more ways than one.
I suppose that Dudley
came to me to confirm
that I'd already lost the
love of Julia and Debby.
I've got a confession
to make, old friend.
You sent me a coin -
that was generous of you -
and I was mean enough only
to see its commercial value.
- Now I don't know what's happened to it.
- Well, I do. Here it is.
Now where...? Here it is.
Where did you find
it? Oh, don't tell me.
Yes. And he told me what it is
- a museum piece, worth a fortune.
No. I insist you keep it. Give it
to Julia as my Christmas present.
It might bring luck to you both.
It seems strange, you being a bishop
and I a broken-down old scholar,
but I feel terribly sorry for you.
I wish there was something

I could do to help.

- Thank you, but there's nothing.

- There must be.

You and Julia love each other. You always have.

That's only partially true. I love Julia.

- Then fight for her.

- How can I fight against...?

- But you have a tremendous advantage.

- Advantage? Over an angel?

That's precisely it. He's an angel.

Julia is a creature of Earth. She's a woman, Henry, and you are a man.

Isn't it beautiful? And he did every bit of it himself and so quick too.

When I saw it, I couldn't believe my eyes. What a blessing he's been to us.

The tree's lovely, Matilda. Lovely.

I'm glad you like it. It's been years since I've worked on a Christmas tree.

I usually get the more disagreeable jobs.

Good night, Matilda. Sweet dreams.

Thank you, Mr Dudley.

- Julia?

- Yes?

I think my work here is almost finished. I'll have to be moving along.

Oh.

Well... Where will you be going, Dudley?

- Wherever they send me.

- Who are "they"?

My superior officers.

Will we ever see you again?

They seldom send us to the same place twice. We might form attachments.

I don't know what you're talking about.

Of course not.

- Julia?

- Yes?

- I don't want to leave.

- Why?

Few people know the secret of

making a heaven here on earth.

You are one of those rare people.

- I think you ought to go.

- No. Please, Julia. Don't send me away.

- What are you saying, Dudley?

- I'm tired of being a wanderer.

I'm tired of an existence where
one is neither hot nor cold,
hungry nor full.

No.

No. No, you must go away.

And never come back.

Julia?

Julia!

I've never before had to fight an angel,
but take off your coat
and put up your dukes.

Why do you want to fight me, Henry?

Because you're a thief.

Trying to steal my wife, my
child, the love that belongs to me.

Don't you realise that as an angel, I
could destroy you with a bolt of lightning?

I don't care. Julia means more to me
than my life. I'm not going to lose her.

Ah. Then I have news for you. I'm going.

I'll accept that as a
fact when I see it happen.

You won't. When I'm gone, you will never
know that an angel visited your house.

- And Julia, what about her?

- There will be no memory with her either.

Or with Debby or the
professor or anyone else.

- I don't trust you, Dudley.

- You may, Henry.

Because your prayer has been answered.

That's not true. I was
praying for a cathedral.

No, Henry. You were praying for
guidance. That has been given to you.

Just a minute, please.

Goodbye, Henry.

Dudley, if we should need

you again, will you come back?

Not I. I should ask to be assigned
to the other end of the universe.

Is that because I was so difficult?

Oh, no. This difficulty was in me.

When an immortal envies the mortal
entrusted to his care,

it's a danger signal.

Take her in your arms

and hold her tight.

Coming.

Kiss her for me, you lucky Henry.

Julia!

Julia.

Shh! She's asleep.

- Are you all right?

- Why, yes, of course I am.

Henry, did you get that for Debby?

No.

I can't imagine where it came from.

Why, Henry. What is it?

I don't know. I just had the most
inexplicable feeling of happiness.

- Oh.

- You know something?

- Downstairs there's a big bowl of cider.

- For tomorrow afternoon.

Let's drink it now. Let's drink to us.

To our happiness and what lies ahead.

Then let's smash the
glasses in the fireplace.

Listen.

That's coming from St Timothy's.

That cider will have to wait if
you're going to give your sermon.

- My sermon.

- Yes.

But that's better still.

? We join with them in adoration

? We join with them in adoration

? We pour to thee our supplication

? That thou wouldst

? Grant us, Lord,

? Salvation

Tonight, I want to tell you
the story of an empty stocking.
Once upon a midnight clear
there was a child's cry.
A blazing star hung over a stable
and wise men came with birthday gifts.
We haven't forgotten that
night down the centuries.
We celebrate it with
stars on Christmas trees,
with the sound of
bells and with gifts -
but especially with gifts.
You give me a book. I give you a tie.
Aunt Martha has always
wanted an orange squeezer
and Uncle Henry could
do with a new pipe.
Oh, we forget nobody
- adult or child.
All the stockings are filled.
All, that is, except one.
And we have even
forgotten to hang it up.
The stocking for the
child born in the manger.
It's his birthday we're celebrating.
Don't let us ever forget that.
Let us ask ourselves what
he would wish for most
and then let each put in his share.
Loving kindness, warm hearts...
and a stretched-out hand of tolerance.
All the shining gifts
that make peace on earth.