

Breaking News in Bethlehem

By Jody E. Haight

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STORY OF THE PLAY

The all angel news team of ANN, the *Angelic News Network*, are reporting the evening news when a bigger story begins to unfold before everyone's eyes. It is not the story the angels expected to report, nor did it occur where they expected to report it, but it may just be their biggest story ever!

DEDICATION

Rev. Lucinda Nelson and the original cast of
Breaking News in Bethlehem.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(10-15 flexible, plus extras, doubling possible.)

GABRIEL/GABRIELLE: High-strung news anchor. Angel.

SERAPHIM/SERAPHIMA: Happy-go-lucky news anchor.
Angel.

SANDY STORMS: Traffic and weather reporter. Angel.

ANGEL-ON-THE-SCENE: Perky but increasingly frazzled
field reporter.

INNKEEPER: Greedy, schmoozy.

MARY: A bit cranky.

JOSEPH: Tired, timid.

SHEPHERDS (3): Argumentative family, #3 is precocious.

WISE GUYS/GALS (3): Very self-important, confident.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS: Makeup crew, Prompter.

*(DOUBLING: Innkeeper can double as a Shepherd/Wise Guy.
Wise Guys can vary in number as needed, Joseph can double
as a Shepherd.)*

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SETTING

News desk is center stage, or at least the major focal point. Stage left near the news desk is the weather/traffic map. Somewhere on the periphery is the stable of the Bethlehem Inn. (Original production utilized choir area behind the stage.) The staging can utilize the entire church or a small area as needed. Optional: Star over stable.

PROPS

Optional cosmetics for Makeup Crew
News scrolls for Anchors
Microphones for Reporter
Shepherd staffs
Camera and drum for Shepherd #3
Map for Shepherd #1
Three gifts for the Shepherds
Baby doll for Mary and Joseph

SFX

News music (Instrumental version of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" works well.)

COSTUMES

The Wise Guys can wear fedoras. Angels can have wings and halos. All other characters should dress in clothing appropriate to the time of Christ's birth.

Breaking News in Bethlehem

(AT RISE: The newsroom. SFX: News music begins. GABRIELLE sits at desk, SANDY STORMS enters to his/her spot. News scrolls are on desk or held by PROMPTER. MAKEUP CREW scurry offstage. Empty seat to Gabrielle's left.)

GABRIELLE: *(Smiles nervously, stage whispers for Seraphima.)* GET OUT HERE NOW! WE ARE ON! *(Smiles at the audience and attempts to act as though nothing is wrong.)* Ahem. Good tidings, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome back to A-N-N, the *Angelic News Network*. This is the *11th Hour*, brought to you by <Insert Your Church Name>. I'm your host, Gabrielle.

(SERAPHIMA enters and sits.)

SERAPHIMA: *(Very bubbly.)* And I'm Seraphima. Good morning!

GABRIELLE: *(Annoyed stage whisper.)* Evening!

SERAPHIMA: Huh? What?

GABRIELLE: It's evening. You know, nighttime.

SERAPHIMA: *(Big grin.)* Ahh, thank you, Gabi. Good evening. Welcome to the *11th Hour*, the news show that brings you the most important stories at the last possible minute.

GABRIELLE: Yes. Our top story this evening: "The Census: Who is really in charge and what does it mean for you?" *(Pause.)* But first, the weather. We go live to our angel with her eye in the sky, Sandy Storms. Sandy?

SANDY: It's Hot. Dry. Zero percent chance of rain. *(Pause.)* Back to you in the studio.

GABRIELLE: *(Expecting more.)* Is that all you've got?

SANDY: Did I mention it was hot?

SERAPHIMA: Alrighty then. *(Pause.)* This just in, breaking news outside of Bethlehem tonight where we have multiple reports claiming an unusual star has been sighted to the east. Officials are investigating, and we will keep you updated as we learn more. And now our top story. Gabi?

GABRIELLE: Gabrielle. My name is Gabrielle. Why do you always do that?

SERAPHIMA: Not now! We're on the air. *(Motions toward audience.)*

GABRIELLE: Ahem! Emperor Augustus has announced that all the world should be registered. Throughout the empire citizens are bustling back to their hometowns in preparation for this census. Bethlehem in particular is busy, busy, busy, as so many are descended from the house and family of David, the first family of Bethlehem. Quirinius, governor of Syria, has stated that taxes will not affect—

(During the above, SERAPHIMA grows distracted, playing with her halo, primping, etc. GABRIELLE tries to ignore it but has finally had enough.)

GABRIELLE: *(Cont'd.)* WHAT are you doing? We are on live! Get with the program!

SERAPHIMA: *(Not missing a beat.)* And now, live from Camel 1, here's our traffic angel Sandy Storms with...traffic.

SANDY: Right you are! All roads leading to Rome are jammed this evening with caravans and camels as citizens work their way back to the cities of their births. Stay away from the Euphrates Bridge as an overturned caravan has all movement at a standstill. South of Jerusalem in Bethlehem, multiple reports of a stalled donkey carrying a pregnant woman have camels in both directions backed up in the downtown area near the Bethlehempton Inn. Your best bet: stick to the roads less travelled. Back to you, Seraphima.

SERAPHIMA: Thank you. Sounds like a tough trip this evening for the Bethlehemites...the Bethlehemians...er, the locals.

End of Freeview

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