

LITTLE LIGHT of LOVE

By the Rev. John Wintermute

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Here's an unusual and touching candlelight service. Guardian angels Gabriel and Agnes are confused when they hear God is sending the Prince of Peace to earth as a baby. A baby!? No army, no muscle, no clout? Then the Child will certainly need the best home and education to succeed. As they argue over the details, they realize He has already been born. The two angels then help the only way they can. From one stable candle they start lighting candles of the congregation to "light the waiting hearts of all those who stand in the dark." Performance time approximately 20 minutes.

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PRODUCTION NOTES

The two angels may stand, one behind the pulpit and the other behind the lectern, or if there is no lectern, then both can stand behind the pulpit with the telephone and telescope on the top of the pulpit. (*The iced tea would be omitted.*) If the play is memorized, then the best presentation would call for two beach chairs with a small serving table between them on the center of the dais.

It would add to the production if a very large painting of Heaven's Gates were placed behind the angels. The gates would be left open.

The pantomime of the nativity scene should be enacted on the floor of the sanctuary and below the dais upon which the two angels are seated. It should have a very simple setting, probably nothing more than a manger and one lighted candle. Two candles for Gabriel and Agnes to light are hidden in the manger. Candles for the rest of the congregation were given out upon entering the sanctuary. Further directions for the pantomime will be noted in *italic* print.

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TIME: The first Christmas Eve.

PLACE: At Heaven's Gates, and the manger in Bethlehem.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

GABRIEL: A tall, imposing fellow, dressed in a long, white robe and wearing sandals. He wears a large-brimmed straw hat, which is painted gold and decorated with a colorful ribbon band, and highly decorative sun glasses. He is inclined to give orders and has a short temper. He carries a golden trumpet which he polishes from time to time.

AGNES: An attractive angel who is also dressed in a long, white robe and sandals. Her floppy straw hat is painted gold and decorated with feathers and flowers. She also wears a pair of sun glasses, even larger and gaudier than those of Gabriel's. She is short and much more mellower than is Gabriel. She carries a harp upon which she strums from time to time, as the spirit moves her.

MEMBERS OF THE NATIVITY PARTY: Dressed in Biblical costumes, according to their background - Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, wise men, the innkeeper, and perhaps an angel or two, if so desired.

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(AT RISE: On the table are a pitcher of iced tea, two glasses, a cordless telephone, a hand-held telescope and a pair of fancy opera glasses. If the Nativity Pantomime is used, a simple manger is placed directly beneath and in front of the dais, on the floor of the congregation.)

Enter GABRIEL polishing his horn and AGNES strumming on her harp. They take their seats. Gabriel picks up the telescope and looks downward toward the earth, totally absorbed in what he is witnessing there. Agnes, puts down her harp, picks up the opera glasses, and focuses on various spots throughout the sanctuary. Toward the ceiling she sees someone she recognizes, and waves her handkerchief.)

AGNES: Hello, Flo! How are things over on your cloud today? *(AGNES nudges GABRIEL, who is too absorbed in his vigilance to respond.)* Gabriel, there's Flo over there. You remember Flo? *(AGNES continues to sweep the ceiling area of the sanctuary with her glasses. Then pauses.)* Nobody stirring over on the far cloud. They're a lazy bunch. Never get up until the day's over. *(Resumes HER scanning, this time toward the rear of the sanctuary. She rises from her chair to see better, then waves at someone.)* Hey there, Fanny. Over here! It's me! Agnes! *(To GABRIEL.)* You're missing seeing all the other guardian angels at work and play.

GABRIEL: *(Still staring into HIS telescope.)* Look at them down there on planet earth, Agnes! They're having another war again!

AGNES: *(Shifting HER gaze earthward.)* They don't seem to have much trouble in finding someone to do battle with, do they, Gabriel?

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GABRIEL: A more bloodthirsty lot of souls, God never created!

AGNES: When they're not fighting with some other nation, then they're murdering each other! Ugh! Leaves a bad taste in your mouth, doesn't it?

(With a shrug of their shoulders, they put down the telescope and opera glasses. AGNES takes a sip of iced tea. GABRIEL shakes his head in controlled anger, as he picks up his trumpet from off the table.)

GABRIEL: I can't for the life of me figure out why the Big Boss doesn't let me blow my horn and end that mess down there.

AGNES: You're a born pessimist, Gabriel, while God's a perpetual optimist! He keeps hoping, that sooner or later, they'll mend their ways for the better; start loving and caring instead of beating one another into bloody pulps, and all for a few more pieces of gold or a few more acres of earth, that they don't really need to begin with.

GABRIEL: Can you think of one good reason why I shouldn't blow my trumpet and end their misery? They're not going to improve, you know, Agnes.

(GABRIEL raises his trumpet to his lips and puffs up his cheeks. AGNES, in fear and trembling, snatches the trumpet away from him.)

AGNES: You don't dare, Gabriel! You can only blow this on The Judgment Day, and when God himself says you may.

GABRIEL: *(Slowly regaining HIS lost sanity.)* I'm sorry, Agnes. It's just that sometimes I get so fed up with that gang that call themselves human beings ...

AGNES: *(Consoling the distracted GABRIEL.)* I know, I know. You must force your mind away from them and think of something more cheerful, more joyous ... Maybe if I played on my harp, it'd soothe your shattered brain

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