

A PLAY OF ANGELIC VISITATION

by R.W. Schneider

CHARACTERS:

Ray, a male student at Wishly Bible College	18
Taylor, a female student at Wishly Bible College	21
Davi Pandruma, Professor of Apocrypha and Ray's father	47
Janet Bratson, Associate Dean and Title IX Coordinator	52
Primordial Metatron, a female angel who inhabits human bodies	5470



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Primordial Metatron is an avatar of female sexuality, a sort of Christianized Aphrodite. She appears now in the body of a pudgy, balding, not-very-fit man of about fifty. She wears tattered shorts and an oily tee shirt. She's in a wheelchair — or maybe she uses a walker or two canes.

METATRON

Bare your flesh to the sound of my voice.
Sex isn't a flower that blooms at puberty; sex is primordial.
Sex is an angel—an angel that visits
sometimes when you beg it to come and
sometimes when you'd rather it stayed away.
I am that angel; I am visiting you now.
What's more, I'm gorgeous. I am so gorgeous that if I revealed myself to you
in my true gorgeosity, you would be vaporized.
Your skin would crust.
Your thighbones would turn to ash.
So it's better if I give you a mental picture:
My face takes your breath away and won't give it back.
My baby blues are the color of dawn in Finland. Even my eyelashes are blond.
I've got breasts like peeled pears and nipples as perky as a Disney movie.
I've got hips like an iguana and an ass that's even more perfect than the perfectest ass
you're thinking about right now. *(to an audience member)* Yeah, *better* than that.
I bet you want to know about the wings? Raphael painted his angels with pigeon wings,
but Raphael didn't know shit. My wings—when I wear them—are big, heavy-lifting
wings, swan wings with primaries as long as a child's arm!
It's a question of taste. I know some angels who go the dragonfly route—damn fast, but
angel flight is mostly metaphor;
we're there in an instant, wings or no wings.

So why dost I appear unto thee in this form? One word: comfort. This is a body I borrow
from time to time to relax in. You may know the owner. Probably you don't. It's just
some guy. *(Suddenly fey, her femininity suddenly apparent.)* There's so much less to fuss
over with a male body, isn't there?

I know you know all about comfort—I see how you're dressed.

*(Taylor appears in a puddle of light. She's wearing a cap and gown. Like the other
mortals, she can neither see nor hear Metatron.)*

TAYLOR *(out front)*

Hi! I'm Taylor. I'm just trying this on. I still have one more semester to go. *(beat)* Some
girls want to rush a sorority and things like that. They value worldly companionship
above spiritual union. They don't enroll in Wishly Bible College. *(beat)* I just want you
to know that if you've had sex, I'm not judging you. Everybody makes mistakes, right?
I'm not perfect—far from it! *(beat)* Sometimes I don't quite fill my body. Like, there's a
space around the edges where there's nothing. Like a carapace. Except a carapace is
rough and I'm not rough, at least not around the edges. At least, I don't think so.

METATRON

Okay, she's an idiot, but that's no excuse. If you reject knowledge, even carnal knowledge, you reject all creation—to say nothing of *procreation*. Reject creation and you reject the Creator. That's when I get a call.

TAYLOR (*out front*)

Saving yourself for marriage is a beautiful thing. I'm not married. I don't even have a boyfriend. I'm just grateful that I can spend time with the Lord!

METATRON

She's like a pony that trots in a circle even though the paddock gate is open and the whole world is waiting. Shoo! Go, on! Shoo!

TAYLOR

I'd just like to do a shout out to all the single Christian girls in the audience. It's normal that you should want to be married, but if you desire it too much, if you *covet* it, that can be bad. Masturbation is coveting sensation. I cut it out because to do it I needed to imagine marriage. And I'm being intentionally single now. And that intentionality means it's not good for me to imagine marriage.

METATRON

Sex fills her horizon, but she doesn't know its name! All around her—the primal cleavage, the fissure in humanity that makes it stronger!

TAYLOR

Lord willing, marriage will come. Maybe it's the lord's will that I'll be single for the rest of my life. If that's His will, I'll follow Him.

METATRON

This young woman aspires to a larval version of herself, as untouched as a tub of tofu. (*To Taylor*) That's something we angels don't allow, dear. You gotta enroll in life or you don't graduate.

TAYLOR

'Bye!

(*Taylor's light fades.*)

METATRON

Fifty-five per cent of Americans think they've got a guardian angel. Fifty-five per cent! I didn't make that up—I read it in the *New York Post*.

VANITY! Human vanity makes me puke—and when I puke, it's a mist of pure platinum! (*to an audience member as appropriate*) Yeah, keep thinking how cute/smart/progressive you are and maybe you'll take home some angel puke.

We angels are NOBODY'S guardian!

You think we got nothing better to do than play nanny to a bunch of morons? To keep you from stubbing your damn toe, or driving drunk, or voting for an asshole? Wise up! We don't care if you stub your toe or vote for an asshole. The only thing we care about is

respect.

You've got to respect us.

You've got to respect creation,

and you've got to respect gorgeosity—even the tiny speck of gorgeosity that lies within you.

(Ray appears.)

RAY *(out front)*

A guardian angel is somebody relatable, right? Somebody looking out for me. Like in the book of Genesis where the angel pulls the guy from a burning city. I guess it would be better still if the angel kept the city from burning...

METATRON

Now this boy is hot stuff! This boy sets me aflame!

RAY

I think Taylor would keep the city from burning. She was one of the first people I met at Wishly Bible. I mean, one of the first people I met when I enrolled as a student. I was on the campus a lot before that. I grew up here. *(beat)* Taylor's not my girlfriend; she's just a friend. *(beat)* There are some people who haven't accepted Christ, but even they have guardian angels. *(beat)* I want to be good, but not like Mother Teresa was good. I want to be good the way an apple is good.

METATRON

He's the one I want!

My apple boy! My Honeycrisp! My Golden Delicious!

Boy, I'm gonna take you to the threshing stone of Araunah the Jebusite. And in that place I'm gonna get you hard like a hatchet handle. I'm not saying how—you'll find out when we get there. And then I'm gonna straddle and ride you till you squirt into me like a fire hose. *(Out front)* Does this shock you? Read your Bible! I work for the guy upstairs—I do His bidding, but I get benefits. And this boy is a *major* benefit.

DAVI *(off)*

Ray!

RAY

Here, dad.

(Davi enters holding a note card. Metatron moves upstage.)

DAVI

The grass needs mowing.

RAY

I'll get it later. Do you want anything from campus?

DAVI

Well, if you go by the library—I know you wouldn’t normally go inside, but if you do—they’re holding this for me at circulation.

RAY (*reading the card*)

Corpus Areo-pagan-eye-cum?

DAVI

Areopagiticum. The Celestial Hierarchy. It’s about angels. You might like it.

RAY

Who’s it by?

DAVI

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.

RAY

I think I’ll wait for it to come to Netflix.

DAVI

Are you seeing Taylor this evening?

RAY

Nah, I got choir practice—and her dorm has early curfew.

DAVI

So... you could rehearse your presentation?

RAY

Yah. I guess I could.

DAVI

Isn’t it due on Monday?

RAY

I got all weekend. Do you want me to fix dinner tonight?

DAVI

That won’t be necessary. I’m meeting with Dean Bratson.

RAY

Again?

DAVI

Title IX stuff. Even Wishly students can be indiscreet, sometimes *quite* indiscreet.

(*Davi exits.*)

RAY (*out front*)

My dad's a professor of apocrypha. That's how it is that I grew up here.

(*Ray exits to get his presentation notes.*)

METATRON

Remember, I'm an angel and I'm gorgeous. I can make concrete crack like peanut brittle. So why don't I crunch this freshman Jonagold right now? Because it's no fun if he's scared shitless—and he would be. His immune system can't handle desire—he's never had any. No, this boy's got to be seduced slow. I've gotta plan this out.

(*Metatron exits. Ray enters to rehearse his presentation.*)

RAY (*out front*)

My presentation is on *The Song of Solomon*, chapter one, verses 12 – 20.

*While the king was on his couch,
my nard gave forth its fragrance.
My beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh
that lies between my breasts.
My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms
in the vineyards of Engedi.*

So “nard” is actually lavender—like lavender shampoo which, personally, I think is gross. But she's saying the king, on his couch, can smell her nard—and also her *myrrh*, which is a perfume. It's made from the gum of a bush that grows in Somalia and parts of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia myrrh, is more brittle and gummy than Somalia myrrh. So... she's heavy into smells. “Henna” are red flowers. I couldn't find much about the vineyards of Engedi. It was near the dead sea, but it's also a place in Texas.

Anyway, they really love each other. They compare each other to all sorts of things, mostly flowers and fruit. And later, she talks to us and says:

*“I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
by the gazelles or the does of the field,
that you not stir up or awaken love
until it pleases.”*

I'm still working on that part. (*beat*) You wanna know about gazelles?

(*Blackout. Later that evening Davi and Janet Bratson dine at an Italian restaurant.*)

DAVI

If you intuit a creator, that's great, but why imagine that he created the world on purpose? It might have been an accident. Or the unintended consequence of some other project?

Maybe he was unable to prevent the world's creation, but instead of cleaning up his mess, he moved on to something else. I can forgive him that. He...

JANET

... or *she*.

DAVI

... or *she*, may have created angels as compensation for *her* sloppy work in other areas.

JANET

What areas? What are you talking about?

DAVI

Nipples on the male? Black flies? Childhood leukemia?

JANET

The appendix?

DAVI

To my book?

JANET

To the human intestine.

DAVI

Quite right! Utterly useless. Or *consciousness*. What's that about? I mean, what is consciousness *for*? It's like an appendix of the mind!

JANET

You're saying consciousness wasn't the goal of creation, but a by-product?

DAVI

Or a punishment—or something completely unintended, like a fart.

JANET

Don't be vulgar.

DAVI

Pardon.

JANET

I can't stand vulgarity in an apostate.

DAVI

I'm not an apostate. I'm a heretic; there's a difference!

JANET

Another bottle of Lacryma Christi? We don't have to finish it...

DAVI

Yes, let's indulge! My son thinks we're discussing Title IX violations.

JANET

Aren't we? Isn't vulgarity a Title IX violation?

DAVI

How about consciousness? *Deep* awareness? Is that a violation?

JANET

Only behavior is a violation, not awareness, not desire, not thought.

DAVI

And the creator? The entity that inflicted hormones on humanity?

JANET

Don't go there! The Almighty is officially blameless: we acquired hormones somehow and we're stuck with them.

DAVI

I say hormones are a source of knowledge.

JANET

Then Wishly Bible is a fountain of knowledge! The kids are racked with hormones. A first kiss leads to second thoughts—a third kiss and they come to me in tears.

DAVI

If the creator cared about our dignity, he—or she—would have let us reproduce asexually, like mushrooms.

JANET (*toasting*)

Here's to mushrooms!

DAVI (*returning the toast*)

To fungi of every species!

(Blackout. The next day in the library, Taylor is studying when she sees Ray enter.)

TAYLOR (*whispering*)

Ray... Ray!

RAY

Oh, hi, Taylor.

TAYLOR

What are you doing in the library?

RAY

I gotta pick up a book for my dad. It's about angels. You had lunch?

TAYLOR

I saw an angel once. Or at least I think I did. Yeah, I had lunch.

(pause)

RAY

Oh, well. I'll see you later, then, I guess.

(Ray exits.)

TAYLOR *(out front, but still whispering)*

Ray's not a boyfriend—he's a friend who happens to be a boy. I'm going to meet him at the malt shop later. *(beat)* Sometimes a boy will look at me and, like, *absorb* me. Like he's making a copy of me. When that happens I feel duplicated. One boy I know probably took his copy home and used it to jack off. He probably thinks he *had* me 'cause he slurped up what I look like. Ray wouldn't do that. This other boy did that. *(beat)* Also, he was chewing gum the whole time and I think that's rude.

(Taylor fades out. Davi enters and speaks out front.)

DAVI

Hello again. I've been asked to speak briefly to cover a set change. Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite was a sixth-century mystic who described nine orders of angels, three groups of three. Pseudo-Dionysius maintained that God is better approached by negations than by affirmations. He claimed that when all names of God are negated, "divine silence, darkness, and unknowing" will follow. Dionysius' vision is useful to us in two ways. First, his charting of a celestial hierarchy provides a symbolic system for us to understand God's cosmos and our place within it. But he also points us towards an exit—and this is the second point—he shows us that we can sidestep the celestial hierarchy—negate it—and perceive our relationship with God directly. We don't need angels and perhaps we shouldn't want them. We, ourselves, are creatures of God's love. So... Oh, I think the malt shop is ready. Thank you.

*(Davi exits. Ray and Taylor are discovered at the malt shop.
Metatron watches lustfully.)*

RAY

What I don't get is how did he become *cute*? How did he get to be on kids' birthday cards and lunchboxes? *Peanuts* was a big part of it. "Curse you, Red Baron!" And cheapo movies where planes twist and turn until one manages to fire into the other's stabilizer. And when the stabilizer's hit, there's this thin streak of smoke and the plane with the smoking stabilizer turns homeward like it's all been a game of tag.

TAYLOR

I've never been on a plane.

RAY

I mean, Manfred von Richthofen was a killer. He would dive out of the sun with his motor switched off, get as close to the other plane as he could—fifty yards maybe. He'd aim for the pilot and pull the trigger. If there was an observer, he'd kill the observer first, then the pilot.

TAYLOR

That's terrible.

RAY

The Red Baron was nothing but a drive-by shooter—except he was flying. He racked up eighty 'victories'—a hundred and twenty-three victims shot through the body—or burned to death on the way down.

METATRON (*out front*)

Now you see why I want him! His head is stuffed with random information—it's just thrown in there! The disorder of his mind excites me. It's like a room full of packing foam. I could rearrange him with just my fingertips!

RAY

I mean, he was never trying to shoot the stabilizer.

TAYLOR

Some of the girls in my dorm are praying on behalf of their future husbands. Do you think that's Biblical?

RAY

I dunno. What if they don't get married?

TAYLOR

They want to get married.

RAY

But maybe they won't, so maybe they're praying on behalf nobody. Can you do that? I mean, isn't that like playing Frisbee? I mean, Frisbee with yourself?

METATRON

Oh, my lust explodes! I'VE GOT TO HAVE HIM RIGHT NOW!

(Metatron's body goes limp. There's a flash. Taylor stands as if possessed.)

TAYLOR

This is fucked up. This is uber-fucked up!

RAY

Taylor! I've never heard you swear before.

TAYLOR

I want it now.

RAY

An uber?

TAYLOR

Sex. I want sex. I don't want to wait for marriage. I want you to be my first.

RAY

Your first husband?

TAYLOR

My first victory. I want you to send bullets into my stabilizer. I want you to bring me down in flames. I want you, Ray. I want you to IrRaydiate me! Take me tonight in the language lab. You know the closet where they store the reel-to-reel tapes? Where the *passé composé* coils around the *passé simple*? I want you to meet me there and shoot me through the body like the Red Baron.

RAY

Point blank?

TAYLOR

You got condoms?

RAY

No.

TAYLOR

Get some!

RAY

Um...

TAYLOR

Tonight. In the language lab. I want you *plus que parfait*.

RAY

Taylor... is this you talking?

TAYLOR
Forget the condoms, just come—forgive that pun.

(Janet suddenly appears in exorcism garb.)

JANET
Primordial Metatron, avast!

RAY
Dean Bratson!

TAYLOR
SHIT!

JANET
Angelic deceiver! Wingèd scum, be gone! I conjure thee by the secret name of minion—
which thou knowest I know—to depart this student’s body forthwith!

TAYLOR
Dean Bratson! You’re so... angry!

JANET
Aroint thee, feather-face; the rump-fed runion cries!

TAYLOR
Oooo! It’s the Associate Dean! I’m scared!

RAY
We were just having milkshakes...

JANET
I conjure thee by the secret name of minion...

TAYLOR *(a la Lady Bracknell)*
Is she a female of repellant aspect, remotely connected with education?

JANET
Be gone!

TAYLOR
Dean Bratson is the most cultivated of ladies, and the very picture of respectability!

JANET
Avast!

TAYLOR
It is obviously the same person.

RAY

I don't get it.

JANET

When they found platinum puke in the parking lot, I knew who I was dealing with. Aroint thee, Metatron!

TAYLOR

Aroint yourself, bitch! You're hurting me.

JANET

I'll hurt thee more if thou clearest not out!

RAY

Dean Bratson!

JANET

Quit the body of this female!

TAYLOR

I'll release her, but I get the boy!

JANET

Out of the question—he's a faculty child!

TAYLOR

Would you rather see him fall for Taylor? You wanna see him go apeshit over a demented virgin?

JANET

Alexa, play Linda Ronstadt.

(We hear the opening bars of "Long, Long Time." Metatron twitches in pain.)

TAYLOR

No, no! That won't be necessary...

RAY

Who's Linda Ronstadt? Am I going to get laid?

METATRON *(roaring)*

STOP, ALEXA! STOP THIS INSTANT!

(The music stops. Taylor staggers around the room, partially entranced.)

JANET

At last, the true voice!

METATRON

Accursed administrator!

RAY

Taylor? Taylor! Say something!

(Davi enters with herbs.)

DAVI

I couldn't find wolfbane. I got basil.

JANET

Basil? What am I making here, a salad?

METATRON

I call your bluff, bitch! Name the secret name of minion!

JANET

Truly? Wilt hear it pronounced?

METATRON

Say it or I crunch the boy right now!

DAVI

Say it, Janet!

JANET

Thou wert warned! "Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 as amended... except as provided elsewhere in this act..."

METATRON

No! My angelic sublimity is sickened by bureaucracy!

RAY

She's trembling!

JANET *(rapid fire)*

"No person shall be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of any educational program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal assistance on the basis of sex..."

METATRON

Oh, shit, that smarts! Back off, lady!

JANET

"... unwanted and unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature which interferes with a student's right to learn, study, work, achieve, or participate..."

(Under the dean's assault, Metatron's masculine exterior begins to chip away.)

METATRON *(fey)*

This is so disagreeable!

RAY

Now she's twitching!

DAVI

Hold her, Ray!

RAY

Like this?

JANET

Because possession by angels is *prima face* an impediment to a student's right to learn, study, work, achieve, or participate...

METATRON *(in pain but furious)*

WRONG! So wrong! An *education* is precisely what I'm giving her!

JANET

A cupful is education; a bucketful is abuse.

METATRON

Your brick-brained school never gave her a thimbleful! You gave her nothing!

JANET

"... a student's right to learn, study, work, achieve, or participate..."

METATRON

Arrrh...ARRRH! Aeerp...

JANET

Depart forthwith, Metatron! I command it as title IX coordinator!

RAY

She's trying to get up!

METATRON

ARRRRRRRH! I almost had him—and you stopped me!

JANET

It's not nice to teach people things all at once. Now go—or I'll bring back Ronstadt!

METATRON *(almost a whine)*

Oh, all right... But it's so unfair... I mean... *really*!

(Metatron exits sobbing and cursing. Taylor bolts to her feet, twitching violently.)

DAVI

Way to go, Janet! You did it!

(Taylor breaks free from Ray's grasp and hops around the malt shop singing wild, operatic runs and flourishes. The other characters manage to catch and restrain her. There's a flash and she snaps out of it.)

TAYLOR

Whoa... was I singing just now?

RAY

You passed out, Taylor!

TAYLOR

I did? I feel all funny...

RAY

I'm holding you—my gazelle!

JANET

An angel of the lord was rough with you, honey, but she's gone now.

TAYLOR

Am I still single?

JANET

Yes, dear, but don't let that bother you. At Wishly Bible we've got zero tolerance for angels. Angels are not the Wishly way!

(end of play)