



One
Epic
Night

by Deb Meyer

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Cast of Characters

<u>GABRIEL</u> :	An Angel. Either gender.
<u>MARY</u> :	Teenage girl.
<u>JOSEPH</u> :	Male. Teen-mid-twenties.
<u>ANNA</u> :	Mary's mother.
<u>LEAH</u> :	Joseph's aunt.
<u>HAVAH</u> :	Woman. Sarcastic.
<u>ISCAH</u> :	The Lead Shepherd.
<u>JON-JON</u> :	A Shepherd
<u>NIKKO</u> :	A Shepherd
<u>AMARI</u> :	A Magi. High-strung. Excited.
<u>CORNELIUS</u> :	A Magi. Skeptical.
<u>DION</u> :	A Magi. Bold and insightful.

SCENE 1 - THE VISIT

SETTING: Mary's home.

TIME: Mid-morning.

AT RISE: MARY enters carrying a basket of towels. She sets the basket on a table or bench and begins folding them. The angel enters and stands a few feet behind Mary. Cue spotlight on the angel.

GABRIEL

Greetings Mary.

Mary turns around and gasps.

The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women.

MARY

What? Who are you? How did you get in here?

GABRIEL

Don't be afraid, Mary. I'm Gabriel, an angel sent from God. I came to tell you, God loves you. He's proud of how faithfully you live your life. Mary, God has chosen you to give birth to His son.

MARY

Excuse me?

GABRIEL

You'll name the baby, Jesus. He will be great and his kingdom will last forever.

MARY

You're bright and shiny.

GABRIEL

I'm an angel.

MARY

An angel, right.

GABRIEL

Let me start over.

MARY

Please.

GABRIEL

I'm Gabriel, an angel sent to you, by God.

MARY

Okay, see, right there. That in itself is a lot to process. I've never seen an angel before. I don't know anyone who's seen an angel. So, how do I know-

GABRIEL

I was told, you are a young woman of faith.

MARY

Yes, I am, but...you're... glowing.

GABRIEL

Yes. I'm Gabriel, an angel, and I glow. Take a breath.

MARY inhales deeply.

Good. Now, can we please move on?

MARY

By all means.

GABRIEL

As I was saying, God sent me to tell you that you are chosen you to have His Son.

MARY

Stop. Let's put a pin in that.

GABRIEL

Excuse me?

MARY

I'm not married.

GABRIEL

Yes, I know. However you are engaged to a faithful man, Joseph.

MARY

Yes, that's true. Are you telling me about my future life with Joseph? Are you saying we're going to have a firstborn son?

GABRIEL

Ehhh. Not exactly. I'm telling you, that you're going to conceive a son by God's Holy Spirit. Mary, *YOU* will give birth to the Son of God.

Mary grabs up a cup of water, takes a drink and coughs.

MARY

A son? Conceived by God's Holy Spirit?

GABRIEL

In the words of the prophet Isaiah, "then the Lord will give you a sign, behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and shall call him Immanuel."

MARY

And that's me? Isiah was talking about me?

GABRIEL

Yes Mary.

MARY

Whoa.

GABRIEL

That's your reply? You want me to go back and tell God you said, "whoa".

MARY

What? No. Of course not. Uh, may it be done to me according to God's will. Better?

GABRIEL

Much better.

Mary fumbles with her cup of water dropping it. As she tries to pick it up, the spotlight on Gabriel goes out and he disappears. She stands up, looks around, shakes her head.

MARY

Wait. What just happened? Was that real? Maybe I was dreaming? I'm not asleep. What did I have for breakfast? Figs and barley cake. Maybe the figs were bad. I mean, generally speaking people don't see angels. Do they?

ANNA, LEAH, and HAVAH enter
carrying baskets of food and
talking.

ANNA
Mary, we're home.

MARY
What? Oh, okay, Mom.

*Mary starts folding the clothes
again but is preoccupied with
thoughts of what just happened.*
So, what did you get at the market?

ANNA
You know the usual, figs, wheat, goat cheese-

LEAH
Come on Anna, you got a great deal on barley from Rubin the
Miller.

ANNA
Ehh, could have been better.

HAVAH
Forget the figs and cheese. Mary, have you heard about
Caesar Augustus' latest decree?

LEAH
The census.

ANNA
Of course she's heard. We've all heard. Leah, where does
your family have to go?

LEAH
Oy vey. We've got to go to the little town of Bethlehem. I
just hope we can find a place to stay.

HAVAH
My cousin Levi has a few rooms there that he rents out.

LEAH
Are they clean?

HAVAH

They're disgusting. He's a hoarder. But unless you go early, it may be your only choice.

LEAH

What do you think Mary? Should I take a chance on staying at Levi, the hoarders?

MARY

What? Uh, sure. Why not.

ANNA

Will you two stop. (*Anna looks at Mary*) Mary, are you alright? You're shaking like a goat before a butcher.

LEAH

Goodness dear. You're pale as a milk.

HAVAH

Sit down Mary. Let me get you some water.

MARY sits. HAVAH gets her a cup of water which she sips on.

ANNA

Now, what's wrong child? You look like you've seen a ghost.

MARY

(*Talking under her breath*) Uh, more like an angle. Mom, can I ask you a question?

ANNA

Can you ask me a question? Of course you can ask me a question. I'm your mother.

MARY

Alright. Well, have you ever had one of those times, when you thought you saw someone, or something, somewhere, like here, but then you weren't really sure if it was real, or not? Or if maybe it was a hallucination from bad figs?

ANNA

Our figs are bad?

HAVAH

Happens to me all the time.

MARY

Really?

HAVAH

Absolutely. But it's usually from too much wine.

ANNA

Mary, what's going on? Are you worried about marrying Joseph?

LEAH

You won't find a better man. Of course, being his Aunt, I am a bit partial to the boy.

MARY

No. No, that's not it.

ANNA

Well then, what's wrong?

MARY

Promise you won't laugh?

HAVAH

Is it funny? Because, if it's funny-

MARY

Never mind.

LEAH

Clearly something is troubling you.

ANNA

Whatever it is, you can tell us. We won't laugh. (She looks at Havah) Will we Havah?

HAVAH

No, of course not. May the Lord smite us twice should we dare to smirk at your worries.

ANNA LEAH HAVAH

Amen!

MARY

Okay. This morning, while you were at the market. someone stopped in.

ANNA

While you were alone? Are you alright? Who was it? It wasn't Avka, was it? He knows you're engaged to Joseph. He'd better not-

MARY

No. It wasn't Avka.

HAVAH

Was it Berel? He came to my house yesterday, tried to sell me soft beets.

MARY

No. It wasn't Avka or Berel. It was...Gabriel.

ANNA

Gabriel? I'm not familiar with a Gabriel in our village. Where's he from? What did he want?

HAVAH

Gabriel. Gabriel. Where have I heard that name?

LEAH

Isn't Gabriel the name of the angel who explained visions to Daniel?

ANNA

Right. Well, if he's named after an angel-

MARY

That where things get a little...peculiar.

ANNA

Peculiar? Because he's named after an angel?

MARY

No. No. He's wasn't named, after the angel. He said he *was* the angel, Gabriel.

HAVAH and LEAH look at each other and break out laughing.

MARY

I knew you wouldn't believe me.

ANNA

Stop it you two. You can see she's upset. Mary, start at the beginning and tell us exactly what happened.

LEAH

Yes. Maybe we can help you figure this out.

HAVAH

What did the angel, Gabriel, say to you?

MARY

He said, "Greetings, Mary."

HAVAH

He knew your name? Impressive.

LEAH

Shhh. Go on.

MARY

Then, he said, God was pleased with me, and that I'd have a son, and should name him, Jesus.

ANNA

I'm going to be a Bubbe! A son is a blessing. Joseph will be thrilled.

LEAH

Mazel tov!

MARY

Hang on to your blessings! It's not what you think.

HAVAHA

Meaning, exactly what?

MARY

The angel said I would conceive a son (*She puts her hand over her mouth and mumbles*) by the Holy Spirit.

ANNA

I'm sorry child. I didn't catch that. What did you say?

MARY

The angel Gabriel, said, I'd have a son by the (*She fakes a sneeze and says*) Holy Spirit.

LEAH

One more time.

MARY

(*Sighs*) The angel said, I would conceive a son, by the Holy Spirit.

HAVAHA

Really?

ANNA *points to a bench.*

ANNA

Sit down.

MARY sits. ANNA takes her finger and pulls down one of MARY's eyelids and looks into her eyes, then picks up her wrist and feels for her pulse. She looks at LEAH and HAVAHA.

Havah, who did we buy those figs from?

LEAH

We've all made mistakes dear, so if you're pregnant-

MARY

No. I'm not. At least, I don't think I am. I don't know.

HAVAH

(Irritated) What do you mean, you don't know? Either you're pregnant, *(Gestures a big belly over her own stomach)* or you're not.

MARY

I'm telling you, I don't know. All I know, is that I told the angel, let God's will be done in my life.

HAVAH

And then?

MARY

He was gone.

LEAH

Just like that?

MARY

Yes. Just like that.

ANNA

Have you talked to Joseph about this?

MARY

It just happened. This morning. While you're at the market.

HAVAH

You'd better tell him. I'm pretty sure he'll want to know his fiancée's pregnant.

ANNA

Stop it Havah. Can't you see, she's scared?

HAVAH

She knows right from wrong.

ANNA

Mary, do you know what this will do to your reputation?

LEAH

You're all he ever talks about-

HAVAH

An angel. The Holy Spirit. Blasphemy. No man will want you now. *(Pause)* You know, once the Pharisees find out, you'll be stoned to death.

LEAH

Joseph will be devastated.

HAVAH

Come on Leah. Let's go.

LEAH

Mary, you'd better go talk with him, or, I will.

They pick up their baskets of food to leave. ANNA runs out after them.

ANNA

Leah, Havah, wait. I'm sure it was just a dream. You know how dramatic young girls are.

The three women exit. MARY begins pacing around and talking to herself.

MARY

God? Are you there? Can you hear me? I need a few more details. I know You promised to send us Messiah. But, why me? How will I tell Joseph? He won't believe me. You heard those women... I could be stoned to death. *(Sighs)* But... I know what I saw, and I heard what I heard, so if this is all true, then I am blessed. But God, I'm scared.

MARY goes back to folding clothes, then sits down and begins to weep. After a bit JOSEPH enters.

JOSEPH

Mary. Are you alright? What's going on? I just overheard my Aunt Leah and Havah, saying terrible things about you.

MARY

Joseph. We, we need to talk.

MARY stands. JOSEPH takes her hand.

JOSEPH

Alright. What is it? Are you ill? You're shaking.

MARY

Joseph, do you...do you, believe in angels?

JOSEPH

Angels? I don't know. Maybe. Why?

MARY

What would you say, if I said, I saw an angel this morning?

JOSEPH

(Chuckles) I would ask if you've been eating Egyptian figs again. Why? Did you? See an angel?

MARY

Yes. I, I did.

JOSEPH

Were the figs poached in wine?

MARY

There were no figs, or wine. It was an angel. I'm telling you, I saw a bright shiny angel.

JOSEPH

Okay. Okay. I'm sorry. It's just a little, unusual. Not the kind of thing one usually hears these days.

MARY

I know.

JOSEPH

So, what did this "angel" say to you?

MARY

Gabriel. His name was Gabriel, and he said, I would have a son and should name him, Jesus.

JOSEPH

That's wonderful. We're having a first born son.

MARY

No. Not exactly.

JOSEPH

No? We're not having a first born son?

MARY

I don't know how to tell you this.

JOSEPH

Whatever it is, just tell me. You know I love you. You can tell me anything.

MARY

The angel said, I was chosen by God, and would conceive a son by, by... the *(slowly)* Holy Spirit.

JOSEPH:

Really? The Holy Spirit?

MARY

That's what he said.

JOSEPH

You know, if there's someone else just tell me. You don't have to make up wild stories about shiny angels and-

MARY

There's no one else. I promise.

JOSEPH

But, you're pregnant? With a son?

MARY

Or, I will be soon.

JOSEPH

I thought I knew you. I trusted you. I was looking forward to spending my life with you. I don't even know how to respond to something like this. *(Pause)* I've got to go.

He starts to walk away.

MARY

Joseph, wait...

JOSEPH

An angel? Huh. You must take me for some kind of fool.

Joseph walks out. Mary begins weeping and exits off in the other direction.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

SCENE 2 - THE DREAM

SETTING: Night. Joseph's dimly lit home.

AT RISE: JOSEPH is trying to sleep. He's tossing, turning and mumbling.

JOSEPH
An Angel. Pregnant. Holy Spirit. Mary. Mary. No. No. I can't.

Gabriel enters and tries to gently wake JOSEPH.

GABRIEL
Joseph. Joseph. Son of David.

JOSEPH
Huh? Who's there? Mom?

GABRIEL nudges JOSEPH again.

GABRIEL
Joseph. Don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife.

JOSEPH
Mary. My wife? No. No.

GABRIEL
Mary has found favor with God. The child she will have is of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, she will give birth to a son. His name will be Jesus.

JOSEPH
Jesus. His name will be, Jesus?

GABRIEL

Yes. He will be great, and will save people from their sins. Joseph, you are part of God's plan. Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife.

GABRIEL exits and Joseph jumps up with a jerk and gasps.

JOSEPH

What was that? Who's there? Come out wherever you are. Show your face. *(Pause)* I heard someone. I'm sure of it. Could it have been an angel? Or, was I dreaming?

JOSEPH begins pacing around.

Was Mary was telling the truth? I do love her, and if it was an angel sent by God, who am I to dismiss him. On the other hand, no one will believe us, or understand why I would marry her. But if it's God's plan, who am I to object. Isaiah wrote, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than our ways and his thoughts higher than our thoughts." Mary shall be my wife, and the child shall be called Jesus.

JOSEPH lies back down and falls asleep. Lights dim.

FADE TO BLACK

SCENE 3 - CUE THE SHEPHERDS

Cool-colored evening lighting effects. Cue nighttime effects and sheep bleating. Lights rise on the shepherds.

ISCAH

We'll camp here tonight.

JON-JON

Fine, I guess. I mean we've done with less.

NIKKO

It looks good to me. Come on let's get a fire going.

NIKKO starts gathering sticks and piling them up.

Jon-Jon, grab some of those dead willow branches. They make a great fire starter.

JON-JON

I don't think so nature boy.

JON-JON spreads out his blanket and lies down.

It's past time for my, slumber joy.

ISCAH slaps him lightly on the back of the head.

ISCAH

Putz. What does that even mean? Forget the fire Nikko. I'm exhausted.

ISCAH spreads out his blanket and lies down.

Let's just call it a night.

NIKKO

But, we always have a fire, and besides, I'm not tired.

JON-JON

Of course you're not tired. You didn't have to chase those four runaway sheep halfway to Herodium, and secure them to Rubin's podium.

He lies down to sleep.

NIKKO

Look at those stars. Stunning, aren't they?

ISCAH

Yeah. Whatever.

ISCAH & JON-JON fall asleep and begin snoring, while NIKKO continues rambling about the stars.

NIKKO

They look different tonight...shinier or something, and that bright one, over there. *(He points)* I don't remember seeing that one before. Maybe I just never noticed it, but I don't think so, I'm usually pretty good with stars. I think I would remember seeing a star that bright.

JON-JON

(Irritated) Hey, Starboy, can the chatter.

Cue small moving lights to reflect stars, lighting up the night sky. A bright light appears as the Angel enters and stands in front of JON-JON. The Shepherds are terrified.

NIKKO

Hey guys, guys, wake up.

JON-JON

What? I had just gotten to... *(Sees the Angel and lets out a little shriek)* Iscah. Iscah!

ISCAH rolls over, sits up, sees the Angel, grabs Nikko and also lets out a shriek.

NIKKO

(Whispers) We should have built a fire.

Don't be afraid.

GABRIEL

GABRIEL looks around, sniffs a few times and reacts to the nasty sheep smell.

I've got good news for everyone. Especially you, O' fragrant shepherds. *(Plugs his nose and tries to speak)* Tonight, in the city of David-

What?

ISCAH

GABRIEL unplugs his nose, takes a deep breath.

GABRIEL
(Talking to himself) I can do this, I'm an angel. I bring you good news. Tonight in the City of David, a baby has been born, who will save the world from their sins. You'll find him wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. Whew! Sorry guys, I gotta go.

GABRIEL hurries out. The Shepherds look at each other and shake their heads in confusion.

Did you just see?

ISCAH

JON-JON
 Blinding light, a terrible fright?

NIKKO
 A highly illuminated angelic being? It really was quite, stunning.

JON-JON
 Or, a plot by Herod to keep our sheep running.

ISCAH
 Okay. *(He looks at Jon-Jon)* You stop rhyming. *(He looks at Nikko)* And, you, nature boy, get out your compass, and get us to the City of David. Where is that anyway?

JON-JON
 I think it's Bethlehem. A-hem, a-hem.

NIKKO holds his finger up to sense the wind direction, and starts walking in one direction.

NIKKO

This way.

ISCAH and JON-JON follow close behind. NIKKO stops, the other two bump into him. He turns around, looks at his compass.

No. We should go... (He points the opposite direction) that way.

NIKKO takes the lead walking out, the other two follow.

JON-JON

Listen. I'm hearing angels sing. Let's go find that baby king.

ISCAH looks at NIKKO.

JON-JON

Sorry. I forgot.

LIGHTS DOWN, END SCENE

SCENE 4 - ROYAL IRONY

The final scene will be at the stable where Mary and Joseph are talking as she holds baby, Jesus.

JOSEPH
He's already amazing.

MARY
I love you.

JOSEPH
His hands are so tiny.

MARY
The hands of a King.

The excited Shepherds ramble in.

NIKKO
Look, here he is. I told you I knew where I was going.

ISCAH
(Talking to Mary and Joseph) We saw an angel.

MARY waves her hand to diminish their smell.

MARY
Really?

JON-JON
There were a bunch of them. Like bright shooting stars. They lit up the skies. Swarming, like a huge mass of black-

ISCAH slaps Jon-Jon on the back of the head.

They told us a Savior was born.

NIKKO
The angel said, we'd find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes...

ISCAH
And, lying in a manger.

JON-JON
I'm telling you, it just doesn't get any stranger.

They all look at JON-JON.

I can't help it. I'm excited.

ISCAH

May we see him?

MARY

Of course. *(She shows them the baby)*

Enter the Magi.

AMARI

Here he is. I told you, the stars never lie.

CORNELIUS

But, it's a stable.

JOSEPH

It was the only place we could find.

MARY

The census. All the rooms were full.

DION

Brilliant. Sheer genius.

CORNELIUS

A king, born in a common stable?

DION

Yet, destined for a throne.

CORNELIUS AND DION

Royal Irony!

AMARI

I knew it. Once I saw Draco, lined up with Libra and Orion, and that brilliant star in the east. I knew, divinity became life.

JOSEPH

His name is Jesus.

AMARI

If I remember my Hebrew, the name, Jesus, means, one who delivers.

MARY

That's right.

DION

Present the King, with his royal gifts.

AMARI

Gold, for King Jesus.

CORNELIUS

Frankincense.

DION

And, Myrrh. (Pause) Ah, more irony.

*MARY and JOSPEH look at each other,
confused.*

DION

A King, humbly born and royally announced in the vastness of
the heavens.

AMARI

Surely, He will be 'The King' for all humanity.