

Mrs Gusset: Everyone else off stage. Millie, you stand here on the right and say your first speech.

Millie: **(Millie holds her script in front of her face.)** This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother, Mary, was pledged...

Mrs Gusset: **(Interrupting)** Millie dear, we can't see your face. You need to lower your script so we can all see you.

Millie: Sorry, miss. **(She lowers the script and reads again, but looks down throughout.)** This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother, Mary, was...

Mrs Gusset: We still can't see your face, Millie. You're reading it like this: **(imitating Millie)** This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother, Mary, was pledged to be married to Joseph. You see? It looks silly. Hold the script down, but keep your head up. Hopefully you'll know your lines, so you won't need to be looking at your script on the night.

Millie: OK, miss. **(As she reads, the script gradually comes up again, obscuring her face.)** This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother, Mary, was pledged to be married to Joseph.

Mrs Gusset: Script Millie! Lower the script!

Millie: Sorry, miss. Do you want me to do it again?

Mrs Gusset: No, no. We'll never get through it at this rate. Just carry on.

Millie: God sent one of his angels, Gabriel, to give Mary a message.

Mrs Gusset: OK. Mary and Gabriel, on you come.

(Mary enters, carrying a doll wrapped in a blanket, followed by Ashley, surreptitiously chewing gum.)

Mrs Gusset: **(Pointing to the doll.)** What's that?

Mary: It's the Baby Jesus, miss.

Mrs Gusset: I know that. What are you doing bringing it on now? The angel Gabriel's about to tell you you're going to have a baby, and you've got it in your hands. That's not biologically possible.

Mary: Sorry, miss. I'll just put him down here.

Mrs Gusset: You can't put him on the floor: it's disrespectful. Give him to one of your friends to hold.

(Mary gives the doll to Rebecca, a shepherd, and returns to the stage.)

Mrs Gusset: Right, Mary, you kneel there, and Gabriel you come on from the left and say your line.

Ashley: (Still chewing.) Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you. Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have...

(Mrs Gusset walks towards Ashley, looking intently at his mouth.)

Mrs Gusset: Are you chewing, Ashley Jenkins?

Ashley: (Stops chewing.) No, miss.

Mrs Gusset: Open your mouth.

(Ashley opens his mouth.)

Mrs Gusset: Lift up your tongue.

(Ashley does so.)

Mrs Gusset: (Gets a tissue from her sleeve.) OK, spit it out.

(Ashley spits it out onto the tissue.)

Mrs Gusset: We can't have the Archangel Gabriel chewing now, can we? What would the other angels say?

Ashley: I don't know, miss. Sorry, miss.

Mrs Gusset: Never mind. Go back to your place and say your line again. Mary, dear, you need to look afraid when Gabriel appears.

(As Gabriel starts to read his line again, Mary begins to shake violently.)

Ashley: Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you. Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have... **(to Mrs Gusset)** what's she doing, miss?

Mary: I'm trembling with fear, miss. They taught me that at stage school.

Ashley: She looks like she's having a fit, miss.

Mrs Gusset: Ashley! You mustn't say things like that. Mary, dear, perhaps you could tremble a little less violently?

Mary: How scared should I be? Scared like I've forgotten my homework? Or scared like I'm going to be eaten by a lion? At stage school they tell us we have to remember our everyday emotions and use them in our acting.

Ashley: When were *you* eaten by a lion?

Mary: Well...I wasn't. But I was bitten by next door's Jack Russell when I was five.

Ashley: 'Cos that's the same.