

THE LITTLEST ANGEL

by Sharon Kirby-Cole



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The Littlest Angel

A dramatic version of
Charles Tazewell's beloved
Christmas story

by Sharon Kirby-Cole

This play is gratefully dedicated to James C. Carver of the Kalamazoo, Michigan, Community Theatre, for his support and editorial assistance. Thanks, sir. Honey, you are the best!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Recording Angel — Kindly, accepting. (Can double as Louise.)

Jimmy Baxter — Seven and one half years old, new to heaven, “The Littlest Angel.”

Charlie — Older teen or young man, very kind and understanding, Jimmy’s guide to heaven.

Henrietta — “Heavenly Robes” angel, brisk and busy. (Can double as Angela.)

George — The Bath Angel, a little skeptical about Jimmy. (Can Double as Angus.)

Charlene — Wings Angel, motherly. (Can double as Sally.)

Suzy — Halo Angel, very kind and patient.

Josie — Choir Director Angel, businesslike, understanding, and quick to praise.

Sally — Choir Angel, a very good angel, pushed too far.

Fred — Choir Angel, impatient.

Angela — Prayer Angel, a very young adult pushed beyond understanding.

Louise — Senior angel, very impatient, high standards.

Angus — The Flight Instructor, a very loving and patient angel. He can be strict, however — after all, flying is a tricky business.

Henry — Young angel who literally has a run-in with Jimmy.

Peace Angel — Mature, loving angel, like a parent.

Small Angels 1, 2, 3, 4 — They play the parts of the Choir, Flying Lesson Students, and Praying Angels. (All Angels may double in crowd scenes.)

Voice of God — Basso profundo Off-stage voice.

PRODUCTION NOTES

This two-act play is based on the delightful and beloved children's story *The Littlest Angel* by Charles Tazewell. Though it was written in 1957, it is timeless in its message of Christmas giving. The pacing should move along quickly.

Setting: All of the action takes place in heaven or at the heavenly gates today.

Flexible Casting: This play was written to involve as many children and teens as possible. However, if you have a smaller cast, you can double some roles as indicated in the cast list. If roles are doubled, then in the final scene only one of the two angels played by the same person will be able to present a gift. Just cut the additional lines. Due to the number of lines, we used three Jimmys, but one or two would be better. A note of warning — everybody wanted to be one of the Flying Lesson Students, so beware!

Set and Props: Gate into heaven. Making a gate that a small boy could swing on was tricky. We used 4' x 4's for a frame, weighted with sand bags. The gate itself had a curved top and a straight bottom with doweling between. The entire gate was painted white with sparkles and topped with pearly white Christmas tree ornaments. Other items needed are a Victorian clerk's desk; feather pen; ink stand; large books; rack of angel robes; measuring tape; celestial shower stall; calipers and shelf of angel wings; box of haloes; polishing cloth; white music stand; director's baton; whistle; comfortable chair; door; small dirty box with a butterfly, a bird's egg, two white stones, and a dog collar; gifts from each angel wrapped in silver or gold paper, or an unwrapped gift from each angel including a feather pen, two or three large ledger-type books, cloud, wrapped box with "robe" tied with lots of white ribbon with one corner open, three bars of white soap tied together with ribbon, white gold halo, scroll of music tied with gold ribbon, sparkly wings, large book with title "How to Fly," small book of prayers, table to hold gifts, star ornament.

We allowed each child and teen to make clouds to dress the set. We used cardboard painted with white lacquer and dressed with cotton. Each child also made or wrapped his/her gift — smaller angels wrapped small boxes, etc. The rack for angel's wings was a piece of plywood

about 2" x 3" with dowels (for racks for the wings) at regular intervals, painted white. The celestial shower was two pieces of plywood hinged; inside we used a cream cheese container fastened to PVC pipe. Inside the container, we used Christmas tree tinsel to simulate the water flowing down. A spring, attached to a cord, released the "lid" when pulled, and the shower came on.

Preset for Act I, Scene 1: Recording Angel's desk, books, feather pen and ink stand; rack of angel robes, celestial shower, wings' shelf, box of haloes.

Brought on, Act I, Scene 2: Measuring tape, calipers, polishing cloth.

Brought on for Act I, Scene 3: Music stand.

Brought on for Act I, Scene 4: Whistle.

Brought on for Act I, Scene 5: Nothing.

Preset for Act II, Scene 1: Comfortable chair, door.

Brought on for Act II, Scene 2: Jimmy's box with butterfly, bird's egg, dog's collar, and shiny stones inside.

Brought on for Act II, Scene 3: Nothing.

Brought on for Act II, Scene 4: Table to hold gifts, and each Angel must bring in his/her gift for the Christ child, including Jimmy with his box and star ornament.

SOUND EFFECTS: Sound of running water for shower, piano accompaniment for the scales in the choir scene and for the hymn of praise (a song of your choosing).

COSTUMES: At the beginning of the play, Jimmy wears jeans, light-up sneakers, and a football jersey. For the Angels, we allowed each cast member to decorate his/her own wings. Everyone wears a white angel's robe, a halo, and wings. Jimmy's angel robe in Act I should be wrinkled and dirty; in Act II it is pristine white. Our cast was barefoot, but sandals would work if you have splintery floors. The Recording Angel needs wire-rimmed glasses.

ACT I
Scene 1

(Cloud background and floor, high gate (open) and fence, painted whitish gold; high Victorian style desk and stool; with huge book (at least 14" x 17"). An older gentleman, the RECORDING ANGEL, is dressed in a white robe with wire-rimmed glasses halfway down his nose and wings and a halo. He is writing in a ledger book with a quill pen and is seated on the stool. As lights come up a small child, JIMMY, dressed in jeans, sneakers, and jersey, very dirty, slowly enters and looks around, fascinated by what he sees.)

RECORDING ANGEL: *(Peering over his glasses)* Well, well, who have we here?

JIMMY: *(Very softly)* Jimmy. *(Beat)* *(Rubbing left foot on back of right leg and straightening up)* **James Thomas Baxter, sir.**

RECORDING ANGEL: Hmmmm. Hello, James Thomas Baxter. And how old are you?

JIMMY: Seven. Mmmmm, seven 'n a half.

RECORDING ANGEL: *(As he examines book)* Let me see — yes, Jimmy Baxter. Here we are. Hmmmm! Yes, good. Welcome to heaven! *(Makes check mark in his ledger and gestures for JIMMY to enter through the gates.)*

JIMMY: Where am I supposed to go? What am I supposed to do?

RECORDING ANGEL: *(So startled he jumps about a foot and blots the book. Grabs his robe sleeve and uses it to blot the page.)* Drat! Double drat! Never in all my years! ... Oh yes, I see. Sorry, my boy. Just a moment, please. *(He turns and calls Upstage.)* Charlie!

CHARLIE: *(Entering from Upstage Left)* Hi there, Jimmy! I'm Charlie, and I will be helping you get adjusted here in heaven. Why don't you and I get you going?

JIMMY: Well, OK, but ... what about my mom?

RECORDING ANGEL: *(Pause while he checks the book)* I'm sorry, Jimmy, but your mom won't be here for quite some time. *(Cheerfully)* But don't worry — time is different here in heaven. You'll hardly notice it passing.

JIMMY: *(Rubs at "tear" with fist.)* Oh, OK, I guess. *(Squares his shoulders, sniffs, and looks at CHARLIE.)* I'm ready! Let's go!

CHARLIE: You got it, Jimmy. Here we go! *(JIMMY and CHARLIE exit through gates.)*

Scene 2

Same set without desk or stool.

(JIMMY and CHARLIE enter.)

CHARLIE: OK, first we'd better get you dressed. *(They cross to a mature angel, HENRIETTA, standing before a clothes rack with multiple angel robes hanging from it.)*

JIMMY: Do I have to wear a dress?

HENRIETTA: These are not dresses, young man! They are robes for the heavenly host. Now, come along. I haven't got all day, you know.

CHARLIE: It's OK, Jimmy. Everyone here wears them — they're very comfortable. I think you'll like it once you try it.

JIMMY: *(Doubtfully)* Welllll, if I have to. But nobody better laugh!

CHARLIE: Nobody will laugh, I promise. *(Crossing his heart)* Cross my heart and hope to die.

HENRIETTA: *(Kind, but brisk and busy)* Come along, young man. *(Takes tape measure from around her neck and starts measuring Jimmy.)* Hmmm — size eight, I guess.

JIMMY: Wow, eight! I'm almost eight!

HENRIETTA: Yes, yes, I'm sure. Now, you trot along behind this rack and get rid of those human clothes. Oh no,

1 wait — a bath. Charlie, what are you doing bringing
 2 him to me before his bath? Oh, well. I haven't got all
 3 day, you know — take him and his robe and get him
 4 clean! If it doesn't fit, bring it back — but it will. I don't
 5 make mistakes.

6 CHARLIE: Sorry, Henrietta. Forgot about the celestial bath.
 7 OK, Jimmy, off we go.

8 JIMMY: A bath? Do I hafta?

9 CHARLIE: (*Explaining very gently*) Well, yes. You see, angels
 10 are never dirty. Come on now. It won't take long, and
 11 I promise it won't hurt. Besides, it's the last bath you'll
 12 ever have to take. Angels don't get dirty, you know, so
 13 this is it.

14 HENRIETTA: Get along, get along! There are others
 15 waiting, you know.

16 JIMMY: (*Stunned*) My last bath ever? Forever? Really?
 17 Ohhhh! How long is forever? OK — last one in is a
 18 rotten egg! (*He and CHARLIE cross in front of the clothing*
 19 *rack toward a large cloud. HENRIETTA exits, taking*
 20 *clothing rack with her as CHARLIE and JIMMY cross*).

21 GEORGE: (*Beside cloud*) Hey Charlie, who have you got
 22 here? How did he ever get in being that dirty?

23 CHARLIE: Hey, George! This is Jimmy. He just got here
 24 and needs his celestial bath and to get into his robe.
 25 (*Quietly, behind his hand, to GEORGE*) Try to be a little
 26 nicer. The kid is really scared. Henrietta was in a
 27 "hurry." (*Makes quotation marks in the air.*)

28 GEORGE: Oh, yeah. Sorry, kid. (*Holding out his hand*) I'm
 29 George, the Heavenly Bath Angel. How are you? New
 30 arrival, huh? Well, don't worry — we'll soon get rid of
 31 that earthly dirt. Ha, ha, get it? Earthly dirt?

32 JIMMY: Hi, I'm Jimmy — uh, James Thomas Baxter. (*Shaking*
 33 *hands.*) It's nice ta meet cha.

34 GEORGE: Nice to meet you too. Now, if you will just step
 35 right over here, (*Gesturing behind the cloud*) we can get you

1 all cleaned up and into your angel robe. Everything you
 2 need is right back here — heavenly soap and water,
 3 washcloth, and towel. (*JIMMY steps hesitantly behind cloud.*
 4 *As he does, GEORGE turns on a heavenly showerhead.*) Do
 5 you need some help?

6 **JIMMY:** (*From behind cloud*) No! I'm seven an' a half. I can do
 7 it.

8 **GEORGE:** Sorry, kid. (*To CHARLIE*) Are you sure this isn't a
 9 mistake? He seems awful young and feisty. Angels aren't
 10 supposed to be feisty. (*To JIMMY*) Ears! (*To CHARLIE*) I
 11 seem to remember ears from when I was a kid on earth.

12 **CHARLIE:** I don't know — they let him in! Besides, I just take
 13 orders here, you know.

14 **GEORGE:** Ain't it the truth! How's it coming, kid?

15 **JIMMY:** (*From behind cloud*) OK, (*Whispering*) but what about
 16 underwear?

17 **GEORGE:** (*Chuckling*) Oh! Look behind you on the top shelf.

18 **JIMMY:** Oh, I see it! Thanks! (*GEORGE shakes his head while*
 19 *CHARLIE shrugs his shoulders. JIMMY steps out in his*
 20 *immaculate robe, with most of the smudges washed off his face*
 21 *and hands. His feet, however, are still in his sneakers.*)

22 **GEORGE:** Well, I guess you'll do — no, wait! (*Explaining*
 23 *patiently*) Kid, in heaven we don't wear shoes, so you
 24 won't need them.

25 **JIMMY:** But I just got these sneakers! They light up when I
 26 walk.

27 **GEORGE:** Jimmy, I know. And they look terrific, but we don't
 28 wear shoes in heaven. (*JIMMY sits down and takes off his*
 29 *sneakers and socks, looking very unhappy.*) Kid, those feet will
 30 not do! Get back into the bath and get clean!

31 **CHARLIE:** George! Jimmy, you do need to be a little cleaner
 32 in heaven. Do you want me to help you?

33 **JIMMY:** Nah, I'll do it. I just forgot about my feet! Sorry.

34 **GEORGE:** (*After a major nudge from CHARLIE*) Oh, that's OK,
 35 kid. We all forget sometimes. Sorry I yelled. (*JIMMY*

1 *trudges back behind the cloud and emerges a moment later with*
 2 *clean feet and a slightly cleaner face. GEORGE nods*
 3 *approvingly and exits, pushing his cloud.)*

4 **CHARLIE:** Much better, Jimmy. Come on, pal. *(They cross to*
 5 *CHARLENE, an angel with a rack of wings behind her.)* Hey
 6 Charlene, this is Jimmy. He just got here and needs his
 7 angel wings.

8 **JIMMY:** Wow! Wings would be totally awesome!

9 **CHARLENE:** Hi, Jimmy. New here, huh? Well, come over here
 10 and let me measure you. *(She takes a pair of calipers from*
 11 *the shelf and measures JIMMY's shoulders.)* Hmmmm, size
 12 seven ex, I think?

13 **JIMMY:** What's a "seven ex"? I know about "seven," but
 14 what's an "ex"?

15 **CHARLENE:** "Ex" means expandable. They will grow with
 16 you, so I don't have to give you new ones later.

17 **JIMMY:** Wow — do angels grow? *(CHARLENE struggles to get*
 18 *his wings on as they are talking.)*

19 **CHARLIE:** Well, we don't really grow, but sometimes, if we're
 20 very, very good, we get a little bigger and more
 21 "impressive."

22 **JIMMY:** What's "pressive"?

23 **CHARLENE:** It just means that you look bigger and better to
 24 the other angels, Jimmy. But you have to be very good
 25 to get there. You know, you look shinier, more majestic
 26 ... *(She is still struggling with his wings. They will not stay on*
 27 *straight. Finally, with a sigh, she gives up.)*

28 **JIMMY:** *(Doubtfully)* Well, my grandma says I'm very good —
 29 in fact, she once said that I was her little angel. Does that
 30 count?

31 **CHARLIE:** *(Laughing)* Of course it does, Jimmy. Grandmas
 32 always know. Thanks, Charlene! *(CHARLENE waves and*
 33 *exits.)* Jimmy, we need to get you a halo now. *(They cross*
 34 *to SUZY, an angel sitting on the floor polishing haloes, who*
 35 *was hidden behind GEORGE's cloud that he pushed off.)* Hi,

1 **Suzy! How's the halo business?**
2 **SUZY:** *(With a big smile and still working hard on a halo)*
3 **Business is really booming. Lots of newcomers! (To**
4 **JIMMY) Hello. I'm Suzy. I'm assigned to the halo**
5 **department. Who are you?**
6 **JIMMY:** **Hi. I'm Jimmy. Do I really get a halo? I thought you**
7 **had to earn one.**
8 **SUZY:** *(With a small chuckle)* **No, if you're admitted to heaven,**
9 **then you get a halo. Let me see ...** *(She eyeballs his head*
10 *and measures it with her hands, then reaches behind her for a*
11 *halo.)* **I think this will do. Let's try it.** *(JIMMY bows his*
12 *head and she fits his halo on. It immediately slips sideways.)*
13 **Oops! No, Jimmy, it's OK. I'll just straighten it.** *(She*
14 *straightens it and as soon as JIMMY moves, it slips.)* **What in**
15 **heaven? I wonder if this is defective — never had a**
16 **defective halo before.** *(She takes it off JIMMY's head and*
17 *examines it carefully.)* **No, it's OK.** *(She puts it back on*
18 *JIMMY's head and it slips sideways again.)* **Well, I just don't**
19 **know. Let's try another one.** *(She tries three different haloes,*
20 *but each one slips sideways as soon as she puts it on JIMMY's*
21 *head. He, meanwhile, is getting very restless and fidgety.)*
22 **CHARLIE:** **Suzy, let's just let it go for now. Maybe later, after**
23 **Jimmy has settled in, he can come back for a new fitting.**
24 **JIMMY:** **Yes, please. I'm really tired of standing still. I was**
25 **never very good at that.**
26 **SUZY:** *(Again with a chuckle)* **You know, I think that's a really**
27 **good idea. Jimmy, you come back after you feel more at**
28 **home here, and we'll see what we can do.** *(JIMMY and*
29 *CHARLIE exit as she waves good-bye. She checks her own halo*
30 *with her hands and looks carefully at the "reject" haloes that*
31 *wouldn't sit straight. With a shake of her head, she goes back*
32 *to polishing, and the lights fade.)*
33
34
35

Scene 3

Same scene three months later.

(*CHOIR ANGELS enter, with JOSIE carrying a white music stand, a music book, and a director's baton. As CHOIR ANGELS get in line and chatter happily, JOSIE sets up music stand and book. JIMMY is the last one in, racing to get into place "on time."*)

JOSIE: (*Tapping baton on music stand*) **All right now. Attention, everybody! Before we begin practice today, I want to thank all of you for all the great work you have done these past couple weeks! I know it's been really busy and you've been practicing hard, but the results have been wonderful! The heavenly choir has never sounded better.** (*The CHOIR ANGELS smile, preen, and look very proud of themselves. A couple of high fives, pats on the back, and general handshakes are passed around.*) **OK, let's get started.** (*Hums a pitch.*) **Hmmmm!** (*JOSIE leads the heavenly chorus in warm-ups. They go up the scale in "la la's" from A to E and back down to A — A, B, C sharp, D, E, D, C sharp, B, A — then do the same thing a half step higher, e.g., starting on B flat — B flat, C, D, E flat, F, E flat, D, C, B flat, and so forth. The CHOIR ANGELS all stand very straight, breathing deeply and focusing on singing well. JIMMY begins softly, looking down at his feet, and as he gets louder, he gets more and more flat. After about six scales —*) **Jimmy, you are not quite on pitch. Listen carefully.** (*She hums an F sharp, and JIMMY follows with an F. She tries five times, with different pitches, and JIMMY just doesn't get it.*) **Jimmy, dear, are you listening? Try again!** (*She tries la, la, la up the scale from middle C, and JIMMY tries to sing the same pitch, but is still flat. She tries lower, then higher, and still JIMMY is flat. Meanwhile, the other CHOIR ANGELS are getting restless, fidgeting, and finally whispering among themselves.*) **Choir! Members of**

1 the heavenly choir, pay attention with patience. This is
2 heaven, after all. (*CHOIR ANGELS quiet and look*
3 *ashamed.*)

4 **SALLY:** Josie, I'm really sorry, but it's so hard to be good
5 and patient when Jimmy never even tries. He's always
6 late, or doesn't know his music, or he sings off-key! It
7 really upsets the rest of us — even if we *are* angels!

8 **JOSIE:** Sally, I truly do understand, but you need to try to
9 be more patient. Jimmy is new to heaven, and I'm sure
10 you all remember what a huge adjustment it was to go
11 from human to angel.

12 **FRED:** That's true, and we do try to remember to be patient,
13 but the heavenly choir has to sound ... well, heavenly.
14 Which it totally doesn't! (*All the CHOIR ANGELS glare at*
15 *JIMMY, then catch themselves and try to look "saintly."*)

16 **JOSIE:** Angels, please! This is not the atmosphere that
17 produces heavenly music. We must all *think* angelic in
18 order to *sing* angelic. Remember, inhalation is
19 preparation, and ...

20 **ALL ANGELS and JOSIE:** (*In unison*) Exhalation is praise!

21 **JOSIE:** Exactly! Now, everyone, let's practice our breathing
22 and see if that will get us *all* in the mood! (*She looks very*
23 *fierce as she leads them in chin up, shoulders down, back*
24 *straight, breathing through the diaphragm, and slowly*
25 *exhaling — very audibly. After about six breaths —*) **Much**
26 **better, don't you agree? All right, let's try this week's**
27 **hymn of praise.** (*She turns her music to the proper page,*
28 *taps with her baton on the music stand, and prepares to*
29 *conduct a hymn of praise. As she gives the downbeat, all the*
30 *CHOIR ANGELS begin beautifully, except JIMMY, who is,*
31 *as usual, flat. All the CHOIR ANGELS stop and stare at*
32 *JIMMY.*)

33 **JIMMY:** I'm sorry, I really am, and I am trying, I am! But
34 it just doesn't seem to work, and besides ... (*Mumbling*)
35 This is really boring.

- 1 **JOSIE:** What did you say?
- 2 **JIMMY:** I said, this is really boring! Well, it is — same ole
3 words all the time, no beat, no fun. (*The entire ANGEL*
4 *CHOIR, including JOSIE, is horrified. They gasp, whisper*
5 *among themselves, point at JIMMY, etc.*)
- 6 **JOSIE:** Jimmy! We all sing to the glory of God. The words
7 haven't changed in millennia!
- 8 **JIMMY:** Well, yeah! Boring.
- 9 **JOSIE:** Jimmy, remember why you are singing! Now, try
10 once more. All right, choir, ready? (*Again, tapping baton*
11 *on music stand, and with downbeat, CHOIR starts off*
12 *beautifully, as JIMMY sings flat as before. JOSIE cuts off*
13 *CHOIR.*) Lord, deliver me. Charlie, Charlie!
- 14 **CHARLIE:** (*From Off-stage*) What? (*As he enters*) Oh! Jimmy,
15 maybe you'd better come with me. It doesn't sound like
16 choir practice is your cup of tea. (*CHOIR exits in disgust.*
17 *JIMMY and CHARLIE cross Downstage Center and sit on a*
18 *cloud.*) Jimmy, what seems to be the problem here?
- 19 **JIMMY:** I dunno.
- 20 **CHARLIE:** Jimmy, you just don't seem very happy here.
21 And this is heaven! What's the matter, pal?
- 22 **JIMMY:** Well, there just isn't anything to do here. Back
23 home, there was lots to do. Here, there isn't anything
24 but sitting on a cloud or singing or praying; no trees to
25 climb, no one to play with, no snow to build forts with
26 or make snowballs, (*As he talks, he tries to make a*
27 *snowball out of cloud material, but nothing happens*) no
28 creeks to swim in, just nothing.
- 29 **CHARLIE:** Well, I just don't know what to do. This is
30 heaven. Everyone is supposed to be eternally happy
31 and at peace here. I ... You just need to concentrate
32 and learn how to be happy here instead of missing
33 home. Will you try? Just for me? Oops, Jimmy, it's time
34 for prayers.
- 35 **JIMMY:** (*Chewing his wing tips*) How did you know that?

SCENE 4

25 (*JIMMY is alone On-stage, swinging on the heavenly gates,*
26 *each one in turn, and jumping off as the swing gets wider*
27 *and wider, catching the gate and swinging again. His halo is*
28 *lying on the ground next to the gates. A senior angel,*
29 *LOUISE, enters.)*

30 **LOUISE:** Young man! What do you think you are doing?
31 This is heaven, and we do not run and jump, and we
32 certainly never, ever swing on the pearly gates! Come
33 here. (*JIMMY jumps down from the gate and slowly heads*
34 *toward LOUISE, head down, feet dragging.) Don't you*
35 **know how to behave yourself? Where are you supposed**

1 to be, anyway?

2 **JIMMY:** Well, I was at choir practice, but I can't sing. Then
3 my halo fell off, an' when I was chasing it, I ran into
4 the gate. I just started pushing it a little, and I dunno,
5 it looked a lot like my rope swing back home. An' —
6 you know, the one that hangs on the low branch of the
7 tree in the front yard — an' I guess I forgot to be an
8 angel. Anyway, I guess now I'm supposed to be at
9 flying lessons.

10 **LOUISE:** Well, young man, you get right over there, right
11 now. And when you are through, get a clean robe and
12 polish your halo! You don't look at all like an angel
13 should. Remember, "*Cleanliness is next to godliness.*"
14 (*JIMMY grabs his halo and darts away. LOUISE exits.*)

15 **ANGUS:** (*Entering with several SMALL ANGELS*) All right,
16 class, now pay attention. Flying is really very easy if
17 you just pay attention. OK, place your feet together, put
18 your hands up over your head, and flap your wings as
19 you breathe slowly in and out. That's right, in and out,
20 in and out. Now, try adding your wings. Up and down!
21 That's right — in and up, down and out. Good job!
22 (*Each SMALL ANGEL practices as told and quickly figures*
23 *it out. Just as they are getting into a rhythm, JIMMY rushes*
24 *in and knocks ANGUS over.*)

25 **ANGUS:** Goodness gracious! What in heaven? (*He gets up and*
26 *dusts himself off.*) Oh, Jimmy, hello. Aren't you just a
27 little late?

28 **JIMMY:** I'm sorry, I really am, and I just didn't know what
29 time it was.

30 **ANGUS:** (*Straightening out his wings*) Well, well, that's OK.
31 Just straighten your wings, take a deep breath, and
32 relax. We had just barely started. (*JIMMY takes a deep*
33 *breath and tries to straighten his wings.*) All right now,
34 class, let's try our breathing again. Deep breaths in and
35 out, and wings up and down with your breaths. (*JIMMY*

1 *breathes raggedly and tries to move his wings, but nothing*
2 *happens. The other ANGELS are doing as instructed.)*
3 **Jimmy, my boy, concentrate!**
4 **JIMMY: I am, I am. My wings just don't move!**
5 **ANGUS: Well, let me see if I can help you a little. You**
6 **breathe, and I'll move your wings.** *(They both try, but*
7 *JIMMY's wings just don't move.)* **OK, let's just go straight**
8 **to flying. Jimmy, up on your toes, wings up, deep**
9 **breath in, and take a running start!** *(JIMMY, frowning*
10 *ferociously, tries to follow each direction. But as he finally*
11 *runs Upstage, he trips on his crooked wings and falls flat on*
12 *his face. The other SMALL ANGELS giggle and laugh.)* **Oh,**
13 **dear, oh dear! Are you all right? Class, that's enough!**
14 **We each learn at our own pace, you know, and slowly**
15 **but surely means you learn correctly! I'm ashamed of**
16 **you! You should be helping Jimmy instead of laughing**
17 **at him.** *(Each SMALL ANGEL hangs his/her head and*
18 *giggles behind his/her hands. ANGUS rushes over to help*
19 *JIMMY up and tries to straighten his wings.)* **OK, let's**
20 **practice just breathing. Everyone, in and out, in and**
21 **out. Very good! Jimmy, that's perfect. OK, in and out,**
22 **in and out. Now, watch my hands, and I will show you**
23 **when to raise your wings and when to lower them.**
24 *(ANGUS begins to raise and lower his hands in time with*
25 *the in and out breaths.)* **Ready? OK, in and out/up and**
26 **down at the same time! Good, good, we're getting there.**
27 **In/up, out/down. In/up, out/down! Awesome!** *(Each*
28 *ANGEL, concentrating hard, breathes in and out and raises*
29 *and lowers his/her wings in time to the breathing. JIMMY*
30 *does really well.)* **Yes, yes, yes, that's just perfect. Now,**
31 **two by two, I want you to try actually flying. Jimmy**
32 **and Henry — up on your toes, wings up, deep breath**
33 **in, and take a running start!** *(JIMMY and HENRY hold*
34 *hands, follow instructions and, as they start to run, JIMMY*
35 *again trips over his wings and cannons into HENRY. They*

1 *both fall and roll and generally end up in a heap of haloes,*
 2 *wings, and arms and legs.) Oh, my stars! Oh, my stars!*
 3 **What in heaven is going on? Jimmy, Henry, are you all**
 4 **right?**

5 **HENRY:** *(Rising, really angry but trying to be angelic at the same*
 6 *time)* **Jimmy tripped me! I was almost flying, doing**
 7 **everything right, and wham! He tripped me! It isn't fair.**
 8 **I was almost there, and he tripped me! *(The other***
 9 ***SMALL ANGELS are laughing so hard they have to sit***
 10 ***down.)***

11 **JIMMY:** I'm really sorry, Henry, I really am. I don't know
 12 what happened. I thought we were really going to fly,
 13 but my wing got in the way. Are you OK?

14 **HENRY:** It isn't fair!

15 **ANGUS:** Now boys, there, there! *(He hugs HENRY and tries to*
 16 *straighten JIMMY's robe, halo, and wings.)* **Henry, it's OK,**
 17 **calm down. We have eternity to learn to fly. Calm**
 18 **down. Jimmy, it's all right. It was an accident. Maybe**
 19 **you need to have your wings refitted.**

20 **JIMMY:** They always end up this way — I've had three new
 21 sets and two new haloes. I don't know what's wrong.
 22 *(He sniffs and starts to cry.)*

23 **SMALL ANGEL 1:** Ha, ha, Jimmy is a crybaby!

24 **SMALL ANGEL 2:** He doesn't belong here! He's weird!

25 **SMALL ANGEL 3:** His wings don't fly and his halo is
 26 crooked.

27 **SMALL ANGEL 4:** He shouldn't be here at all!

28 **ALL FLYING LESSON STUDENTS:** *(Ad lib taunting)* Ha, Ha.

29 **ANGUS:** *(Blows his whistle for attention.)* **Angels! I am**
 30 **ashamed of you! This is *not* how we behave in heaven!**
 31 **Now, you straighten up and tell Jimmy how ashamed**
 32 **you are! Go on, tell him how sorry you are! *(As they***
 33 ***hesitate, JIMMY runs off, tripping on his wings, falling, and***
 34 ***then getting up and running off, crying.)* This is**
 35 **reprehensible! You each sit down and think about how**

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1 you. Heaven is supposed to be peaceful and, well,
2 heavenly. You want to belong and fit in, don't you?

3 **JIMMY:** *(Crying and sniffing)* I just don't know how!

4 **CHARLIE:** *(With a huge sigh of relief)* Well, pal, the Peace
5 Angel can teach you. That's why you need to see him,
6 OK? *(Pause)* Well, OK?

7 **JIMMY:** *(With a huge sniff and wiping his nose with the back of*
8 *his hand)* If I hafta. OK. *(They both exit. Lights down. End*
9 *Act I.)*

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ACT II

14

15 *(JIMMY enters alone, desperately trying to polish his halo,*
16 *straighten his wings, smooth his robe and clean his face and*
17 *hands. Since he has no polishing rag and no washcloth or*
18 *soap or water, he is using his robe; which is only becoming*
19 *more wrinkled, smudged and dirty. He goes slower and*
20 *slower in an attempt to delay his arrival at the PEACE*
21 *ANGEL's room. Eventually he arrives at a door. He knocks*
22 *timidly, waits one second, and turns to run away. However,*
23 *as he turns ...)*

24 **PEACE ANGEL:** *(Happy and jolly)* Come in, come in, come in.

25 *(JIMMY slowly opens the door and enters. He is so afraid*
26 *that he has tried unsuccessfully to cover his face with his*
27 *robe sleeve; however, his wings get in the way so we can see*
28 *about half of his face. The PEACE ANGEL is sitting on a*
29 *chair, humming happily.)* What's this? Who is hiding back
30 there? Hello?

31 **JIMMY:** *(Peering out with one eye)* Hello.

32 **PEACE ANGEL:** Hello — are you James Thomas Baxter?
33 *(JIMMY peers out with the other eye and nods.)* Bless my
34 soul — such a small angel to cause so much ruckus in
35 heaven. Are you the angel who is making heaven so

- 1 unheavenly? How in heaven do you manage?
- 2 **JIMMY:** (*Sniffing*) I'm really sorry. I don't mean to. I —
- 3 **PEACE ANGEL:** Well, well, son, don't cry. Why don't you
- 4 come over here and tell me what the trouble is? Come
- 5 on, son. (*Pats lap.*) Tell me, what's the problem? You see,
- 6 we just can't have problems in heaven. It isn't heavenly.
- 7 So you and I need to figure out what to do.
- 8 **JIMMY:** (*Climbing slowly onto the PEACE ANGEL's lap*) Well,
- 9 you see, sir, there just isn't anything to *do* in heaven.
- 10 Not that it isn't nice. I'm sure it is, for grown-ups
- 11 anyway, but there's no *fun* here. Back home I used to
- 12 have so much to do — trees to climb, and my rope
- 13 swing, and swimming, and skipping rocks on the creek,
- 14 and catching frogs, and building castles of snow or
- 15 rocks or sand. (*Huge breath in*) Annnnd, there were
- 16 puddles to splash in, and hide 'n seek, and friends to
- 17 play with and wrestle with and tell jokes to and stuff,
- 18 and (*Another breath*) I'm really, really sorry I'm late to
- 19 prayers, but heaven is so big, and I just don't know
- 20 how to tell time. And it's not my fault that my halo
- 21 keeps slipping. I've been back twice for a new one, but
- 22 it just doesn't stay where it should over my head, like
- 23 it does on the other angels. So, I just don't know what
- 24 to do or how to do it, and I'm always in trouble. (*Big*
- 25 *sigh and sniffing*)
- 26 **PEACE ANGEL:** My goodness, what a list of troubles! How
- 27 in the world did you manage on earth? You weren't
- 28 always in trouble then, were you?
- 29 **JIMMY:** Well, only some of the time. But you see, there was
- 30 my dog, my yard, my swing, a little brook behind our
- 31 house to wade in, and all kinds of games and fun stuff
- 32 to do. Annnnd, other kids to play with, and my mom
- 33 didn't care if I got dirty or had fun — well, not much,
- 34 anyways. Here, there just isn't anything to do!
- 35 **PEACE ANGEL:** Hmmm, I do see what you mean.

1 Hmmmm. This is a big problem, isn't it? Let me think
 2 a minute. Hmmmm, I do seem to remember. Yes, a
 3 brook and frogs. Yes. And a tree swing. Well, let's see
 4 — what do you think is the one thing that you miss the
 5 most?

6 **JIMMY:** *(Thinking hard)* Welllll ... back home under my bed,
 7 there's a little box. It isn't very pretty or heavenly, but
 8 if I could just have my box ... *(Blackout)*

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Scene 2

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13 *(CHARLIE and JIMMY are sitting at Center Stage. JIMMY*
 14 *is holding a small, dirty, wooden box in his lap and smiling.*
 15 *JIMMY's robe is clean, his halo is on straight, and his wings*
 16 *are straight and unbitten. All in all, he is a different boy —*
 17 *a real angel! He is showing his treasures to CHARLIE.)*

18 **JIMMY:** See what the Peace Angel got for me? *(Slowly*
 19 *opening his box and taking the items out one at a time.)* Oh,
 20 wow, my butterfly! I remember when Dad and I caught
 21 it, it used to flutter and fly and sort of hop around. *(He*
 22 *passes the butterfly to CHARLIE, who admires it.)* Oooooo,
 23 my bluebird's egg! I listened and watched the birds
 24 build a nest in our tree in the back yard, and then the
 25 mommy sat and sat and sat, and then one morning
 26 there were baby birds. Then ... I can't remember how
 27 long it was, but there was my bird's egg, empty and
 28 blue and beautiful on the ground by my stool. It was
 29 broken, but Mom said that was so the baby bird could
 30 get out. And it's still a wonderful color, like the sky
 31 back home. *(He hands the egg to CHARLIE and takes the*
 32 *butterfly back and puts it into the box. With a huge sniff, he*
 33 *pulls out two white stones.)* Joey and I used to go
 34 swimming and oh, I remember the day I found these —
 35 two white stones, so much alike and so shiny in the

1 sun. I wonder what Joey is doing now ... *(Pause while*
2 *he thinks and admires his stones, then hands them to*
3 *CHARLIE, taking the egg back and putting it into the box.)*
4 **CHARLIE:** *(Peering into the open box as he puts the stones back)*
5 **Jimmy, what's this? It looks so familiar.**
6 **JIMMY:** Oh, this is my dog's collar. Mom and I went to the
7 store to get him a new one when he grew up — dogs
8 sure grow faster than people — and I got to keep the
9 old one.
10 **CHARLIE:** Can I look? You know, I seem to remember
11 something like this down below. Me and ... what was
12 his name? Oh well, me and my pal used to have a whole
13 pile of rocks, and we'd build forts and stuff. Wow — I
14 haven't thought of that in years. Did you have lots, or
15 just these two?
16 **JIMMY:** Oh, we had lots, but these two were special.
17 **CHARLIE:** Yeah, and I remember ... aggies? Yep, aggies. I
18 used to keep them in a little pouch on my dresser.
19 **Playing marbles was fun!** *(CHARLIE and JIMMY are*
20 *both lost in a reverie of remembering. Suddenly JIMMY*
21 *jumps up.)*
22 **JIMMY:** Oops, I gotta run — I can't be late. *(He gathers up*
23 *his treasures, hides his box in a cloud, and runs Off-stage.*
24 *CHARLIE exits slowly, shaking his head and remembering.)*

Scene 3

29 *(All the ANGELS enter and stand in groups, chatting.*
30 *JIMMY enters last in his clean white robe, halo and wings*
31 *straight. As each ANGEL calls to him, he goes to them.)*
32 **JOSIE:** Thanks for the solo yesterday in choir! You did a
33 great job! Everyone really enjoyed it.
34 **JIMMY:** Aw ... you're welcome.
35 **HENRIETTA:** Jimmy! How nice to see you! Yes, I was right. A

1 size seven ex.

2 **GEORGE:** Wow! Jimmy, you really cleaned up nice. I guess
3 you really do belong here. Nice to see you again.

4 **JIMMY:** Hi! Yeah, being clean isn't really hard in heaven.

5 **CHARLENE:** Jimmy! Great to see you! Those wings really look
6 nice. I was afraid when we had to refit them so many
7 times that they wouldn't do. How's flying?

8 **JIMMY:** Great! Now that I can fly, I'm never late!

9 **SUZY:** Jimmy — hooray! We finally got that halo straight. Only
10 crooked halo I ever had. (*JIMMY gives her a thumbs-up.*)

11 **ANGUS:** Jimmy, great flying lesson yesterday. I hope you
12 enjoyed it.

13 **JIMMY:** It was really fun! Tomorrow, same time?

14 **ANGUS:** You bet!

15 **GOD:** (*A huge booming voice, Off-stage, announces:*) Attention,
16 please! My Son will be born on earth to save humankind
17 soon. He will be born to Mary, in Bethlehem in Judea.
18 Since he will have such an enormous job, any angel who
19 wants to can give him a gift to help him. (*Each ANGEL*
20 *stops what he/she is doing immediately and sits down to think*
21 *of what to give God's Son. In front of them all is the littlest*
22 *angel, JIMMY, sitting and thinking very hard. And thinking*
23 *and thinking and thinking, even while the other ANGELS*
24 *scurry Off-stage.*)

25 **JIMMY:** (*Quietly, thinking out loud*) I just don't know what to
26 give the Son of God. What would God's Son want? What
27 shall I do? What can I give him? What would be good
28 enough for the Son of God? What would keep him happy
29 down on earth with all those people? I just don't know.
30 (*He sits and thinks some more. Suddenly an idea forms in his*
31 *mind, his eyes light up, and he grabs his box from the cloud*
32 *and runs Off-stage.*)

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