

Off Plan

Cast: God (needs no introduction)
Heather (a trying (and failing, but keen) angel)

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God is in his study reading. Heather enters

HEATHER: Hello Lord God.

GOD Ah Heather, you're back

HEATHER Yes Lord, I'm back

GOD Do come in. Have a seat

H Thank you Lord God. I need a seat. This is one
tired angel Lord

God Yes. I'm sure. That was quite a mission

H Yes Lord

G So, how do you think it went?

H Pretty well I think. I trust you are pleased with
my work?

G Um...well...that's kind of why I wanted to see you

H OK

G Yes. Look, you went down to earth as I asked

H I did

G And that was good

H Thank-you

G And you spoke, as we agreed

H Yes

G But apart from those two very basic elements, you
did kind of go a little bit 'off piste' shall we
say, didn't you?

H Maybe

G With Mary for example

H Mary?

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G Yes. The mission was to visit Mary

H Yes

G But you didn't visit Mary did you?

H No Lord

G You visited...?

H Mavis

G Yes, Mavis. Why was that Heather?

H I just felt she was a much better candidate for the job Lord

G Right. Um, why?

H Married, for a start

G Yes

H Not poor

G No

H Not 14 years-old

G No

H And not from Nazareth. Have you ever been to Nazareth?

G Um...

H Don't. It's ghastly. I just felt Mavis was much better suited to be the mother of the creator of the universe come in human form Lord

G Hmmm. But there was one fairly major problem with Mavis wasn't there?

H Was there? I don't remember

G Well I've got the transcript here. Let me just read it

H OK

G So you said: "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you"

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H Yes, as agreed

G Yes, that was good. And then: "You have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son."

H Yes, also the agreed line

G To which she replied...

H Yes?

G "I know"

H Yes

G As in "I know I'm going to give birth because I'm currently in labour"

H Oh yes, yes she was

G Heather, do you see how this could present a problem for The Plan?

H Um, well maybe

G And the name change?

H Yes?

G What was the thinking there?

H I didn't think Jesus sounded quite right

G No, right. Well let's just read it shall we: "You will be with child and give birth to a son and you are to give him the name...Clive."

H Yes.

G Clive?

H I like it. Don't you like it?

G Um, well I have nothing against it Heather, but names have meanings you know and Jesus means the Lord saves, it's very important in The Plan, whereas Clive means um, it means cliff, or lives near or at a cliff. Does Mavis live near a cliff?

H I didn't notice one

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G No

H She could move to be near a cliff

G Heather. It's not really what we agreed is it?

H Well maybe not all of it

G Heather

H Well, no, sorry. I just thought your plan was a bit...rubbish. You're mighty God. You made everything. You are incredible, you are raw power. How on earth can you go down there...I mean I could just stop there actually...but then be born to some barely literate, unmarried at time of conception, peasant girl from Nazareth. It doesn't make any sense Lord...with all due respect

G Heather

H You need power, you need armies, and you need riches for that. You need to scare the living daylights out of them. That'll stop 'em thieving and murdering and lying and fornicating and all the rest of it. They need the fear of God in them and turning up as a baby in some cow shed won't scare anyone

G Oh Heather. I do love you. Your heart is really very good. Your theology however is terrible

H Well, I never liked that at angel school

G Yes, I know. Let me ask you something. When you were learning to fly you had a few problems with landings. You went to see someone for advice.

H I did

G Who did you go to?

H Gabriel

G Why?

H Because someone told me he'd had similar problems when he was my age

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G Yes. And he helped you didn't he?

H Yes

G Do you think he would have been much use if he had never flown before in his life, but had read a lot of books on flying?

H I don't know. I doubt it. What's your point?

G Heather. I need to go down and show them how to live a fully human life. But I need to do that not from power, or from violence – don't you think they've had enough of that already and where has it got them? They don't need fear Heather. They need love. I'm tired of all the fear, tired of them thinking I am some tyrant who just wants to punish and blame. Tired of them being terrified of death and thinking life is a random collection of experiences, any one of which might finish them off. I have to be vulnerable, I have to be meek, I have to walk the way of peace. And do you know what will happen? I will be despised, I will be rejected. I will know sorrow, I will know suffering. And there will be violence, but it will be against me. But after all of that, love will beat it. The light of life will break through. And men and women will finally know how to truly fly. [beat] Do you understand now?

H I'm not sure

G No, it's hard to comprehend

H Yes. [long pause] Can I go now?

G Of course

H You're not going to smite me

G No Heather, I'm not

H That's good. Don't suppose there's any chance I can have a crack at Mary then?

G I think I'll just pass this one on to Gabriel