

# ARE THE KINGS STILL WEARING CURTAINS?

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## LIST OF SCENES AND CHARACTERS

1. Narrators Old and Narrators New: *(A sort of prologue...)*  
Old: adult  
New: older teenager
2. Angels Old and Angels New: Old: lady, about 60  
New: a girl, about nine
3. Shepherds Old and Shepherds New: Old: man, about 55  
New: girl, about twelve
4. Three Kings Old and Three Kings New: Old: three young men  
New: three children  
small *(non-speaking)*
5. Herods Old and Herods New: Old: man, middle age  
New: boy, about 13
6. Josephs Old and Josephs New: Old: man, middle age  
New: boy, about ten
7. Marys Old and Marys New: Old: woman, about 30  
New: girl, about 7
8. Inn Keepers Old and Innkeepers New: Old: couple, middle age  
New: boy and a girl, small  
*(non-speaking)*
9. Christmas Dolls Old and Christmas Dolls New: Adult man
10. Players Old and Players New: *(A sort of epilogue...)*

*(\*Note: The ages and sexes suggested for the actors are suggestions only and can be freely altered to suit local conditions, resources and personnel.)*

## Scene 1: Narrators Old and Narrators New

*(A sort of Prologue...)*

*(The **Old and New Narrators** take the stage to introduce the series of sketches.)*

**New Narrator:** For two thousand years, the characters of the Nativity have been brought to life in song, story and drama.

**Old Narrator:** In the middle ages, the drama was acted out in the annual cycle of 'mystery plays' and performed in the open air by the tradesmen of professional associations called guilds.

**New Narrator:** Over the centuries, the re-living of the first Christmas has become the responsibility of school and Sunday school.

**Old Narrator:** A supporting role as shepherd, angel or wise man has been the stage debut for many successful actors, and the first public witness of faith for many long established Christians.

**New Narrator:** The tradition - and often the costume - is still passed down the generations, and with it the timeless message of the nativity.

**Old Narrator:** But as nativities new succeed nativities old, what advice do those stepping down give to those taking their place? What questions do the rising stars ask of their guiding lights?

**New Narrator:** And what fresh insight is found by those taking up the challenge to tell and retell the nativity story to a new generation.

*(They leave.)*

## Scene 2: Angels Old and Angels New

*(**Old Angel**, in robe and halo but without wings, stands holding the costume for **New Angel**. **New Angel** enters wearing ordinary clothes and carrying her halo.)*

**Old Angel:** Come on now, dear. You're running late.

**New Angel:** I thought angels had all the time in eternity.

**Old Angel:** We do, but they (*the audience*) don't. Now hurry up and put this on.

**New Angel:** *(Putting on her angel costume)* It smells funny.

**Old Angel:** Of course it does. It's been in the Primary teacher's attic since last Christmas.

**New Angel:** It's too big.

**Old Angel:** Don't worry. It'll fit you properly next year.

**New Angel:** I don't want to be an angel next year.

**Old Angel:** There's nothing wrong with being an angel.

**New Angel:** All the other angels are babies. I have to look after them and help them up the steps.

**Old Angel:** Now stop complaining, dear.

**New Angel:** I want to be a king

**Old Angel:** Why?

**New Angel:** Their costumes don't smell.

**Old Angel:** That's because yesterday their costumes were still curtains. Now put your wings on.

**New Angel:** Why do we have to have wings?

**Old Angel:** It's traditional, dear. People expect to see angels with their wings on.

**New Angel:** You haven't got wings on.

**Old Angel:** That's because I'm not in the nativity play any more.

**New Angel:** (*Innocently.*) You're too old, aren't you?

**Old Angel:** Yes, dear.

**New Angel:** I wish I was too old to be an angel.

**Old Angel:** And you will be before you know it. So put those wings on and enjoy it while you can.

**New Angel:** Didn't you want to be anything else? Like a shepherd. Or a Mary?

**Old Angel:** No. I only ever wanted to be an angel. Every year an angel.

**New Angel:** Why?

**Old Angel:** Because only the angels knew who the baby in the manger really was. The shepherds didn't know. The kings thought they knew. Herod didn't want to know. Even the baby's parents weren't sure. But the angels knew. And I knew. Even when I was your age, I knew. People said they could see it in my face. Shining. Like I was a real angel.

**New Angel:** You must have been better looking in those days.

**Old Angel:** That's life, dear. The nearer you get to being an angel, the less you look like one. Now, have you learnt your words?

**New Angel:** I think so.

**Old Angel:** Come on then, let's hear them.

**New Angel:** *(Without any expression of enthusiasm.)* "Fear not: for behold I bring you tidings of great joy that will be to all people. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." There. I said it.

**Old Angel:** Well the words are right. But they won't make anyone run all the way from the countryside to the town to find a stable.

**New Angel:** That's up to them. I only have to tell them where to go.

**Old Angel:** You have to tell them why they must to go.

**New Angel:** Why?

**Old Angel:** Because you know who this baby is. And if you don't tell them, they'll miss him. Want to try again?

**New Angel:** *(With real spirit.)* "Fear not! For behold, I bring you tidings of **great joy** that will be to *all people*. And this shall be a sign unto you. Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying... in a *manger!*" How was that?

**Old Angel:** I think that should get them going.

**New Angel:** I hope so. I wouldn't want them to miss him.

**Old Angel:** Come on. It's time we were going too. Have you got your halo?

**New Angel:** Yes, but it doesn't fit very well. *(It falls around her neck.)*

**Old Angel:** Never mind. I think you'll grow into it. *(They leave)*