

# SPECIAL DELIVERY

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## PART 1: GABRIEL AND MARY

*(The stage is dimly lit. Small groups of shabbily dressed people huddle together for protection from the cold and from their fear of the darkness. Mary, wearing a long coat and carrying a weakly shining lantern, offers them what comfort she can. The messenger, Gabriel, enters. He is colourfully but smartly dressed, perhaps in a striped blazer, and carries an old fashioned satchel or a postbag. Part of his face is painted with a white and silver design that marks him as being not of this 'lower world'. He stands a little way off and watches. Except for Mary, no one sees him.)*

Gabriel: The time of darkness will not go on for ever. The people who dwell in the darkness will see a great light - a light that will shine on all who live where death casts its shadow. They will shout with joy. Their chains will break and the whip that scars them. There will be no more bloodshed and the broken buildings will be restored.  
*(approaches Mary and speaks compellingly to her)* Mary!

Mary: What? Who are you?

Gabriel: A messenger. *(offers nothing more)*

Mary: And? Well have you got something for me or haven't you?

Gabriel: That depends.

Mary: Depends on what?

Gabriel: On what you're prepared to receive.

Mary: I've got work to do. *(returns to her work, tending to the people)*

Gabriel: I am a voice shouting in the wilderness, "make a road through all the wasted places. Straighten every twisting turn. Clear away the debris of the past and mark the road for everyone to see. The day is about to dawn." You know the words. You know the voice that shouts.

Mary: I know the words and I know the voice that shouts, I just don't see the one who's shouting. Not around here anyway. *(goes to another needing her care, moving Gabriel out of her way)*

Gabriel: "For a child is born to us. A son is given to us. And the government will rest upon his shoulders."

Mary: I said I know the words. I know the promises. They're part of our

people's story. But they're empty, *(returning again to her work)* the promises and the people.

Gabriel: "And these will be his royal titles: wonderful counsellor. Immanuel, God with us. The Prince of Peace."

Mary: Tell me what this is about or leave me alone.

Gabriel: You said you knew the words.

Mary: Everyone knows them.

Gabriel: And the voice.

Mary: Yes, and the voice.

Gabriel: Then you know who sent me.

*(For Mary this is more than she will tolerate and makes to leave, the people show some fear of being left without their comforter.)*

Gabriel: Mary!

Mary: *(stops and turns toward Gabriel.)* What does he want with me?

Gabriel: He wants you to carry on the story.

Mary: It's what we all want, it's not just me.

Gabriel: But only you received the message.

Mary: Why, why me?

Gabriel: Perhaps you're the only one that's listening.

*(Mary looks around and becomes aware that she is the only one that sees Gabriel.)*

Gabriel: "His ever growing, peaceful rule will never end. He will rule for ever with fairness and justice for all. The passionate commitment of the Lord almighty will guarantee it –"

Mary: Yes, alright. But how do I –?

Gabriel: "And a maiden shall conceive –"

Mary: *(realising what Gabriel is talking about)* Oh, no. Oh, no, no – No!

Gabriel: “And shall bring forth a son.”

Mary: No. No, that can’t be. It can’t be, we not married yet, we haven’t even –

Gabriel: That doesn’t matter, not to him.

Mary: Well it matters to me!

Gabriel: Your situation is not an obstacle to him.

Mary: Oh, really. And what about my fiancé, what about our families? Because I’m sure they’ll find it’s a pretty big obstacle to them?

Gabriel: They’re all part of the story.

Mary: Oh, yes, the story we’ve been waiting for, the story of how we find our way out of this darkness. Well why has it taken him so long, what’s *he* been waiting for?

Gabriel: For you. He’s been waiting for you.

Mary: Oh, no. No he can’t do this. He can’t go around ruining people’s lives, ruining people’s plans just because of a story.

Gabriel: No. No, you’re right. He can’t do this. Only you can do it. Only you can say yes to him. He won’t do it unless you do say yes, of your own choice.

Mary: What if I say no?

Gabriel: Then that will be the story. All of it.

Mary: And all of this? *(the people)*

Gabriel: They’ll never know any different.

*(Mary walks among the people. She sees the need in the eyes of the people and the way they look at her for help and rescue.)*

Mary: When?

Gabriel: As with all good stories, when everything that must be in place is in its place, when everyone who must be told has been told.

Mary: My fiancé?

Gabriel: Especially him.

Mary: Who else?

Gabriel: That depends on who dares to receive the message? *(the implication that Mary hasn't yet accepted her part in the story)*

Mary: So... I am going to have a baby?

Gabriel: I don't know, are you?

Mary: *(places her hand on her abdomen, feels the baby move and happily recognises the evidence of her own acceptance)* Yes. Yes, I am. I'm going to have a baby.

*(The whisper, 'a baby', goes around the huddled people and the news visibly lifts their spirits. Mary picks up this new air of hopefulness in those she cares for.)*

Mary: Wonderful counsellor.

Gabriel: God with us. The Prince of Peace.

Mary: Who breaks the chains that bind.

Gabriel: And the whip that scars.

Mary: With fairness.

Gabriel: And justice and peace for all.

Mary: Then carry a message for me. *(Gabriel produces a note book and writes what Mary says.)*

Tell him, the one that sent you, that I am pleased, no, not pleased. Tell him I'm blessed to carry on the story, however it unfolds. And may everything he said be just as he said it would be.