

## GIVE US THIS DAY

*[Man at desk (Scottish); a knock at the door.]*

MAN: Come!

*[WOMAN in blue shawl, heavily pregnant, enters]*

Ah, enter! Turn round. Kneel. Kiss the carpet. Stand. Pat your head with your left hand. Rub your tummy with your right hand. Now both together. Jump up and down. And sit.

*[WOMAN collapses on chair]*

WOMAN: What's that in aid of?

MAN: Nothing. I just like to show claimants who's in charge. Name?

WOMAN: Mary, sir.

MAN: Mary who?

WOMAN: Just Mary, sir.

MAN: That's a mite irregular. Are you one of yon feminists?

WOMAN: Oh no, sir. I'm a good catholic girl. Well, I will be. When they invent it.

MAN: Now, you've got an application in to the Department for Work and Pensions for a grant from a Discretionary Housing Payment for removal from temporary to permanent accommodation.

WOMAN: Yes, sir

MAN: Where are you living?

WOMAN: An outhouse

MAN: Stable?

WOMAN: Oh yes, I'm quite stable.

MAN: I meant the accommodation. Stable?

WOMAN: It's not really stable, sir. Just while I have the baby.

MAN: Shouldn't you be in hospital for that?

WOMAN: They closed down Bethlehem, sir. Nearest one's in Jericho, and there's no buses.

MAN: Landlord?

WOMAN: Innkeeper, sir. It's a sub-let. But we can't stay cos of the ox and the ass. Council don't allow no pets. They're always coming down on my ass. So, see, my Auntie Maureen got an oasis in Egypt, and we can pitch a tent there permanent.

MAN: And the baby? Whose is it?

WOMAN: Oh it's mine, sir. I'm not one of those surrogate mothers.

MAN: Yours and who else's?

WOMAN: Now it's funny you should ask me that. Thereby hangs a tale. I was sitting doing my spinning, minding my own business, when in comes this fella with wings.

MAN: Paul McCartney? *[To camera:]* That was a joke for the over-60s.

WOMAN: No, real wings. With feathers. Made a right mess. Moulting he was. All over the rushes. Anyway, this fella says, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured". I thought he was giving away those vouchers for MacDonald's. But he wasn't. I was impregnated of the Lord.

MAN: Lord, eh? Do you have an address for this Mr. Lord?

WOMAN: You what?

MAN: Lord. The father of the child. What's his address?

WOMAN: How should I know? All I ever saw was a fucking angel.

MAN: Just because you were attracted to this man, that's no reason not to know something about him. Like his name and address.

WOMAN: I was dumbstruck. I just saw this great light –

MAN: On drugs, were you?

WOMAN: No! It's just that it all happened so fast. One minute I was spinning, next thing I know, it's happened.

MAN: Some men can't help that. Are you in the habit of having sex with strange men?

WOMAN: Certainly not. For it is written, I have known not a man.

MAN: Known not a man? Who you trying to kid?

WOMAN: It's true.

MAN: Some complete stranger comes in and says, "I'm an angel, fancy a bonk?", and you just say, "Oh, thanks very much, don't mind if I do?"

WOMAN: I didn't actually have much say in the matter.

MAN: Oh, come now. I'd have thought a woman of your build could influence the situation at least. Let's have no more of this prevarication. You do realise that withholding information about the father can result in your income support being cut by 20%? He should face up to his responsibilities, why should the state have to support you?

WOMAN: I've told you his name. God.

MAN: I thought you said Lord.

WOMAN: Yes. Lord God.

MAN: Member of the aristocracy, eh? Better try Debrett's.

WOMAN: He won't be in there.

MAN: So Lord's his first name?

WOMAN: No, it's just that sometimes you say Lord, and sometimes you say God. Oh, and Almighty too.

MAN: Uses aliases, does he? Seems a pretty slippery customer. Gets virgins pregnant, then slips off without leaving so much as a forwarding address.

WOMAN: You might find him in Heaven.

MAN: I'd have thought he was straight.

WOMAN: I mean, he Art in Heaven.

MAN: Art? Is that another alias? What's this fellow look like, then?

WOMAN: Well, I didn't actually see him.

MAN: Good grief! That must have been quick.

WOMAN: All I saw was this angel.

MAN: And what was his name?

WOMAN: Gabriel.

MAN: Gabriel what?

WOMAN: I don't know. Just Gabriel.

MAN: Peter Gabriel? Walter Gabriel?

WOMAN: I think it was his first name. I think you could say we were on first name terms

MAN: I don't know. Young people today. It's just, "Hi, I'm Mary", "Hi, I'm Gabriel", and there's a bun in the oven before you can say Sperm Count. So what's this Gabriel's address? Maybe we can get him for the maintenance.

WOMAN: He's not the father. At least, I don't think he was the father. It was a bit confusing. And the light was in my eyes.

MAN: Good grief! So either of them could have been the father?

WOMAN: No, I'm pretty sure God was the father. I mean, he is known as God the Father.

MAN: Makes a habit of it, does he? Likes a bit of how's-your-father. *[NB How's is pronounced 'hooz']*

WOMAN: Who's your father?

MAN: Ay, how's your father?

WOMAN: He's the father. God the Father's the Father.

MAN: No, how's-your-father.

WOMAN: Who's your father?

MAN: What's my father got to do with it?

WOMAN: Well, what's my father got to do with it either?

MAN: Not your father. How's your father. God the Father likes how's your father.

WOMAN: My father's not the father.

MAN: God the Father -

WOMAN: God the Father's not my father!

MAN: But he is the father.

WOMAN: Yes.

MAN: Because he likes a bit of how's your father.

WOMAN: About this grant. I need the money really badly. I got to get a crib and some swaddling bands cos he's got to be meanly wrapped, and we could use a bit of fresh straw –

MAN: Have you seen this man?

*[He pulls out a picture of God from Michelangelo's "Creation".]*

WOMAN: Yes, yes, that's him. I can see it all now. I remember thinking the beard tickled.

MAN: I thought so. We've been after this wee chappie for some time. He's a master of disguise. Appeared to one girl as a bull, another saw him as a swan. Even had the nerve to masquerade as a shower of gold. Mind you, some people will believe anything ...

WOMAN: So, do I get my grant then?

MAN: I'm sorry, but our assets are frozen.

WOMAN: It is a bleak midwinter, isn't it? Snow falling, snow on snow, snow on snow –

MAN: There's no money at all till the new financial year.

WOMAN: How am I going to live?

MAN: You should have thought of that before believing in angels, shouldn't you?

WOMAN: Look, couldn't you even manage a few loaves and fishes? I'm sure we could fix something ...

MAN: There is no money.

WOMAN: What about a loan, then? I will render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

MAN:

Not even a loan. Now get out of my office. [*She makes to go.*] Oh, and could you send the next ones in? The names are - Adam and Eve. Not that they've got a hope in hell. Intentionally homeless.

**[BLACKOUT]**