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A Christmas Play in One Act

# The Littlest Angel

*by*

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Based on a Story by

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THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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# THE LITTLEST ANGEL

*A Christmas Play in One Act*

For Nine People and Extras

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## CHARACTERS

GATEKEEPER  
THE LITTLEST ANGEL  
PATRIARCH PROPHET  
FLYING MASTER  
CHOIRMASTER  
UNDERSTANDING ANGEL  
HEAVENLY MESSENGER  
SIXTH ANGEL  
VOICE

EXTRAS:  
TWO TRUMPETERS  
FIVE ANGELS  
MATRONLY ANGEL

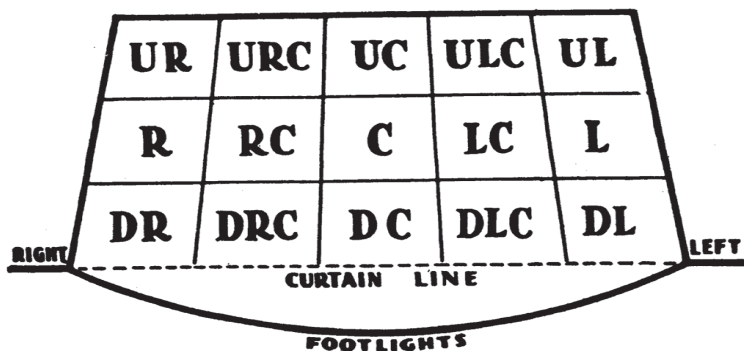
OTHER EXTRAS (ANGELS) as desired

PLACE: *The Celestial Kingdom.*

TIME: *The Year Eternal.*

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## CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



## STAGE POSITIONS

*Upstage* means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: UR for *up right*, RC for *right center*, DLC for *down left center*, etc. A territory designated on the stage refers to a general area, rather than to a given point.

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**NOTE:** Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

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## PROPERTIES

**GENERAL:** High stool, podium; large ledger, inkwell and quill on podium; golden "road," rocks, "clouds"; throne, golden scales; golden stairs, throne on platform.

**GATEKEEPER:** Handkerchief.

**LITTLEST ANGEL:** Halo.

**TRUMPETERS:** Trumpets.

**ANGELS:** Glittering gifts for Christ child.

**CHOIRMASTER:** Baton.

**MATRONLY ANGEL:** Lighted candle.

**UNDERSTANDING ANGEL:** Long golden stick.

**HEAVENLY MESSENGER:** Box on silver tray (box should contain butterfly, bird's egg, two white stones, dog collar.)

## PRODUCTION NOTES

Nothing adds more to the polish of a production than the quick picking up of cues. Unless there is a definite reason for a pause, train your actors to come in with their speeches "on the heels," so to speak, of the preceding speeches. When a production lags, audience interest likewise will lag.

It is always advisable during the last week of rehearsals to hold one or more sessions during which the actors merely sit around in a circle and go through lines only, with the express purpose of snapping up cues.



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# The Littlest Angel

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**BEFORE RISE OF CURTAIN:** *At the beginning of the play: GATEKEEPER, dressed as an angel, bearded and bespectacled, enters R in front of curtain, crosses to C and addresses audience.*

**GATEKEEPER.** Hello, there! May I introduce myself? I am none other than the Keeper of the Holy Gates in the glorious Kingdom of God. All who wish to enter Heaven must first present themselves to me so that I may enter their names in the holy register. Now you're probably wondering why I'm here instead of there--(*Points up to the heavens.*)--attending to my duties. Well, every hundred years or so, when I have a day off, there is nothing I enjoy more than selecting a favorite story from my vast celestial records and flying down to earth to tell it to a select group of potential angels. Ummmm--most of you fit into that category--(*Looks about sternly.*)--with a few exceptions--(*Hopefully.*)--but time can work miracles.

The story I have chosen for you today concerns a most miserable, thoroughly unhappy and utterly dejected cherub, who was known throughout Heaven as The Littlest Angel. He was exactly eight years, four months, five days, seven hours and forty-two minutes of age when he presented his small self to me and awaited admittance to Heaven.\* (*GATEKEEPER crosses L, where there*

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\*Note: If necessary age can be made greater, but actor playing this role should be as young and small as possible.

*are high stool and podium on which rests the Great Book of the Registrar, together with an inkwell and quill. He sits on stool and buries his head in the Great Book, and is writing busily.)*

*(THE LITTLEST ANGEL enters L. He is a little boy, disheveled appearance. He walks toward GATEKEEPER. He stands with legs apart, hands behind his back, halo askew. He is trying very hard to look brave and self-possessed but, in fact, he is very scared. He coughs lightly to get the GATEKEEPER'S attention, but it goes unnoticed. He tries again--much louder this time.)*

GATEKEEPER. What? What? What an ungodly noise! Who goes there?

LITTLEST ANGEL *(in a small, shaky voice)*. Me, sir.

GATEKEEPER. Oh? *(Bends over and peers down.)*

Ah, yes. I've been expecting you, little fellow.

Here, you see I shall write your name in the Great Book and . . .

LITTLEST ANGEL *(suddenly sneezing a terrible sneeze)*. Achoo!

GATEKEEPER. My word, that infernal sneeze made me blot the page! Something I have never done before in all Eternity! *(THE LITTLEST ANGEL, to make things worse, wipes his nose on the lovely sleeve of his white robe. GATEKEEPER feels harried.)* Your handkerchief! Where is your handkerchief?

LITTLEST ANGEL. I left it at home, sir.

GATEKEEPER. Humph! Here, take mine then, and straighten out your halo. You must try and conduct yourself with more dignity in the future. It is a great honor to be accepted into God's heavenly kingdom. *(LITTLEST ANGEL nervously bites*

*his wing-tips.) And stop biting your wing-tips. Dear me, I must have gotten up out of the wrong side of the clouds this morning. You may enter now. . . . (Claps his hands three times slowly and goes out L.)*

*(On the third clap, two TRUMPETERS of the Lord, dressed appropriately, enter from opposite sides of the stage. They meet at C, begin blowing a fanfare [this may actually come from a sound-effect record], then turn and draw curtains apart, revealing a big expanse resembling "Heaven". There may be a golden road [possibly made of gold cloth or paper] curving toward U L. Along the road we see a PATRIARCH PROPHET sitting on a rock [possibly canvas on a box] in divine meditation. There are also some clouds cut out of cardboard, painted pink and white--one with a few steps, unseen by the audience, behind. LITTLEST ANGEL stands in utter awe.)*

FIRST TRUMPETER. Follow the golden road and you shall come upon all the wondrous sights of Paradise.

SECOND TRUMPETER. Godspeed, Little Angel, welcome to Heaven! *(Curtains have been parting and we hear the heavenly choir.)*

LITTLEST ANGEL. How beautiful! But . . . oh, so quiet. The Golden Road! *(Starts skipping along, humming, and comes upon the PROPHET.)* Hello.

PROPHET. Hello, Little Angel. This is your first day with us, I believe?

LITTLEST ANGEL *(nodding)*. Yes.

PROPHET. Well, well, welcome. I am one of the Patriarch Prophets.

LITTLEST ANGEL. What are you doing? I mean,

you're just sitting.

PROPHET. I'm in divine meditation.

LITTLEST ANGEL (*uncomprehending*). Oh. . . .

May I watch?

PROPHET (*slight chuckle*). If you so desire. (*He goes back to his meditations. LITTLEST ANGEL watches for a moment, then becomes restless, shuffles his feet, hums, etc., and finally peers into the PROPHET'S face. PROPHET looks up and sighs.*) I'm afraid this won't do, son. You have disturbed my meditations. We require absolute tranquility. Why don't you take a lesson in flying? That should use up some of that youthful energy.

LITTLEST ANGEL. Ooh--I would love that! To fly!

PROPHET. Ah, you see, there is the flying master now.

(*FLYING MASTER enters R.*)

FLYING MASTER. Yes, yes, did somebody call me?

LITTLEST ANGEL (*crossing to FLYING MASTER*). Sir, could you teach me to fly?

FLYING MASTER. Certainly, little fellow.

(*At this point, other ANGELS, who have been masked behind "clouds," appear and gather around FLYING MASTER and LITTLEST ANGEL to watch the lesson.*)

FLYING MASTER (*addressing LITTLEST ANGEL*). Just ascend this cloud. (*Cardboard, with steps behind, will suffice. LITTLEST ANGEL ascends.*)

LITTLEST ANGEL. Oh, boy, if only that big bully back home could see me now! (*Stands on cloud*)

*teetering and looking around in wonderment.)*

FIRST ANGEL (*giggling*). Look at him! He doesn't even look like an angel!

SECOND ANGEL. His halo is terribly tarnished.

THIRD ANGEL. . . . and lopsided.

FLYING MASTER. Now close your eyes and think heavenly, peaceful thoughts----(*LITTLEST ANGEL closes his eyes, teeters this way and that --very scared indeed. FLYING MASTER flaps his wings in demonstration.*) Come on--it's really easy. Don't be afraid.

FOURTH ANGEL. Littlest Angel, if you succeed I will see to it that you are given an extra piece of angel cake at supper. (*Now LITTLEST ANGEL has the courage to jump.*)

LITTLEST ANGEL. Oh---- Oh---- (*Shuts his eyes again, holds his nose and jumps, landing with a thud.*) Oh. (*Dejected.*)

FLYING MASTER. You forgot the essential thing. (*Pause.*) To move your wings! (*Much general laughter.*)

FIFTH ANGEL (*laughingly*). He fell head over halo. (*More laughter.*)

(*While LITTLEST ANGEL is sitting on the floor in a bewildered heap, CHOIRMASTER enters, clapping his hands and waving a baton.*)

CHOIRMASTER. All right, now--order! Places, please. (*ANGELS knowingly take their places according to height. They are in a straight line. LITTLEST ANGEL picks himself up slowly and painfully, then crosses to tallest angel, who looks at him disdainfully and points to the other end of the line with a sweep of his arm. LITTLEST ANGEL crosses in front of angels appraisingly until he reaches the end of the line and plac-*

*es himself next to the smallest angel.) All right, now. I want to hear your voices soar out over the Universe. (They sing.)*

ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL  
*(optional)*

ANGELS *(singing)*.

All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful,  
The Lord God made them all.

*(On the last note, or chord, the LITTLEST ANGEL hits an excruciatingly sour note. At this point, the ANGELS, starting with the tallest, turn their heads one by one toward him in utter disgust, while the LITTLEST ANGEL shrivels under their glances.)*

CHOIRMASTER *(tearing at his hair and jumping up and down)*. What is that hooting? Never have I heard such a sound coming from the heavenly choir! What is it? *(Again the ANGELS turn toward LITTLEST ANGEL.)*

LITTLEST ANGEL *(in a small voice)*. Me, sir. I don't know the song.

CHOIRMASTER. I am painfully aware of that. Well, my inspiration has been crushed for today. You are all dismissed. *(CHOIRMASTER goes off in a huff, shaking his head.)*

*(From the opposite side of the stage, a MATRONLY ANGEL enters, carrying a lighted candle.)*

MATRONLY ANGEL. Time for evening prayers, everyone. *(ANGELS immediately cross down-stage and kneel in a row in an attitude of prayer. THE LITTLEST ANGEL, disrupting things as usual, scrambles through the center of the row of*