

## **The Angel Intrudes**

BY FLOYD DELL  
A COMEDY

To GEORGE CRAM COOK

"The Angel Intrudes" was first produced by the Provincetown Players, New York City, in 1917, with the following cast:

The Policeman..... Abram Gillette The Angel..... James Light  
Jimmy Pendleton.... Justus Sheffield Annabelle..... Edna St.  
Vincent Millay

*Washington Square by moonlight. A stream of Greenwich Villagers hurrying across to the Brevoort before the doors are locked. In their wake a sleepy policeman.*

*The policeman stops suddenly on seeing an Angel with shining garments and great white wings, who has just appeared out of nowhere.*

THE POLICEMAN. Hey, you!

THE ANGEL. *(haughtily, turning)* Sir! Are you addressing me?

THE POLICEMAN. *(severely)* Yes, an' I've a good mind to lock you up.

THE ANGEL. *(surprised and indignant)* How very inhospitable! Is that the way you treat strangers?

THE POLICEMAN. Don't you know it's agen the law of New York to parade the streets in a masquerade costume?

THE ANGEL. No. I didn't know. You see, I've just arrived this minute from Heaven.

THE POLICEMAN. Ye look it. (*Taking his arm kindly*) See here, me lad, you've been drinkin' too many of them stingers. Ye'd better take a taxi and go home.

THE ANGEL. What! So soon?

THE POLICEMAN. I know how ye feel. I've been that way meself. But I can't leave ye go traipsin' about in skirts.

THE ANGEL. (*drawing away*) Sir, I'm not traipsing about. I am attending to important business, and I must ask you not to detain me.

THE POLICEMAN. (*suspiciously*) Not so fast, me laddie-buck. What business have you at this hour of the night? Tell me that.

THE ANGEL. I don't mind telling you. It concerns a mortal called James Pendleton.

THE POLICEMAN. (*genial again*) Aha! So you're a friend of Jimmy Pendleton's, are you?

THE ANGEL. Not exactly. I am his Guardian Angel.

THE POLICEMAN. Well, faith, he needs one! Come, me b'y, I'll see ye safe to his door.

THE ANGEL. Thank you. But, if you don't mind, I prefer to go alone.

*He turns away.*

THE POLICEMAN. Good night to you, then.

*He idly watches the angelic figure walk away, and then stares with amazement as it spreads its wings and soars to the top of Washington Arch. Pausing there a moment, it soars again in the air, and is seen wafting its way over the neighbouring housetops to the northeast. The policeman shakes his head in disapproval.*

*Jimmy Pendleton is dozing in an easy chair before the grate-fire in Ms studio in Washington Mews. A yellow-backed French novel has fallen*

*from his knee to the floor. It is Anatole France's "La Revolte des Anges". A suitcase stands beside the chair. Jimmy is evidently about to go on some journey.*

*A clock begins to strike somewhere. Jimmy Pendleton awakes.*

JIMMY. What a queer dream! (*He looks at his watch.*) Twelve o'clock. The taxi ought to be here. (*He takes two tickets from his pocket, looks at them, and puts them back. Then he commences to pace nervously up and down the room, muttering to himself*)--Fool! Idiot! Imbecile! (*He is not, so that you could notice it, any of these things. He is a very handsome man of forty. There is the blast of an auto-horn outside. He makes an angry gesture.*) Too late! That's the taxi. (*But he stands uncertainly in the middle of the floor. There is a loud pounding on the knocker.*) Yes, yes!

*He makes a movement toward the door, when it suddenly opens, and a lovely lady enters. He stares at her in surprise.*

JIMMY. Annabelle!

*Annabelle is little. Annabelle's petulant upturned lips are rosebud red. Annabelle's round eyes are baby-blue. Annabelle is--young.*

ANNABELLE. Yes! It's me! (*There is a tiny lisp in Annabelle's speech.*) I got tired of waiting, and the door was unlocked, so I came right in.

JIMMY. Well!

ANNABELLE. (*hurt*) Aren't you glad to see me?

JIMMY. I'm--delighted. But--but--I thought we were to meet at the station.

ANNABELLE. So we were.

JIMMY. You haven't changed your mind?

ANNABELLE. No. . . .

JIMMY. Er--good.

ANNABELLE. But--

JIMMY. Yes--?

ANNABELLE. I got to wondering. . . . (*She drifts to the easy chair in front of the fire.*)

JIMMY. Wondering . . . about what? (*He looks at his watch.*)

ANNABELLE. About love. . . .

JIMMY. Well . . . (*He lights a cigarette*)--it's a subject that can stand a good deal of wondering about. I've wondered about it myself.

ANNABELLE. That's just it--you speak so cynically about it. I don't believe you're in love with me at all!

JIMMY. Nonsense! Of course I'm in love with you.

ANNABELLE. (*sadly*) No you're not.

JIMMY. (*angrily*) But I tell you I am!

ANNABELLE. No. . . .

JIMMY. Foolish child!

ANNABELLE. Well, let's not quarrel about it. We'll talk about something else.

JIMMY. (*vehemently*) What do you suppose this insanity is if it is not love? What do you imagine leads me to this preposterous escapade, if not that preposterous passion?

ANNABELLE. That isn't the way *I* love you.

JIMMY. Then why do you come with me?

ANNABELLE. Perhaps I'm not coming.

JIMMY. Yes you are. It's foolish--mad--wicked--but you're coming. (*She begins to cry softly.*) If not--ten minutes away is safety and peace and comfort. Shall I call a taxi for you? (*She shakes her head.*) No, I thought not. Oh, it's love all right. . . . Antony and Cleopatra defying the Mann Act! Romance! Beauty! Adventure! How can you doubt it?

ANNABELLE. I hate you!

JIMMY. (*cheerfully*) I don't mind. (*Smiling*) I rather hate you myself. And that's the final proof that this is love.

ANNABELLE. (*sobbing*) I thought love was something quite--different!

JIMMY. You thought it was beautiful. It isn't. It's just blithering, blathering folly. We'll both regret it tomorrow.

ANNABELLE. *I Won't!*

JIMMY. Yes you will. It's human nature. Face the facts.

ANNABELLE. (*tearfully*) Facing the facts is one thing and being in love is another,

JIMMY. Quite so. Well, how long do you think your love for me will last?

ANNABELLE. For ever!

JIMMY. H'm! I predict that you will fall in love with the next man you meet.

ANNABELLE. I think you're perfectly horrid.

JIMMY. So do I. I disapprove of myself violently. I'm a doddering lunatic, incapable of thinking of anything but you. I can't work. I can't

eat, I can't sleep. I'm no use to the world. I'm not a man, I'm a mess. I'm about to do something silly because I can't do anything else.

ANNABELLE. (*pouting*) You've no respect for me.

JIMMY. None whatever. I love you. And I'm going to carry you off.

ANNABELLE. You're a brute.

JIMMY. Absolutely. I'd advise you to go straight home.

ANNABELLE. (*defiantly*) Perhaps I shall!

JIMMY. Then go quick. (*He takes out his watch.*) In one minute, if you are still here, I shall pick you up and carry you off to South America.--Quick! there's the door!

ANNABELLE. (*faintly*) I--I want to go. . . .

JIMMY. Well, why don't you? . . . Thirty seconds!

ANNABELLE. I--I can't!

JIMMY. (*shutting his watch*) Time's up. The die is cast! (*He lifts her from the chair. She clings to him helplessly.*) My darling! My treasure! My beloved!--Idiot that I am!

*He kisses her fiercely.*

ANNABELLE. (*struggling in his arms*) No! No! No! Stop!

JIMMY. Never!

ANNABELLE. Stop! Please! Please! Oh! . . .

*The light suddenly goes out, and an instant later blazes out again, revealing the Angel, who has suddenly arrived in the middle of the room. The two of them stare at the apparition.*

THE ANGEL. (*politely*) I hope I am not intruding?

JIMMY. Why--why--not exactly!

ANNABELLE. (*in his arms, indignantly*) Jimmy! who is that man?

JIMMY. (*becoming aware of her and putting her down carefully*) I--why--the fact is, I don't--

THE ANGEL. The fact is, madam, I am his Guardian Angel.

ANNABELLE. An Angel! Oh!

THE ANGEL. Tell me, *have* I intruded?

ANNABELLE. No, not at all!

THE ANGEL. Thank you for reassuring me. I feared for a moment that I had made an inopportune entrance. I was about to suggest that I withdraw until you had finished the--er--ceremony--which I seem to have interrupted.

JIMMY. (*surprised*) But wasn't that what you came for--to interrupt?

THE ANGEL. I beg your pardon!

JIMMY. (*bewilderedly*) I mean--if you are my Guardian Angel, and all that sort of thing, you *must* have come to--to interfere!

THE ANGEL. I hope you will not think I would be capable of such presumption.

JIMMY. (*puzzled*) You don't want to--so to speak--reform me?

THE ANGEL. Not at all. Why, I scarcely know you!

JIMMY. But you're my--my Guardian Angel, you say?

THE ANGEL. Ah, yes, to be sure. But the relation of angelic guardianship has for some hundreds of years been a purely nominal

one. We have come to feel that it is best to allow mortals to attend to their own affairs.

JIMMY. (*abruptly*) Then what did you come for?

THE ANGEL. For a change. One becomes tired of familiar scenes. And I thought that perhaps my relationship to you might serve in lieu of an introduction. I wanted to be among friends.

JIMMY. Oh--I see.

ANNABELLE. Of course. We're delighted to have you with us. Won't you sit down? (*She leads the way to the fire.*)

THE ANGEL. (*perching on back of one of the big chairs*) If you don't mind! My wings, you know.

JIMMY. (*hesitantly*) Have a cigarette?

THE ANGEL. Thank you. (*He takes one.*) I am most anxious to learn the more important of your earthly arts and sciences. Please correct me if I go wrong. This is my first attempt, remember. He blows out a puff of smoke.

ANNABELLE. (*from the settle*) You're doing it very nicely.

THE ANGEL. It is incense to the mind.

ANNABELLE. (*laughing, blowing a series of smoke rings*) You must learn to do it like this!

THE ANGEL. (*in awe*) That is too wonderful an art. I fear I can never learn it!

ANNABELLE. I will teach you.

THE ANGEL. (*earnestly*) If you were my teacher, I think I could learn anything.

ANNABELLE. (*giggles charmingly*).

JIMMY. (*embarrassed*) Really, Annabelle...!

ANNABELLE. What's the matter?

JIMMY. Ordinarily I wouldn't mind your flirting with strangers, but...

ANNABELLE. (*indignantly*) Jimmy! How can you?

THE ANGEL. It was my fault, I'm sure--if fault there was. But what is it--to flirt? You see, I wish to learn everything.

ANNABELLE. I hope you never learn that.

THE ANGEL. I put myself in your hands.

JIMMY. Er--would you like a--drink?

THE ANGEL. Thank you. I am very thirsty. (*Taking the glass.*) This is very different from what we have in Heaven. (*He tastes it. A look of gratified surprise appears on his face.*) And much better! (*He drains the glass and hands it back.*) May I have some more?

ANNABELLE. Be careful!

THE ANGEL. What should I be careful of?

ANNABELLE. Don't drink too much of that--if it's the first time.

THE ANGEL. Why not? It is an excellent drink.

JIMMY. (*laughing*) The maternal instinct! She is afraid you may make yourself--ridiculous.

THE ANGEL. Angels do not care for appearances. (*He stands up magnificently in the chair, towering above them.*) Besides . . . (*refilling his glass*) I feel that you do an injustice to this drink. Already it has made a new being of me. (*He looks at Annabelle.*) I feel an emotion that I have never known before. If I were in heaven, I should sing.

ANNABELLE. Oh! Won't you sing?

THE ANGEL. The fact is, I know nothing but hymns. And I'm tired of them. That was one reason why I left heaven. And this robe. . . .  
*(He descends to the floor, viewing his garment with disapproval.)*  
Have you an extra suit of clothes you could lend me?

JIMMY. *(reflectively)* Yes, I think I have some things that might fit.  
*(The Angel waits.)* Do you want them now? I'll look.

*He goes into the bedroom. . . . The Angel looks at Annabelle until his gaze becomes insupportable, and she covers her eyes. Then he comes over to her side.*

THE ANGEL. *(gravely)* I am very much afraid of you. *(He takes her hands in his.)*

ANNABELLE. *(smiling)* One would never guess it!

THE ANGEL. I am more afraid of you than I was of God. But even though I fear you, I must come close to you, and touch you. I feel a strange, new emotion like fire in my veins. This world has become beautiful to me because you are in it. I want to stay here so that I may be with you. . . .

ANNABELLE. *(shaken, but doubting)* For how long?

THE ANGEL. For ever. . . .

ANNABELLE. *(in his arms)* Darling!

THE ANGEL. I am so ignorant! There is something I want to do right now, only I do not know how to go about it properly.

*He bends shyly toward her lips.*

ANNABELLE. I will teach you.

*She kisses him.*

THE ANGEL. Heaven was nothing to this. They kiss again. . . . *Enter Jimmy, with an old suit of clothes over his arm. He pauses in dumbfounderment. At last he regains his voice.*

JIMMY. Well! *They look up. Neither of them is perturbed.*

THE ANGEL. (*blandly*) Has something happened to annoy you? (*Jimmy shakes the clothes at him in an outraged gesture.*) Oh, my new costume. Thank you so much!

*He takes the clothes from Jimmy, and examines them with interest.*

JIMMY. (*bitterly, to Annabelle*) I suppose I've no right to complain. You can make love to anybody you like. In fact, now that I come to think of it, I predicted this very thing. I said you'd fall in love with the next man you met. So it's off with the old love, and--

ANNABELLE. (*calmly*) I have never been in love before.

JIMMY. The fickleness of women is notorious. It is exceeded only by their mendacity. But Angels have up to this time stood in good repute. Your conduct, sir, is scandalous. I am amazed at you.

THE ANGEL. It may be scandalous, but it should not amaze you. It has happened too often before. I could quote you many texts from learned theological works. "And the sons of God looked at the daughters of men and saw that they were fair." But even if it were as unusual as you imagine, that would not deter me.

JIMMY. You are an unscrupulous wretch. If these are the manners of Heaven, I am glad it is so far away, and means of communication so difficult. A few more of you would corrupt the morals of five continents. You are utterly depraved--Here! what are you doing?

THE ANGEL. I am taking off my robes, so as to put on my new clothes.

JIMMY. Spare the common decencies at least. Go in the other room.

THE ANGEL. Certainly, if that is the custom here. With the clothes over his arm, he goes into the bedroom.

JIMMY. (*sternly, to Annabelle*) And now tell me, what do you mean by this?

ANNABELLE. (*simply*)--We are in love.

JIMMY. Do you mean to say you would throw me over for that fellow?

ANNABELLE. Why not?

JIMMY. What good is he? All he can do is sing hymns. In three months he'll be a tramp.

ANNABELLE. I don't care. And he won't be a tramp. I'll look after him.

JIMMY. (*sneeringly*) The maternal instinct! Well, take care of him if you like. But of course you know that in six weeks he'll fall in love with somebody else?

ANNABELLE. No he won't. I'm sure that I am the only girl in the world to him.

JIMMY. Of course you're the only girl in the world to him--now. You're the only one he's ever seen. But wait till he sees the others! Six weeks? On second thought I make it three days. Immortal love! (*He laughs.*)

ANNABELLE. What difference does it make? You don't understand. Whether it lasts a day or a year, while it lasts it will be immortal. *The Angel enters, dressed in Jimmy's old clothes, and carrying his wings in his hands. He seems exhilarated.*

THE ANGEL. How do I look?

JIMMY. It is customary to wear one's tie tucked inside the vest.

THE ANGEL. (*flinging the ends of the gorgeous necktie over his shoulder*) No! Though I have become a man, I do not without some regret put on the dull garb of mortality. I would not have my form lose all its original brightness. Even so it is the excess of glory obscured.

ANNABELLE. (*coming over to him*) You are quite right, darling.

*She tucks the tie inside his vest.*

THE ANGEL. Thank you, beloved.--And now these wings! Take them, and burn them with your own sweet hands, so that I can never leave you, even if I would.

ANNABELLE. No! I would rather put them away for you in a closet, so that you can go and look at them any time you want to, and see that you have the means to freedom ready to your hand. I shall never hold you against your will. I do not want to burn your wings. I really don't! But if you insist--!

*She takes the wings, and approaches the grate.*

JIMMY. (*to the Angel*) Don't let her do it! Fool! You don't know what you are doing. Listen to me! You think that she is wonderful--superior--divine. It is only natural. There are moments when I have thought so myself. But I know why I thought so, and you have yet to learn. Keep your wings, my friend, against the day of your awakening-- the day when the glamour of sex has vanished, and you see in her, as you will see, an inferior being, with a weak body, a stunted mind, devoid of creative power, almost devoid of imagination, utterly lacking in critical capacity--a being who does not know how to work, nor how to talk, nor even how to play!

*Annabelle, dropping the wings on the hearth, stares at him, in speechless anger.*

THE ANGEL. Sir! Do you refer in these vulgar and insulting terms to the companion of my soul, the desire of my heart, the perfect lover whose lips have kindled my dull senses to ecstasy?

JIMMY. I do. Remember that I know her better than you do, young man. Take my advice and leave her alone. Even now it is not too late! Save yourself from this folly while there is still time!

THE ANGEL. Never!

JIMMY. Then take these tickets--and I hope that I never see either of you again! *He holds out the tickets. Annabelle, after a pause, steps forward and takes them.*

ANNABELLE. That is really sweet of you, Jimmy! The blast of an auto-horn is heard outside.

JIMMY. (*bitterly*) And there's my taxi. Take that, too.

THE ANGEL. Farewell!

*He opens the door. Annabelle, at his side, turns and blows Jimmy a kiss. Stonily, Jimmy watches them go out. Then he picks up his suitcase and goes, with an air of complete finality, into the other room.*

*There is a moment's silence, and then the door opens softly, and the Angel looks in, enters surreptitiously, seizes up the wings, and with them safely clasped to his bosom, vanishes again through the door.*