

## The Tenth Play: The Annunciation

*Solveig*  
(God) Since I have made all things of nought  
And Adam with my hands have wrought,  
Like to mine image, by my device,  
And given him joy in paradise  
To live therein as that I bad,  
Until he did what I forbad;  
And then I put him from that place,  
But yet I mean to grant him grace,  
And the oil of mercy for his gain  
And in time to **ease his pain**

*Tansley* ...**ease his pain**  
For he has suffered sin full sore  
For these five thousand years and more,  
First on earth

*Lyndon* and then in hell;  
But long therein he shall not dwell.  
Beyond pain's power he shall be laid,  
I will not lose what I have made.  
I will make **redemption**

*Laura* ...**redemption**  
As promised, in my person,  
All with reason and with right  
Both through mercy and through might.

*All* **With joy we shall be reconciled**

*Alex* For he was wrongfully beguiled;  
He shall out of prison pass  
Because that he beguiled was  
Through the serpent and his wife;

*Tansley* They made him touch the tree of life,

*Laura* And eat the fruit that I forbad,

*Lyndon* That doomed him to a life full sad,

*All* **Righteousness will we perform**

*Solveig* My son shall take on human form,  
And reasons therefore shall be three,  
A man, a maiden, and a tree,

*All* **Man for man, tree for tree,  
Maiden for maiden; thus shall it be.**

*Solveig* My Son shall by a maid be born,  
The fiend of hell to hold in scorn;  
Without a spot, as sun through glass,  
So pure a maid may none surpass

*Women* Both God and man shall he be

*Men* And both mother and maiden she,

*Tansley* To Abraham I once decreed  
To save both him and all his seed;  
And I intend that prophecy  
Be here fulfilled by me;

*All* For I am Lord and live anew,

*Tansley* My prophets shall be found most true.  
As said Moses

*Lyndon* And Isaiah

*Laura* King David

*Alex* And Jeremiah

*Tansley* Habbakuk

*Lyndon* And Daniel

*Laura* Sibyl sage, that spoke so well

*Alex* And mine other prophets all,

*All* **As they have said, it shall befall**

*Solveig* Rise up Gabriel, and find  
A gentle maiden, meek and kind  
In Nazareth of Galilee  
Where she dwells in that city.  
To that virgin and her spouse  
To a man of David's house  
Who as Joseph known is he  
AND the maiden named Mary  
Angel must to Mary go  
For to Eve the fiend was foe  
He was hateful in my sight  
But thou art angel fair and bright;  
And hail that maiden, as I plan,  
As graciously as thou can.  
On my behalf thou shall her greet  
I have her chosen, that maiden sweet,  
She shall conceive my darling  
Through thy word and her hearing.  
In her body will I come  
THat to me is cleanly done  
She shall of her body bear  
God and man, nor harm a hair;  
Blessed shall she be, and ever so;  
Bestir thee, Gabriel and go.

*Gabriel* Hail Mary, gracious!  
Hail maiden and God's spouse!  
To thee I bow, devout;  
Of all virgins thou art queen  
That ever was, or shall be seen,  
Without a doubt

Hail Mary and well thou be!  
My Lord of heaven is with thee,

Without an end.  
Hail woman, most of grace!  
Fear not nor feel disgrace  
That I commend

For thou has found, without a doubt  
The grace of God that has gone out  
For Adam's plight.  
This is the grace that gives thee bloom  
Thou shalt conceive within thy womb  
A child of might

When he is come, that is thy son,  
He shall take circumcision,  
Call him Jesus  
God's son men shall him call  
Who comes to free the thrall  
Within us

My lord shall also give to him  
David's throne to sit therein  
His lineage to show  
He shall be king of Jacob's kin  
And the crown eternal win,  
Lady, you must know.

*Mary* What is thy name

*Gabriel* Gabriel  
God's strength and his angel  
That comes to thee.

*Mary* Wondrous words are in thy greeting,  
But to bear God's gentle sweeting  
How should it be?

I slept never by man's side  
But in maidhood would abide  
Unshaken  
Therefore, I know not how  
This may be, because a vow  
I have taken

Nevertheless, full well I know  
God may work his will below  
Thy words fulfilling.  
But, I know not the manner,  
Therefore, teach me, thou messenger,  
God's way instilling

*Gabriel* Lady, this the secret, hear of me;  
The holy ghost shall come to thee,  
And in his virtue  
Thee enshroud and so infuse,  
Yet thou thy maidhood shall not lose,  
But ay be new.

The child that thou shalt bear, madame,  
Shall God's son be called by name;

And, Mary, understand,  
Elizabeth, thy cousin, whom barren all believed,  
A son in her old age she has conceived  
By her husband

ANd this is, for who will know,  
The sixth month since she conceived so,  
Whom barren all thought  
No word, Lady, that I thee bring,  
Is impossible to heaven's king,  
Who all has wrought

*Mary* My lord's love will I not withstand,  
I am his maiden at his hand,  
And in his fold  
Gabriel, I believe that God will bring  
To pass with me each several thing  
As thou hast told

*Gabriel* Mary, gentle maid,  
Too long now have I stayed,  
My leave of you I take

*Mary* Fare to my friend,  
Who did thee send,  
For mankind's sake

*Joseph* Almighty God, what may this be,  
Mary, my wife amazes me  
Herself she has forgot  
Her body is great, and she with child  
By me she never was defiled  
Mine therefore, it is not.

I am irked full sore with my life  
That ever I wed so young a wife  
Repent I of that plan  
To me it was a doleful deed  
I might have known the wench had need  
To love a younger man

I am old, indeed to say,  
And past the pleasures of love's play  
Those games from me are gone  
Young and old are poorly paired  
That know I well, since ill I fared  
Some other she dotes on.

She is with child, I know not how  
Who could trust any woman now?  
No man of any good.  
I know not what now I should do  
Save go to her and ask her who  
Shall own the fatherhood

Hail Mary, and well ye be,  
Why, but woman, what cheer with thee?

*Mary* The better sir, for you

*Joseph*      So would I, woman, that ye were,  
A mock, now, Mary, you'll incur  
And your state sadly rue

But one thing I must ask of thee  
The child's father - who is he?

*Mary*          Sir, ye, and God of heaven

*Joseph*      Mine, Mary, leave be thy din  
Ye know I have no part therein  
Swear it by those stars seven!

Wherefore link ye me thereto?  
I had never with thee to do  
How should it then be mine?  
Whose is that child, so God thee speed?

*Mary*          Sir, God's and yours, I say indeed

*Joseph*      Spare those words of thine

For none of mine it is, I know  
And I repent thou hast done so  
Ill deed as is seen  
And had thou thought thyself to kill,  
Thou full sore against my will,  
It better might have been.

*Mary*          By God's will, Joseph, must it be,  
For certainly save God and ye  
I know no other man  
Nor in flesh have been defiled

*Joseph*      How then art thou thus with child?  
Excuse that if ye can

So God save me, I blame thee not  
To weaken for a woman's lot  
But to thee I must say this  
Well ye know, and so do I  
That thy state cannot deny  
That thou hast done amiss.

*Mary*          Yea, God, he knows all my doing

*Joseph*      Woe! Now this is a wonderous thing,  
I can say nought thereto;  
But in my heart I feel full sore,  
And ever longer more and more;  
For dole, what shall I do?

God's and mine she says it is.  
I will not father it; she says amiss;  
With shame she is beset  
To excuse her villainy to me  
,  
With her I can no longer be.  
I rue that ever we met

And how we met, ye soon shall know  
Young children used to the temple go  
In learning's way to tread  
And so did she, till she grew more  
Than other maidens, wise of lore,  
Then to her the bishops said,

*BISHOPS* Mary, it behoves thee to take  
(*Solveig,* Some young man thy mate to make  
*Tansley,* As others have done before  
*Lyndon*) In the temple, whom thou wilt name?

*Joseph* And she said

*Mary* none!

*Joseph* For still the same  
God of heaven she would adore

She would none other for any saw;  
They said

*BISHOPS* She must! It was the law.  
(*Solveig,* She was of age thereto  
*Tansley,*  
*Lyndon*)

*Joseph* To the temple they gathered, old and young  
All those from Judah's lineage sprung,  
To give the law its due

They gave each man a white wand there,  
And bad us in our hand it bear,  
To offer with good intent;  
They offered their wands up at that tide,  
But I was old and stood beside,  
I knew not what they meant

They lacked one which came not nigh  
All had offered, they said, but I  
For I ay withdrew me.  
Forth with my wand they made me stand,  
With bloom it flourished in my hand;  
Then said they all to me

*BISHOPS* Thou thou be old, this marvel on thee  
(*Solveig,* Shows God of heaven, thus ordains he  
*Tansley,* Thy wand shows clearly  
*Lyndon*) It flourishes so, without gainsay  
That to marry Mary is your way.

*Joseph* A sorrier man then was I  
I was full sorry to be thus caught,  
My age put marriage past my thought  
For us to share a tether  
Her youth would find my age no use  
But they would hear of no excuse

But wed us thus together

*Joseph* When I all thus had wed her there

We and my maidens home did fare,  
That kings' daughters were.  
They all at silk worked everyone  
Mary wrought purple all alone,  
No other colour.

I left them in good peace I thought,  
And in the country, where I wrought  
My craft with might and main  
I went to earn what we should need'  
Of Mary I prayed them take good heed.  
Until I came again.

Nine months away from Mary mild,  
When I came home, she was with child;  
Alas, I said, for shame  
I asked those women who had that done  
They told me

*Women (T,  
S and Ly)* An angel had come  
None other was to blame

An angel spoke with Mary bright  
And no man else by day or night  
Sir thereof be ye bold

*Joseph* They excused her thus readily  
To clear her of all folly  
And mock me that I am old.

Should an angel this deed have wrought?  
Such excuses help me nought,  
Nor no cunning that they can;  
A heavenly thing, forsooth is he  
And she is earthly; this may not be  
It is some other man

Her misdeed grieves me sore, in truth  
But yet such is the way of youth  
So wantonly to sport  
Young women ever yearn to play  
With youths, and turn the old away  
Such is the world's report

But Mary and I never played love's game,  
Never together so closely we came,  
Never so near

As clean as uncut crystal she  
And shall be while I live, for me,  
The law will have it so  
ANd then am I cause of her deed?  
Of good counsel I am sore in need  
Alas, who recks my woe!

And if indeed it so befall  
With God's son that she be withall  
Such grace is me denied  
I know well that I am not he  
Who should worthy deemed to be  
That blessed body beside.

Nor yet to be in company  
To the wilderness then flee  
ANd there my fate deplore  
In future never with her deal,  
But secretly from her shall steal  
That meet shall we no more

*Gabriel* Be warned, Joseph, and change thy thought  
Which to wondering thee has brought  
In the wilderness so wild;  
Turn home to thy spouse again  
THy wife she is without a stain  
Nor ever was defiled

Tax not from earth the heavenly host,  
SHe has conceived the holy ghost  
And God's son she shall bear  
Therefore with her, in thy degree,  
Meek and obedient, look thou be  
And of her take good care.

Ah Lord, I love thee above all  
For so great boon as may befall  
That I should tend this stripling  
I that so ungracious were  
To cast on her the slightest slur  
Mary, my dear darling

Repent I now what I have said  
Against her matchless maidenhead  
For she is pure in deed  
Therefore to her now will I go  
ANd pray her be my friend not foe  
And her forgiveness plead

Ah Mary, wife, what cheer?

*Mary* The better, sir, that ye are here  
Thus long where have ye been?

*Joseph* Fretting and walking up and down  
And troubled how to smooth thy frown  
Against my thoughts unclean

But now I know and clearly see  
My trespass against God and thee



Forgive me, I thee pray.

*Mary* Now all that ever ye said to me  
God forgives as I do thee  
With all the might I may

*Joseph* Blessed be, Mary, thy good will  
In forgiving my words ill  
When I did thee upbraid  
And blessed be he with such a wife  
Though dowerless, to share his life  
He may count himself well paid

Lo, I am as light as a leaf!  
He that can quench all grief  
And every wrong amend  
Lend me grace, power and might  
My wife and her sweet son of light  
To keep to my life's end