

# The angel who was always late

**O**nce upon a time there was a little angel who could never manage to be on time. The clouds messed up by the last storm needed to be tidied and Samuel was late. The moon needed shining and the little angel could not be found. He arrived for choir practice so out of breath that he could not even sing a note for the first few minutes. The other angels decided that the time had come to scold Samuel for his thoughtlessness. "This won't do - said one of the archangels crossly, looking down on him - you'll have to learn to be more punctual". "I do try - replied the little angel - but I don't know what happens, time slips by so quickly". "He is young and inexperienced and gets involved in too many things" intervened another archangel sympathetically. "It's time he learned to be in time and to keep his promises" the first archangel said severely and, as he sent Samuel off, he reminded him "Tomorrow is Christmas, make sure you're not late as usual!" The little angel promised to be on time and went back to his usual activities.

**H**e had so many things to do: help a baby take his first steps, arrange for a lonely girl to get to know a lonely boy, make peace between two brothers after a quarrel, find a kind home for a stray cat. And then there were people waiting for news from far away, people who needed hope, who had forgotten how to smile, who were too lonely, people who were worried about an examination, who were lost; there were so many people in need of a little help from a little angel. "Tomorrow is Christmas, it must not be a sad day."

**S**amuel kept on flying here and there, doing his best to make people smile again. He was a bit tired but very happy when he could finally stop and then he realised that, as usual, he was late. He flew as fast as he could to the choir, which had already started singing. "Gabriel will be furious with me" he was thinking when he actually crashed into that severe archangel. "Late even today, you really are incorrigible" said the angel but a gentle voice interrupted: "Don't scold him, I know that he wasn't able to be in time to sing in your choir, even today, but the things he does make me happy". All the angels turned towards the person who had spoken out in defence of the little angel and Jesus went on, smiling: "This little angel is always late because he tries to give people some joy, some hope, some faith and there is never enough time to do it. Let him continue with the task he has picked out because a smile makes me happier than anything else and it is the best present I could get for my birthday".

**T**he angels all gathered around Samuel and their voices rose higher and more harmoniously than ever to tell the World of the birth of Jesus on that Christmas Night.

