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Annunciation
fantasy for Advent
based on Luke 1:26-38
by Ralph Milton

*During a meeting with clergy for the preaching magazine **Aha!!!** we were reflecting on how God seldom chose the most obvious candidates. King David, the prophets, Moses. Virtually all of God's choices seemed to be of people least expected to carry out the assigned task.*

Meditating on the story of God choosing Mary to be the mother of Jesus, this wild and crazy fantasy developed. Some people have found it highly offensive. Others have said it was liberating.

You can decide for yourself.

One eternity not long ago, God was talking to the angel Gabriel.

"I've had it with prophets, Gabe. They've been a weird bunch to start with. They garble my message, and people throw rocks at them. Time for plan B, Gabe. The Messiah. I've been promising the folks a Messiah, so now's the time."

"But God," Gabe whined, "Messiahs are a lot of work. The political situation with your people is a mess. You've got all kinds of religious sects throwing prayers at each other...."

"Which makes it the ideal time, Gabe. Get to it."

Gabe needed no instructions. They'd all be proclaimed eons ago. "A young woman shall bear a child...." Gabe muttered to himself as he began looking through his data base of possible candidates. "I suppose if God's Messiah is to be completely human, we need a human mother, but it seems to me there'd be an easier way."

"There isn't Gabe. Look, I gave my human children choice. I gave them freedom. That means they can mess up. And they do. Royally. For a Messiah to be like them, the Messiah has to be able to mess up too...in other words has to be human. So find me a human mother."

Princess Dorothea was the first candidate on Gabe's list. She was young and beautiful and the daughter of a King.

"A what?" she demanded. "A baby? I've got a social calendar that's full from now till a year next November. Where would I work a baby into that? Besides, there's been enough scandal in the royal family already. Do you know what kind of flak I'd get if I got pregnant and I said God was the daddy? Get real!"

Bad choice. Gabriel knew that even before the conversation ended and decided to go on to candidate number two.

Rachael was a widow. Also young, beautiful, and conveniently unattached. "A year after my sainted husband dies I should have a baby? What kind of an angel are you, trying to get a nice eligible widow like me in trouble? I have a nice little estate left by my husband and I still have my looks. In other words, I have prospects. Why are you trying to get me into trouble with a baby? Kids are not an asset in second marriages. Get real!"

"Right," said Gabe and flew off. He was getting a bit discouraged by now. But an assignment from God is an assignment from God. Try Esther.

Esther's career was in full flight. From the ground up she had built a nice little chain of shops selling smelly soaps, lotions and other potions to pamper the body. Heavenly Body Shops she called them. "Everything is absolutely ecologically correct," she proclaimed, "and I treat my employees very well. As long as they do exactly what I say."

Gabriel's request was not good news. "Do you know the price of daycare? Who would run my shops while I'm on maternity leave? Get real, Gabriel."

"Yes, get real, Gabriel," he thought as he sat on a cloud considering his options. Right near the bottom of his list he saw the name Mary. "A plain-Jane kind of name," he muttered. "She waits on tables at the local pub, which I gather is a real dive. And her growing up years were pure hell with a step father who kept forcing sex on her."

Gabriel took a deep breath. "Well, here goes nothin'."

"Greetings, Mary," said Gabriel. "God is with you."

"I know," said Mary. She kept on wiping a table without looking up. "So?"

"God has a great calling for you, Mary. God needs your help in bringing the Messiah into the world. God wants you to have a baby. Emmanuel. God's chosen one."

"What? Me? I thought you needed a virgin for that," said Mary. "Isn't that what the Bible says? So go find yourself a frilly sweet young thing from the other side of the tracks. You're not likely to find many virgins in this neighborhood."

"Well, no, the prophet said a 'young woman' shall bear a child."

"You get old before your time in a place like this?" said Mary. "The manager tries to put the make on me every night at closing time. That's how I know that God is with me. Alone, I couldn't have done it. Every night I pray, 'God, get me outa this place! Say, is this the answer to that prayer? Weird.'"

"Trust the mystery, Mary," said Gabriel. "The child God wants you to bear will be the Holy one of God."

"Am I on candid camera?"

"Mary, give your cousin Elizabeth a call on the phone. She's pregnant."

"What? Lizzie wanted a kid, but she's old. Like ancient! Are you putting me on?"

"Elizabeth's prayers were answered, Mary. Call her. Then you will know that this was a real conversation, and not a dream."

"What did you say your name was?"

"Gabriel."

"Gabriel. You're one of the guys that works for God, right? Like an angel?"

"You got it."

"Well, I guess. Wait a minute. What am I going to tell Joe, my boyfriend?"

"I'll talk to Joe. It'll be OK," said Gabriel. "Trust Joe. Trust yourself. Most of all trust God."

"You're sure you want a dumb and dirty booze slinger to be the mother of the Messiah? I mean, get real!"

"Yes, get real Mary. God wants a real woman from the real world to give birth to a real Messiah who knows what real life is like in places like this."

"Well, OK, I guess. But you will talk to Joe?"

"I'll talk to Joe."

**Ralph Milton has written a number of books,
all of them available through Wood Lake Publishing.**

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