



# NEW CYCLE OF MYSTERY PLAYS

The Parable of the Good Servant  
by Frazer Flintham

<b>Wendy</b>	<b>Rosie Cavaliero</b>
<b>Carly</b>	<b>Lizzy Watts</b>
<b>Rod</b>	<b>Will Howard</b>
<b>Loren</b>	<b>Christine Absalom</b>
<b>Alan</b>	<b>Adam Nagaitis</b>
<b>Mr Bell</b>	<b>Patrick Brennan</b>

Directed by Jessica Dromgoole

**PLEASE BRING HARD-SOLED SHOES TO THE STUDIO  
PLEASE REMEMBER TO SIGN YOUR CONTRACTS**

**Readthrough/ Record:**

Wednesday 31 October 2012 1430-1900

**Venue:**

Studio 60A  
BBC Broadcasting House  
Portland Place  
London W1A 1AA

**TX: Wednesday 19 December 2012 at 2245 in The Essay BBC Radio 3**

## **SCENE ONE – INT. SHOP FLOOR**

### **Music in 00:00**

GILES FRASER: In the year 1210, Pope Innocent III issued a ban on clergy performing in any sort of drama on the public stage. For a while, the church had been getting increasingly twitchy about the popularity of religious plays that had spilled out from the church and into the market place where they were often sponsored by the local town guild. But no one ever granted the church some exclusive deal to be the sole custodians of the Christian message. The proliferation of popular interpretation represented a confidence that the stories of the Bible could be understood in a whole host of different ways and by different people. In this new cycle of commissions, radio 3 has asked a series of contemporary playwrights to do something similar, to take some familiar New Testament stories and to set them in the context of the modern workplace. In this retelling of the Parable of the Good Servant, the mysterious Mr Bell watches his department store from a distance. But like the absent of God, some begin to doubt his existence. And as the loose faith, so the store begins to change character.

1 .Wendy Right, morning team. So. Overall Store sales for last week were basically – amazing. Not only did we hit all our daily targets but we also smashed it with the new Ladies and Gents fragrance lines, with Floral Dimension and Masco-Mucho coming out on top. Mr Bell specifically asked me in this morning's email to pass on his thanks.

### **Out 1:24**

2. Carly *(whispering to Rod)* Where's he live again? Swindon?

3. Rod Sweden.

4. Carly *(sighs)* I'd love to go to Sweden.

5. Rod I'd be happy with Swindon right now.

6. Wendy And as it's only my third week here, I also really appreciate your efforts. However - at the end of play yesterday, I did notice three bottles of 'I'd Dye To be Brown' hair coloring bottles with their labels facing in opposite directions. Now, I didn't tell Mr Bell this, but he could make his store visit at any time, and it's these little things that he'll be assessing us on...

7. Carly I really thought she was gonna be more chilled out than Rosa – her coming from Glossers. I might apply for Burger City.

8. Wendy Is there something the matter Carly?

1. Carly No. No!

2. Wendy Then why's your face all crunched up? You want to watch that– people won't take advice on our Spring Lipstick Range from someone with a top lip like a Quaver!  
Now! In Mr Bell's email this morning he also informed me that as of this coming Friday - Loren will have been an employee at Bells for twenty-five years!

3. All No/Gosh/Really?

4. Wendy So come here Loren.

5. Rod (to *Carly*) I think I'd have topped myself at six.

6. Wendy In true Bells Store ethos, Mr Bell will be putting an extra £100 into Loren's account this month.

7. Loren A hundred pounds? Wait 'til I tell my Frank!

8. Rod Huh! You'd get more begging outside Greggs

9. Loren (to Wendy) Can you thank him in your email?

1.Wendy Of course. Right. Okay, well it's ten to, let's get those doors open and aim for more of the same this week! Because when Mr Bell arrives, we want to make him ding-a-ling-a-ling!

FX The Sounds of the Tills opening and closing.

**SCENE TWO – INT. OFFICE**

1.Loren                    So Wendy. How've you found your first month? You settling in all right?

2.Wendy                    Yeah - I think so.

3.Loren                    Well the store looks gorgeous. I mean, you never know when you get someone new in, if they're going to rise to the challenge or belly-flop.

4.Wendy                    Well that's why I made the move here from Glossers. Bells has such a wonderful reputation – I'm made up to finally be a part of it.

5.Loren                    Yes. Well Mr Bell sounds pleased.

6.Wendy                    Yes his emails are very encouraging. It's good to know that he trusts me to just get on with things. Although I do hope he makes a visit soon, because it would be nice to meet him. I had my interview with his daughter, who he sent over from Sweden.

7. Loren                    That's how he's always done it, yes

8. Wendy                    Well I just hope he likes what I've done.



### **SCENE THREE – SOUNDSCAPE**

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

1.Wendy Another wonderful week team – so thank you for your hard work.... Now Mr Bell...

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

2.Carly Yes Madam, of course. I think Fire Of London Orange would suit your natural tones perfectly.

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

3.Rod Mr Bell, Mr Bell, Mr Bell!

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

4.Wendy So another excellent week on sales – and the store is looking top drawer.

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

5.Wendy Rod! How many shades of tanning lotions do we have in the summer Shimmer like a winner Range?

6.Rod                    Er....

1.Wendy                Twelve Rod!

FX                    The sound of the tills being shut.

2.Rod                    Do you think she's always going to be like this?

3.Carly                Why can't he just turn up, so we can all just relax.

**SCENE FOUR – SHOP FLOOR**

1.Wendy                    Okay Carly – you can come off that till and do Ladies Leg Care when Rod gets back from his lunch.

2.Carly                    All right.

*Wendy exits.*

3.Rod                    You'll never guess who I've just seen in the arcade?

4.Carly                    (*shock*) Not her with that fringe?

5.Rod                    No. Rosa!

6.Carly                    Oh! Did you tell her that we thought she was bad enough?

7.Rod                    No. But you'll never guess what she told me?

8.Carly                    What?

9.Rod                    The real reason she left!

10.Carly                    She was in love with Loren and couldn't bear it any longer?

1. Rod No. Mr Bell had promised her first dibs on running a new store he's opening in Westfield – Bells In Heaven.

2. Carly No!

3. Rod Yeah! An even higher-end store than this one!

4. Carly Wow! So that's why Wendy came here from Glossers!

5. Rod Yeah. But he never made one visit. Not once, in the whole five years she was here!

*Carly notices Wendy approaching*

6. Wendy Err...Rod You may be on your lunch, but Carly isn't.

7. Rod Yeah, sorry. (pause) Err... Wendy, can I have a word?

8. Wendy What is it?

9. Rod I erm. I've errrmm, just seen Rosa. Our old manager, before you.

10. Wendy Oh right.

1. Rod Yeah. And she asked me to give you a message.

2. Wendy Me?

3. Rod Yeah. She erm... (*in confidence*) She said that she isn't allowed to speak to you herself, as it was in her contract - but there's something she thought you should know.

4. Wendy Go on.

5. Rod She said to tell you - 'Mr Bell didn't come'.

6. Wendy (*beat*) She told you this?

7. Rod Yes. She said he never visited when she managed here, not once.

8. Wendy He must have done!

9. Rod That's what she said!

10. Wendy And how long was she here?

11. Rod Five years.

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

**SCENE FIVE – INT. OFFICE**

1. Wendy Is it true, that Mr Bell never visited when Rosa was here?  
(pause) Loren?

2. Loren Erm....

3. Wendy Is it?

4. Loren Yes.

5. Wendy And that's why she left?

6. Loren Yes.

7. Wendy But....!

8. Loren Look, just because he hasn't been yet - doesn't mean he won't come at all. Don't lose faith Wendy. You've only been here six months. He'll come. You just have to trust him.

9. Wendy You mean he's never made a visit?

PAUSE

10. Loren?

1. Loren Not yet, no.

2. Wendy And you've never met him?

5. Loren Everyone round here knows he's a wonderful man.

6. Wendy But you've been here twenty-six years and he's never visited, once?

7. Loren If he said he's coming, then one day he will.

8. Wendy But...

9. Loren I know what he's promised you...

10. Wendy (*beat*) How do you know about that?

11. Loren Oh don't you leave as well Wendy, you're the best manager we've had – the store's never looked so good, it really hasn't.

12. Wendy Really?

1. Loren Yes. And this new store – it sounds just wonderful. Just think how wonderful that's going to be – I mean what an honour – that's something money can't buy!

2. Wendy But if he never comes!

3. Loren                    He will! Do you think I'd have stayed working for a man this long if I didn't think he was a man of his word? I don't need to work – what with my Frank's retirement money – but knowing that when I walk down that high street people say 'look, there's Loren Hope, she works at Bells !

4. Wendy                    But it's only his word!

5. Loren                    Mr Bell's old school – he rewards loyalty. Look at the bonus he gave me! He's the God of Bells, and in our God, we must trust. All the other managers have bailed, but you Wendy, if you keep faith in his word, just think how greatly you'll be rewarded.

6. Wendy                    Well I'd better be

**SCENE SIX – SOUNDSCAPE**

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

1. Wendy Okay, there must be two of you in each aisle at all times, and we must ensure that there is a member of the team available to them within four seconds of store entry.

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

2. Wendy Carly, where's your badge?

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

3. Loren Yes, of course Madam, which would you like?

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

4. Carly Would you like a bow on that Madam?

5. Customer Yes please.

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

6. Wendy Is that a crease in your shirt Rod?

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

1. Wendy ...this month's overall sales are up again on last month....

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

2. Wendy Carly – was that a yawn?

3. Carly No.

4. Wendy I'm in here at 5am every day and I don't leave much before 9 – but do you see me yawning? (*beat*) And swill some mouthwash – I can smell pasty from here.

FX Till shutting crescendos.....

**SCENE SEVEN – INT. OFFICE**

1.Rod Well that's all the Autumn shades hair pieces out Wendy, so I'm gonna head off now.

2.Wendy Okay, thanks Rod.

3.Rod (pause) Are you okay Wendy?

4. Wendy Yes, yes, I'm fine. I'm just a little tired that's all.

5. Rod Why don't you leave with us?

6. Wendy I need to do these figures.

7. Rod Okay. (*beat*) All he's bothered about is whether or not we hit our targets. Mr Bell!

8. Wendy Rod!

9. Rod I'm just saying. All this work you do – in here every night.

10. Wendy It's my job Rod.

1. Rod I know but. If you ask me, what's it matter if we put bows on stuff or curtsey every time someone comes in if?

2. Wendy Have you been curtseying?

3. Rod No.

4. Wendy Good.

5. Rod if we're hitting the targets anyway. People would still come in - the products you get here are all the same as at Glossers.

6. Wendy Mmmm.

7. Rod Well.. I'm sure Mr Bell appreciates it. I'll see you in the morning.

*Rod exits.*

*Wendy lets out a long sigh.*

**SCENE EIGHT – SOUNDSCAPE**

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

1. Wendy Well done again team, Mr Bell is over the moon about the further increase in profits over this last quarter.

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

5. Rod Hey Wendy – they're having a Fireworks theme day over at Glossers.

6. Wendy Really?

7. Rod Yeah it's packed.

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

2. Carly Wend – just so you know - I'm going to dust that display down straight after I do these - I haven't forgotten!

3. Wendy It's okay. Do it tomorrow.

4. Carly                    Oh, right

1. Wendy                    Actually Rod, just get as many of them on the shelf as you can – don't worry if they aren't all in line hey, as long as they're on there.

FX                        The sound of the tills being shut.

2. Loren                    Wendy, I don't wish to seem like a snitch – but Carly's been handing out bags to customers with the Bells logo facing away from the customer.

3. Wendy                    I'll have a word with her later.

4. Loren                    Well I'd say something to her now - she's already done it twice this morning.

5. Wendy                    I'll speak to her later.

FX                        The sound of the tills being shut.

6. Carly                    Wendy, me and Rod just wondered – and please it's only a suggestion, but would it be okay for me and Rod to use some of the damaged make-up as face paints for Halloween?

7. Wendy                    (*pause*) I don't see why not!

FX

The sound of the tills being shut.

**SCENE NINE – INT. OFFICE**

FX                    The sound of the tills being shut.

1. Loren            Can I have a word?

2. Wendy            Come in Loren.

3. Loren            Is everything okay?

4. Loren            Not really no.

5. Wendy            What's up?

6. Loren            I'm a little concerned as to the direction this store is going in?

7. Wendy            Oh!

8. Loren            Yes. I... I've been wanting to say something for a while now, but I thought maybe it was just a blip.

9. Wendy            But we've never been busier Loren – and our sales are through the roof!

10. Loren           Yes, but...

1. Wendy And Mr Bell's emails are nothing short of gushing!

2. Loren But the store? It's like Poundworld out there.

3. Wendy Loren...

4. Loren A lady came in yesterday and asked Carly where she could find the facemasks and Carly told her she'd be better off just buying a balaclava.

5. Wendy People like banter.

6. Loren People don't come to Bells for banter! They come to Bells for a deluxe customer experience and always have done. If they want banter and their goods shoved in a bag like the cashiers stuffing a chicken - they can go to Glossers for that.

7. Wendy And what's so wrong with the people who shop in Glossers? Hey?

8. Loren I mean there're people coming in who eat at Burger City! Mr Bell employed you to maintain this store's reputation, to protect the brand, not...

9. Wendy We're still hitting our targets?

1. Loren When Mr Bell visits, you'll be for the high jump!

2. Wendy (*pause*) He's never coming Loren! Do you not see?

3. Loren Yes he is. And he'll come when you least expect him!

4. Wendy There hasn't been a drop in sales because we haven't dusted on top of every shelf, or grovelled to every customer as they pass by. People are getting their products, Mr Bell's making his money, we're all getting our annual pay-rise, so what's it matter?

5. Loren Well if this is going to continue like this, then I can't stand and watch it happen.

6. Wendy (*pause*) What are you saying Loren?

7. Loren I'd like to resign.

8. Wendy Well if that's what you want.

9. Loren Yes. I don't think I could bear to watch it when Mr Bell does arrive. For him, for any of you.

10. Wendy I'll be sorry to see you go.

1.Loren      And I'm sorry too. Because I really thought you were the one who'd stick with it, no matter what.

2.Wendy      Well it seems this place has been a surprise for all of us then.

FX      The sound of the tills being shut.

FX      Christmas Carols play – it fades to the background music in the store, into the next scene.

**SCENE TEN – INT. SHOP**

FX Christmas tunes now play in store

FX The sound of the tills being shut.

1. Carly And eighty-five change. See ya

*Wendy approaches.*

2. Carly Wendy, is it okay if I nip and get a hot chocolate to have  
behind the till, I'm freezing.

3. Wendy Yes, go on then. Put a coat on though, they said it might snow  
today.

4. Carly No.

5. Wendy Yeah.

6. Carly Well I hope it doesn't stick. I've got Zumba tonight.

Music Deck the halls carol.

**SCENE ELEVEN – INT. SHOP**

1. Carly                    Just look at it! How are we going to get home?

2. Wendy                    We'll have to stay here the night.

3. Carly                    Here?

4. Wendy                    Yes – we don't want to get stranded in this. We'll get set up in the tea room with the fire on and sleep on the sofas.

5. Rod                      Well let's shut the shop and get out the back now – nobody's going to come out in this.

6. Wendy                    We've got another hour yet?

7. Rod                      Oh please Wend!

8. Wendy                    (pause) Oh alright.

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FX                            The store doors open. The sound of the wind and snow comes in.

9. Alan                     How come you've got power! It's all gone off in our place.

1. Wendy                    Oh no!

2. Alan                    Yeah.

3. Wendy                    Ah – I wanted a Quarter-Pounder for my tea!

4. Alan                    No chance of that. It's freezing in there. Is it alright if I send my staff over here Wendy? Coz they can't get home just yet, and I can't leave them in there.

5. Wendy                    Course yeah.

6. Alan                    Cheers Wend!

7. Wendy                    We're all going to stay here tonight.

8. Alan                    Are you?

9. Wendy                    Yeah.

10. Alan                    Well we were meant to be having our Christmas party tonight.

11. Wendy                    Well that won't be happening will it.

12. Alan No – the venue's already called to say they're not opening.

1.Wendy What a shame.

2. Alan Yeah. And I've still got a people carrier full of party bits and booze – and twelve cold miserable staff on my hands.

3. Carly Have it here!

4.Wendy Carly!

5.Carly (*whispers*) Come on Wendy! The Burger City guys are FIT!

6.Rod I bet they've been looking forward to their Christmas party all year - there's nothing worse than being promised something and then it never happening, hey Wendy.

7. Wendy (pause) Alright then. But no making a mess!

**SCENE TWELVE – INT. SHOP**

Music Slade's 'Wish it could be Christmas Everyday'

*Cheers – partying.*

*Singing 14:14*

1.Rod I just can't believe what a good bar the perfume counter makes!

2.Carly Right Wendy – you're having a shot!

3.Wendy No. No.

4.All Yeah / Go on / Do it! Do it!

5. Rod Let your hair down!

6. Wendy Alright then.

7. All Cheer.

**SCENE THIRTEEN – INT. SHOP****Out 14:35**Music The Macarena. In 14:36

1.Wendy Is that a Zumba move as well Carly?

2.Carly Yeah.

3.Rod We just thought you were having a fit Carl!

**Out 14:48**

**SCENE FOURTEEN – INT. SHOP**

Music Mambo Number 5. In 14:48

1.Rod Let's get the wigs out?

2.Wendy Rod!

3. Rod Oh come on Wendy!

4.Wendy Well I'm having the blonde!

**Out 15:06**

**SCENE FIFTEEN – INT. SHOP**Music George Michael – Last Christmas.*Wendy is now drunk.*

In 15:06

1.Wendy ....because, you know Rod, that he promised me, once he'd visited the store and was happy – Bells in Heaven. Oh yeah!

2.Rod We know Wend!

3.Wendy Do ya?

4.Rod Yeah.

5.Wendy Well you see Loren - she was just old school – believing in something just because she's been told to. You've got to be more savvy than that – or people take advantage. Rosa should have stayed and made the most of this – pay rises with no one looking over your shoulder.

6.Carly (shouts) Okay lads! Who's next under my mistletoe?

*Cheers from the lads.*FX The music suddenly goes off.

Out 15:42

7.All Ahhh!

1.Rod Not our power as well!

2.Wendy It's okay, it's okay. We've got a backup generator, I'll...

3.Rod Loren?

*Everyone goes quiet.*

4.Wendy Loren? You came back, you came back!

5.Loren What have you done?

6.Wendy We're having a party Loren? A Party! Would you like a cheese twirl? (pause) Is this your Frank? Hello Frank, welcome to the party! Would you like a cheese stick?

7.Loren Wendy, this is...

8.Mr Bell Hello Wendy. I'm Mr Bell.

9.Wendy Mr Bell? Mr Bell. Right... Mr Bell!!!

10.Mr Bell It's nice to meet you at long last Wendy.

11.Wendy Yes. Yes. You too.

1.Mr Bell But what a shame.

2.Wendy Oh, I can explain, we err...

3.Mr Bell No need.

4.Wendy Loren! Did you...?

5.Mr Bell No, she didn't. I told you I would come Wendy. You weren't the one for Bells in Heaven after all.

6.Wendy But I...

7.Mr Bell I think you'd better leave, don't you.

8.Wendy But how am I going to get home?

Music in: 16:50

Annos.

Music out 17:20