



NEW CYCLE OF MYSTERY PLAYS

The Parable of The Sower
by Tom Wells

Ellie	Katie Angelou
Miss	Eleanor Crooks
Marcus	Shaun Aylward
Daniel	Jack Boulter
Alice	Ellie Hopkins
Robot	Paul Stonehouse

Directed by Jessica Dromgoole

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

Readthrough/ Record:

Thursday 1 November 2012 1100-1600

Venue:

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

TX: Friday 21 December 2012 at 2245 in The Essay BBC Radio 3

Scene One – Ellie's bedroom

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 renarration of the Parable of the Sower, Ellie meets a weird woman on the bus and is inspired to turn the Biblical story into a school science experiment. But as the experiment develops one begins to ask whether the whole thing is not so much about growth of Ellie's cress but much more about the growth of Ellie herself.

Music out 1:26

1. Ellie: Dear God and or Jesus.
Ellie D. Rickman Street. Monday night.
Just wanted to say: cheers for the miracle.
You know the one.
On the bus, on the number 8.
Cos you sent that woman didn't you?
Who reads the Bible out.
Normally I just think 'nutter' but today I realised: no. She's sent from God.
2. She looked a bit like you actually. Same beard.
I was just sat there thinking 'what the eff-word am I gonna do?'
Cos of my science club issues. And Daniel was all asking
what's up why are you distracted but everyone knows,

everyone knows: the first rule about Science Club, you do not talk about Science Club. It's like Glee Club. With test tubes. So I was doing that, not talking about Science Club, she came up to us all: 'Hearken.'

3. Which I did.

Went off on one, story about this bloke planting these seeds. Scattering seeds. In all different places. Whether they grew or not.

And Daniel was sort of ignoring her. Just carrying on with his knitting. But I was listening. Hard.

4. Cos it didn't sound like a story to me.

It sounded to me like a brilliant experiment.

Like a prize-winning experiment sort of thing.

And time is running out now so. Only got til Friday. And my Mum's not being that encouraging to be honest.

5. So yeah.

It's a plan. Codeword 'cress'. I will instigate it tomorrow.

Amen.

Scene Two – Science Club

1. Marcus: On this axis is how many calories I have eaten each day. And then on this axis is how much I weigh in kilograms. And then the curve, that's... So, in conclusion, the more calories you eat, the more I weigh.

It's like, it's getting fat. For science.

2 .Miss: Marcus I'm not sure that's a good plan.

3. Marcus: Too late Miss.

4. Miss: I thought the plan was to get fit for science. More fit. Fitter.

- 5 .Marcus: Yeah it was but then I thought about it, decided, this is better.
Cos it's the same science either way isn't it? And this is
Science Club. So it should be about the science.
6. Miss: Marcus.
7. Marcus: It's the science that's important. In science club.
8. Miss: I suppose but -
9. Marcus: You're all about the science Miss.
10. Miss: I am all about the science.
11. Marcus: So what I'm thinking is: as long as I'm using the same science
- and it is good science Miss, you said that. Long as I'm doing
that, the experiment stands. The experiment is just as good.
You can't hold it against me Miss.
1. Miss: I'm not holding it against you Marcus.
2. Marcus: I can't believe you're holding it against me Miss. Getting fat.
3. Miss: I'm just thinking about your health Marcus.
4. Marcus: Don't be fattist Miss.
5. Miss: I'm not being fattist.
6. Marcus: You're a fattist. You're a fattist dictator.
7. Miss: I'm not a fattist dictator Marcus.

8. Marcus: You are though.
9. Miss: I'm just saying -
10. Marcus: Not my fault Miss.
11. Miss: It is your fault Marcus.
12. Marcus: Miss!
13. Marcus: You've gained weight on purpose.
14. Marcus: Yeah, for science.
15. Miss: I just don't understand why you'd choose to -
1. Marcus: Think about it. We come in here every lunch time. End of term, we get to do our own experiments. One of us wins a prize. Which you won't tell us what it is.
2. Miss: It's a surprise.
3. Marcus: I'm not being funny Miss, you pulled that one at half-term, we got a Chomp.
4. Miss: It's better than a Chomp. I promise.
5. Marcus: Doesn't matter Miss. Cos this way, I win whatever. I am a winner. Every day.
6. Miss: I don't...

7. Marcus: Today I've won a Twirl and three Yorkies. It's only lunch time.

8. Miss: Marcus you have to stop this.

9. Marcus: Nah Miss, stop Friday.

10. Miss: You'll make yourself ill. You will.

11. Marcus: Got to do it properly.

Scene Three – Ellie’s bedroom

1. Ellie: Dear God and or Jesus.
Ellie D. Tuesday night.
Stage one of plan is complete.
And I have to say it is going pretty well.
Imagine four zones.
2. One. Codename: “The wayside”.
Actual name: the school bird feeder.
Cress seeds scattered, 0815 hours.
Cress seeds eaten by hungry birds, 0816 hours.
Conclusion: inappropriate conditions for growth.
I have taken a photograph of the birds eating the seeds to put
in my evaluation, which I will print out in ICT.
3. Thing is, it was perfect. It could not have turned out more like
the story.
I was like: what are you Jesus? Some sort of prophet? Lol.
Zone Two. “The stony ground.”
This was harder cos I had to think about the best way of
recreating the conditions.
Playground’s no good: too cold. Cos it’s been frosty hasn’t it?
Sports Hall. Too much sports. Might get stood on.
4. In the end, decided: under the radiator in the Humanities
corridor. On the way to the library.
It’s the end of term, no one goes to the library anyway. Only
the geeks. And they’re probably doing Science Club.
Like e.g. Daniel.
Just crouching down by my seeds, he walks past.
Looking a bit sad. Doesn’t even say hello or anything.
5. Think he’s hiding but. More important things to focus on.
I’m checking the progress of my seeds.
No signs of life yet but will continue to monitor.

1. Zone three. "Among thorns."
That's just. I sprinkled some on a cactus.
Nothing's happened.
And then the last one, zone four: "good ground."
ie. One petri dish.
2. One piece of damp cotton wool.
Keep it safe in the girls loos.
Second cubicle, on top of the cistern.
Warm, moist, light enough and safe.
3. Conditions are perfect.
Now just: watch and wait.
Now just: keep the faith.
As long as it's sprouting by Friday, I win.
4. I win and the others, Marcus, Alice, Miss, they take me seriously, as a scientist. Like how they take Daniel seriously.
Maybe my Mum will too. Cos she's not into science really, for me, for my future, at the moment. She's thinking more catering.
5. But Daniel, he'll just sit there going did you know our galaxy is heading straight towards a whole other galaxy and they are going to crash into each other at some point in the next two billion years? And everyone is like: wow, Daniel.
I could be like that.
6. Fingers crossed anyway.
Amen.

Scene Four – Science Club

1. Daniel: A uterus. A uterus. A womb.
2. Miss: Oh a uterus.
3. Daniel: It's a model. A wool model, knitted model. Of -
4. Miss: Wow Daniel. Very unusual.
5. Daniel: I just got the pattern off the internet. Just googled it.
6. Miss: And is it, is it...?
7. Daniel: Is it...?
8. Miss: I don't know is it, accurate? Biologically.
9. Daniel: Hopefully. What do you think?
10. Miss: Very lifelike.
11. Daniel: It's not finished yet.
12. Miss: Oh.
13. Daniel: Needs another fallopian tube. And some pompoms. For the ovaries.
I might not get it finished to be honest.
14. Miss: What?

1. Daniel: Might not finish.

2. Miss: You must do Daniel.

Daniel sighs.

3. Why not?

4. Daniel: Oh I dunno Miss. Taken ages already hasn't it? So I might not.

5. Miss: Is everything alright?

6. Daniel: Yeah, fine thanks yeah.

7. Miss: Good.

10. Daniel: D'you think it's worth doing Miss? Worth finishing it?

11. Miss: Course it is, Daniel. This is: wonderful, this is exactly the sort of thing -

12. Daniel: Only, people are, yeah, saying stuff.

13. Miss: What d'you mean?

1. Daniel: Quite a few people have been sort of, yeah, taking the piss or, whatever.

2. Miss: Don't listen to them.

3. Daniel: Not that easy Miss.

4. Miss: Do you want me to have a word with these -

5. Daniel: No. Thanks Miss but. I'm, I'm alright so...

A moment.

6. Miss: It's a good prize Daniel. I think you'd really like it. And I think you could, easily... I mean this is... And I know how much you care about... Think you'd regret it, if you didn't finish.

A moment.

7. (whispers) It's a trip to the Planetarium, Daniel. The London Planetarium. With an astronomer, a proper astronomer to show you round. Galaxies, constellations, the whole, the universe.

A moment.

8. Daniel: Does sound good actually Miss.

9. Miss: Stick with it. It's worth sticking with it.

Scene Five – Ellie's bedroom

1. Ellie D: Yo team God slash Jesus.
Ellie D. Wednesday night.
I'm being outgeeked, it's a nightmare.
Marcus isn't really a threat, he's not fooling anyone. Getting fat on purpose - not science, it's an attitude problem. But then Alice is up to something properly technical.
2. I don't know much but I know this: it's got a remote control.
And Daniel's is...
Like, I was looking at it today, like the craftsmanship - it is just: very good. To knit a uterus. Who does that? Daniel does.
I can't even grow cress.
And that is fine because, that is sort of the plan isn't it?
Sort of.
3. Stony Ground ie under the radiator has had a quick transformation. Took two photos. One yesterday after school cos it had just begun to sprout, a couple of tiny shoots, then another this morning when the intense heat of the radiator had caused the shoots to shrivel and die.
So that's perfect really.
4. And nothing's happened with the ones on the cactus. Ideal.
But petri dish, I dunno what's up with it.
Conditions are spot on but...
I'll be honest, I was in there today, in the toilets. I was in there and I was sort of thinking, what is that smell? It has never smelt like that before. Smelt sort of, clean.
5. And, probably nothing to worry about but I do wonder, I do wonder if one of the cleaners has been in there with the flash spray.
It's probably nothing.
And we've got til Friday to show our findings.
A lot can happen in two days. Especially in the world of cress.

Still though.

1.

Cutting it fine.

I wouldn't mind but I sort of overheard what the prize is and like, it just sounds...

Yeah. Heaven.

2.

I mean I bet you get sick of looking at the stars and everything, all the time, don't you God? Probably like, what, more stars, I created them or whatever. In a day but.

Here.

3.

Too much happening, too many lights and buildings and noise and...

Sky doesn't get a look in.

Sky doesn't get a chance.

Anyway. Later.

Amen.

Scene Six – Science Club

1. Alice: You can ask him stuff.

2. Miss: Wow, Alice. What shall I...?

3. Alice: Anything.

4. Miss: What sort of...?

5. Alice: Anything.

6. Miss: Alright, er. Well. What's your name?

7. Alice: It has to be yes or no Miss.

8. Miss: Right.

9. Alice: His name's Will.i.am though.

10. Miss: Ok. Will.i.am. I suppose: are you a robot?

A moment.

11. Will.i.am: Yes.

12. Miss: Wow Alice! Isn't that clever?

13. Will.i.am: Yes.

14. Miss: Very good. How have you...

Actually I'll ask: can I have a little look inside you please?

Will.i.am?

Is that ok?

A moment.

1. Alice: Oh for f -

2. Miss: Alice.

3. Alice: No I'm sorry he keeps doing this. So annoying. Aren't you you div?

4. Will.i.am: Yes.

5. Miss: Can I...?

6. Will.i.am: Yes.

7. Miss: There we go.

8. Alice: I mean it's not very...

Miss opens him up.

9. Miss: Alice, this is extraordinary.

10. Alice: Yeah, well, still not working right though is it? Just meant to press this button and -

11. Miss: But I mean, this kind of circuitry, even the soldering it's so detailed. How did you...?

12. Alice: Just did it.

13. Miss: How though?

1. Alice: Just, you know. The usual way.
2. Miss: What d'you mean?
3. Alice: Dunno just. Finished the Shreddies, turned him into a robot.
4. Miss: It's amazing. Last term you couldn't even put the batteries into a torch. Now...
Look at those resistors. How many did you use there?
5. Alice: Where?
6. Miss: By the capacitor.
7. Alice: Oh. Two?
8. Miss: No there.
9. Alice: Oh right, 60.
10. Miss: Sixty!
11. Alice: Yeah. Ish.
- A moment.
12. Miss: Is this definitely your own work Alice?
13. Alice: Yes.
14. Miss: Really?

1. Alice: Yes!
2. Will.i.am: Yes.
3. Alice: See.
4. Miss: Come on Alice.
5. Alice: What you saying Miss?
6. Miss: Nothing just. I don't know. You don't seem too sure about some of the details and. Well, I met your Mum at parents evening and she is, she is an electrical engineer isn't she, so...
7. Alice: I did it Miss.
8. Miss: It's fine if you didn't Alice. It's fine to just be honest. Even without doing all the electronics it's still a lovely robot. You'd never guess he used to be a cereal box.
9. Alice: I did it Miss.
10. Miss: I'm not sure I believe that Alice.
11. Alice: Of for -
12. Miss: Alice.
13. Alice: Not my fault my Mum's an electrical engineer. Is it though?
14. Miss: I'm not saying it is. I'm just -

1. Alice: You don't have a go at Ellie cos her Mum works in Greggs.
 Where d'you think she gets the cress from?
2. Miss: Can you leave Ellie's Mum out of this please?
3. Alice: Can you leave my Mum out of this?
4. Miss: Come back here Alice! Come back.

Scene Seven – Ellie's bedroom

1. Ellie D: Dear God and or Jesus. Buddha. Vishnu. Anyone.
Ellie D. Thursday night.
I'm starting to wonder if getting science out of the bible was actually a good plan.
I'm screwed. Is the thing.
It's not growing. My petri dish cress.
2. Stood there in the loo looking at it, whispering to it, singing a bit (Rihanna).
Nothing.
It's the Flash Spray isn't it? It is though.
So frustrating.
3. All these beady little seeds and I know there's big leafy worlds inside. Big cressy worlds. I know there is. But they're not getting out.
And Daniel's in the end cubicle sobbing cos some dickhead's nicked his uterus, wiped their bum on it. Left it in his locker covered in. Yeah.
4. That is what happens if you talk about about Science Club.
And now I'm wondering: was the bus lady even a sign?
Cos it's not a prizewinning experiment is it?
It's just some seeds that got eaten, or died, or never grew.
Maybe just a story. About something else. About who turns out alright and who just. Yeah.
But, I dunno.
5. Cos if my cress is growing tomorrow, I'll win.
I just will. Cos Daniel's is in the bin; Alice blatantly cheated.
Marcus went to an all-you-can-eat buffet last night, hasn't been seen since.
And I've promised to take Daniel with me as well.
We have a chat and that is what I do.

1. We sit in the girls loos and talk about the stars and the planets and the galaxies and so on.
He stops being sad about his uterus. I stop worrying about people not taking me seriously as a scientist. Daniel's like - you were born to be a scientist, think about it, your name's L.E.D.
2. Check up on my seeds again. Just to see.
Still haven't grown.
But maybe that is happening now God. Maybe that is what's happening in the night. And tomorrow those little seeds will be big cressy worlds and I will take photos of them for my evaluation and Miss will be properly impressed, everyone at Science Club really, and my Mum. Hopefully.
3. So I was wondering: just have a word with those seeds will you God? Please.
Just have a word.
Amen.

Music in 17:15

Annos

Music out 17:44