



Angela and the Baby Jesus (Adult Edition)

Frank McCourt

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The six year old Angela looks at the naked baby Jesus in her local church in Limerick, Ireland, circa 1912, and thinks he looks cold. She wonders why his mother, or one of the shepherds, doesn't put a blanket over him. She decides to take him to her bedroom and wrap him in her own blanket. The journey home is a bit difficult and when the disappearance is discovered, the whole parish is very, very upset. But Angela does carry the baby back to church, and all turns out well.

Amazon.com Exclusive

Angela and the Baby Jesus, the first Christmas book from beloved author Frank McCourt, is an unprecedented event, with a children's edition published by Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing and an adult edition published by Scribner. Set in Ireland, the story is about the childhood of Angela, of *Angela's Ashes*. Each edition has the same story written by McCourt but is illustrated by a different artist. Raul Colon illustrated the children's edition and Loren Long illustrated the adult edition. Amazon asked both artists to write about their experiences illustrating the same scene from McCourt's story to get an inside look at how they interpreted McCourt's words.

Loren Long on the Fireside Scene from *Angela and the Baby Jesus*:



Usually little Angela would want to be right in the middle of the action as the family sits by the fire and talks. But not this time--she has a secret upstairs.

At this point in the story, I'm giving the reader a seat behind the family in the shadows away from the fire. At the same time we, the readers, know about Angela's secret in the bedroom upstairs and we see her hanging back from the others, sneaking peeks up the staircase. We can see that she has something more important on her mind than her family's chattering.

In my visual interpretation of *Angela and the Baby Jesus*, I wanted to tap into Frank McCourt's sophisticated blend of gritty realism and subtle humor. For this reason, I specifically chose a limited color palette. I worked with acrylics on canvas and tried to keep the paintings a bit edgy and raw.

Choosing images came naturally when working on this story. I was taken with the balance of reverence, innocence, and humor in Frank's text and I simply tried to come up with creative ways to portray these elements in a subtle but hopefully profound way. --Loren Long

Raul Colon on the Fireside Scene from *Angela and the Baby Jesus*:



This image for Frank McCourt's *Angela and the Baby Jesus* picture book came to me just by thinking of a warm fireplace on a cold night.

In this particular scene the family sits around the fire to chat after tea. Angela's little brother is giving up the secret that the "Baby Jesus" is in the bed upstairs. Angela shows a bit of worry in her face, since she quietly snuck the "baby" into the house. Surely she'll be in trouble now.

Throughout the story I hardly show any of the adult faces, focusing mainly on the children's world. Hence, Mother's back is turned toward us. I also cut off the little brother's face by having Mother's turn-of-the-century hairdo get in the way (A little thing I learned from the great artist Degas.) It gives the scene intimacy, as if the viewer is there taking a snapshot with his camera. All in all a fun and rewarding book to illustrate. It was an honor to turn McCourt's words into actual pictures. --Raul Colon

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