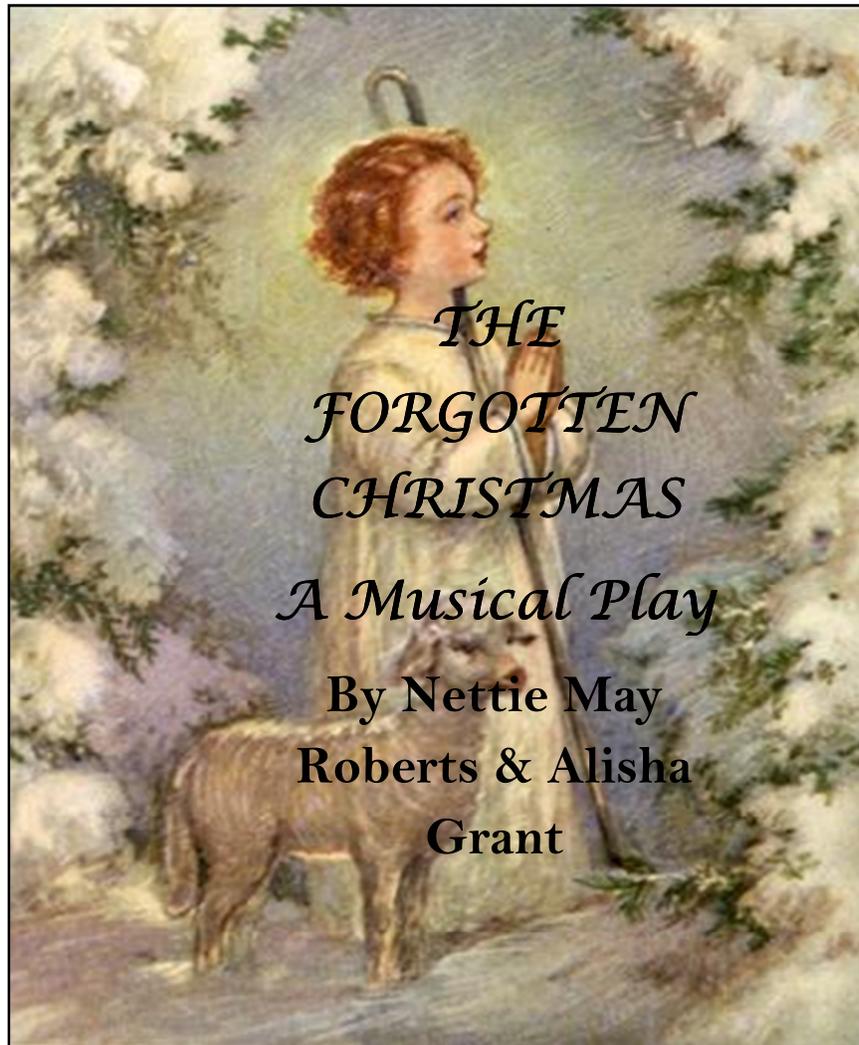


THE FORGOTTEN CHRISTMAS

A Musical Play

By Nettie May Roberts & Alisha Grant



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THE FORGOTTEN CHRISTMAS

A Christmas Musical Play

(With Choir and Soloists)

***(Making the traditional Christmas real
in the present day world)***

By

Nettie May Roberts and Alisha Grant

(Playing time, approximately 55 minutes.)



CHARACTERS

Narrator—Someone who can speak clearly, with expression.

Two main adult characters who are acquaintances - a man and woman, but can be two men, or two women—who have the ability to speak well.

Fred

Georgia (if a woman or George if a man)

A storekeeper, or sales clerk

Two female soloists. (For different parts)

A male soloist (The innkeeper)

A little boy

Four children playing siblings. Preferably two teenagers and two younger children

Two children who can speak and sing

Shepherds—Three or four adults, with several of different ages—(including children)

Woman walking through the hills where the shepherds are—(Soloist)

Mary

Joseph

COSTUMES

Scenes one and four, regular street clothes. Scenes two and three, loose flowing robes for the women, sandals, or bare feet. Long loose head scarves okay for the women and girls. Robes with belts, and sandals for the men.

PROPERTIES

Music: Piano or organ, accompaniment CDs

Need three simple backgrounds.

Scene One:

A simple store countertop or tables with gift items for sale. A large coffee pot on a counter or table to one side with coffee cups with a sign "free coffee" in front of it, with a small table and two chairs for Fred and Georgia to sit.

Scene Two:

A night scene, with shepherds and sheep (painted) showing Bethlehem down a sloping hill, faded into the distance, with the star above.

Scene three:

A simple manger scene with a plain or painted dark background, as in a stable, with a manger, and a bench (or stools, wood boxes or simple chairs.)

Scene Four:

Returns to the simple store setting. Any of these scenes can be as simple or as elaborate as you desire.

SETTING

NARRATOR —stands in front of a closed curtain and greets the audience, thanks them for coming, and sharing this time and story with us. You will see by the inserts in your bulletins that you can also be part of this play by joining the choir in some of the songs. He or she opens in prayer followed by reading clearly: "Here is God's promise from Isaiah 9:6, 7" "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."

SCENE ONE

(The curtain opens. Shoppers, (choir members before taking their places) are looking over the items for sale. They can slowly drift off to their perspective places. Georgia walks in and stops at the counter and begins to look at the different products.)

CLERK *(Seeing Georgia, she walks towards her from back of the stage towards counter, smiling)*—Can I help you?

GEORGIA *(Looking up, smiles)*—Yes I am looking for a certain gift for a friend.

(The voices of the clerk and Georgia begin to fade. The female soloist has been mingling with the rest but begins to come to the front and stands off to her right on the stage as unseen children are calling out to each other in the background.)

ONE VOICE *(Questioning)*—Where is Santa?

OTHER VOICE *(Excitedly)*—He is over here.

(Facing the audience, the soloist shakes her head as she hears the children and turns slightly as if to observe the activities when a little boy comes to her, tugging on her shirt. She looks down at him with a smile.)

BOY *(Excitement)* Excuse me Ma'am. Do you know where the line is to see Jesus?

(The soloist smiles at the little boy and looks up as he runs off the stage.)

SONG: (Soloist) WHERE'S THE LINE TO SEE JESUS?

(After song, she slowly makes her way to her place in the choir.)

(Fred strolls in, hands shoved in pocket, looking agitated. Georgia is still talking to a store clerk and has her back to Fred. Four young people, (siblings) preferably, two teenagers (boy and girl) with smaller children (boy and girl) quickly enter from behind him. The two young ones are pulling the two older ones behind them and nearly bump into Fred. They are excited about seeing Santa, while the teenage girl is laughing because of the zealousness of her younger siblings but the other teenager (boy) appears to be bored. The two older siblings bring the children to a stop almost in the middle of the stage as Fred looks on.)

OLDER SISTER *(Half-way laughing)*—Slow down, we are not going to a fire.

YOUNGER BOY (*Excitedly*)—We don't want to miss telling him what we want for Christmas.

OLDER BROTHER (*Almost as if disgusted and while rolling his eyes, says under his breath*)—I could only wish.

YOUNGER GIRL (*Ignoring her older brother and turning to her younger brother*)—Do you know what you are going to ask for?

YOUNGER BOY (*Looking at his sister*)—I want a fishing pole so I can go fishing with Dad and grandpa.

YOUNGER GIRL (*Looking at her older sister*)—What about you Sis?

OLDER SISTER (*Smiling at her younger sister*)—I want an iPod.

YOUNGER BOY (*Looking at his older brother*)—Ben, what are you going to ask him for?

BEN (*Frustrated*)—NOTHING!

OLDER SISTER (*Shaking her head at older brother*)—Ben where is your Christmas spirit?

BEN (*Obstinate*)—I have only one word to say about all of this, "Humbug!"

OLDER SISTER (*Looking at the younger siblings*)—Ignore your older brother. He is just sore because he wants a car for Christmas and suspects that since no one can fit it under the tree he most likely won't get it. (*Taking the hands of her siblings she starts walking towards the same direction as the previous little boy. Looking over her shoulder, she calls back to Ben.*) Coming Scrooge?

(*With hands in pockets and looking down, Ben reluctantly follows his siblings off stage as Fred looks on. Georgia looks away from the clerk and sees Fred and takes a step towards him while the clerk recedes in the background.*)

FRED (*Under his breath and sarcastic*)—Humbug indeed! The older they get the more expensive the toy.

(*Fred goes to turn around and bumps into Georgia, and instantly recognizes her (or if a male, him) as an old acquaintance. The remaining shoppers fade out of the scene as Fred and Georgia engage in conversation.*)

GEORGIA (*Excitedly, shaking both of his hands.*)—It has been awhile since the last time I saw you and your family. (*Letting go of his hands and lifting her right hand to her cheek*) Let me see it was....

FRED (*Smiling*)—It was at my aunt's 75th birthday party. That was about five years ago.

GEORGIA (*Looking at him with concern*)—Forgive me for asking, but is there something wrong? You appear to be carrying the whole world on your shoulders. (*Slightly leaning over to him as to if to whisper to him.*) For a moment I even thought I heard you talking to yourself.

FRED (*A bit embarrassed and hesitant*)—Uhhh, I received a pink slip yesterday at work.

GEORGIA (*Alarmed*)—I am so sorry Fred. What a rotten thing to happen to you and your family.

FRED (*Shaking his head in agreement and looking down in despair*) I came down here to clear my head and think about my options, but... (*Looking around*) ...all of these Christmas activities remind me that the Miller family will not have any Christmas this year. My youngest daughter will be disappointed and it will probably ruin her for life, my older daughter most likely will accept it quietly but it might affect her psyche latter on, and for my older son, he will become sarcastic and will probably go around saying humbug all of the time as he thinks of me as a failure because I can't give him a car this year.

GEORGIA (*Rolling her eyes while slightly smiling*)—You sure know how to paint a picture Fred.

FRED (*Shakes his head in agreement*)—My wife always tells me I know how to spin a good yarn.)

GEORGIA (*Slightly nodding her head*)—She certainly would be the one who would know such things! (*Looking around she spots the table and chairs*) I'm a good listener. (*Then motioning her hand towards the table and chairs*) Why don't you and I sit down and you can talk about your situation while we have some of the free coffee the store is giving out to their customers.

FRED (*Resigned*)—Why not, I have time on my hands.

(*Before sitting down, Georgia walks to the counter where the free coffee is and picks up two cups while Fred walks over to the table and sits in one of the chairs, turned slightly towards the audience.*)

GEORGIA (*Looking at Fred with sympathy as he almost slumps in the chair while facing the audience*)—Fred, the real meaning of Christmas is not about you giving gifts to your loved ones; rather, it is about each of us receiving the gift that God gave to all humanity on that night long ago.

FRED (*Looking thoughtful as if a memory is coming back to him, he then sits straight up.*)—Ah, I was taught the Christmas story when I was young. I almost forgot. After all it is just for children, right?

GEORGIA (*Surprised*)—Fred, we are all children at heart. That story has been passed down from generation to generation. But, the first Christmas is not just a story, it is a historical event that brings wonderment to the hearts of children and hope to people like myself that have received God's gift. (*She pauses*) And, Fred, if anyone needs hope right now it is you.

FRED (*As if ignoring her last statement, it appears as if he remembering some distant time*)—You know what I remember the most about that story?

GEORGIA (*Intently*)—What?

FRED (*Looks as if he is remembering and looks at her*)—That innkeeper. Talk about missing it! He did not have room in the inn for Joseph and Mary, and she was even going to have a baby. (*He looks down and shakes his head.*)

(*As if it a scene playing out in Fred's mind, Joseph and Mary walk past him and Georgia, down in front of the stage to the other side where they step up on the stage and knock on a door. The innkeeper comes out. The couple begins to silently motioning and talking to him, while the innkeeper looks down, shaking his head back and forth.*)

GEORGIA (*Both are looking at the scene that is being played out between Joseph, Mary, and the innkeeper*)—The real tragedy of the innkeeper was not that he did not have room in the inn, but that he missed what was happening.

FRED (*Surprised and curious*)—What was happening?

GEORGIA (*In a tone of awe*)—On that eventful night God's only begotten Son, Jesus, was born to a virgin to bring hope and peace to mankind. The innkeeper did not have any room at the inn because of the demands of the world. The world often keeps us caught up with insignificant things, preventing us from seeing those opportunities that the God-ordained events can present to us. What the innkeeper missed was the opportunity of being identified with something great, something profound. Such missed opportunities will always end in regret.

(*Joseph and Mary exit the stage as the innkeeper looks on with uncertainty.*)

SONG: Innkeeper (Solo) LET HIM IN or (Choir) HAVE YOU ANY ROOM FOR JESUS?

FRED (*Sadly, while looking down*)—I am like that innkeeper. I failed to keep any room open in my life for God. I have let the world crowd out what is important.

GEORGIA (*Understanding look*)—Fred, there were actually three other reactions towards the event that night besides the innkeeper. There was Herod who perceived God's gift as a threat, and there were the wise men who sought it out and later found it, and there were the shepherds who heard the good news

and witnessed the event and shared it with others. Perhaps we should revisit the story beginning with the shepherds.

SONG: (Choir and possibly audience) OH LITTLE TOWN OF BEHTLEHEM

The curtain begins to close while the song is being sung. Change to Scene Two.

(There can be special songs between each scene.)

SCENE TWO

(The curtain opens to reveal shepherds with hillside background.)

SONG: (Choir) WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED THEIR FLOCKS

(The store background is gone, but Fred and Georgia are still sitting at the table to the side of the stage. They are talking as if she is retelling him the events surrounding the first Christmas, which is being played out.)

FRED (*Pondering*)—Can you imagine what the shepherds witnessed that night? It must have been incredible.

GEORGIA (*Wonderment*)—What is amazing is that God did not proclaim the message of hope to royalty or the religious leaders of the day, but to lowly shepherds: individuals who were considered insignificant people in society.

FRED (*Still pondering*) Why would God proclaim such an important event to shepherds?

GEORGIA (*Thoughtfully*) Due to their humble status, many shepherds had nothing to lose and everything to gain from what happened that night. As a result, they would be the ones who most likely would believe the message that was declared by the heavens as truth and receive it. Remember, creation is God's stage to declare His glory and desire for mankind.

(Fred once again seems to see the events run across the scene of his mind. His eyes follow a shepherdess woman who appears from the side of the stage walking past him in the front of the stage. As she approaches the others she steps on the stage, and strolls among the shepherds, looking around and then looks up, and begins to sing.)

SONG: (Soloist, or with Choir) I WONDER AS I WANDER

FRED (*Amazement*)—If the world is God's stage, then the shepherds certainly had a front row seat to the events that took place that night. I am sure at times God's creation created wonderment in them.

GEORGIA (*Shaking her head in agreement*)—Like a child, the status of shepherds allows them to see through the eyes of simplicity. The Bible tells us it is the poor in spirit who enter the kingdom of God and the pure in heart are the ones who shall see Him.

(Fred once again turns his attention on the scene before him. Two shepherd children or young people or a combination can stand up among the shepherds, joyously singing to each other. Choir can join in softly.)

SONG: DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR?

FRED (*Sadly while still looking at the children*)—It is clear that I have lost my ability to see as a child into the heavenly realm, and now I have a hard time hearing.

GEORGIA (*Intently looking at Fred*)—Fred, (*Fred turns to look at Georgia*) that night the angels proclaimed a message of hope, a message that offers eternal life to all who will believe. All you have to do is open your heart to the Lord and ask Him to have mercy on you. He will give you the eyes of wonderment to see and the ears to hear the message the angels proclaimed that night.

FRED (*Longingly looking back at the scene*)—I would love to really hear the message of Christmas, (*he pauses*) and find hope.

SONG: (All - Choir, shepherds, and audience) HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING

(Fred continues to watch the scene in a wishful way.)

GEORGIA (*Slightly touching his arm to get his attention. Fred looks at her*)—You know Fred, God's light shines the brightest when it is the darkest. That was true for the first Christmas and can be true for you as well.

(Fred thoughtfully looks back at the scene.)

SONG: (All – Choir, shepherds, and audience) IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR

FRED (*Thoughtfully*)—You know Georgia, I am facing a long dark night, and right now I need God's light to penetrate my darkness.

(Georgia squeezes Fred's arm in agreement and encouragement. He lightly touches her hand signifying he accepts her encouragement.)

SONG: (Choir) ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

As the curtain closes.

(A special Christmas Song that retains the mood of that Holy Night can be placed here as well, such as O Holy Night.)

SCENE THREE

(Curtain opens to reveal the manger scene, with Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus in the manger. Dimly lit except around the manger itself. Mary is looking into the manger, at the baby Jesus.)

SONG: (Mary and Choir) ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT

(The shepherd children walk softly into the manger, with a shepherdess woman or mother.)

FRED *(Looking at the manger scene and tenderly watching the children)*—You know what else I remembered about the Christmas story?

GEORGIA *(Inquisitive look)*—What?

FRED *(Fondly)* As a young child I was part of the children's choir during Christmas and we sang, AWAY IN A MANGER. *(Half-laughing)* I remember singing as loud as I could. Someone told me later that my mouth was so wide open that I could have caught a fly with it. But you know, I was enthusiastic because somehow I related to the baby in a manger.

(Georgia nods her head in agreement as Fred looks again at the mother and her children.)

SONG: AWAY IN A MANGER *(While looking at the baby in the manger, two or more children quietly enter the scene, and sing the first stanza, joined by the shepherdess (or mother) in the second stanza, with the choir joining in the third stanza)*

(After the song, the children quietly kneel before Jesus as their mother looks on.)

FRED *(Confused)*—Why did God allow His Son to be born in a manger?

GEORGIA (*Tenderness*)—The manger represents man's condition, tarnished by sin, which is rebellion against God, causing a stench to go up to heaven. However, Jesus was born in the midst of it to show man that if he allows himself to be humbled by his sinful condition, he can find Jesus being born anew in his heart, reviving the Christmas message once again and bringing life to his spirit and hope to his weary soul.

FRED (*Still fondly considering the scene*)—I don't understand it, but I know that it was a magnificent thing God did so long ago.

GEORGIA (*Nodding her head*)—Yes it was a glorious thing indeed!

(They both look towards the scene as the shepherdess sings.)

SONG: (Solo or choir) WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

FRED (*Mostly to himself*)—Why did God have to send His Son? Why would He do that?

GEORGIA (*Looking up in adoration*)—The Bible tells us God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. (*She looks at Fred*) Jesus took on human form. He came to die for you and me, to take our place in death so we could have life.

FRED (*Stunned*)—He came to die for us, (*then pointing at himself*) for me! Why?

GEORGIA (*Intently*)—He had to die for us because we are all sinners, separated from God. He came to reconcile us back into a relationship with our Creator, to make things right, to restore what was lost so long ago by our first parents, Adam and Eve.

(Lights dim on stage as Fred shakes his head as he tries to reconcile what he has just heard.)

SONG (Solo) BORN TO DIE

SONG: SILENT NIGHT (*As the soloist walks away after the song, the choir immediately goes into this song and audience will be encouraged to sing along.*)

As curtain closes.

(A special song can be sung here.)

SCENE FOUR

Curtain opens to reveal the store scene, with Fred and Georgia, sitting at the table, coffee cups set aside.

(Fred is looking down at his hands in contemplative thought as Georgia quietly looks at him.)

FRED—Georgia. I forgot about the first Christmas. I was not like Herod who resented Christ, *(He pauses)* but I was not like the wise men either, who sought him out. Instead of being like the shepherds who heard the message, received it and then found Jesus, I have been content to be like the innkeeper, sticking close to worldly attitudes towards God. But, by reliving it today through the eyes of the lowly and innocent, God's light has indeed penetrated my heart. I have truly heard the message of hope and I have seen the love of God in Jesus. *(He pauses and he looks at Georgia)* But, I don't know how to receive the gift of eternal life. Could you help me?

GEORGIA *(Joyously as if to jump out of her chair)*—Are you kidding, I have been waiting for you to ask, for today is truly the day of salvation for you. All you have to do is humbly confess your sin and receive the gift of Christ in your heart as your Lord and Savior. In fact, just be honest with the Lord for He is ready to forgive you and give you the gift of eternal life.

(To Georgia's surprise, Fred stands up and then kneels down and bows his head.)

FRED *(Prayer)*—Lord, I don't want to be like that innkeeper any longer. I missed my first opportunity to receive the gift of Your Son because I failed to do business with You the first time around, but I do not want to let the opportunity go by. You gave it all for me, and I want to give myself wholly to You. Granted, I have nothing of worth to offer You, and You know I am broken by my situation and hopeless with the life I have been living, but here I am. Forgive me for everything, especially my unbelief towards You. Forgive me for forgetting about the first Christmas. I open my heart right now to receive the Gift You offered so long ago and now I know I really have something to offer to my family this Christmas. As I have received Your Gift, I trust that You will receive me into Your kingdom. Amen

GEORGIA *(Standing up as Fred begins to stand. She looks up, mouths THANK YOU, then looks at Fred, joyously clasping her hands)* The angels are rejoicing right now for another lost sheep has been found, ...another prodigal has made his way home.

SONG: O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL *(As lights dim, choir and cast join on stage singing with audience.)*

Invitation to salvation given, ending with benediction.