

(The Story of an Indian Maiden)

By Mary-Eunice

CAST

Narrator	Anastasia...Friend of Tekakwitha's mother.
Priest	
Chorus	Karitha...Aunt of Tekakwitha
Two Indian Messengers	Arosen...Aunt of Tekakwitha
Priest...Missionary in Canada	
6 Indians	Cowana...An Indian maiden
	Luana...An Indian maiden

NARRATOR: This is a Christmas short about Kateri Tekakwitha, a North American Indian. She belonged to the nation of the Iroquois, well known for their warlike unrest. She was a member of the great and fearless Mohawk tribe. Her parents died when she was but four years of age. She was taken by her uncle Iowerano. He and his wife brought Kateri up as an Indian Princess.

As the years passed the womenfolk, in Indian fashion, instructed her in every household task and craft; and Tekakwitha became the most skillful worker in the tribe. Then one day the Jesuits arrived to make friends among the Indians. These Missionaries were given lodging in the house of the chief. It gave the little Princess a chance to listen to stories about the Great God of the Blackrobes.

When these Missionaries left the chief's house they set up a "wandering" mission house. However, because of the open and general distrust of the Blackrobed Missionaries by the Indians the number of converted Indians scarcely increased.

(ENTER PRIEST WITH SEVERAL INDIANS. THEY SIT ON THE GROUND AND LISTEN TO HIS TALK. THIS IS IN PANTOMIME. NOW TEKAKWITHA TAKES HER PLACE SEVERAL PLACES AWAY FROM THEM. SHE LISTENS.)

CHORUS: Tekakwitha often watched the public religious instructions but because of her shyness and even because of her fear of her uncle, on whom she was entirely dependent, she was afraid to show her interest.

(NOW THE PRIEST AND MOST OF THE PEOPLE GO OFF. ANASTASIA, A CHRISTIAN INDIAN SEES TEKAKWITHA.)

ANASTASIA: My child, you should not be here.

TEKAKWITHA: I could not help but come this way. The Blackrobe talks about Christmas. I do not understand about this talk of Christmas. You were my mother's good friend.

ANASRASIA: And your mother was a Christian.

TEKAKWITHA: I know...and she was gentle and good.

ANASTASIA: That is true. Oh, many a Christian I've seen butchered by your uncle's people. They allow me to stay because I once helped your mother. Iowerano does not forget that...but soon I must leave this country...and go to Canada and be free to worship as I please. Next Christmas, perhaps I'll be there and be able to worship the birthday of our God.

...more...

TEKAKWITHA: We believe in the great God, Rawennio. (RA-WEN-NI-YO) Is your God the same one?

ANASTASIA: I think He is. You see the Great Father in Heaven sent His Son down to earth..so that He might save all mankind. He wanted them all to go to heaven. He came to us as a Baby in His Mother's arms. You see, God had selected a Lady by the name of Mary to be His Mother. Her husband, Joseph, a poor carpenter, was to be His Foster-Father.

TEKAKWITHA: You mean He came to earth to be like us? Not as a great king or chief?

ANASTASIA: Many years ago in a place called Bethlehem a star led some shepherds to a cave where the Baby King was born. His name was Jesus and when He grew up He became a leader of men. He was kind, good and always charitable. He cured the sick, the lepers and brought dead friends back to life!

TEKAKWITHA: Oh, if only I could follow a star like the one overhead...and find this God!

(ENTER KARITHA, AUNT OF TEKAKWITHA, WITH AROSEN, ANOTHER INDIAN.)

KARITHA: Tekakwitha, you have no right to be here!

AROSSEN: We might have known that Anastasia would be trying to teach her the ways of the "praying Indians." My brother, Lowerano, shall hear about your ways!

TEKAKWITHA: She was telling me only of good things and all about Christmas.

KARITHA: We want no part of it! If you are wise, Anastasia, you'll stay away from here. (ANASTASIA LEAVES SADLY.)

TEKAKWITHA: But she only told me about a star...like that one above...and how it led shepherds to the cave where the Infant King was born.

AROSSEN: A cave, indeed! Our God is in the heavens. Not on this earth! He is a fierce, mighty warrior. We must be warriors, too!

TEKAKWITHA: But the ways of their God...is not that of a warrior. He is gentle and kind. Oh, if only that star so bright overhead would lead me to their God.

KARITHA: Enough! We want no more talk about the white man's God! Come, it is getting late.

CHORUS: Tekakwitha began to want to know more about this God of mercy and in the evenings she would go to the mission house and study catechism lessons.

NARRATOR: Although the Missionaries were accustomed to administering Baptism only after several years of study they decided to admit her to Baptism on the coming Easter, 1676. Her pagan relatives were angry with her conversion. They did not like this girl to devote time to prayer and not to work on Sundays. She was persecuted by her own people. (ENTER TWO INDIAN GIRLS.)

COWANA: Did you ever hear of such a thing?

LUANA: Oh, the shame our Chief has because she has become one of them.

(ENTER TEKAKWITHA.)

...more

COWANA: We have been ordered not to give you food today.

LUANA: Why do you not work like the rest of us on this day of Sunday?

TEKAKWITHA: I've told you many times that it is God's day. We must keep holy the Sabbath. Can we not give one day to God? He who blesses us with the sunshine and the rain...and our food? I worked twice as long during the week...to pay homage to my God on the day of Sunday. (KARETHA ENTERS.)

KARETHA: We have taken her as a daughter and she does not listen to the chief. Let us not stay near here. Come!

(THEY EXIT LEAVING HER IN PRAYER.)

TEKAKWITHA: Oh, dear God in heaven...if I but had a star to lead me to safety. I know my life is in danger with my very own people...I love them so much and yet they will not understand Your ways. (PRIEST ENTERS.)

NARRATOR: Then one day Father De Lamberville, knowing her life was in danger, came to see her and said:

FATHER: Tekakwitha, when you were baptized you received the name of Kateri, and your life changed. How that you know and understand that you have a soul eternal you must take care of it. You must nourish it. You must leave this village. Two Indians have come from the mission in Canada and they will help you escape. When it gets dark and you hear the sound of the owl, go to the big tree in the forest. Your mother's friend, Anastasia, waits for you in Canada.

CHORUS: She watched him go and then seeing the night was coming...unfolded her mat for sleep. She was joined by Arosen.

(ARSEN COMES ON THE SCENE.)

ARSEN: We need sleep if we are to work in the cornfields in the morning.

TEKAKWITHA: I like to sleep under the stars. See, that one up there? It almost beckons me to follow.

ARSEN: It is too chilly and the stars are much too bright. I shall go inside the log house where there is some warmth.

TEKAKWITHA: Goodnight, Arosen, goodnight. (SHE WATCHES HER GO.) I am alone at last and free to escape to the land of the Christian. (SOUND OF OWL.) It is the sound I have waited for so long. I come...I come...(SHE GOES OFF.)

CHORUS: The Indian maiden joined her companions and on and on they ran...fearing to be caught by the great chief and his warriors...and they knew the punishment would be death. (ENTER KATERI AND TWO INDIANS. SOUND OF DRUMS IN DISTANCE.) Now they hear the sound of the toms-toms. They could not rest. They dare not rest and on and on they trudged.

TEKAKWITHA: (POINTING TO THE STAR.) Look! It is the Christmas star so bright! We must follow it.

...more

CHORUS: With courage they found the canoe and voyaged onward. The three Indians came to a happy end when they finally reached the Mission of St. Francis Xavier at the place called Sault, in Canada. She was greeted by her friends.

(SEVERAL INDIANS COME TO MEET HER.)

TEKAKWITHA: Our hope was in the star so bright. It guided me to you.

NARRATOR: The people of the village watched the new arrival, and she was grateful and thankful to be in Christian surroundings. She could be seen going to Mass at daybreak...and again at sunrise. She returned to the chapel at intervals during the day...praying for her people at home. The words of the Masses, the Rosary, the hymns and Vespers all burned deep into her mind. She longed for Holy Communion. There was such a long period that converts must wait before they were admitted to First Communion. The priest watched her. She knew the hymns, lives of the Saints, the Creed and Ten Commandments and all the Litanies of the Blessed Mother. One day the priest spoke to her and she left him with great joy...when she told him all the answers to his questions on Christianity. (TEKAKWITHA WITH OTHER INDIANS.)

TEKAKWITHA: Long have I waited for Christmas. Back home at the mission I wanted to take part..to sing..to pray...during the Christmas service. I had looked so many times at the painting of the Three Wise Men...who had come from the East to bear gifts to the Christ child. The anniversary of my Savior's birth is to be the occasion of my own birth into the Church.

NARRATOR: Something happened before the Christmas alter...which was the culmination of all that had gone on before in the spiritual development of Kateri Tekakwitha.

CHORUS: From that day forward she appeared always to be full of love for God, and every person, and also for every animal of her new Father in the sky...and the spirit of Christmas stayed with her the whole year through!

THE END

---O---

---O---

For the complete list of plays by Mary-Eunice please write to:

MARY PRODUCTIONS GUILD
58 Lennison Avenue
Belford, N.J. 07718

For further information about the cause of Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha please write to:

OFFICE OF THE VICE POSTULATOR
6969 Strickler Rd.
Clarence Center, N.Y. 14032

(Reproduced November 13, 1974)