

A.M.D.G.

OUT OF THE DARKNESS

The Story of Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha

Scene I:

(Tom-tom)

Narrator

In the year 1655 the Mohawk valley echoed with the sound of drums. Wandering Dutch traders who heard them in the forest paled and turned the other way. It could be a hunt or a great tribal council, but they sounded like drums of war. Already the word had drifted down from the St. Lawrence of the ambush that had routed the Algonquins and killed one of the Blackrobes who was with them.

Father Simon Lemoyne, whom the Mohawk elders called Ondesonk, the name they had given Father Jogues, seemed destined to share that martyr's tortures as well as his name. He had his choice of two kinds of death. If he chose not to visit the Mohawk country as he had promised, they would say he intended to revenge the death of his fellow Blackrobe in the ambush of the Algonquins and would hunt him down before he could go back for friends and guns. If he did visit them here at Ossernenon, the sound of the drums told him how he would be welcomed.

(Sentry comes out, takes his post, looks about, gives a start, peers, waves his blanket...Five Mohawks run up to him. They look where he points. One runs back.)

Runner

Ondesonk!...Ondesonk!...Ondesonk!

(Those with the sentry go forward cautiously. Drums quicken. Villagers, men and women, come in with the runner. Near the sentries LeMoyne enters with a small party carrying bundles and a canoe...He salutes the sentries. They draw back without replying. They trail him, they and his guides eying one another. He meets the villagers. The drums stop. They draw back. The elders beckon. A fire is prepared. They take places around it, others coming on from all sides.)

LeMoyne

My Brothers, as a man grows old, his ears begin to deceive him. When I left my brothers here only one year ago, they spoke of peace. But now when I return I seem to hear drums, the drums of war.

Onsegongo

Ondesonk must indeed be growing old, for his mind is weak. It has made him do many foolish things. Three years ago the French with their Huron and Algonquin cousins began to talk of peace with the Five Nations. But to whom did Ondesonk go as the ambassador of peace? To the Mohawks? No! To the Onondagas! Among whom did the Frenchmen build their houses? To whom did their fifty soldiers go? To the Onondagas!

(Shouts of anger from the crowd.)

Broken Jug

Brothers, show Ondesonk what happens to those who do not wish to be our friends. Bring the Huron blankets and beads still colored

red with their blood. Count the captives for him. Tell him what we did to their chiefs. Tell him how long it took before death came to James Washonk!

(Shouts.)

LeMoyne My Brothers! Are these words of peace?

Elder Ondesonk, the Five Nations of the Iroquois form but one cabin. We are the door. The Onondagas are the roof. You should enter a cabin by the door, not by the roof!

LeMoyne My Brothers, how can I go in by a door that will not open? I come to speak of peace, and yet the faces I see about me show frowns of anger and wear the paints of war. Two weeks ago you killed and captured many Christian Hurons. How can some of you say that I am the one who loves murder and destruction? You cause me great shame, for my people say that I love the men who kill my brother Blackrobes. Here is a gift to bring back your minds that have wandered away. You say that we prevent the Hurons from coming to live among you. That is not true. They are free to leave us. But they fear to come into your cabin when they see a hatchet in your hand.

Elder Be not angry, Ondesonk. I am your brother. Our young braves have no sense. They strike blindly without thinking. Take these beads which I give you. Place them over your heart, and your anger will pass away and you will be cured. Tell the Huron that I have spread a mat for him in my cabin and that I send him this collar of wampum to guide his canoe here to Ossernenon.

LeMoyne But what shall I tell him when he asks for his brother, James Washonk? What shall I tell the elders who stand on the hilltop looking toward the Mohawk country, waiting in vain for their greatest warrior?

Elder Tell him that we have never seen a man who knew how to die as well as that man. From the torture-stake he kept praying to your God and calling to the other captives to remember the land far away where that God was waiting for them.

Huron (hobbling into sight, one arm limp, head sideways) Ondesonk!

(They grab for him, but LeMoyne stops them.)

LeMoyne My Huron brother. Have you come to tell me of James Washonk?

Huron Yes, Ondesonk. He kept us faithful. It was Sunday morning when they tortured us. James Washonk called to us, "Remember, my Brothers. In Canada all the Christians are coming together this morning to offer the Great Sacrifice. Let us join their prayers. If our enemies stop us from praying aloud as we always do, we will speak to God in our hearts. Who shall prevent us? (He turns -- to the villagers.) Neither your firebrands nor your hatchets heated red hot can keep us from speaking to our God!"

(Stir among the villagers. Elder beckons for silence.)

Elder Yes, Ondesonk. There was something more than human in that man. We tortured him to force a cry out of his lips, but all he did was look up to the heavens as if he were speaking to someone there. When another man would have screamed, this Washonk made us a speech. He said he was going to a happy land called Paradise to ask the great chief of that country to bring us there. We tortured him till the life ran away from his body, but the only sound we could get from him was that one same word, Paradise.

LeMoyne And James Washonk has seen the great Chief, my Brothers. He has asked God to let you come and feast with Him in Paradise. That is why I have come back to you, to show you the way. (The villagers shake their heads and begin to leave.) My Brothers! How can you turn away after all that you have seen? How many of you can die like James Washonk? Are your hearts of stone that such things cannot move you?

(They all leave. Some point and laugh. Their leaving reveals three women, one lying under a blanket asleep, one fanning her, one rocking a baby in her arms.)

LeMoyne Wait, my Brothers! You know in your hearts you are not happy. Why will you keep wandering in the night? What do you see ahead but darkness? (kneeling) O Lord, how long? Can so many martyrs die in this one single village and still leave it in gloom and sin and ignorance? Is there no ray of light? (He goes over to the women.) Peace, my children...Ah! What a fine little baby! What is its name?

Aunt Tekakwitha.

LeMoyne And this is the Mother? (They nod. He goes near.)

2nd Aunt She is Kahenta, an Algonquin captive. She was brought here when she was young.

LeMoyne Kahenta? Yes, it is. But she is a Christian. I must baptize her baby.

2nd Aunt No!

LeMoyne But I must. Her mother would want it.

2nd Aunt Tekakwitha's father would not want it. And he is a great chief.

LeMoyne Kahenta! Tell them.

(She makes no move. He bends over her then rises and goes toward the baby. They draw back.)

2nd Aunt Please! Do not come near. Kahenta has told us what she wants, but we know what Tekakwitha's father would do and-- Please! We are afraid!

(He stops, looks around but finds no one else. His shoulders sag, and he leaves.)

Squaw (Tom-tom in background. Cf. music for her melody. After third verse villagers return and hum melody with her.)

The wind sighs,
Relieved that now the stars are gone.
Pale vapors rise,
Unveiling bush and tree and hill,
And in the early-morning chill
All is still
And waiting for the dawn.

The dim glow
That lends the hills a golden sheen
Begins to grow,
And as it gnaws the night away,
A field, a stream, a myrtle spray
Now are grey,
Now brown and blue and green.

The low hum
Of waking wildlife swells to song.
The day has come!
Oh, turn and see the sun appear.
A Dawn will end our darkness here.
Are You near?
The night has been so long.

(Scene II. Tom-toms take a slower beat.)

Narrator But the ray of light in the eyes of little Tekakwitha almost flickered out. Soon there was wailing in every lodge in the village. Smallpox carried Tekakwitha's mother off, then her baby brother. She saw the strong brave man who was her father fall to the ground never to rise again. The smallpox demon has no respect for great chiefs and no pity for little girls.

(Villagers come from the lodge, go in single file around the altar humming the Squaw's refrain. Two carry a child on a litter. They reenter the lodge. The tom-toms stop.)

Narrator (meanwhile) Those who could still walk dragged themselves away from Ossernenon westward along the Mohawk river. Tekakwitha, four years old, couldn't keep up with them and had to be carried. The smallpox had struck her too. She couldn't run the way she used to. Her eyes hurt whenever she left the darkness. And her face-- The two aunts who took care of her now sighed and shook their heads when they looked at it. (Waits till drums stop.)

They settled ~~on the north side of the river~~ on a hill just west of ~~where Fonda stands today~~. And now a ray of light appeared through the darkness. There was peace with the French. The Black-robos were welcome now. Soon a great chief was baptized, then another. This village seemed happier than Ossernenon. They named

Auries Creek

it Gandewaga, ~~"Laughing Waters"~~. "At the Rapids."

But in the lodge of Onsegongo, the uncle who had adopted Tekakwitha, it was hard to laugh. She had been a happy child. Her aunts used to say that she knew some secret magic that helped her to make up jokes and stories to keep the women amused while they were sewing. But she stopped telling stories. She had grown up now. Her eyes had turned away from pretty daydreams to the real world all about them, and they found it dark and cruel.

(Screams. Tekakwitha is dragged onstage by Onsegongo.
She limps.)

Tek. Uncle, please! You're hurting me! I can't walk so fast! Please, Uncle!

Ons. Lift your clumsy duck feet or I'll drag you!

Tek. Wait, Uncle! Please. I'm trying, but I can't go any faster. Oh

(She falls. Enter 1st Aunt.)

1st Aunt Well, the brave Onsegongo is grown so old and weak that he only dares to fight a crippled girl.

Ons. Stop your squawking, woman, or that turkey face will feel how strong Onsegongo is.

1st Aunt I have felt Onsegongo's hand before, and were a tooth left in this old head, I would bite it.

Tek. Aunt, help me!

1st Aunt Come here, child. What magic have you worked that has turned your Uncle into such a fat grouchy bear?

Ons. Magic? Who knows what magic she is brewing to poison us? If I catch her with the Christians again, this arm will knock the magic out of her.

Tek. I wasn't with them, Uncle. I just wanted to see what they do in their big lodge.

Ons. Yes, and learn their spells and use them against us. (To 1st Aunt) While you, old moose, were sleeping in the sun, I caught her going into the Christian lodge.

Tek. No, Uncle! I wasn't going in. I was just looking through the doorway. They have just celebrated the great feast of their God and have put a crib in the lodge for the baby of some chief. There were pine branches and torches and--

Ons. Silence! Isn't it enough that I find no joy walking into my own lodge and having to look at that face? (She winces.) You, the proud one! You who do not listen to your elders. What have you

to be proud of? I search the village for a husband brave enough to look at that face, and you whimper like a dog and say you will not marry. Do you think you will sit in my lodge and eat my corn? Why aren't you in the fields with the other women?

Tek. My foot hurts again.

Ons. Your foot hurts! It carried you to the Christians' lodge, didn't it? Will it carry you to Canada with them? I suppose you did not know that Athasata is coming to tell them foolish tales about the north and rob our village of its chiefs and warriors. Did you think you would sneak away with them? If I see you near the Christians' lodge again, I'll knock your brains out as I should have done when you were smaller. Turn that face away! It makes me sick.

(Tekakwitha sinks to the ground crying.)

1st Aunt O thou strong empty wind! O thou fat toothless bear that frightens little children! Shall I call the warriors to sing the song of victory? Come, great chiefs. Begin the dance. The great Onseongo has conquered a little mouse. (He goes to strike her but leaves in disgust. She raises Tekakwitha up.) Here now...Come, Tekakwitha...No more, I tell you. Would you make your Aunt cry too?

Tek. (sobbing) I cannot help it, Aunt. You heard him.

1st Aunt Niece, I am an old woman, and one thing have these many moons taught me. The only beast more stupid than a man is a woman who listens to him.

Tek. But I'm ugly!

1st Aunt Ugly? Well, Niece, I will not lie to you. The demon of disease has marked your face. It is not beautiful. And yet I like to look at it, and so do many others. There are some faces that are pretty because they are good.

Brave (running in) Athasata! Athasata!

Villagers (coming in from the other side) Athasata! Athasata!

(They form a double line with space between. Tom-toms are heard in the distance. They shuffle to the rhythm. The elders stand together in the center near the fire. Others sit behind them. Braves enter single file, some beating tom-toms. Last of all is Athasata. He reaches the elders, raises his hand. They do the same. All sit down. Drum-beat stops.)

Elder Athasata, bravest among men. You are our brother. Our hearts wish to leap and dance when they see you come, and yet our ears bid them be still, for they have heard sad things about you. The wind that blows from the north has told them that you come to

lead our strong men away and make them women who will not drink or go to war. They say that our old widows will cry with hunger because there is no one left to hunt for them. But the wind tells lies. Speak to us. Tell us he is wrong.

Athasata My Brothers, I left you many moons ago to track the deer who had wandered to the northland, but on the trail I caught sight of a rare and fleet-winged bird that my heart had long been trailing. Often had I aimed my arrows at him, but always had he escaped. Then a Blackrobe showed me how to lay a trap for him. I caught him, and though he beat his wings, I would not let him go. For the Christians poured a sacred water on my head that made me strong enough to hold him. Now I have come to show you where he builds his nest that you may hunt him too.

Onsegongo Such hunts are for women! Deer and bear are what we seek, and they are here.

At. Brother, what is this talk of women? Was it a woman who led you in that last great battle against the Mohegans? Was it a woman who called you back when all of you had run? Ask the widows of the Mohegan chiefs if Athasata is a woman?

Villagers Athasata! Athasata!

At. Brothers, do not hang back. You who are chiefs should take the lead. Look, the women are ahead of you. You all know Marie Tsewente. She was a princess here in our village. Listen to the words she bids me read to you. (taking out a letter) "Marie Tsewente to the People of Gandawaga!"

"My people, in times past you listened to me in the councils, but now there is more reason for you to hear me, for I speak of the most important thing that you have in this world. Listen to the Blackrobes and believe them. Give up the customs that the demons of hell have invented in order to make us perish with them. Your drunkenness and impurity stop up your ears. Will all the prayers I have offered to God be of no use to you?"

"O my Brothers, do you not realize the tortures they suffer in hell who die in their sins? If I could only make you understand the happiness you would know if you would listen to those who come to teach you. Now is the time to open your hearts. There will be no time after death." (He closes the letter.) Will you hear her, my Brothers?

Ons. (getting up to leave, followed by some others) Better to hear the crows cawing than to listen to the talk of women.

At. Onsegongo, these hands would not find it hard to make you careful with your tongue. But I will not blame you. Your eyes cannot see the truth for you walk in this land of darkness. Come with me, Onsegongo (turning to leave) and you my Brothers. There is another village, another Gandawaga, north of the lakes where the Christians live. Even when the sun sets there, in their hearts there is always light. Brothers, I have led you before. Come.

bring your weapons and blankets. Follow Athasata out of the night of sin and tears. I will lead you to the sun.

(About a third leave with him. Tom-toms. A single brave begins to chant. (Of. music) The others take it up, shuffling as they walk. When the last ones have left, Tekakwitha limps a few steps after them. Onsegongo steps forward and she stops. She turns toward the audience, looks up and extends her hands in prayer. The chant grows louder. A squaw begins the melody from the first scene. The others behind Tekakwitha take it up. It continues till Athasata's party has left. The drumbeat stops then begins at a slower tempo.)

Narrator Tekakwitha's weak eyes and those feet that would not run made her used to watching other people do things she could never do herself. She had never sulked. She was glad for them. But from the day she saw the people leave with Athasata something happened inside her. She kept watching the Christians, feeling as though the other girls were running off to fish and she could only follow limping, reaching out in the darkness, weeping because she could not do as they did. Blackrobes were in the village, but she dared not speak to them. Then in 1675 a new one arrived, Father James DeLamberville.

(Drumbeat stops. Tekakwitha is seated working on a bead-work necklace. Her two aunts come out of the lodge.)

2nd Aunt So your little bird has crippled her wing and cannot come to harvest the corn with us.

1st Aunt Not her wing, her foot. This is a strange bird that cannot hop and cannot see and keeps bumping into things and hurting herself.

2nd Aunt We will not harvest the corn with out foot. Up, you lazy little turkey! Use your hands like the rest of us.

Tek. I cannot, Aunt. I really did hurt my foot, and the cornfield is far away. Even if I walked there, I could never get back.

2nd Aunt What whining little puppies these young ones are! What do you know about pain? Look at me, abandoned by my husband for no reason whatever with four little brats in the lodge to cry and eat my corn and get in the way. And do I sit on the ground? Do you hear me complaining, with no one to help me and four big mouths always shrieking? How do I stand it? Do you hear me, girl? No husband and--

1st Aunt Maybe your husband will come back when his ears are rested

2nd Aunt Why should his ears need rest? What complaint did they ever hear from me? I am the one who needs the rest, and do I get it? No! I must go out to gather food for the four little wolves who claw at me. And then to see this fat little turkey squatting there,

too lazy to work!

Tek. I will work, Aunt. I will sew for you. Tell me what you need.

2nd Aunt Sew for me? Oh yes, I know. You are Tekakwitha, the proud one who makes fine beadwork and does nothing else. I will give you something to sew! (She snatches at the beadwork. Tekakwitha tugs at the other end.)

Tek. Please! You'll tear it! Let go! Please!

(Father DeLamberville enters. The struggle stops. The Aunt lets go of the beadwork and smacks Tekakwitha, who begins to sob.)

DeL. Peace, my children. (going over to Tekakwitha) Please. The pair will go. Do not weep Tekakwitha.

Tek. How do you know my name?

DeL. I have heard people talk about the good Tekakwitha.

Tek. ~~You lie,~~ ^{Oh no,} Blackrobe. Nobody talks about Tekakwitha, and nobody calls her good.

DeL. There is one who talks about her.

Tek. Who?

DeL. You do not know Him, but He is the Lord of the earth and sky, and He knows you.

Tek. Your God knows Tekakwitha?

DeL. Yes. He has sent me to talk to you. He does not like to see you weep. He once lived in a village Himself, and He knows what it is to cry.

Tek. Tell me about Him.

1st Aunt Girl! Will you forget the words of your Uncle?

Tek. I do not forget them, but I have seen the Christians and they are happy. I want to have what they have.

1st Aunt A hatchet in your skull is what you'll have. Now, stop this chatter or Onseggongo will return with me.

2nd Aunt Come. It will be what she deserves. I have seen Onseggongo. He sits in the chief's lodge where they hold council with the Christian chief from the north.

DeL. (starting to leave) I will not bring you harm, Tekakwitha.

Tek. Wait! Let them go. I want to hear about this God Who knows me.

1st Aunt We have warned her. Come.

DeL. Tekakwitha, think first what you are doing. It is not easy to be a Christian.

Tek. I know, and I do not want to be a Christian. That is-- I do want to, but I am afraid.

DeL. Afraid of your Uncle?

Tek. No. Afraid of myself.

DeL. But why? You are a good girl. The Christians in the village have told me about you.

Tek. I do not know anything about that. I only know that if this God who rules the earth and sky could think of speaking to you about me, then I should love Him. But if I become a Christian, I would be alone in the lodge with no other Christian to help me. I might do evil. That would be a terrible thing and I would rather die. I cannot let it happen.

DeL. Tekakwitha, what would you do if the Mohogans came and captured the village?

Tek. If enemies came, I would have warriors to help me. I could bite and scratch, and if they put me to death, I would sing the war chant with the others. But the Christian life is strange. The others would try to make me stop it, and I would not know how to fight them. I am weak and alone, and the Christians have no war chant. I might betray your God. Ohh!

(A group of villagers approaches led by Onsegongo and Skandregoraksen.)

Skand. Do not be afraid, Tekakwitha. I am your Brother. Even the priest Onsegongo would not harm the friend of Skandregoraksen.

DeL. Skandregoraksen, Tekakwitha is afraid that the Christians have nothing to make them brave like the war chant. Sing her the chant of the Christians.

Skand. (singing the Tantum Ergo)

Twa wen ni iost O Ka ris tis
E tho ie ho ta seh ton
Je sos ne Son Kwa wen ni io
A e twa Kwe Kon ha Ko
Tsi ni iot na tsi te wa Ken
E tho ni tion Kwe ta Kon

A tsi twa sen na ien Ni io
 Fo ni ha nok Fo ien ha
 Pot Kon Po ia ta to Ken ti
 A tsi twa na ton se Ke
 Non wa nok o ni tsi nen we
 Iah ta Ka ri wen ta ne.

(Solo and chorus. Tekakwitha walks over to Father De Lamberville. He leads her slowly around the altar. As he begins--)

Skand. I believe in God.

All The Father almighty, etc. (Creed)

(Tekakwitha and Father DeLamberville complete circle. Water is brought. As she comes forward, Skandregomaksen begins his hymn again, and the others take it up. It continues while she is baptized. Toward the end, 1st Aunt beckons her angrily into the lodge. She starts, looks timidly back, then walks toward it resolutely and goes inside. Onsegongo tries to lead DeLamberville and the others away as the lights fade. Drumbeat, slow.)

(Scene IV:)

Narrator Kateri, for that was Tekakwitha's baptismal name, had need of the Christian chants and every other help the Faith could give her. As she had told Father DeLamberville, she was the only Christian in her lodge, and the others, led by her aunts and uncle, did everything they could to see that she wouldn't be a Christian very long.

(Drumbeat stops. A boy runs out of the lodge dangling a rosary just out of the reach of Tekakwitha, whose lamp makes it hard to keep up with him even though he runs backwards.)

Tek. Give me that!

Boy Here, take it...What's the matter? I told you to take it.

(Onsegongo and other men come out and sit down, ignoring her. 1st Aunt brings out a pot and sets it before them. They begin to eat.)

Tek. Please. Please give it to me.

Boy Here it is. Don't you want it?

Tek. Aunt! Make him give it to me.

1st Aunt I have no time for games. I am working as you should be.

Tek. Please: If you give it back to me, I'll make you a pair of moccasins.

Boy O no! They would be Christian moccasins. You would bewitch them.

Tek. No, I wouldn't. Please. I can't run anymore.

Boy (about to break the chain) Here. You will have half, and I will have half.

Tek. No! Do not break them!

Boy Then stop chasing me and let me eat.

(He sits down. Tekakwitha goes over to the group.)

1st Aunt Away with you, Christian! Do your work.

Tekakwitha But it is evil to work on the first day of the week. It is a holy day.

1st Aunt If you will not work, you will not eat.

Tek. But I have had nothing all day.

1st Aunt Let the Christians feed you.

(She stands there watching them eat.)

Boy (chanting) Christian! Christian! Christian!

(One or two other boys come and throw sticks at her. The family rise and leave, the women joining the boys in their chant.)

Group Christian! Christian! Christian!

(A drunken Indian staggers onstage, attracted by the noise.)

Onsegongo Broken Jug! Come here, my Brother. (They whisper together. Broken Jug laughs then approaches Tekakwitha.)

Ons. Christian sorceress, long have I searched for a husband who could look at that face and not run out of the lodge. Here is one whom the white man's drink has made strong enough to do it. Come, speak to your husband.

Tek. I want no husband.

Onsegongo Broken Jug, will you be pushed aside by a Christian?

(Broken Jug takes out a hatchet and approaches Tekakwitha.)

Ons. Well, little crow. Will you stop your cawing and obey your Uncle now? What have you to say?

Tek. (rushing to her Uncle and kneeling) Uncle, please!

Ons. Speak not to me, Christian. Speak to your husband.

(Broken Jug approaches brandishing the hatchet.)

Tek. When the chief has entered the lodge, there is room for no one else. The God of heaven dwells in my heart. I want no husband.

(Broken Jug raises the hatchet. She looks up, screams, then lowers her head. Broken Jug looks foolishly at the others, reverses the hatchet and taps her head lightly with the handle. All laugh. Tekakwitha sinks down sobbing. Hot Ashes runs onstage and knocks Broken Jug to the ground. Onsegongo draws his knife and approaches him.)

Hot Ashes Onsegongo, are your eyes so weak that they cannot see the open jaws of the bear you so foolishly approach? Did you not hear how I tortured the Blackrobe giant? Did they not tell you how I ate his flesh before his very eyes? I am a Christian now, but my name is still Hot Ashes. Run while there is time, for it was not for my patience that they named me. (He crouches. Onsegongo wavers then leaves, the others following.) Here, take this sick dog with you. (He kicks Broken Jug, who gets up and tries to run.)

B.J. Mercy, Hot Ashes! Mercy! He told me to do it!

Hot Ashes Koteri, my sister. Rise. No one will touch you. (She rises.) Does this torture go on in your lodge every day? (Tekakwitha nods and begins to sob.) My sister, this village is full of demons from hell. A Christian cannot live here. You must leave this land of darkness. There are two brave warriors with me. Take my place in the canoe while I go to tell my brothers in the Onside villages about our God. My braves will bring you safe to Canada.

Tek. I dare not. My Uncle would find us and kill them both.

Hot Ashes He has gone now. There is time to run.

Tek. But the people will see us.

Hot Ashes (after looking around) Stand over there and wait for me. (She moves to one side.) Broken Jug, my Brother! Come back! Is there no welcome in this village for a guest? Where is the food? Where are the drums and the dancers? Come, my Brothers! Shall I tell the Onsides that you would not receive their chief?

(He sits down and begins to beat a tom-tom. Others enter with drums. The village assembles. Dances begin. Hot Ashes slips away with Tekakwitha. Off to one side he meets the two braves and leaves her with them. They go toward an exit on the right. He slips off to the other side. Just as Tekakwitha and the braves reach the exit. Onsegongo returns. He looks and doesn't see her. Then he notices the three by the exit.)

Onsegongo Tekakwitha!

(The drumbeat quickens. Onsegongo goes into the lodge and comes out with a rifle. Meanwhile the villagers chant and do a war dance. Continuing the chant, four of them follow Onsegongo in pursuit. The others disperse behind the altar. Tom-toms stop.

Tekakwitha and the two braves come in by another door on the same side. They reach the center. A drumbeat is heard in the distance. One brave stops and sends the other on with Tekakwitha. Just as they reach the exit, Onsegongo enters from where the three have just come in. His followers send up a war cry when they see the brave, who folds his arms and waits for them.)

Onsegongo Why are you standing here?

Brave Because my legs are holding me up.

Onsegongo (handing the rifle to a follower and drawing his knife) Will you make jokes with Onsegongo?

Brave Onsegongo must be a stranger in this part of the forest. He does not know who speaks to him. Even the dogs in my village will tell him that when I joke everybody laughs. (He draws a knife.) There are five of you, but when you leave there will only be four. Come, which of you will die with me?

Ons. Where is Tekakwitha?

Brave Tekakwitha? Who is she? I saw a little white bird with a broken wing fluttering into the forest. (He points in the direction she went.)

Ons. All Christians lie. That is the one way she did not go. Follow me.

(He heads toward a different exit. The brave waits until they leave, waves his blanket toward the exit Tekakwitha had used and follows Onsegongo.

Another Indian enters from a different door, crosses the center toward Tekakwitha's exit, stops, looks around, peers, then waves his blanket. Drumbeat offstage. Christian villagers come to the center. Some wait with Father

LeMoyne. Others go toward the sentry. Tekakwitha enters with the brave. Men begin the chant. Women sing the refrain from the first scene. Tekakwitha reaches Father *Fremin*.
~~LeMoyne.~~)

Tek. What is this place?

~~LeMoyne~~
Fremin This is the village of the Christians, Kateri. There is the lodge where God lives.

Tek. (looking at the altar) A cabin of wood is not what God wants. He wants our hearts to live in. I am not worthy to enter this place, for I have often driven Him from my heart. I should be out with the dogs.

~~LeMoyne~~
Fremin The other brave who helped you escape brought me this letter, Kateri. It is from Father DeLamberville. (reading) "Kateri has long lived in the night, but now she sees the sun. She is coming to live with the Christians. You will soon find out that a treasure I have sent you. Guard it well."...Come, my daughter. God will welcome you to His lodge.

(Benediction. For the Tantum Ergo they sing the melody used in scene III but with Latin words now.)

The End