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## KATERI TEKAKWITHA



*"The Death of Kateri Tekakwitha"*

*(one of the twenty-six monologues)*

*in*

*"Center Stage"*

*A new collection of scripts*

*by Mary-Eunice of Mary Productions*

*25¢ per copy*



## THE DEATH OF KATERI TEKAKWITHA



**NARRATOR:** Kateri Tekakwitha was a North American Indian. She belonged to the nation of the Iroquois, well known among the many tribes for their warlike unrest. Her tribe was called, Mohawks, which came from the name of the river along which the Indians had built their village. Kateri's mother was a Christian Indian, taken prisoner, but fortunate enough to win the affections of one of the chiefs of the tribe. A great epidemic of smallpox was responsible for the death of her parents. She was then taken by the Indian Chief, Lowerano, and his wife and brought up as an Indian princess.

As Tekakwitha grew older her relatives wished her to marry. She refused and they showed their anger by treating her as a slave for her disobedience. At this time she began to take an interest in the teachings of the missionaries. She was baptized Easter, 1676. Her people treated her cruelly and she finally escaped and fled to the Mission of Saint Francis Xavier in Canada. There she lived a life of penance and sacrifice, and in her 25th year fell very ill. Her sickness increased and in the year 1680, the people knew she would not last much longer. The time is Holy Week, 1680, late afternoon. An Indian woman known as Minnowa watches the people go to the bedside of Kateri Tekakwitha.

**MINNOWA: (WATCHING A SMALL CHILD)** Child, do you go to the bedside of Kateri Tekakwitha? Oh, please tell her, then, that Minnowa must speak to her. Here **(GIVING THE CHILD A GIFT)**... here is a trinket for you – the tooth of an elk...Yes, yes, little one, you may keep it; but, please, do not forget my message.

**(NOW SHE SEES ANASTASIA)** Anastasia, wait! I must go to Kateri. I need her forgiveness! You are like a mother to her; won't you help me?...Yes, I know it was all my fault. I started the gossip. I do not deny it. You see, everybody always said, "Kateri does this well. . .and Kateri does that well!" Then every morning I would see her going to early Mass. . .and she actually liked our work in the cornfields. She never complained – the way I do – when our hands got hard and rough. When we went on the hunt, the rest of us were glad for the chance to eat our fill of meat, but not Kateri; she insisted on staying in the village, to be near Our Lord in the chapel. "I prefer to have my body hungry and my soul strong", she'd say. I was disgusted with her being so good all the time. The last straw came one day when my husband and I were about to go on a trip. I had mended our canoe and taken it to the river. All our provisions were packed ahead of time; but when we came to leave, the boat was filled with water. Oh, my husband was so angry! He yelled, "You stupid one! Go get Kateri; she knows how to mend a canoe properly!" Then I was angry. I already envied Kateri and to have my own husband say that was just too much! I was determined to get even, so I told everyone that Kateri was in love with my husband! Yes, at first they believed me, but then they knew me for what I was – a spiteful liar. You know I am an out-cast in our tribe. The only way I can get back our people's respect is to tell Kateri that I'm sorry.

(SHE SEES ENNITA, HALF-SISTER OF TEKAKWITHA, WHO IS CALLING TO HER) You are calling me, Ennita?....Kateri? She will see me? Oh, thank you! Thank God! Please, Anastasia, come with me. I do not like to go among our people alone. (THEY WALK A FEW STEPS, ENTERING WHERE KATERI LIES DYING)

Oh, look! How thin and pale she is. (SHE KNEELS AT THE BEDSIDE, THE BED BEING A MAT ON THE FLOOR) Tekakwitha, it is Minnowa! I come to ask your help. (TO THE OTHERS) Look, she smiles at me. (TO KATERI) I must ask your forgiveness. My evil tongue was the cause of the gossip; I started that awful story about you....You knew all along? Oh, Kateri, I'm sorry! I didn't mean to be so cruel. I was just so jealous – the way my husband praised you....He adores me? He was always telling you what a good wife I am? Oh, Kateri, Kateri, what a fool I've been! Please forgive me – and pray for me....(TO THE OTHERS) Did all of you hear what she said? Kateri is my friend!....(TO KATERI) Yes, I will try to be a better Christian, Kateri, but my faith is weak. If only I could have a sign! – then maybe I could be more like you, faithful to Mass and devotions.

Oh, you must not try to sit up alone – here, let me help you. (SHE REACHES DOWN, AS THOUGH PUTTING HER ARMS AROUND KATERI'S SHOULDERS TO LIFT HER UP). What is it, Kateri? What are you trying to say? "Jesus". (TO THE OTHERS) She calls the name of Jesus! (NOW MINNOWA INDICATES BY THE POSTURE OF HER ARMS, AND BY FOLLOWING "KATERI" WITH HER EYES, THAT THE DYING GIRL HAS FALLEN BACK TO A LYING POSITION. PRACTICE IT WITH SOMEONE PLAYING THE PART OF KATERI, THEN, TRY IT ALONE. MINNOWA GAZES, STUNNED, FOR A FEW SECONDS AT KATERI THEN SAYS QUIETLY, BUT AUDIBLY): She is dead. (MAKES SIGN OF CROSS, TURNING AWAY) Please, Anastasia, close her eyes. (TO THE OTHERS) Her eyes – how beautiful they were! What did she see when she whispered the Holy Name? (TURNING BACK TO LOOK AT KATERI) Surely she did not see. . .Look! Her face! She is smiling – and the pox-marks that she's had since childhood are gone! It's a miracle! I've had my sign! God has given me a sign! I must go to the fields and call the rest of our people – they must know that our good Kateri has gone to the Great Father in Heaven! (SHE HURRIES OFF)



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