

LEGEND OF THE CHRISTMAS ROSE

adapted from the story by Selma Lagerlöf

Curtain opens with Carl on stage weeding the garden. Mother Robber and children come on in single file, look over wall and come into garden thru' open gate. Only when they are all in does brother Carl notice them.

Brother Carl: I'm sorry, but you must leave at once. You can't come in here. (Robber mother makes no reply. He takes her by the arm.) I'm Brother Carl, and I'm asking you to leave. Don't you hear me? (He attempts to turn her toward the gate.)

Mother: (Shaking him off, and turning on him vehemently) Do you know who I am? I'm Robber Mother from Goinge Forest . . . that's who I am. Now, touch me if you dare.

Brother Carl: (Steps back in surprise at her anger.) You are Robber Mother?

Mother: (Leaning toward him threateningly) Yes, that's who I am. And it's a sure thing it won't do anyone any good to ill me, or any of my brood. Remember that!

Carl: Don't threaten me, Robber Mother. I know all about you.

Mother: Then you know very well that Robber Father will avenge any threat or insult that's given us, don't you?

Carl: I'm not threatening you, I'm only asking you to leave. The gate shouldn't have been left open. I'm to blame. But go now, please.

(Robber Mother walks about the garden and looks at the flowers, ignoring Brother Carl)

1st. Child: Mother, look at that lovely yellow one.

2nd. Child: And that red one there. Here! Look at it!

Carl: You must surely know, Robber Mother, that this is a monk's cloister, and no woman in the land is allowed within these walls.

(Robber Mother still ignores him. She walks slowly over the garden.)

3rd. Child: Mother, look at these blue ones!

Mother: (Shaking a finger at him) Smell, but don't pick.

Carl: I tell you, Robber Mother, if you don't go away, the monks will be very angry with me because I forgot to close the gate, and they might even drive me away from the cloister, and from this herb garden.

(No response from Robber Mother. Brother Carl looks desperate, and exits for help as the evening hymn comes from the cloister. Robber Mother and the children listen in rapt attention.)

MONKS CHANT

Mother: (To children) It is lovely here in this garden (sighs) so peaceful.

Carl: (Enters with two other monks) Now, Robber Mother, I'm telling you again. You must leave!

(The two monks stand with hands on hips looking meaningfully at Robber Mother)

Mother: (Shouts) I won't leave! You must try to make me leave! Go on! Try it! I'll bite the first one to lay a hand on me! I'll ... I'll burn the cloister to the ground! I'll . . .

(Carl and the two monks close in on her)

Carl: Robber Mother! Please go!

(They attempt to force her to leave, but she stands her ground. She and the youngsters fight, kick and bite and are all over the three monks until they have all they can do to defend themselves. The three monks retreat, and the children let out a yell of triumph. The three monks turn to go for help, and bump into Abbot Hans who is coming out to find out what is happening)

Abbot: (Concerned) What is this trouble? What is all this?

Carl: Abbot Hans, this is Robber Mother from Goinge Forest. She refuses to leave. (He starts toward the wings)

Abbot: Where are you going?

Carl: (Turning toward the Abbot) We must have help to put out this woman and her five demons. They won't go for us. We tried! . . . .

Abbot: The three of you tried to put her out? Why should Robber Mother be put out in such a way? What have they done? (to the two monks) Go back to work both of you. (Two monks leave)

Carl: But Abbot Hans, this is a cloister!

Abbot: Since she has already entered the cloister, let us find out why. I want to learn what this is all about. (To Robber Mother) So you are Robber Mother.

Robber Mother turns defiantly toward Abbot Hans, for she expects only to be trapped and over powered. But when she notices his white hair and bent form, she answers peaceably)

Mother: Yes, that's what they call me. But now, don't you try to put me out.

Abbot: Tell me, what is it you want here?

Mother: I want to see this garden. It is something fine to look at, with all these flowers.

- Abbott: (pleased) So you like it? And do you mean to tell me that you fought three of my brothers just to stay and look at my garden in peace.
- Mother: And why not? This is a most unusual garden. Did you say this was your garden?
- Abbot: It belongs to the monastery, but I am privileged to work in it, and to make it beautiful. I love this herb garden as much as it is possible for me to love anything earthly and perishable.
- Mother: But you are old! How can you work in the garden?
- Abbot: Brother Carl here, does the hard work. In the last few years he has been the actual gardener, while I have enjoyed the garden. Until it became hard for me to dig and stoop, it was all my work.
- Mother: I can see that you must have worked many years to have so many different plants, and such beautiful ones. Yes, you must have worked hard.
- Abbot: That's true, I did! I worked many hours here, for I was young when I came, and as you see, I'm an old man now.
- Mother: At first when I saw this, I thought I had never seen a prettier garden; But now I see that it can't be compared with one I know of.
- Carl: This is Abbot Hans, who with much care and diligence has gathered the flowers from far and near for his herb garden. We all know that there is not a more beautiful garden in all Skona. It is not befitting that you who live in the wild forest all the year around, should find fault with his work.
- Mother: I don't wish to make myself the judge of either him or you. I'm only saying that if you could see the garden of which I am thinking, you would uproot all the flowers planted here and cast them away like weeds.
- Carl: I can understand that you only talk like this to tease us. It must be a pretty garden that you have made for yourself amongst the pines in Goinge forest!
- Mother: (Drawing herself erect) Why should I? Robber Father takes care of our wants. He could come here at night and rob you of anything he . . .
- Abbot: (interrupting) Do not threaten us, Robber Mother. No god ever comes of threats. We haven't harmed you, have we?
- Carl: Indeed we haven't. And I'd wager my soul's salvation that you have never been within the walls of an herb garden before.
- Mother: (with rage) It may be true that I had never been within the walls of an herb garden; But I said I know of a lovelier garden, and that is true.
- 3rd Child: We see it every Christmas.

# THE FOREST

This fo-rest is as God once thought the earth would al-ways be.

The first system of the handwritten musical score for 'THE FOREST'. It features a treble and bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words underlined.

Where ev-ry-thing that's living ought to dwell in harmo-ny.

The second system of the handwritten musical score. It continues the melody and accompaniment from the first system. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words underlined.

No win-ter wind, no win-ter cold, but al-ways gen-tle

The third system of the handwritten musical score. It continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words underlined.

Spring, with har-vest yiel-ding all year and birds that al-ways

The fourth system of the handwritten musical score. It continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words underlined.

sing, This fo-rest is as God once thought the earth would al-ways

The fifth and final system of the handwritten musical score. It concludes the piece with the final line of lyrics. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words underlined.

Mother: Well, Abbot Hans, since you love gardens so much, I would like you to see the most wonderful Garden. On the next Christmas Eve I will send Bernard here, who is the eldest, to show you the way. But more than one follower you cannot take with you.

Abbot: Robber Mother, I'm grateful to you. Since you have trusted me, I will in no way abuse it.

Mother: Now I am ready to leave your garden. Thank you Abbot Hans.

(Robber Mother exits with her five children. Bells are heard very faintly)

CHURCH BELLS

Carl: Abbot Hans, Robber Mother gave you permission for one monk to go with you.

Abbot: Yes, she did. Would you like to come with me, Brother Carl? Or, I could go alone.

Carl: Oh, no, no. I should like to see that forest too. But Father Abbot, I don't believe their story of the forest. I'm afraid they may plan to trap you, or . . .

Abbot: Don't even permit such evil thoughts to enter your head. I long to see this miracle. Since I was a boy, I've heard of the forest on Christmas Eve. And now . . . to have the opportunity to see it . . .

Carl: (Interrupting) You must remember, Abbot Hans, that in winter this will be a very long hard journey for one as old as you.

Abbot: I will do it. But do not reveal to a soul that which has been agreed upon. I fear that the monks, should they learn of my purpose, would in truth not allow a man of my years to go up to the robbers cave.

(Exit both)

CHORUS SINGS: TIS CHRISTMAS? OH SEE HOW THE FOREST AWAKENS

(Enter Archbishop Absolon with the Abbot)

Archbishop: So, Abbot Hans, how very nice to walk with you in the garden. And the finest garden in all the land it is.

Abbot: Yes, Bishop Absolon, it is beautiful here. And, father, I too, thought I had the finest garden, until I listened to the visitor who has just left.

Archb.: Didn't the visitor like your garden?

Abbot: Very much. Enough to fight for the opportunity of viewing it to her heart's content.

Archb.: Her? A woman visitor in a cloistered garden?

Abbot: Let me explain. Brother Carl was working in the garden pulling weeds. He had pulled a pile, and was putting them out under the old linden tree. Since he had to make a number of trips, he l

weeds. He had quite a pile and was putting them out under the old linden tree, and since he had to make a number of trips, he left the gate open.

Archb. : I understand.

Abbot: And in that short time, Robber Mother from Goinge Forest came in.

Archb. : (laughing) You have illustrious visitors, I must say.

Abbot: This Robber Mother insisted on seeing the garden, even though she had a fight with Brother Carl, and two other monks.

Archb. : A fight? You mean . . .

Abbot: Yes, a real fight. She wanted to see the garden, and she and her five children kicked and bit and fought . . .

Archb. : Five children. Belonging to this - - - Robber Mother?

Abbot : They are outlaws living up in the forest on the mountain.

Archb. : What about the authorities?

Abbot ; What can they do? If harm came to Robber Mother or to any of the children, Robber Father would burn down every house in the village.

Archb. : This is certainly a bad situation!

Abbot: Now this Robber Mother told me that every Christmas at midnight, Goinge Forest comes into full bloom in memory of our Lord's birth.

Archb. : The forest blooms in the middle of winter?

Abbot: They were most sincere in telling me of this. And if these bandits aren't so bad, but that God's glories are made manifest to them, surely we can't be too wicked to be given the same privilege.

Archb. : My dear Father Abbot, such legends are . . . beautiful, but without foundation. Forget it, Abbot Hans, my friend.

Abbot: But, Father, - - - these children. Think of it. We are fostering a band of outlaws by letting them grow up wild in the forest.

Archb. : That is why the authorities should make short work of this.

Abbot: I thought of another way to remedy this matter. Would you --- could you --- give me a letter of ransom for this outlaw --- this Robber Father --- so he can lead an honest life, and send his children to school in the village?

Archb. : But that would be letting the whole wolf pack loose upon the village. No, no. A letter of ransom would do no good.

Abbot: I would like so much to help the situation. If God, in His mercy, can let them see such miracles.

Archb. : My dear Brother Abbot, I put h stories. None at

# AWAKE THOU SPIRIT OF THE WATCHMEN

1. A - wake thou Spirit of the watchmen who never held their  
 Con - ten - ding from the walls of Zi - on a - gainst the foe, con -

A - wake thou spirit of the watchmen who ne - ver held their peace  
 Con - ten - ding from the walls of Zi - on A - gainst the foe, con - fid -

peace by day or night Throughout the world their cry is  
 fid - ing in thy night.

by day or night Throughout the world their cry is ringing  
 ing in thy night.

ring - ing still, And bringing people to thy ho - ly will,  
 still And bringing people to thy ho - ly will.

(*Quater*)  
 2. O Lord, now let thy fire enkindle  
 Our hearts, that everywhere its flame may  
 go,  
 And spread the glory of redemption  
 Till all the world thy saying grace shall  
 know.  
 O mighty Lord, look down on us and view  
 How bare the fields; the laborers, how few.

(*Sing out*)  
 3. Send forth, O-Lord, Emanuel  
 By many messengers, all hearts to win;  
 Make haste to help us in our weakness;  
 Break down the realm of Satan, death, and  
 sin:  
 The circle of the earth shall proclaim  
 Thy kingdom, and the glory of thy Name.

*ff*

all. But I promise you, whenever you send me a flower --- just one flower (holds up one finger) that has blossomed in Goinge Forest at Christmas time, then I give my word, I will write a letter of ransom for Robber Father.

(Exit both)

CHORUS: THE FOREST. THE CHRISTMAS FOREST. AWAKE THOU SPIRIT OF THE WATCHMAN

A C T II

(Very blue dim lights, for it is night. To the right, in the wings, is the Robber cave, all dark. The curtain opens slowly. As soon as the curtain opens Robber child enters with lantern. He is waiting for the Abbot and Brother Carl, and holds the lantern high so they can see. They enter slowly from back of audience, and Brother Carl is assisting the Abbot, who is very tired)

Abbot : (To Bernard) Here you are, my boy, I've waited a long time for this Christmas Eve.

Bernard: So have I, Abbot Hans. Our family is always happy at Christmas time.

Carl: I'm sure you are, even tho' you can't celebrate as the other children in the village ~~my~~ do.

Bernard: We celebrate! You'll see.

Abbot: Of course you do. We all celebrate in our own way, as we can.

Bernard: Abbot Hans, we celebrate much up here in the forest. Oh, the fruits and the berries! I can hardly wait!

(Although Brother Carl is helping the Abbot, he stumbles and the Robber child and Brother Carl help him to his feet.)

Carl: We should have started earlier, Abbot Hans. This is a bad, rough way to travel in the dark.

Abbot : (Getting his breath) I know! But that is Mother Robber's precaution. You can't blame her for being careful.

Carl: She doesn't want us to barn the way. She doesn't trust us.

Abbot : Ah, Brother Carl, you are a skeptical soul. She must have trust or she wouldn't have permitted us to come.

Bernard: We'll be home soon now. It was a long way, but we're almost there.

Abbot: I - - - must - - - rest again. I'm - - - out - - - of breath.

Carl: We mustn't hurry so. Are you Father Abbot?

Abbot: A little rest - - - and I'll be - - - this. I'm enjoying



Carl: Child, are you cold too?

Bernard: I'm used to it. And we're not far from home now.

Abbot: (As if to himself) Home! A cave, poor child! But it's home to him!

Carl: Father Abbot, I'm afraid of a trap with these outlaws.

Abbot: Put aside your fears. They can't be as strong as my desire to see the forest bloom.

Carl: I can't help worrying for you.

Abbot: Have more faith, Carl. Now no harm will come, I tell you!

Carl: It may be so. But the way is so rough, and the road so steep.

(The Abbot rests on his staff and sighs . . . )

CHORUS: IT'S A HARD ROUGH ROAD UP THE MOUNTAIN STEEP

Bernard: (pointing) Here we are. There's the cave!

(Dialogue continues while this action takes place. Mother enters the cave slowly so she will not be noticed. She turns the light on under the fire, and moves a few sticks as if to coax the fire.)

Carl: At last! Are you terribly cold, Father Abbot?

Abbot: A little. But what difference does that make?

(Robber mother raises her head at these words, for the travellers are approaching the entrance to the cave.)

Mother: Come, you out there, out of the night cold.

Abbot: Good evening Robber Mother. I'm sorry! But I know no other name by which to call you.

Mother: It is name enough. I have forgotten any other. But speak softly for Robber Father and the children are asleep on the pine boughs over there (points).

Abbot: (Looking around) This is rough living, Robber Mother.

Mother: Rough, but free. We are used to the cold, and to having little to eat. Sit down by the fire and warm yourself. Abbot Hans, and if you have food with you, eat, for the food which we in the forest prepare, you wouldn't care to taste.

Abbot: We have food here. (opens knapsack to show her) This night we shall all have the same, for we have brought enough for all.

(He opens the knapsack, and the children come shyly one at a time. They give each child a piece of bread and cheese. The children snatch it, and sitting at the fireside, eat it ravenously.)

- Mother: It is far up here to the cave, Abbot Hans. If you are tired, after the long journey, you may lie down on one of those beds over there to sleep.
- Carl: (skeptically) Then if we fall asleep, the forest will bloom but we won't see it.
- Mother: Do you believe I lie about the forest?
- Carl: But how can we know if we're asleep when it blooms?
- Mother: Rest easy, Monk. You needn't be afraid of oversleeping, for I'm sitting here by the fire keeping watch. I shall awaken you at in time to see that which you have come up here to see.
- Carl: Then, I'll rest awhile. Abbot Hans, will you rest also?
- Abbot: Soon, but first I would like to speak to Robber Mother.
- (Mother has in the meantime motioned children back into cave. Carl exits through the cave. As he exits, Robber Father comes into the cave. He stares at Abbot Hans and at Robber Mother who are sitting by the fire conversing.)
- Mother: Sit here, Robber Father.
- Abbot: (Looking up) So you are Robber Father?
- Father: And so?
- Abbot: I've wondered about you.
- Father: And I've wondered about you, too.
- Abbot: You know, on our way here tonight, we passed homes with candles lighted, and the rooms adorned with evergreens. There were all manner of Christmas preparations going on in the village.
- Father: Really? Well, what has that got to do with me?
- Abbot: There was the smell of fresh bread baking, and of meat cooking. Robber Father and Robber Mother, do you remember all the fine preparations they make for Christmas in the village?
- Mother: That is down in the village. This is the Robber's cave.
- Abbot: That is exactly what I mean. I'm sorry for your children who can never run on the village street in holiday dress, or tumble in the Christmas straw.
- Mother: Of course, I've thought of it. But it can't be helped.
- (Father Robber jumps up and walks around angrily)
- Abbot: In the village the children are now getting ready for Christmas, decorating their homes, and lighting candles for the Christchild.
- Robber Father stops his pacing and makes an angry gesture toward the Abbot.

- Mother: Do you imagine we haven't thought of all that?
- Abbot: And then they will gather together to sing carols, and eat the cakes made especially for Christmas.
- (Robber Mother covers her face with her hands, but Robber Father strides toward the Abbot, towering over him, and shaking his fists above the Abbot's head.)
- Father: (roar) You miserable Monk! Did you come here to coax from me my wife and children? Don't you know I'm an outlaw and may not leave the forest?
- Abbot: (Looking straight at him, fearlessly) Yes. I know that! I came, not to make trouble for you; my purpose is to get a letter of ransom for you from Archbishop Absolon.
- (Both robbers burst into laughter)
- Mother: You're wasting your time, Abbot Hans.
- Father: We know well enough the kind of mercy a forest Robber can expect from Bishop Absolon. (He goes and sits down)
- Abbot: He is a good man. And I believe I will get this letter of ransom from him for you.
- Father: Oh, if I get a letter of ransom from Absolon then I'll promise you that never again will I steal so much as a goose.
- (Bells are heard faintly, growing louder)
- Mother: We sit here and talk, Abbot Hans, and are forgetting to look at the forest. Now I can hear, even in this cave how the Christmas bells are ringing!
- Abbot: How can this bell ringing ever waken the dead forest?
- Mother: Sh - h - h ! Watch and listen!
- (As bells continue to ring, banks of lights gradually come on increasing and decreasing in intensity, giving an oncoming, wave-like effect. Recording of birds may also start quietly. Bells fade out)
- Abbot: Old Man that I am, shall I behold such a miracle?
- (When maximum light is on and rabbits, doves etc., are hopping around, Robber family enters forest and pick fruit and play with animals.)
- Father: (Leans down to stroke a rabbit) Ah little rabbit, you like berries too, do you?
- 1st. Child: Look Mother, what a nice arm bank this snake makes.
- Carl: (In alarm) That snake is poisonous. It will bite the boy.

Father: (Moves to hold Carl back, who has moved toward the child as if to assist him) There is no danger. All forest things are harmless tonight while the forest blooms. Why, Mother Robber can even stroke the black bear.

Abbot: (Softly) I see. And I saw one pet the red fox and fondle its litter.

Carl: Such things as this cannot be. Surely it is not of heaven.

Mother: See for yourself! Eat as we do. God has given it.

22 1st. child: M-m-m These berries are good. (Picks them from bush and eats them.)

Abbot: Oh, such flowers! Beautiful Beautiful! But for the saint Archbishop I must choose the most beautiful of all.

(Angels singing very softly is heard)

Abbot: Listen - - - is it - - - God's Angels? (Singing gets louder)

Carl: This cannot be a true miracle since it is revealed to malefactors. This does not come from God, but has its origin in witch-craft and is sent hither by Satan. It is the Evil one's power that is tempting us and compelling us to see that which has not real existence.

(Singing gets louder still)

They would enchant and seduce us, and we shall be sold into perdition.

(shouting and waving his arms)

GET YOU ALL BACK TO HELL? WHERE YOU CAME FROM!

(Lights off, Music Stops. Very faint blue light again. Snow falls, and all rush to the cave, except the old Abbot, who falls down in the snow. Thunder and lightning, wind. The Robber family do not notice the missing Abbot in the confusion at the mouth of the cave.)

Abbot: The flower! Absalom's Flower!

(Thunder & Lightning come on here, after Abbot has spoken)

Father: All is gone! Gone!

Children: (wailing) It's gone! Our Forest! It's gone! (They act very confused)

Carl: Where is Abbot Hans? Father Abbot where are you?  
(He starts out to find him, calling constantly)

Mother: Let's us go out and find him.

Father: Here, light a torch. (He finds Abbot Hans) Here he is! I've found him!

Carl: Oh, Abbot Hans! Father Abbot! It is I! It is I who killed him because I drank from him the cup of happiness which he had been thirsting to - - - last drop.

CHORUS SINGS: OH MEN WHO LOOK FOR BELONGING HAMIS

A C T III

(Monks chant is heard from the cloister. At the end of the song church bells ring. The Monks pass slowly through the garden toward the Abbey. Brother Francis and Brother Carl stop while the others continue and exit.)

Francis: Aren't you coming to eat with us, Brother Carl? Even Archbishop Absolon is here to celebrate Christmas with us.

Carl: No. The thought of food sickens me. This Christmas brings me no happiness.

Francis: You are thinking of Abbot Hans, then?

Carl: Yes, I am. It is just a year since Abbot Hans and I went up to the cave in Goinge Forest.

Francis: Brother Carl, have you still found no peace about the Christmas night?

Carl: It was my fault, without a doubt. It wasn't the hard trip that caused his death. It was my words.

Francis: But think Brother Carl, it was a cold night and a long journey and he an old man.

Carl: It was my fault. Consider the shock of being so close to the angels, of seeing the miracle of the forest blooming in the midst of winter, and then --- these terrible words I shouted. The forest turned into winter in seconds.

Francis: I heard that.

Carl: It all happened because I wouldn't believe in good. No I had to believe in evil. Just because they were outlaws.

Francis: You carry a heavy burden, Brother.

Carl: The Robber family was sick with sorrow when they brought the Abbot here to the monastery. In his hand the Abbot still clutched a few bulbs from some of the flowers that had blossomed.

Francis: What became of the bulbs, Brother Carl?

Carl: The bulbs? I planted them.

Francis: They didn't grow?

Carl: No. How could God permit them to? I didn't believe in the miracle He sent. I planted the bulbs near the Abbot's favorite rose bush.

Francis: And they didn't come up?

Carl: No. In the ground, but there wasn't a sign of them.

A CHRISTMAS SONG

Oh men who look for help-ing hands, Oh men who

see the win - t'ry lands, Oh men who cold and hun-gry

pine, Help does not come out of our time!

Help will not come from human hands  
In wintry, cold, and dying lands.  
Light will not come by human deed,  
To break the darkness of our need.

This city gives a radiance bright:  
The manger and the child shed light!  
This child alone redemption brings,  
This child removes death's fearful  
stings!

An angel stands on this dark earth.  
He shows the way to man's new birth.  
For all he points with shining hand  
To light's own city, love's own land.

This child alone our hunger stills.  
This child alone our poor life fills.  
This child alone will make us whole.  
Arise, He is our way, our goal!

# THE MAY TREES ARE FLOWERING

The May trees are green things, all - pear - ling on our bleak pas-ture.

time. Yea all things come in glo-rious flow'r, the earth yields forth a

sweet sa - vor. There's sing - ing bells ring - + ing. The

Harp + ta - bor, flute & Viol un - til I can scarcely tell, How this won - der fell

Harp sun & ta - bor flute & Viol  
my stoops down from hea - ven's hall  
re - pen - tance true & pure

The angels from heaven proclaim a Saviour's birth.  
 A child for us given, God comes to man on earth;  
 The nightingale makes sweet delight;  
 I see from heaven a shining light  
 Down, down to earth streaming;  
 The sun stoops down from heaven's hall  
 And bows before the lowly stall;  
 Angels are singing all.

O God, grant this to me, that I with joyful heart  
 May one day behold thee in glory as thou art;  
 Then thou wilt be my judge aright,  
 I far too lowly in thy sight;  
 Thy shining tears fall for me!  
 Make my repentance true and pure,  
 While still the days of grace endure.  
 O Christ-Child stay, with

Then I thought they might come up during the summer, but they didn't. I even watched during the fall. Brother, I think my words must have destroyed all life on that night, even those bulbs.

(They walk towards the monastery together. Francis goes in. At the door, Brother Carl turns once more to look at the place where he had planted the bulbs.)

Carl: (shouting excited) Look! Look! Here on the very spot where I planted the bare root bulbs, a beautiful flower has sprung with flourishing green stalks and silver white leaves. (Calls loudly) Brothers, Brothers, Bishop Absalon, come see what I have found in the Abbot's garden!

(Monks and Bishop Absalon come running from the monastery)

Francis: See, a flower blooming on Christmas Eve, when all the other growths are as if dead.

Bishop A: This flower must in truth have been plucked by Abbot Hans from the Christmas Garden in Goings Forest.

Carl: These are the flowers he promised to pick for you from the Christmas Garden.

Arch B: (Looks in silence for a moment) Abbot Hans has faithfully kept his word and I shall keep mine. A letter of ransom shall be drawn up for the wild Robber who was outlawed ever since his youth.

Carl: And I myself shall take the letter up to the Robber's cave tonight.

- Curtain -

CHORUS: THE MAY TUNES ARE FLOWERING



A C T III

S C E N E I

(Curtain opens on Cave scene at night. Snow is falling. Owls hooting. Brother Carl enters from left of stage. Father, and Mother Robber and children around fire in mouth of cave. As Robber Father sees Carl approaching, he leaps up with club uplifted and advances threateningly.)

Robber Father: I'd like to hack you monks into bits, as many as you are. It must be your fault the Goings forest did not last night dress itself in Christmas bloom.

Brother Carl: The fault is mine alone and I will gladly die for it. But first I must deliver a message from Bishop Absolon. Here is the letter of ransom the Bishop had promised to Abbot Hans. These are the flowers that I found blooming in the snow this very Christmas morn, in the Abbot's garden from the bulbs he had plucked from the Christmas Forest. Please forgive me Father Robber for my coldhearted faithlessness. Truly this is a great miracle. It is God's love that has brought Spring to our hearts and opened my eyes. Let there be peace my kins brother, and let us share these gifts that God gives us just as Abbot Hans wished it to be.

C U R T A I N

CHORUS: Lo how a rose o'er blooming

S C E N E II

C R I B S C E N E

76 ES IST EIN' ROS'

German, 15th century  
English words by  
Ursula Vaughan Williams

(There is a flower)  
(CHRISTMAS)

Trad.  
(arr. Michael Praetorius)

In moderate time

SOPRANO  
ALTO

1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloomed from the stem  
Of David's lineage cometh, that hath

TENOR  
BASS

stem hath sprung  
old have sung. It came, a flow'et  
mid the cold of win-ter, when half spent was the night.

hath sprung  
have sung

mid the cold of win-ter, when half spent was the night.

Half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,  
The rose I have no mind,  
With Mary we beheld it,  
The virgin mother kind,  
To show God's love aright,  
She bore to man a Saviour  
When half-spent was the night.

This flow'r whose fragrance tender  
With sweetness fills the air,  
Dispels with glorious splendor,  
The darkness everywhere.  
True man yet very God,  
From sin and death He saves us,  
And lightens e'ry load.

1st. Child: Yes, we do, every Christmas Eve.

Carl:O (in disgust) There is no garden on earth lovelier than this.

Mother: But you monks who are holy men, certainly must know that on every Christmas Eve the great Goinge Forest is transformed into a beautiful garden to commemorate the birth of our Lord. We who live in the forest have seen this happen every year. And in that garden I have seen flowers so lovely I dared not lift my hand to pluck them.

Children: (the following should not be said in unison, but spontaneously, as if in protest. ) We have seen! Every Christmas. Yes! Yes!

Carl: Would you really try to make me believe this?

Children : But it's true !

Abbot: It is wonderful, even to hear of it!

SONG: THIS FOREST IS AS GOD ONCE THOUGHT THE EARTH WOULD ALWAYS BE

Abbot: Every since my childhood I have heard it said that on every Christmas Eve the forest was dressed in Holiday glory.

Mother: You are an honest monk, Abbot Hans, and what we say it true. We have seen it. And although I am the wife of Robber Father, you may believe me. I speak the truthx.

Abbot: I believe ~~what~~ what you tell me, Robber Mother. This is truly a miracle.

Mother: A miracle it is indeed! At midnight, on Christmas Eve, the forest blooms, the birds twitter in the tree tops and the angels sing. Then the colors of light come, . . . and surely . . . but surely it is from Heaven.

Abbot: It is indeed from Heaven! How I would love to see this.

Mother: You would? You really would! (Pause and then angrily) Or are you trying to trap me?

Abbot: (in surprise) No, No! Of course not! Why should I do that?

Mother: No, no, it's ~~g~~ impossible ! You could find Robber Father, and take him away from us. No, no that's impossible.

Abbot: Oh no! Robber Mother! I wouldn't do such a thing as that.

Mother: Well, perhaps, perhaps I can trust you. You really are sincere, But you are not to waylay us, or trap us as sure as you are a holy man.

Abbot: That I can surely promise you. And, Robber Mother, would you allow me to come up to the Robbers' Cave on Christmas Eve, so that I might see the miracle in the Forest. If you would only send one of your children to show me the way, I could ride up there alone, and I would never getray you, on the contrary, I will do all that lies in my power to help you.

# CHRISTMAS FOREST

1. 'Tis Christmas, oh see how the forest a-wa-kens, A light as of  
2. The forest's a-light with the newness of Springtime. The warmth of the  
3. dawn ing brightens the sky. The harsh winter wind and the snow quickly  
4. summer sun fills every thing. All natures a-glow with the riches of  
5. vanish and light streams in bright rays from Heaven to earth. The  
6. harvest, And man, bird and beast all in harmo-ny sing. The  
7. trees are in blossom, the birds sing their praise. And green branches  
8. angels come down to the earth on this night, Singing songs of God's  
9. glory in a warm summer breeze. 'Tis Christmas, and now in the  
10. love, of the vic-try of light. All earth filled with brightness, the  
11. forest 'tis spring, on-ly God could cre-ate such a wonderful thing  
12. Christmas bells ring. A all in that Jesus is King