

The Gift

A poor orphan girl named Maria
Was walking to market one day
She stopped for a rest by the roadside
Where a bird with a broken wing lay
A few moments passed till she saw it
For it's feathers were covered with sand
But soon clean and wrapped it was traveling
In the warmth of Maria's small hand

She happily gave her last peso
On a cage made of rushes and twine
She fed it loose corn from the market
And watched it grow stronger with time

Instrumental

Now the Christmas Eve service was coming
And the church shone with tinsel and light
And all of the town folk brought presents
To lay by the manger that night
There were diamonds and incense and perfumes
In packages fit for a king
But for one ragged bird in a small cage
Maria had nothing to bring

She waited till just before midnight
So no one could see her go in
And crying she knelt by the manger
For her gift was unworthy of Him

Then a voice spoke to her through the darkness
Maria, what brings you to me
If the bird in the cage is your offering
"Open the door, let me see
Though she trembled, she did as he asked her
And out of the cage the bird flew
Soaring up into the rafters
On a wing that had healed good as new

Just then the midnight bells rang out
And the little bird started to sing
A song that no words could recapture
Whose beauty was fit for a king

Now Maria felt blessed just to listen
To that cascade of notes sweet and long
As her offering was lifted to heaven
By the very first nightingale's song

Setting: A marketplace beside a road

Characters: Maria, merchant, town folk

Backdrops: Market, Church

Props: Bird, handkerchief, peso, cage, corn, tinsel, lights, manger, presents, bells

Actions:

Maria walks slowly by the road running by the market.

She stops and looks at some booths.

She sits down on the ledge beside the road.

A bird lies beside the road, covered with sand and leaves.

Maria looks around.

She sees the birds, picks it up and brushes it off.

She takes a handkerchief out of her pocket and wraps the bird in it.

She walks to the booth, gives the merchant a coin.

The merchant hands her a cage.

She goes to the next booth and buys a bag of corn.

She walks further along, stroking the bird in her hands.

Interlude of music, curtain, Church background and props.

Curtain opens.

Town folk walk to church with presents.

They lay the presents before the manger, and then leave.

Maria walks in with her bird in the cage.

She kneels before the manger, crying.

She opens the cage, and the bird flies out.

(The bird will have a clear string attached to it, allowing someone to pull it out of the cage and up into the air, and then down behind the curtain)

Chimes or bells sound.

Maria sits facing the crowd, her face lifted to the ceiling as if listening to the bird's song.