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Dramatic Publishing
The Christmas Doll

Adapted from the book by Elvira Woodruff
Book, Music and Lyrics by Joan Cushing

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The Christmas Doll

Musical. Book, music and lyrics by Joan Cushing. Adapted from the book by Elvira Woodruff. Cast: 3m., 10w., many extras. Doubling possible. Set in 1840’s London, Lucy and Glory Wolcott live at Grimstone Union Public Workhouse at the mercy of the cruel Matron Wick and Mistress Branch. Lucy invents stories about a family she barely remembers and a long lost doll named Morning Glory to humor her sister. When a deadly fever sweeps through the workhouse, the two sisters escape to the mean streets of London, where they encounter many colorful characters. Now they must learn to survive on their own. Finding an old, discarded doll by the river that Glory believes is her long-lost doll, and teaming up with the beggar boy, Nick Button, Morning Glory leads the three on a journey that will change their lives forever, for Morning Glory is no ordinary doll. Flexible set. Music excerpts available online. Optional accompaniment CD available. Approximate running time: 75 minutes. Code: CP3.

Photo: Children’s Theatre of Charlotte, Charlotte, N.C., featuring Emily Calder.
Photo: Todd Sumlin. Cover design: Susan Carle.

“A Dickensian saga full of outlandish Londoners and narrative twists … Audiences will cherish this lovingly crafted Doll.”
—The Charlotte Observer
The Christmas Doll

A timeless story of courage and love.

A musical in 75 minutes

Book, music and lyrics by

JOAN CUSHING

Adapted from the book by

ELVIRA WOODRUFF

Dramatic Publishing Company
Woodstock, Illinois ● Australia ● New Zealand ● South Africa

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(THE CHRISTMAS DOLL)

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“Woodruff spins a Dickensian saga, full of outlandish Londoners and narrative twists, both cruel and kind … But beneath the dark, chilly gloom of The Christmas Doll … beats a big, bright, beautiful heart … Audiences will cherish this beautifully crafted ‘Doll.’”

—The Charlotte Observer.

“It’s better than half the musicals I saw on Broadway last year—with production values at the same high level … a damn good musical!”

—Creative Loafing Charlotte.

“The children in the audience ate it up … the music and dance, the story, the sets and especially the ending … that Charles Dickens or Nora Ephron would be proud to claim.”

—ARTS à la Mode.

“A visually spellbinding production.”

—National Youth Theatre.
Opening on November 30, 2007, *The Christmas Doll* received its world premiere at ImaginOn’s McColl Family Theatre by the Children’s Theatre of Charlotte in Charlotte, N.C.

**PRODUCTION STAFF**

Director .......................................................... Alan Poindexter  
Executive Director ........................................... Bruce LaRowe  
Literary Manager ................................................. Lucy Hazelhurst  
Orchestrations .................................................. Keith Tittermary  
Musical Director ................................................ Drina Keen  
Choreography .................................................... Ron Chisholm  
Scenic and Costume Designer ............................... Bob Croghan  
Lighting Designer ................................................ David M. Fillmore, Jr.  
Sound Designer .................................................... Elisheba Ittoop  
Stage Manager ..................................................... Ryan Margheim

**CAST**

Lucy Wolcott ..................................................... Caroline Bower  
Glory Wolcott .................................................... Emily Calder  
Nick Button ........................................................ Ben Mackel  
Mrs. Thimblebee/Mrs. Wolcott ............................... Amy Van Looy  
Mistress Florrie Nuggins/Mr. Nuggins ..................... Mark Sutton  
Nora Cooperwait/Bess .......................................... Nicia Carla  
Doctor/Mr. Wolcott/Constable ............................... Chaz Pofahl  
Mistress Branch/Iris/Beggarwoman ......................... Gina Stewart  
Matron Wick/Highborn Lady/Washerwoman .... Barbi VanSchaick  
Emma .............................................................. Hayden Rockecharlie  
Charlotte ............................................................ Savannah Devore  
Aggie Crofter ..................................................... Caroline Kasay  
Sarah Henley ..................................................... April Crumpler  
Emma Waverly .................................................... Heidi Woodward  
Orphans ............................................................. Anna Farish, Tierney Lanham, Alexis Nyrindeh, Maddie Lanphear, Jacki Lanphear  
Chestnut Vendor .................................................. Tyler Jiminez  
Muffin Man/Coach Man ......................................... Brandon Lawler  
Beggar ............................................................ Jura Davis  
Custodian .......................................................... Steven Buchanan

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The Christmas Doll

CHARACTERS

LUCY WOLCOTT: 10-year-old orphan girl (soprano).
GLORY WOLCOTT: 7-year-old girl orphan girl (soprano).
NICK BUTTON: 10-year-old beggar boy (tenor).
MATRON WICK: Strict, no-nonsense overseer at Grimstone Union (alto/mezzo).
MISTRESS BRANCH: Assistant to Matron Wick (alto/mezzo).
MRS. THIMBLEBEE: Owner of Thimblebee’s Doll Shop, sweet and very proper (soprano).
BESS: Assistant to Mrs. Thimblebee, all business, slow to soften (mezzo/soprano).
FLORRRIE NUGGINS & MR. NUGGINS: Husband-and-wife proprietors of rag and bone shop, both roles can be played by same male actor.
MR. & MRS. WOLCOTT: Well-dressed parents of Lucy and Glory.
EMMA & IRIS: Shop girls at Thimblebee’s Doll Shop.

EXTRA ROLES

ORPHANS
AGGIE CROFTER
SARAH HEMLEY
NORA COOPERWAIT
EMMA WAVERLY
DOCTOR
OLDER GIRL
CUSTODIANS (Two)
CONSTABLE
WASHERWOMAN
BEGGARWOMAN
LONDONERS
VENDORS
MUFFIN MAN
CHESTNUT VENDOR
CROSSING SWEEPER
SHOPKEEPER
PROPER LADY
PROPER DAUGHTER

MUD-LARKERS
OLD WOMAN MUD-LARKER
GIRL MUD-LARKER
SAILCLOTH SELLER
TOBACCO SELLER
MATCH SELLER
BIRD SELLER
RUM SELLER
DOLLS (Optional)
GHOST OF CHARLOTTE
CUSTOMERS (At Thimblebee’s and Nuggins’)
SPOILED BRAT
FATHER OF SPOILED BRAT
HIGH-BORN LADY
ROYAL FOOTMAN
LAMPLIGHTER
QUEEN’S GARDENER’S DAUGHTER

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MUSICAL NUMBERS

This show can be performed with or without an intermission.

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*“If I Were a Well-Born Girl” can be cut for school shows, but should be kept, if possible, for public shows. Lucy is the main character, and her song of envy and then realization of her true blessings is important to the story. This will make the running time 80 minutes, but the song could be shortened.
CHARACTER NOTES

*The Christmas Doll* can be performed with a minimum cast of 11 (Lucy, Glory, Nick, plus Chorus) or 8 (2m., 6w. with all actors playing multiple roles, except those playing Lucy and Glory). Or with a cast many times that size and only minimal doubling.

SETTINGS

PROLOGUE

Time: 1848
Place: London

ACT I

Time: December, 1853
Place: Grimstone Union, a London Workhouse
The Streets of London

INTERMISSION (Optional)

ACT II

Time: Week before Christmas
Place: The Streets of London
Thimblebee’s Doll Shop

EPILOGUE

Time: Christmas Day
Place: Number Fourteen Mulberry Lane
The Christmas Doll

PROLOGUE

The Streets of London, 1848

AT RISE: Darkness, fog. CHORUS enters, including the MUFFIN MAN with a tray of crumpets, and sings.

(#1: “Long Ago in London Town #1”)

MEN.

LONG AGO IN LONDON TOWN,
WHEN THE DAY BEGAN
WITH THE MUFFIN MAN
CRYING

MUFFIN MAN.

MUFFINS, MUFFINS,
FRESH FROM THE BAKER.

LADIES.

A DEADLY FEVER CAME AROUND.
AND STRUCK WITH SUCH A VENGEANCE

MEN.

HALF THE POPULATION
WENT EARLY TO THEIR MAKER.

ALL.

AND HIST’RY WASN’T KIND
TO THOSE IT LEFT BEHIND.
ORPHANS.
  CHILDREN WHO WERE ONCE WELL FED,
  HAD TO MAKE THEIR WAY
(With MEN.)
  WHILE THEIR PARENTS LAY
  DYING.

MALE SOLOIST.
  EVERYWHERE THE
  SOUNDS OF MOURNING.

LADIES & MEN.
  AS PRECIOUS LOVED ONES DID SUCCUMB
  TO THE DEADLY FEVER.

FEMALE SOLO.
  SOMETHING IN THE WATER
  ATTACKED WITHOUT A WARNING.

ALL.
  AND HIST’RY WASN’T KIND
  TO TWO YOUNG GIRLS IT LEFT BEHIND.

(LUCY and GLORY enter.)

LADIES & ORPHAN GIRLS.
  LUCY.
  GLORY.
  HARD TIMES BEFELL.

ALL.
  ’TIS THE STORY
  WE HAVE COME TO TELL.

MEN.
  AND SO THE ORPHAN GIRLS WERE BROUGHT
  TO THE BLEAK COLD SHELTER
  OF A PUBLIC WORKHOUSE
LADIES & ORPHANS.
TO EARN THEIR BED AND BOARD.

MEN.
WHERE THEY DAILY PINED
FOR WHAT THEY LEFT BEHIND.

ALL.
FOR HIST’RY WASN’T KIND
TO SOME OF THOSE IT LEFT BEHIND.

ACT I

SCENE 1. Grimstone Union Public
Workhouse, 1853
Daytime

(Lights up on six orphan girls—AGGIE CROFTER, SARAH HEMLEY, LUCY WOLCOTT, GLORY WOLCOTT, EMMA WAVERLY and NORA COOPERWAIT—sitting on a hard wooden bench, sewing rag pieces in a cheerless, dank workroom. MISTRESS BRANCH oversees their work.)

MISTRESS BRANCH. Lord, we pray for the souls of those who have gone to join you in your heavenly kingdom, and for the privilege of living here at Grimstone Union. Amen.
ORPHAN GIRLS. Amen.

(#2: “Grimstone Union”)

(ORPHAN GIRLS sing while sewing in rhythm with the music.)

ORPHAN GIRLS.
KNITTING STOCKINGS, STITCHING SACKS
TILL OUR HANDS ARE ACHING.
MENDING SWEATERS BY THE STACKS,
WHILE OUR HEARTS ARE BREAKING.
AND WE ARE MOTHERLESS AND FATHERLESS.
AND FROM NOW ON,
THE WORKHOUSE IS OUR HOME.

AGGIE.
SEWING RAGS AND BITS OF LACE
ON OUR WOODEN BENCHES.

SARAH.
IN THIS DANK AND CHEERLESS PLACE,
WHERE WHO KNOWS WHAT THAT STENCH IS.

ORPHAN GIRLS.
AND WE ARE DESTITUTE
AND PENNILESS,
ALL COMFORTS GONE.
THE WORKHOUSE IS OUR HOME.

ALL.
GRIMSTONE UNION.
NOTHING COULD BE GRIMMER

EMMA.
NOT A SMILING FACE TO GREET US.

NORA.
GRIMSTONE UNION.
WHERE WE’RE GROWING SLIMMER.

ALL.
FROM THE SO-CALLED FOOD THEY FEED US.

LUCY.
CAREFUL, HERE COMES MATRON WICK.
BETTER SAY A PRAYER.

GLORY.
EVERY TIME SHE SMACKS HER STICK,
WE ARE FILLED WITH TERROR.
NORA.
WHEN WHAT WE NEED IS TENDER LOVING CARE.

SARAH.
BUT LOVE IS GONE.

ALL.
THE WORKHOUSE IS OUR HOME.

LUCY.
YES, WHAT WE NEED IS TENDER LOVING CARE,
BUT LOVE IS GONE.

ALL.
NOW THAT GRIMSTONE UNION IS OUR HOME.

(MATRON WICK enters, carrying her birch rod.)

MATRON WICK (smack!). Be still! There had better be some progress! Right, Mistress Branch?

MISTRESS BRANCH. Right, Matron Wick.

(When called upon, each girl stands up to answer.)

MATRON WICK. Aggie Crofter! What have you done today? I said, what have you done today?

AGGIE. I’ve mended a sweater and two pairs of socks.

MATRON WICK. Is that all?

AGGIE. Yes, Matron Wick. (Starts coughing.)

MATRON WICK. Stop that coughing! Right this instant! There isn’t time for coughing. This is a workhouse. Not a hospital ward. Isn’t that right, Mistress Branch?

MISTRESS BRANCH. It certainly is, Matron Wick.

MATRON WICK (to AGGIE). Get to work!
(MATRON WICK moves on to the next girl, followed by MISTRESS BRANCH.)

MATRON WICK. Sarah Hemley!
SARAH. Three pairs of socks and two rags, Matron Wick.
MATRON WICK. Not enough. You see this birch rod? There’s nothing it likes to do more than administer a flogging to little girls’ knuckles who haven’t done their work. (Smack!) Nora Cooperwait. What have you to say for yourself?
NORA. I’ve mended a pair of socks, mum, and I’m working on a blanket.
MATRON WICK. A disgrace! Emma Waverly.
EMMA. A sweater and some rags.
MATRON WICK. An outrage! Lucy Wolcott!
LUCY. A blanket, two sweaters, a shawl and four pairs of socks.
MATRON WICK. Better.
LUCY. Thank you, Matron Wick. (Sits down.)
MATRON WICK. I’m not through yet. (LUCY stands back up.) Is there some reason your sister is so behind? (To GLORY.) Up with you! Speak up!
GLORY (in a barely audible voice). I’ve mended a pair of socks, Matron Wick.
MATRON WICK. A pair of socks. Rubbish!
MISTRESS BRANCH. Rubbish, indeed.
MATRON WICK. It’s always the same with little miss Glory Wolcott. Never keeping up with the others.
LUCY. She’s only 6 years old, mum.
MATRON WICK. Quiet! I will not tolerate insolence! If your precious little sister can’t get her work done, then you will be expected to do her share of the sewing, as well. Is that clear?
LUCY. Yes, Matron Wick.
(LUCY and GLORY sit down.)

MATRON WICK. Now then, it is time for supper, though not a one of you deserves it, if you ask me. Twenty minutes and back to work. And I want to see twice as many socks, sweaters, blankets and rags finished before bedtime. What do I want?

GIRLS. Twice as many socks, sweaters, blankets and rags finished before bedtime.

MATRON WICK. See that you do. (Makes a dramatic exit.)

MISTRESS BRANCH. Please stand and form a single-file line. And proceed to the Dining Hall. Quietly.

(#3: “Grimstone Union” [Underscore])

(Music under as they exit.)

SCENE 2. Girls’ Dormitory

Nighttime

(The ORPHAN GIRLS are having a pillow fight, but the sound of footsteps echoing down the hallway sends them jumping under the covers in their six beds, pretending to be asleep.)

NORA. Matron! Matron Wick!

(Music out. At least one pillow remains on the floor. MATRON WICK enters, holding her signature birch rod, followed by MISTRESS BRANCH. One of the girls suppresses a giggle.)

MATRON WICK. Silence! (Smack! Paces by each bed, her footsteps echoing on the hard floor). Do you know what I think, Mistress Branch?

MISTRESS BRANCH. No, what, Matron Wick?
MATRON WICK. I think these girls are not asleep at all. In fact, I think they are only pretending to be asleep.

MISTRESS BRANCH. Pretending, indeed.

MATRON WICK (picking the pillow up off the floor). Because somebody has been horsing around. And you know what that means.

MISTRESS BRANCH. Indeed, I do.

MATRON WICK & MISTRESS BRANCH. The Keeping Room!

(#4: “The Keeping Room!”)

MATRON WICK (honing in on the girl whose pillow was missing).

DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS TO AN ORPHAN GIRL WHO IS VERY, VERY BAD?

(Smack!)

SHE IS HAULED AWAY
FOR A HOLIDAY
WHERE THE OUTCOME’S VERY, VERY SAD.
DOWN THE STAIRCASE WE EXPEL HER
INTO THE PITCH BLACK CELLAR.
WHERE SHE IS SHOVED, KABOOM,
INTO THE GLOOM
OF THE KEEPING ROOM.

MISTRESS BRANCH.

SHE IS SHOVED, KABOOM,
INTO THE GLOOM
OF THE KEEPING ROOM.

(Music continues under through dialogue.)

MATRON WICK. And who lives in the Keeping Room, Mistress Branch, just waiting for little girls to chew on?

MISTRESS BRANCH. A very large rat, Matron Wick.
MATRON WICK. A very large rat indeed. As big as a CAT!
MISTRESS BRANCH. With an appetite for human flesh.

MATRON WICK & MISTRESS BRANCH.
SCRITCHY SCRITCHY SCRATCH.
SCRITCHY SCRITCHY SCRATCH.
ANOTHER NAUGHTY GIRL TO
CITCHY CITCHY CATCH.
GNAWING ON NOSIES.
LITTLE GIRLS’ TOESIES.
SCRITCH SCRITCH SCRATCH.

MATRON WICK (to LUCY). I know what you’re thinking, you clever little brat. “I’ll run away and take my precious little sister with me.” Well …

DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS
TO AN ORPHAN GIRL
WHO RUNS AWAY?
SHE IS ALWAYS CAUGHT.
AND ALWAYS BROUGHT
BACK THE very same day.
SHE’LL BE SQUIRMIN’ LIKE A SEAL,
BUT A VERMIN NEEDS HIS MEAL!
THEN IT’S TO THE TOMB
WHERE THE RATS CONSUME
IN THE KEEPING ROOM.

MATRON WICK & MISTRESS BRANCH.
SCRITCHY SCRITCHY SCRATCH.
SCRITCHY SCRITCHY SCRATCH.
ANOTHER NAUGHTY GIRL TO
CITCHY CITCHY CATCH.
GNAWING ON NOSIES.
LITTLE GIRLS’ TOESIES.
SCRITCH SCRITCH SCRATCH.

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MATRON WICK.

OH, THERE’S MANY A GIRL AT GRIMSTONE
WHO HAVE MET A SIMILAR DOOM.
AND YOU’LL FIND THEIR BONES
ON THE COBBLESTONES

MATRON WICK.

OF THE KEEP—

MISTRESS BRANCH.

THE KEEP—

MATRON WICK & MISTRESS BRANCH.

—ING ROOM!
SCRITCH, SCRITCH, SCRATCH!

(MATRON WICK exits, slamming the big oak doors shut. Maybe MISTRESS BRANCH attempts a dramatic exit herself.)

AGGIE (whispering in the dark). I wish I could run away.
SARAH. You heard what Matron said. They always catch you.
EMMA. And throw you in the Keeping Room!
AGGIE. I don’t care. I’m getting out of here someday.
GLORY. I don’t like thinking about giant rats. If only I could remember home. Maybe I wouldn’t feel so scared.
AGGIE. I remember home.
NORA. Me, too.
AGGIE. Clear as crystal.

(#5: “Anywhere But Here”)

LUCY. Before the sickness.

(The ORPHAN GIRLS sing tenderly.)
DESCRIPTIONS FROM THE BOOK

Thimblebee’s Doll Shop:
A miniature structure with a fanciful air about it, with its crooked chimney and its peaks and spires, rising above crumbling old roof tiles. Blackbirds perch on its highest peak. Window boxes overflow with holly, berries and pinecones. A large black lantern hangs beside a plum-colored door. Above the lantern is a wooden sign that reads: Thimblebee’s Doll Shop, with a figure of a lovely, smiling doll painted below. In the display window are dolls in striped satin balancing on wires and dolls with straw bonnets and baskets of flowers. There are miniature lady dolls looking most prim and proper and fancy wax dolls in frilly dresses with fine crystal necklaces. Sweet-faced baby dolls sleep in their cradles, while golden-haired porcelain dolls take their tea at a little table.

Mrs. Thimblebee:
A round-faced little hen of a woman dressed in a blue velveteen frock with a lace collar and cuffs, and a bit of white lace pinned just above her silver bun. She wears spectacles, and a thimble on one thumb.

Washerwoman:
A hefty old woman with a great red cabbage of a nose and a black patch over one eye. She wears a long white apron that falls below her shawl and carries a willow basket full of dirty laundry on her back.

The Streets of London:
London wakes up. Carts and coaches rattle over cobblestones. Crossing sweepers shout directions. Street vendors hawk their wares. After the drab, colorless life in the workhouse, the jumble of brightly colored objects lining the busy street is a startling sight. Street vendors sell tea, tallow, cigars, rat poison, sugary confections and all are clamoring to be heard. Most enticing are the sound of a bell ringing and the cry of the muffin man.
Nick Button:
  He wears a large tattered coat, and a wool cap on his head. He
  wears only one sock.

The Doll (Morning Glory) when she is found in the river:
  There is neither dress nor hat, and though the face is worn, it
  holds a beautiful smile, for it curves up ever so slightly, causing
  the doll to look as if it knew a happy secret.

Nuggins’ Rag and Bone Shop:
  A cobwebby shop full of rags and baskets of bones. Lines
  dripping with strips of wet rags are strung from one end of the
  shop to the other, while piles of colored cloth cover the floor. In
  the back of the musty, airless shop, through a maze of rag piles,
  and under a dripping canopy, is a coal fire, a chair and a counter.

Florrie Nuggins:
  A figure is half hidden behind the rag piles, sitting near the fire.
  She is a heavyset, redhead woman, dressed in a green and
  tattered velvet bonnet.

Bess, Mrs. Thimblebee’s Assistant:
  She wears a white mobcap and apron to match, a tape measure
  around her neck, and on her wrist is a cushion full of pins.

The Back Room of Thimblebee’s Doll shop:
  A cozy sitting room with a comfortable chair, a settee and a fire
  blazing in the fireplace. There is a work table for assembling
  the dolls, cluttered with ribbons and lace, boxes of buttons and
  bolts of silk.

The Doll (Morning Glory) after transformation at Thimblebee’s:
  The doll has been transformed. The mud-stained moppet is
  gone. In her place, a fair-faced beauty with long golden curls
  smiles the familiar crooked smile … This new Morning Glory
  is dressed in a flounced gown of robin’s egg blue to match the
  color of her eyes. Her petticoats are edged in lace, as is the
  pinafore that is tied in bows down her back. Around her neck
  hangs a delicate seed-pearl necklace, and in her hand, she holds
  a straw bonnet with red silk poppies sewn to its brim.