**THE STORY OF ANNIE MOORE**

**(adapted by Patricia Hesse & Angie Hunt)**

**CAST:**

**Annie – Lainie**

**Interpreter Guard – J.P.**

**Desk Guard/ Rescuer Guard – Fowler**

**The Man – Brett**

**Father – Ryan Gardner**

**Amelia – Amelia**

**Mary – Sydney**

**Berta Rhinehart – Abigail**

**Annie – Brooks**

**Miriam – Leslie**

**Pauline – Montana**

**Leona – Jadyn**

**Other immigrants – Lillian, Madison, Piper**

(***video of “Isle of Hope, Isle of Tears”)***

*(Annie stands on deck with other children (her dress is a color, making it easier to find her in the group) –looking over heads of audience, some are waving, some are weeping, some are excited and talking to each other; one has a strand of red yarn trailing—it is pulled away; everyone is talking, looking around Annie goes to C.S.)*

**Annie**: Mama. The potato famine has gotten even worse. There is no food in Ireland for families like our’s. Many more are starving. Papa’s letter arrived with the money for my voyage to America and now I am on the ship. It is all the money he had, but he is afraid to wait any longer for me to come. I know he is afraid I, too, will starve. I watched the harbor fall away behind us. I am safe, Mama. But oh, Mama, how I wish you were safe –here with me. I will not let myself remember the last time I saw you. I will not. I cannot think of the hunger and the sickness; I will think only of your face before –before when we were all together and our lives were as beautiful as the green hills of Ireland. Will I ever see them again?

*(The children and Annie shift to a sitting position on the floor. They are crowded, unsure. Everyone is rolling back and forth together like waves -- and holding their stomachs)*

***Lights go down.*** *Eventually, they all lie down Amelia –some of the children are sick, up –*

**Amelia (comes to front)**: “Stay with it!” my mother says. “Don’t let it out of your sight, Amelia!” So, I’m stuck like Robinson Crusoe on his island. Only it’s me on our trunk. Other people, they have soft bundles. They can plump up their worldly goods, pillow fashion, and get a good rest. But our trunk is straight and hard. To pass the time during the day, I picture everything inside. Our trunk holds jewelry, the family Bible, sheets, pillowcases, and a few teacups wound in paper and packed in sawdust. Everything we own we left behind, except for what I’m sitting on. That is all we have.

***Lights go up –it is day.*** *Everyone slowly gets up, straightens their clothes, etc. –they are constantly moving back and forth*

**Annie**: (*Annie is looking up*) Ah, you cannot believe how crowded we are here. We are in the very bottom of the ship, what they call steerage (*she looks around at the others*). No windows. No air. Row after row of bunk beds and everyone in them sick from the rolling of the ship. (*Annie looks back up*) I am not sick. (some ***go to platform which represents top of ship –some stay in steerage)*** Some of us go and run on the deck, breathe the fresh air. There is no smell of war and rotting potatoes in the air here on the ocean. (*Standing children hold out arms and turn with joy, talking and playing as does Annie*)

ACTION

**Annie:** The weather is clear and bright, and the ocean is calm. Everyone feels better. There are so many of us here… people from all over –Italy, Germany, Poland, even countries I’ve never heard of before. (*Annie looks the group over*) Some are very sad, very lonely (*a few of the children cry and are comforted, some are clearly excited and happy*) they’ve left many of their family behind –… there wasn’t enough money to buy passage for everyone. Some are coming to join their family in America –just like me. They are the happiest, laughing. I should feel like them, but it is hard –I keep thinking about the picnics by Ross Castle with my friends, especially Maev and Claire. I know I’ll never see them again.

**Miriam**: I know you are sitting there wondering what would make us leave our homes for a place far across the ocean. We left because of catastrophes –starvation when crops failed year after year, we left because we were being massacred by evil governments, we left because we had to do something.

*(Off-stage a* **voice is heard saying: “Stew!”** *Kids pick up tin pie plate and spoon quickly. They sit on the floor and pretend eating)*

**Annie:** The food is not very good. I eat it anyway, Mama. I know you would tell me to do that if you were here. We have tin plates. We can wash them after each meal, but there isn’t much hot water, so it is hard. I can’t wash myself, either. You would not like the way I look today, all dirty and my hair all tangled. (*Annie acts out each thing said, even touching her hair)* I try the best I can. *(Annie looks up)* Watch over me, Mama.

(*The lights go out, strobe light, storm sound effect –children huddle together, tossing… in fear*)

**Annie**: Mama, …a terrible storm! They’ve drove us all down into the hold and have bolted the doors so we can’t go up; we are trapped. Everything roars –it sounds like the ocean is swallowing us. (*Some are praying, some crying*) Mama, I’ve prayed the “Our Father” you taught me. I’m so afraid!

(*Lights go completely out! Storm begins to subside… eventually lights come on and children slowly, arise walking to front of stage, blinking as if blinded. Storm finally subsides. Lights come on. Everyone is up doing things –some on ship, some in steerage*)

**Mary (comes to front)**: In America, they say you can earn enough in one day to buy yards and yards of calico, two sacks of rye, and soap so cheap that even the poorest people can wash with it. Not just once a week, but every day! America –is all we talk about –it is the only thing that keeps us from giving up. When will we get there? Will it be tomorrow? Today?

**Annie**: Oh, Mama! The voyage is over. Can you see it? The buildings look like mountains. Tomorrow we take the little boat to Ellis Island. (***Someone points to back left –everyone is excited saying “Lady Liberty,” etc.***) Oh, Mama –LOOK! I see the Lady. *(Annie cries as two friends comfort her)* Her face looks like yours… so calm and kind.

(*Lights out. Screen down.* ***“The Story of Emma Lazarus”*)**

***(“Give Me Your Tired, Your Free” – 5th grade girls***) –rest of cast picks up luggage and goes off stage. When song is over: *Children enter at steps on left, carrying boxes and luggage. A tall guard is there and pins a number to their clothing. Another guard is sitting behind a tall desk like a judge. Children are frightened. Occasionally, they put a mark on someone’s coat)*

**J.P**.: Get ready! The ferry with the first boatload of immigrants has docked. We are making history today. Ellis Island will now be the port of entry for all those entering the harbor.

**Abigail**: When I arrived a year ago, I never dreamed I would one day be working at Ellis Island. But here I am.

(Brett leads them in)

**Brett**: This way (it is obvious they do not understand. They are frightened following his gestures).

**Brett**: (speaking to Fowler & Abigail) They’re pretty scared.

(processing begins)

**Leona**: There is a rule that everyone entering America must have ten dollars. That was all the money in the world to many of us, so sometimes after we passed inspection, we would secretly hand the money down the line for those behind us to use.

**Fowler**: Step up! (to Abigail) They don’t have a clue what we’re saying, do they?

**Abigail**: No. Neither did I when I first landed, but they will learn.

(Begin processing)

**GUARDS ADLIB**

**Annie:** I’ve never seen a room like this! It is bigger than a church. The high windows let the sun stream in on us. I just want to stare and stare.

**GUARDS ADLIB**

**Annie:** I hoped to see Papa waiting for me when I got off the ship, but they quickly put us on a smaller boat and now I’m here at this huge building. Why do I wear a number? The men look like the soldiers in the horrible stories I heard the others tell. Mama. Look down on me here. Help me to be brave.

INCIDENT WITH MONTANA – TRACHOMA

Bertha – Krimeechee Lino

**Berta Rhinehard (comes to front):** When they see my uniform, they think I’m after them. Gendarme! Al-shurta! Police! I see the fear in their faces, and I understand. I use words to soothe their fears. The first words are my name. I stab my chest with a finger. “Inspector Berta Rhinehard.” I point to them. “What is your name?” “Votre nom?” “Shismak?” The other questions are easier to ask, easier to answer, once we know each other’s names. Tell me: Where are you from? Where are you going? What is your story? I have the power to let you in or keep you out. But understand this: I have walked in your shoes. I am Berta Rhinehard, American. But I am an immigrant too.

*GIRLS FREEZE*

**Brett:** We need you to come over here.

**Annie**: He speaks to me, but I don’t know the words. (*J.P. and Abigail looks at the papers, looks at her, and then J.P. frowns)*

**Abigail (looks at her number):**

**J.P.: Cad is ainm duit?** (*Kay sin ied mmm vich?)*

(*Annie smiles)*

**Annie**: Is é mo ainm Annie Moore. (*Iz eh inum*)

**Interpreter Guard:** Com-me thoreck om-yes?

**Annie**: Cá bhfuil tú ó? Cén aois atá tú (coble two oh? Ku-neesh-she-at-two?)

(*J.P. and Abigail are looking at her doubtful and then looking through her papers*)

**Annie:** Mother, he asked me where I was from and how old I was. I know it was wrong, but I lied and said I was 17. I know that’s wrong, but I heard on the ship they sometimes send those younger back unless someone is here to meet us! I know Papa will come! They can’t send me back. He is looking at the papers again. I can tell he doesn’t believe me.

**J.P.**: Little Girl! Go and wait over there. GUARD! (Brett takes her over to Fowler. Fowler looks at papers. Goes with Brett, taking his clampboard, and compares at their desk.)

**Annie**: Are they putting me in jail? Is it because I lied? Is it too late to tell him I am really thirteen? I’m sorry. I’m sorry.

**Nurse** (comes to front): It’s easy enough to follow some of the rules. I starch my cap stiff and straight to perfection. The chief nurse approves. I never complain, as some of the girls do, about having to live where I work. But how can I do what the sign says? It’s nailed on the wall, right above the nurses’ station. DO NOT KISS A PATIENT. My little charges come here so full of fear and pain. Sometimes – no, most of the time – we don’t speak the same language. Yet I am almost certain they understand when I tell them it will be all right. I smile. They smile timidly back. For the time they are here under my care, I’ll give them all the warmth I can. And when the chief nurse turns away, do you think I can resist giving the little ones a kiss?

**J.P**.: Nurse, bring that young Irish girl over here. (brings her)

**Brett**: Now, what is your name?

**Interpreter Guard**: Cad is ainm duit? (*Kay sin ied mmm vich?)*

**Annie**: (*she speaks*) Annie Moore.

**Brett**: And how old are you?

**Interpreter Guard**: Cén aois atá tú? (guards freeze)

**Annie**: (*she hesitates*)

**Annie**: I know it is wrong to lie. But I don’t see Papa here to claim me, and I must come into America! What can I do?

**Annie**: seacht (shott)

**J.P.**: she says she is seventeen

**Brett**: Ask her what year she was born?

**J.P.**: Cén bhliain inar rugadh tú? (ken – yen-nawka-rumma-too?)

**Annie**: (*says nothing*)

**J.P.**: Ní chuirimid chreideann tú (*nee-****kermige****-cheree-im-mu-two*)

**Brett**: What did you ask her?

**J.P.**: I told her that we don’t think she is really 17.

(*Annie hangs her head*)

**Brett**: (*frowns*) What adult is with you?

**Interpreter Guard**: Cad é do dhaoine fásta a bhfuil tú? (*Kee-****dif****-phoe-me-fil-eh-****fos****-too)*

**Annie**: Papa

**Brett**: Then where is he? Ask her if he traveled with her.

**J.P.**: Na ta nar pol oh el leg nes de?

*(Annie hands the Interpreter Guard a letter in her bag. He opens it and reads silently)*

**J.P.**: It says her father is here in America. He sent the money for for the girl and her mother to join him, but the mother died during the potato famine. (*He looks at the outside of the envelop*) It has his address on it.

**Abigail**: Poor child. I wonder how she ever managed to get here on her own? We’ll send her father a telegram. Tell her not to be afraid. He will come tomorrow.

(*Lights come on, Annie is sleeping on floor. She arises. Desk scene again with guards and man in place.)*

**Annie**: It is many days now, Mama. Papa is still not here. I learn a little English from the guards. (*She goes over to the guard*)

**Annie**: Papa, today?

**Fowler**: (shakes head no)

(*The guards come on stage and lead the children, including Annie, off stage*)

**Annie** (*as they leave): Is Papa here*?

(*The man shakes his head, “no.”)*

(*Lights out. Spotlight on Annie*)

**Annie**: (center of stage) Oh, Mama, they are sending me back. They say it is the law. A child cannot come to America alone. There still has been no word from Papa. What will happen to me. There is no one for me to live with –so many have died and left. (*She looks up)* Mama, Mama, look down from the angels and help me, help me. (*She falls on floor sobbing –then a man’s is heard calling Annie)*

**Abigail**: Annie Moore! Is Annie Moore here?!!

**Annie**: (*jumping up, shouting*) Me! Me! Annie Moore. Here. Me. Me.!!!

(Kids file out silently, singing “Isle of Hope, Isle of Tears” softly… Dad goes up steps on opposite side. She sees him!)

**Annie**: PAPA! (singing continues)