



WHAT SHOULD WE REMEMBER

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

FOR???

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A musical play for Primary Schools and Drama Clubs

Duration approx 25-30 mins.

Cast:

- Florence Nightingale (as a lady)
Her mother
Narrator 1
Nurse 1
Nurse 3
Other Nurses
Florence Nightingale (as a child)
Soldier 1
Soldier 3
Other soldiers
Military Officer 1
Lord Houghton
Modern Day Group of Children: Barry
Lorna
Singers
Her father
Narrator 2
Nurse 2
Nurse 4
Soldier 2
Soldier 4
Military Officer 2
Modern Day Teacher
Sanjeev
Sophie
others

FOR EVALUATION ONLY

Props needed: big history book, embroidery, rifles/swords, old blankets, lantern, jug of water and a cup, medicine, pills, bandages

CD LISTING NB: The special CD contains audio tracks, the script to customize, a piano score and a Powerpoint presentation which includes lyrics.

- 1. What Should We Remember Florence Nightingale for?
2 This Cannot Be
3 A Lantern Shone
4 I Saw an Angel
5 What Should We Remember Florence Nightingale for (backing track)
6 This Cannot Be (backing track)
7 Sad Music
8 A Lantern Shone (backing track)
9 Guns and Wind music
10 I Saw an Angel (backing track)

Narrator 1: (Teacher and children onstage) Welcome to our play about the life of a very important lady who lived in Victorian Times. We hope you enjoy our show. First of all, we take you to a modern school, where a history lesson is taking place.

Teacher: (Holding a Big History Book) Good morning, class. In our history lesson today we are going to learn about the life of a very famous person called Florence Nightingale. Does anyone know who Florence Nightingale was?

Sanjeev: I think she was just a nurse in a war a long time ago.

Lorna: She wasn't a very important person like a king or a politician. She was only a nurse in the Crimean war.

Sophie: That was a long time ago! Why was she so important if she was just a nurse?

Barry: I've never heard of Florence Nightingale. What should we remember Florence Nightingale for?

SONG: Track 1: What Should We Remember Florence Nightingale For? (Backing Track 5)

All: What should we remember Florence Nightingale for?

She was just a nurse in the Crimean war.

That was a long time ago! What is there to know?

What should we remember Florence Nightingale for? She was just a nurse in the Crimean war! That was a long time ago. What is there to know?

Teacher/All: In these pages you can read tales of human history!

Tales of struggles to be free!

They changed the world for you and me! For you and me! (repeat all)

Teacher: In those days, there were no modern hospitals, and when soldiers were hurt, they died from their wounds because they weren't looked after properly.

Lorna: She must have been a very kind person then.

Teacher: Yes, Lorna, and very brave too.

Barry: Brave, yes! And stupid! Think of all those bedpans and bandages and all that blood!

Sophie: She must have been a strong person to put up with all that.

Teacher: Yes. Some people say she was a hero. The hospitals were cold at night and hot during the day. They were dirty, and if the patients didn't die from their wounds they died because of germs and diseases. Nurses did not get paid much money, and they had to work long hours. Nursing was seen as a very working class job, so it was unusual for a rich girl to become a nurse. Come, we will learn more. **(Exit teacher and children)**

Narrator 2: Florence Nightingale had a rich father and mother. She was given the name Florence because she was born while they were abroad in Florence, Italy, on 12th May, 1820. Her father was a good religious man. In those days, slavery was still common. He worked hard to put an end to slavery. Florence was very close to her father. Her father treated her as his friend and companion. He showed her how to become a refined young lady and he taught her Greek, Italian, Latin, French, German, history, philosophy and mathematics.

(Enter Florence as a child and father. Florence is sewing an embroidery.)

Florence: Good morning, papa. You have risen late today.

Father: Indeed I have. I was working late into the night on my anti-slavery campaign.

Florence: What's slavery, papa?

Father: It is an evil thing that should be stopped. No one has the right to own another human being and force them to do work without any pay.

Florence: Yes, slavery sounds very cruel. Do you like my embroidery, papa?

Father: Yes, but have you done the schoolwork I gave you?

Florence: Yes, papa.

Father: And what have you learnt today?

Florence: I have learnt that it is good to be truthful, to be honest, to work hard, and to serve others. In fact, I think I would like to work in a hospital when I grow up!

Father: That's not possible, Florence. Only men can become doctors in this country!

Florence: I don't want to be a doctor, papa! I want to be a nurse! A nurse!

Father: Don't be silly, Florence. **(Exit)**

Narrator 1: Florence grew to become an intelligent young lady. Her mother was a bossy woman. She wanted her fine young daughter to have a good husband and raise a family.

(Enter Florence as a young lady, with her mother and father)

Mother: Florence, it is time to consider your future.

Florence: Yes, mama. I must choose my career wisely.

Mother: You don't need a career. You are far too restless and your head is full of useless daydreams. You should be married into a rich and noble family.

Florence: But mama, I have been having such wonderful dreams about my future and my place in the world.

Father: Yes. She believes that God wants her to care for other people.

Florence: Oh yes, papa! I want to see the world and do great things!

Mother: Stuff and nonsense! I have big plans for you! You must settle down and marry into society. In fact, I have agreed another visit from your suitor. Please go to the door and meet him. **(Exit Florence)**

Father: Lord Houghton is an excellent writer and a good politician. He is friendly with our great modern poets such as Keats, Tennyson and Swinburne.

Mother: He would make a very suitable husband for our daughter. **(Enter Florence and Lord Houghton)**

Lord Houghton: Good day. It is an honour to meet you once again. But I must be on my way.

Mother: Oh, Lord Houghton. Don't go! Please stay! You are most welcome in our house.

Lord Houghton: Your daughter does not want me here. Goodbye! **(Exits)**

Mother (to Florence) Dear child! Explain!

Florence: Mama, he has asked me to be his wife. I don't want to be married!

Father: What do you want to do with your life?

Florence: I want to leave home and train to be a nurse! Nursing is my destiny!

Mother: (aghast) A nurse! A nurse! That's a job for common working women. I forbid it!

Father: A nurse? Tell me it's not so! I forbid it!

***** **SONG: Track 2 This Cannot Be** ***** **(Backing Track 6)**

Father: Tell me it's not so! I don't want you to go!
Tell me it's not so! I don't want you to go!
Oh no this will not do! Nursing is not right for you!
Oh no this cannot be! You are high society!

(All): High society! High society!

Mother: Tell me it's not so! I don't want you to go! Tell me it's not so!
I don't want you to go! Oh no this will not do!
I have got big plans for you! Oh no this cannot be!
You are aristocracy!

(All): Aristocracy! Aristocracy!

(All, except parents:) She knows what she wants and what she wants to be! Nursing is her destiny!
You will never never never You will never change her mind!
You will never never never You will never change her mind!

(Exit all)

Narrator 2: It took a long time, but in the end, her father changed his mind and gave her permission to train as a nurse. So she began a long successful career in medicine.

***** **SAD MUSIC: Track 7 (Play as Narrator 1 speaks. Soldiers arrive in hospital)** *****

Narrator 1: Some years later, Britain and France went to war against Russia in 1854. This was called the Crimean War. Many British soldiers became sick with cholera, malaria, typhus, diarrhoea and dysentery. The sick and wounded soldiers were taken by boat to the army hospital at Scutari on the coast of Turkey. Conditions in this hospital were terrible. There were very few beds so sometimes patients were laid on the floor wrapped in a blanket. Rats ran amongst the dying. Even dead bodies were forgotten about and left to rot. There were hardly any doctors and no trained nurses. There was no clean water and no good food. Florence Nightingale took a group of 38 nurses to work there.

(Enter nurses - not Florence- visiting soldiers are lying on the floor in blankets. Nurse 2 has water and a cup.)

Nurse 1: Ooh! I saw a rat! This is a nightmare! There aren't enough bandages and these poor soldiers need medicine. The men who run this hospital don't want us here. They say we are just interfering.

Soldier 1: (to nurse 1) You need to interfere! This army hospital is filthy and everyone is dying!

Nurse 2: (to soldier 2) You poor man. You need clean clothes and blankets. You are still in your dirty army uniform. **(Gives him water)**

Soldier 2: (to nurse 2) Thank you, nurse. Am I getting better?

Nurse 2: (to soldier 2) Yes, but you must drink plenty of fresh water.

Soldier 2: (to nurse 2) Was it you who visited me last night with your lantern?

Nurse 2: (to soldier 2) No. I think you must have been dreaming.

Soldier 3: (to nurse 3) Nurse....The Lady with the lamp comes every night. Who is she?

Nurse 3: (to soldier 3) I don't know what you mean. Get some rest. We have cleaned your wounds and they seem to be healing.

Soldier 4: (to nurse 4) Where am I, nurse? What happened to me?

Nurse 4: (to soldier 4) You have a bad disease, but you will recover. We will bring you fresh food in a moment.

Soldier 4 (To nurse 4) Thank you, nurse. I have seen so many of my friends die in here. I am in great pain. Am I going to die too?

Nurse 4: We hope not. We will do what we can to help you.

(Nurses kneel to tend patients. Lights dim. Florence Nightingale enters and patrols ward with a lantern during the song:)

***** **SONG: Track 3 A Lantern Shone (Backing Track 8)** *****

*In a cold land far away the wounded soldiers lay.
It seemed all hope had gone.
But then a lantern shone! But then a lantern shone!
It was just a tiny light but it was a welcome sight!
It was just a tiny light but it seemed to shine so bright!*

*In a room that wasn't clean she taught about hygiene
It seemed all hope had gone.
But then a lantern shone! But then a lantern shone!
It was just a tiny light but it was a welcome sight!
It was just a tiny light but it seemed to shine so bright!*

*She brought her nursing skills and medicines and pills
It seemed all hope had gone.
But then a lantern shone! But then a lantern shone!
It was just a tiny light but it was a welcome sight!
It was just a tiny light but it seemed to shine so bright!*

(Exit all except patients who sleep. Enter Military Officer 1 and Military Officer 2)

Military Officer 1: That awful woman has been complaining about us again.

Military Officer 2: What awful woman, sir?

Military Officer 1: Nightingale! Florence Nightingale! She says we are not doing our job properly!

Military Officer 2: Great Gods! We will lose our jobs! Who does she think she is? She's only a woman. She does not belong here!

Military Officer 1: She has reported us to the Times Newspaper! The whole of Britain knows about this hospital.

Military Officer 2: What's going to happen, sir?

Military Officer 1: They are sending medical supplies, blankets, clothes, beds, more nurses, and more doctors. **(Exit)**

***** **Track 9: Guns and Wind music plays as Narrator 2 speaks** *****

Narrator 2: The Crimean War raged on and on. Many soldiers died on the battlefield. Many more died from diseases. Florence Nightingale continued to care for the sick and injured at Scutari Hospital. It took a long time for things to improve. But at last, the government sent medical supplies and the death rate at the hospital began to slow down. **(Fade music)**

Soldier 1 (standing) I feel better today.

Soldier 2: (standing) So do I.

Soldier 1: Last night, I saw an angel.

Soldier 2: That was no angel. That was Florence Nightingale, the lady with the lamp.

***** **SONG: Track 4: I Saw an Angel** ***** **(Backing Track 10)**
(Florence and other nurses tend to sick soldiers by lantern light)

*Soldier 1: Last night while I was sleeping an angel visited me!
Last night I saw an angel! An angel plain as can be!
Maybe I was dreaming! But it all seemed true!
All: Maybe when you are sleeping an angel will visit you!
Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh*

*Soldier 2: Last night while I was sleeping an angel visited me!
Last night I saw an angel! An angel plain as can be!
Maybe I was dreaming! But it all seemed true!
All: Maybe when you are sleeping an angel will visit you!
Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh **(Repeat all)***

(Exit all. Enter Teacher and children.)

Teacher: In 1856 Florence Nightingale returned to England as a national heroine. She became world famous as "The Lady with the Lamp". She was presented to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. For years she kept trying and trying to make hospitals better. She also worked hard to get equal rights for women. As she got older, Florence Nightingale became unwell, and in 1895 she went blind. She needed full time nursing herself. She died on 13th August, 1910.

THE END

(All Cast on Stage- Repeat song "A Lantern Shone" if time allows. Then replay any backing track as the cast take curtain calls in reverse order of the cast list.)

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