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*Dramatic Publishing*





# *Genesis*

A CHORIC DRAMA

**Gretchen Bogan**

THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



# Genesis

***Choric drama. By Gretchen Bogan. Cast: flexible.*** Originally played by an all-female cast, this prize-winning drama may also be performed by a mixed cast. Eve is the central figure. We watch her pass from the innocent rapture of her first awakening to her encounter with the Spirits of Evil. We follow her rebellion and her new awakening as she gathers confidence so that after the conflict of Cain and Abel, she emerges as the valiant woman of faith and love—the mother of all living. *Series of platforms.*

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**A Choric Drama**

# GENESIS

by

**GRETCHEN BOGAN**



**THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY**

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# GENESIS

*A Choric Drama*

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## CHORAL GROUPS:

GROUP I—*Spirits of Good*

GROUP II—*Spirits of a Higher Order*

GROUP III—*Devils*

## CAST:

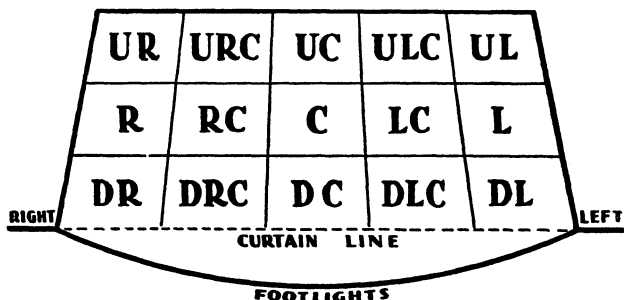
EVE

ABEL

CADN

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## CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



### STAGE POSITIONS

*Upstage* means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: U R for *up right*, R C for *right center*, D L C for *down left center*, etc. One will note that a position designated on the stage refers to a general territory, rather than to a given point.

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NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

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# GENESIS

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*SCENE: Low levels Downstage Right. Upstage Left are higher levels. The rest of the stage remains bare for the flow of the action.*

*AT RISE: GROUP I, the Spirits of Good, stand in spearhead formation Down Center, facing half-right, their heads thrown back as if flying. Upstage on the high levels, GROUP II, Spirits of a Higher Order, are arranged permanently. EVE lies face down on the floor before GROUP II, unseen until she rises.*

*SOUND: Two slow clashes of the cymbals. The curtain opens on darkness.*

*LIGHTS: During the first three lines, a very faint blue light grows on GROUP I.*

*[NOTE: GROUP I chants the days of Creation with marked rhythm. There is a silent beat at the end of each line, as the play is printed. Wherever there is movement, the rhythm should become even more marked. GROUP II uses slow, majestic gestures of the hands and head; the body remains motionless. When not speaking, each Chorus freezes; facial expression, however, always responds to the action of the scene. Adam does not appear; his lines are given by GROUP I, with suitable imitation.]*

## GROUP I

And the earth was void and empty,  
And darkness was upon the face of the deep,



And the spirit of *God* moved over the waters,  
[*Slowly lifting faces to GROUP II*] And God said:

## GROUP II

Be light made.

[*LIGHTS: Spot stabs down on GROUP II.*]

## GROUP I

And there was evening and morning—one day.  
And God said:

## GROUP II

Let there be a firmament.

[*LIGHTS: Bring up blue on sky drop.*]

## GROUP I

And it was so.  
[*Moving rhythmically toward low platforms Right*]  
And the evening and morning were the second day.  
And God said:

## GROUP II

Earth.  
Seas.

## GROUP I

And God brought forth of the ground all manner of  
trees

Fair to behold  
And pleasant to eat of.

SOLO [*from GROUP I*]

[*Walking Down as she speaks*] The tree of life also in  
the midst of Paradise.

SOLO [*from GROUP I*]

[*Walking Down*] And the tree of knowledge  
Of good  
and evil.

GROUP I

[*Moving Right as before*] And the evening and morning  
were the third day.  
And God created

GROUP II

Sun.  
Moon.  
And the stars.

GROUP I

[*Accelerating, moving Right*] And the evening and  
morning were the fourth day.  
And God created

GROUP II

Fishes.  
Birds.

## GROUP I

And He blessed them saying

## GROUP II

Increase and multiply.

## GROUP I

[*Moving Right, taking positions on levels*] And the evening and morning were the fifth day.

[*Accelerating*] And God made the *beasts* of the field  
And He saw that they were good

[*Swiftly lifting faces to GROUP II*] And He said:

## GROUP II

[*Lifting their faces*] Let us make man  
to our image and likeness  
and let him have  
dominion.

## GROUP I

[*Swiftly facing front, with joy chanting*] And God  
made man to His own image:

To the image of God He created him:

Male and female He created them.

And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth,  
And He breathed into his face the breath of life

And man became

A living soul! [*Extending their arms overhead, in ecstasy*]

[*SOUND: Soft clash of cymbals. EVE slowly sits up, her*

*face lifted toward GROUP I and her back to the audience.]*

## GROUP II

Behold I have given you every herb  
All beasts of the earth  
Every fowl of the air that you may have to feed upon.

## GROUP I

And He commanded them saying:

## GROUP II

Of every tree of Paradise thou shalt eat  
But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil  
Thou shalt *not* eat  
[*Not sternly, but with love*] For in what day soever  
thou shalt eat of it  
Thou  
shalt  
die  
the death.

## GROUP I

And God saw all the things that He had made,  
And they were very good.  
And the evening and morning were the sixth day  
And on the seventh day  
[*Folding hands across breast*] God rested.

[*Eve slowly rises and turns, gazing in wonder and delight at sky and earth.*]

And *they* were before Him—  
playing,  
playing in the world.  
Oh, innocence!  
Oh, likeness of God looking up from the earth!  
[*Softly*] Likeness of God.  
They *find* it in each *other's* eyes:  
[*Chanting*] That beauty not on land or water

[*Eve turns and lifts her face to Adam in wonder and love.*]

Find  
and know it *good*.

#### GROUP II

Let there be love

#### GROUP I

Said Love,  
And love descended from the Living One  
To them.  
Their souls were shaken with the joy thereof  
And they were young

#### GROUP II

[*Softly*] with God

#### GROUP I

in the morning of the world.

*[Left hand sweeps toward EVE in a long gesture.]* They stand

*[Right hand follows and clasps left.]* Hands clasped like children.

*[The following lines are said with pronounced rhythm.  
EVE sees and responds to the beauties of creation  
as each is named.]*

Sky runs red and gold

GROUP II

*[Softly]* For them

GROUP I

And all the stars come one by one shining and singing  
together

GROUP II

All

For them.

EVE

How lovely thy earth!

GROUP I and II

*[Softly]* How lovely Thy children, O God.

GROUP I

The roses are breathing

12

Genesis

GROUP II

For them

GROUP I

And the rain shines down

GROUP II

For them

GROUP I

Along a thousand shores

They do not see,

The white waves crash

Sh-sh-sh-sh-sh! [*Imitating sound of rushing water*]

GROUP II

[*Crescendo*] Sh-sh-sh!

GROUP I

[*Softly*] Unheard.

And in the garden

One small bird

Begins to sing

GROUP I and II

All

[*Barely breathing*] For them.

[*One of the chorus whistles a soft bird-call, perhaps four notes. Half the Good Spirits run lightly down from levels to Center, and remain there watching*]

EVE. EVE runs counter to the chorus, toward an imaginary bird, and mimics the bird-call. Another whistles the bird-call; and the remainder of the Good Spirits run down from levels to Center, leaving levels unoccupied. Again EVE runs, to the Left, and mimics the bird. Now the entire chorus joins in whistling bird-calls. EVE runs singing in this forest of bird-song, and at last runs up on levels Right, raising her arms high with one long note of ecstasy. Just as she finishes it, the DEVILS rush out and crouch at the foot of the levels.]

[SOUND: Rapid, soft beating of tympany.

LIGHTS: Green borders. Dimout CHORUS I and II.]

#### DEVILS

[Smiling and innocent. They speak rapidly, drawing out the last vowel of each phrase, or the word to be emphasized, with many inflections or a weird whining effect that will cling to the ear long afterward.]

Why hath God commanded you that you should not eat of every tree of Paradise?

[SOUND: Beating of tympany as GROUP I runs Right, surrounding level on which EVE stands, and taking a position of guard with hands crossed on their foreheads, palm out.]

#### EVE

[Wide-eyed, childlike, coming down from levels slowly]  
Of the fruit of the trees that are in Paradise we do eat:



But of the fruit of the tree which is in the *midst* of Paradise,

God hath commanded us that we should *not* eat;

And that we should not *touch* it,

Lest perhaps we die. [*She says this word with complete lack of comprehension. There is no fear, and no sadness in her voice.*]

#### DEVILS

[*Pouncing the word out*] Noooooooooooooooooooooo.

[*Gathering sweetly around her, never quite looking at her, never touching her*]

You shall not die.

[*Accelerating*] For God doth know

That in what day soever you shall eat thereof

Your eyes

Shall be opened

And you shall be as *gods*!

Knowing good

And evil.

#### GROUP I

[*Casting their hands down, with majesty*] Liar!

From the beginning!

#### GROUP II

[*With pronounced rhythm, slowly*] I saw Satan fall like lightning

#### GROUP I

[*Calling her softly*] Eve! Eve!

[*One of the chorus whistles the bird-call, and EVE lifts her head, forgetting temptation.*]

## DEVILS

Shwsh! Shwsh! Shwsh! [*Like the rustle of leaves*]

SOLO [*from GROUP I*]

[*Walking forward to EVE's right side*] Consider a thousand trees and their fruit.

[*EVE plucks fruit from another tree.*]

SOLO [*from GROUP I*]

[*Also approaching EVE*] Consider the companion who loves thee.

[*EVE offers the fruit to Adam. Just as she does so, the DEVILS pounce their temptation into her mind again.*]

## DEVILS

You shall know

You shall be

[*In a fierce whisper*] As gods!

SOLO [*from DEVILS*]

[*Sweetly*] So small a thing!

SOLO [*from DEVILS*]

Once do it and have done!