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Dramatic Publishing

The Forgotten Door



**Adapted by
Gregory A. Falls**

**Based on the novel by
Alexander Key**

The Forgotten Door

The Forgotten Door was successfully produced at the Young ACT Company, Seattle, Wash. and the Alliance Theatre, Atlanta, Ga.

Fantasy. Adapted by Gregory A. Falls. Based on the novel by Alexander Key. Cast: 5m., 2w., with doubling, or up to 14 (7m., 4w., 3 either gender). The play is a wonderfully stylized script with enjoyable roles. Movement, lighting and incidental music add to the effect. Jon, a boy from another world, accidentally falls through a forgotten door to Earth losing his memory, but retaining his ability to communicate with animals and hear people's thoughts. He is warned of danger by a deer and narrowly escapes peril throughout his adventure. He happens upon the farm of kindly Mary and Thomas Bean. Jon's supernatural abilities are almost immediately apparent to Mary, and she suspects he is otherworldly. Thomas is skeptical, at first. Word travels fast about a "genius boy" staying with the Bean's farm. Mary and Thomas realize there is precious little time to take Jon elsewhere before everyone from threatening neighbors to the CIA tries to get their hands on him. The military and the press are closing in on the house when Jon "hears" his father's voice calling him from their world. Jon realizes the door is open again, and without a moment to lose, the three of them steal away through the woods on a moonless night, guided by the voice of Jon's father to seek the forgotten door. *Simple set, suitable for touring. Costumes: contemporary/fantasy. Approximate running time: 45 minutes. Code: FB8.*

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The Forgotten Door



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The Forgotten Door

Adapted for stage by
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From the book by
ALEXANDER KEY



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“Produced by special arrangement with
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A modern space age story of Jon, a boy from outer space who accidentally falls to earth and loses his memory, but retains his ability to talk with animals and to understand what people are thinking! These special powers quickly embroil him in a series of thrilling adventures that culminate in a successful escape in the mountains. A cast as small as seven, or as many as twenty, it has been successfully produced by the Young ACT Company, Seattle, and the Alliance Theatre, Atlanta. Based on the popular novel by Alexander Key. It uses a simple unit set, contemporary costumes, and plays continuously.

The original production used seven actors whose names and parts were

Jon	Si Osborne
The Deer, Mary Bean	Brenda Hubbard
Gilby Pitts, Jon's father's voice	Robert John Zenk
Emma Pitts, Miss Josie, Jon's mother's voice	Marie Mathay
The Snake, Rascal, First Farmer, Newscaster, Colonel Quinn	David Colacci
Thomas Bean	R.A. Farrell
Sheriff Anderson Bush, Second Farmer	William Moreing
The Stage Manager was Sandy Cruse.	

The play is written to be played continuously; therefore, all transitions of place are covered by narration or some action that will permit the necessary chairs, stools, cloths, etc. to be set by actors in the scene. The large black cloth for the void and the large brown cloth for the cave and rocks should be stretchable and at least 20 feet long and as high as the actor's can reach up. Then they can be manipulated by actors not in the scene. While the touring production used only a minimum of scenery, adding set pieces and props can enhance the production.

Music is vital and lighting effects are important.

Jon's "thoughts" as well as those of others, can be recorded and played back on cue, or can be live with the use of cordless microphones. Thoughts may also be spoken by the actor if everyone else "freezes" while the thoughts are spoken.

The Forgotten Door

(At the opening, a very large black cloth is discovered draped over benches and stools to look like a small hill or rock. It is night and lovely. Music comes up and people with simple but attractive clothes come on, looking at the sky which is alive with shooting stars. The star effect is created with whips made of long strips of silver Mylar that can be whipped into curving patterns about the stage.)

Jon is dressed in a fabric cap, shirt, pants and boots, which are similar to ours, but different enough to make him look "different." He addresses the audience as his people watch the wonder of the stars.)

JON

We were on top of the hill looking up at the stars and planets. They were like jewels flung across the sky. Everyone, even the children, had come up from the valley to see them. I wanted to see better, so I stepped up on a little rise — and it *happened!*

(The black cloth suddenly stretches up and out, making a black void behind JON. He tumbles slowly into it, as the music swells and changes. He is falling in space, first this way and then that, sometimes upside-down, until finally his feet touch the floor and the black cloth flings him forward, then seems to pull him backwards as it disappears off stage, and he crashes into a very large brown cloth that is configurized to look like the wall and part of the top of a cave. As he falls against it, he hits his head, losing both his cap and his consciousness.)

The music changes and he recovers consciousness. His lips don't move but we hear his thoughts.)

OHhhh. MY HEAD. WHAT HAPPENED? STEPPED UP AND FELL THROUGH A HOLE. WASN'T THERE BEFORE. BETTER GET OUT OF HERE! GO BACK!

(He rushes out of the cave into the mountains. The brown cave cloth transitions into a rock with a small stream (Mylar strips) on it that activates when JON sees it. Some actors in brown burlap ponchos enter supporting tree branches. They configurize stones and parts of the mountains.)

MY KNEE HURTS . . . A LITTLE STREAM!

(JON limps to the stream and washes his face in the cool water, climbing over the ROCKS, running in panic. The TREES rush past him as he runs in place, so he seems to be going very fast.)

BETTER. SEE BETTER NOW. KEEP GOING. WHERE? . . . WHERE AM I GOING? . . . I DON'T KNOW. HELP ME! RUN! RUN!

(JON is now running through the mountains. Finally he stops, comes down stage and looks out at the audience. The ROCKS disappear.)

STOP IDIOT . . . YOU'LL KILL YOURSELF. STOP. THINK, REMEMBER. CAN'T REMEMBER. CAN'T REMEMBER ANYMORE . . . NOT EVEN MY NAME.

(He looks around as his loss of memory sobers him.)

THIS PLACE LOOKS FAMILIAR . . . BUT NOT QUITE. THERE'S SOMETHING DIFFERENT ABOUT IT . . . AND ABOUT THOSE FERNS AND ROCKS. I'M IN A STRANGE PLACE AND . . . *I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM!*

(He kneels down in alarm, but hears the DEER, who enters on the other side. The DEER is feeding, unafraid, but is alert to both sound and smell.)

JON thinks out toward the DEER.)

DEER, LOOK OVER HERE.

(The DEER is suddenly alert)

(EMMA PITTS, GILBY'S wife, also dressed in overalls and carrying a hoe, comes in.)

EMMA

How's that, Gilby?

GILBY

Would you look at what I found sneakin' onto our land.

EMMA

Lordie, never seen him afore.

JON

CAN'T QUITE UNDERSTAND THEIR LANGUAGE.

EMMA

Whose young 'un is he, reckon?

GILBY

Dunno. Figure he's an Indian, mebbe, from the reservation.

EMMA

Naw, tain't no Indian. Look at that hair and them clothes. Funny lookin' get up.

JON

BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY SAY.

EMMA

You a gypsy boy? Huh? A runaway, mebbe? Answer me!

JON

SHE'S GOING TO *HIT* ME! ?

EMMA

Answer me, I say!

(EMMA tries to slap JON, but misses when he pulls away from GILBY and moves away from them.)

GILBY

Hey, hey. Would you look at what we got?

EMMA

We got ourselves a wild boy.

(They intend to capture this "wild boy." They make a team and slowly close in on him, as they ad lib:

"Come on, wild boy. Let's get ourselves a wild 'un." Etc., etc.

(But JON is capable of running much faster and leaping much higher than people of our world. As the Pitts come toward him, he makes a quick feint to the left, then the right and with a leap, sails between them. They both move left then right, then toward each other, knocking the other sprawling on the ground. They watch in amazement as JON exits with a great leap.)

GILBY

Would you look at him skat out of here!

EMMA

Gil, he jumped over that little tree.

GILBY

And over that high fence—kinda like he *flew* over it.

EMMA

C'mon, Gil. See if we can head him' off on t'other side of the ridge.

GILBY

He's a strange 'un

(They exit, chasing after JON, who now enters from another part of the stage. He has easily escaped them, but doesn't know where he is. Meanwhile, an-

other actor wearing a brown burlap poncho enters and becomes a ROCK, on which is coiled a RATTLESNAKE. This actor can manipulate the SNAKE's upper body, head and mouth.)

JON

There they go. I'm safe . . . That rattling sound?

(As JON comes past the rock, the SNAKE raises its head and rattles a warning.)

SNAKE

STAND OFF! BITE YOU.

(JON sees the snake. He is curious about it, because there are no snakes in his world and because there people and animals are friendly.)

JON

WHY? I WON'T HURT YOU. YOU MUST KNOW THAT. WHAT KIND OF ANIMAL ARE YOU? NO LEGS, COVERED WITH SCALES, SLIDING ALONG THE GROUND?

(JON comes closer and the SNAKE opens its mouth warning "KEEP BACK." When JON gets too close, the SNAKE strikes at him, saying "KILL." JON leaps back surprised.)

ALL RIGHT. I'LL GO AROUND YOU.

(JON goes around the SNAKE and travels on; the SNAKE and ROCK exit. Another ROCK comes on, as the light fades into twilight. JON, having been lost all day, is exhausted and depressed.)

WHAT AN ANGRY PLACE THIS IS. WHERE AM I? WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? IT'S GETTING DARK . . . I'M SCARED . . . IN THIS . . . STRANGE PLACE.

(He collapses by the ROCK, on the edge of the BEAN's front yard. The BEANS, MARY and THOMAS, moved to the mountains when THOMAS came home from Viet Nam. They are in their late 20's and are warm attractive people. MARY enters from her "front door" on the "porch" of their house. She is expecting THOMAS for supper.)

MARY

Thomas? Is that you?

(THOMAS comes on.)

THOMAS

Coming, Mary.

MARY

What's that over there?

THOMAS

Where?

MARY

Over there, on the edge of the yard.

(They go toward JON, who is trying to get up.)

THOMAS

It's a boy. What seems to be the matter?

MARY

He may be hurt. His face is all covered with scratches.

THOMAS

Hey, young fellow. Are you all right? Are you lost?

MARY

Here, let me wipe his face. Are you hurt some place?

THOMAS

I think he's just frightened.

MARY

Can you tell us who you are? We want to help you.

THOMAS

Shock, maybe. Look at his eyes. Haven't seen that look since Viet Nam.

MARY

Can you stand up? Let me help you. That's better. Maybe you're hungry. Like something to eat? Some food? Eat?

(She mimes "eating" and JON slowly nods "yes" as he begins to understand.)

Good. That's it. Come into the kitchen. We'll get something warm in your stomach.

(MARY leads JON to the kitchen.)

THOMAS

You'll be just fine in no time. I'll look around and see if there is anyone else out there. Hallllloooooo? Halllllooooooo? Anyone there?

(THOMAS now addresses the audience, as we hear night noises: crickets, hoot owl.)

THOMAS

There wasn't anyone else. These mountain ridges 'round here are pretty rugged. We figured he had gotten lost from his family. Maybe wandered about all day. Course, we were right about all that . . . but we didn't know then what a strange tale it really was. You'll see.

MARY

(Enters, carrying JON's boots.)

He's plain tuckered out. Ate some but wouldn't touch any of the meat. He's asleep now. Out like a light.

THOMAS

Did he tell you anything?

MARY

Nope. But he did smile at me just before he dropped off. Funny thing . . .

THOMAS

What?

MARY

Nothing.

THOMAS

Come on, what is it?

MARY

I have this strange feeling about him. Oh, I don't mean that . . . I'm not afraid of him, he seems like a nice enough boy. It's just that . . . well, look at these boots.

THOMAS

Pretty fancy boots for our mountains. He must be a city boy, wearing cloth boots up here.

MARY

But I've never seen cloth like this before. It's very strong.

THOMAS

Probably some new synthetic.

MARY

Who's that coming up the road?

THOMAS

Maybe it's his parents. Nope. Looks more like Gilby Pitts to me. He's riled about something.

MARY

Wonder what old nosey Gilby wants this time of night?

(GILBY enters, carrying a lantern and rifle. Owl hoots or other night sounds, as he comes to the porch.)

THOMAS

Sh-h-h. We'll find out Evening, Gilby.

GILBY

Howdy, Thomas . . . Mary. You folks seen anything unusual 'round here tonight?

THOMAS

Not 'specially.

GILBY

Uh huh. You still got that there old bloodhound of yourn?

THOMAS

Naw. Traded him to Ben Whipple about six months ago. Picked up a mongrel named Rascal. But I can't do anything with him. Keep him tied up out back.

GILBY

Wish you still had that there bloodhound.

THOMAS

What for?

GILBY

There's a wild boy loose in these parts!

MARY

A wild boy?

GILBY

Dang tootin'! Like an animal. Had my hands on him fer a minute but he fought like a wild cat. Ran off faster'n lightning!

THOMAS

You telling us a tall one?

GILBY

Nary a whit. He jumped clean over my high fence. At least ten foot in the air.

THOMAS

Awww.

GILBY

I'll swear on a stack of Bibles. Emma seen it too.

MARY

Hope you aren't going around alarming folks about this?

GILBY

Have to! This warnt no natural thing. He was only a young 'un. But what if there is more of 'em up in the mountains? Grown ones? Why they'd . . . Mary, them's funny looking boots you got there.

MARY

Yes, this boy that . . . uh . . .

GILBY

What boy?

MARY

Uh . . . one that's visiting us.

GILBY

You got a stranger boy visiting you all?

MARY

Well, he's not exactly a stranger.

GILBY

Uh huh.

THOMAS

Son of a friend of mine . . . one I knew in the Army.

GILBY

Reckon he seen that wild boy?

THOMAS

I doubt it. He just came this afternoon.

GILBY

This afternoon, huh. You figure he's the one been pokin' round my land? Let me see him.

MARY

THOMAS (Together) He's asleep. No, not now.

GILBY

Uh huh. Don't want to let me talk to him, huh? I know when I ain't welcome. Maybe I'd better mosey on along. Thought I'd warn you. Them's sure peculiar lookin' boots, Mary, ain't they?

THOMAS

Good evening, Gilby.

GILBY

Yup. Thomas. Mary.

(GILBY exits, but he is suspicious.)

MARY

Nosey old skinflint.

THOMAS

You think maybe he's the boy Gilby saw?

MARY

The boy asleep in there is no wild boy who jumps ten feet in the air. I'm going in and see if he's warm enough.

THOMAS

His parents'll show up looking for him tomorrow . . . I'm pretty sure they will.

(THOMAS now addresses the audience.)

THOMAS

But they didn't. I just knew we'd hear about a lost boy on the radio the next morning. But there wasn't anything on the news. It surprised me some, but not as much as that boy surprised Mary the next morning.

(THOMAS exits as MARY and JON enter talking and carrying a small breakfast table. JON sits and begins to eat as MARY, who is wearing an apron, watches.)

MARY

I just can't get over how your scratches healed up over night. You're walking just fine now. Sure wish your memory would come back and you'd talk to me. Course, I've been talking a blue streak ever since you got up. I'll bet your family's worried sick trying to find you. Try to remember. Try to speak. Tell me your name.

JON

(Speaking for the first time — a little uncertain.)

J-J-Jon.

MARY

Jon . . . that's good. Cat's no longer got your tongue! Is it "Jon" as in Jonathan?

JON

Y-yes. Jon . . . as . . . in . . . Jonathan.

MARY

Do you know where you are?

JON

No . . . I . . . do . . . not.

MARY

You are lost, then.

JON

Yes, I am.

MARY

Anyway, I'm glad you're talking. Now you can help us find your family. Want some bacon on that toast?

JON

We don't eat . . . animals.

MARY

Vegetarians, eh?

JON

Yes. Veg-e-tarians.

MARY

Is it hard for you to talk?

JON

It is hard . . . now . . . but it is . . . coming.

MARY

All right. You and I'll talk up a storm. I'll tell you some things about us, than you can tell me some things about you. Let's see You know that I'm Mary Bean, and that my husband is Thomas. We bought this farm right after he came back from Viet Nam, but we soon found out that you can't make a living on a small farm, anymore. So, Thomas started that Rock Shop you can see up there on the road. With the tourist trade, it keeps the money coming in.

JON

Money? What is money?

Mary

You must know what money is. Everybody has to have it.

JON

We don't have it.

MARY

You couldn't live without it . . . how would you eat?

JON

It's a food? You eat money?

MARY

(Laughing)

Oh, come now. You don't remember what money is? Not even this penny?

JON

No. It's metal. Hard and round.

MARY

You're just not remembering yet! Let's go around the house and I'll point at things. You tell me which things you remember . . . that are familiar to you.

JON

All right.

(MARY moves about, miming the things she points to, and JON follows. It is a fun game for both of them.)

MARY

A window?

JON

Yes, familiar.

MARY

A door . . .

(The cave theme music comes up and plays under the scene until JON says he can't remember.)

JON

Door! I remember. I fell through a door.

MARY

(Laughing)

Well, you didn't quite make it to our door. You fell in the yard. What about this radio?

JON

It carries music and messages?

MARY

Yes, it "carries" music and messages. What about this?

JON

You call it . . . a book?

MARY

Yes. What do you call it?

JON

I don't know.

MARY

Hm-m-mmm. Read me some of it.

JON

I can't read this language . . . yet.

MARY

That's strange. A boy your age, who speaks English as well as you do, ought to be able to read it.

JON

I think there's another language I seem to know.

MARY

Maybe you're a foreigner. Speak in your own language.

JON

(Upset at his inability to remember)

I can't remember it.

MARY

Try.

JON

I know it's there, but all I can remember is a little song.

(During this sequence, JON gets through the song three or four times. First he starts to hum the tune, which leads him to begin moving his arms and hands in a children's clapping game. This leads him to remember the words. MARY is drawn into the clapping game with him until they are doing the clapping faster and faster, ending in a burst of laughter.)

Ahoeeeee, ahoeeeee,

Umanam loee, loee

Umanam la tee, la tee!

MARY

That's great! What do the words mean?

JON

I don't know. I don't even know where I learned it.

MARY

Well, where did you learn English?

JON

I haven't learned English yet. I only began yesterday.

MARY

Say that again.

JON

I'm learning it now from you.

MARY

No, no. You don't understand me.

JON

You were thinking I could not learn English so quickly.

MARY

Of course.

JON

But I am.

(A dog howls off-stage.)

Your dog is thirsty for water.

MARY

Rascal? No, no. Thomas fills his water pan every morning.

JON

He has a dry throat. There is no water in his pan.—You do not believe me! Why?

MARY

Jon, surely you remember the difference between truth and falsehood?

JON

Truth is right. Falsehood is—not right. But you are thinking another word for falsehood.

MARY

A lie.

JON

But I don't lie. I must always speak the truth.

MARY

Now we're getting somewhere.

(During this scene they clear the table off-stage. RASCAL enters with a rope around his neck, which is held by an actor as though he were a tree. RASCAL has his empty water dish in his mouth. He drops it on the floor and barks. JON and MARY are still inside the house, but when they come out the whole stage becomes the yard.)

JON

Rascal wants water. I hear him. How can Rascal think a lie?

MARY

Jon! Do you believe you can read his mind?

JON

No. I hear his thoughts.

MARY

Oh, dear

JON

I will go and see if Thomas is