

PERUSAL SCRIPT



Newport, Maine

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SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

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CAST LIST -- 19m 3w, + extras

RALPH CHAMBERLIN, 28

JOSEPH F. SMITH, President of the LDS Church, 65

HORACE HALL CUMMINGS, Church Commissioner of Education , 35

ORSON F. WHITNEY, 30

GEORGE BRIMHALL, President of Brigham Young University , 50

HARVEY FLETCHER, a physics professor , early 20s

FLORA BRIMHALL, polygamous wife to George, 20

JOSEPH PETERSON

HENRY PETERSON

JAMES E. TALMAGE

FRANCIS M. LYMAN

HEBER J. GRANT

CHARLES W. PENROSE

ANTHONY W. IVINS

HYRUM M. SMITH

GEORGE F. RICHARDS

JULIETTA JENSEN

CHRISTEN JENSEN, her husband

CARL F. EYRING

THOMAS L. MARTIN

MALE PROFESSORS 1 & 2

FACULTY WIVES 1 & 2

ESTHER GROVES, BYU student

Thom Duncan BIO

Having been born of goodly parents, in the town of Southgate California, I am currently employed as a Technical Writer. I am published in every branch of the medium except screenplays. When I do that, I can die happy.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST by **Thom Duncan** (*For LDS Wards, Stakes and Community Theatres*) Unit Set. 19m 3w + extras. In 1911, the Science Department of Brigham Young University sponsored a symposium honoring the 50th year of the anniversary of the publication of Charles Darwin's groundbreaking work, *The Origin of Species*. Charles Darwin is considered the father of the theory of Evolution. Because his theories were being freely taught on campus, it was felt by the faculty that the question as to whether his theories about the origin of life were not in conflict with the doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had long been settled. Nevertheless, based on some complaints by a minority of students, the issue was re-investigated by the leaders of the Church and the loyalty of three teachers was called into question. Despite their support by the then president of the University, George Brimhall, hundreds of students, and their repeated statements of faith in the Brethren, these three teachers find themselves in conflict with two institutions that they love and respect: stop teaching Evolution or risk losing your jobs. This taut drama explores the conflict between religion and science that remains today. **ORDER #2048**

ACT I

SCENE 1 -- *SETTING: 12 February 1909. A podium. Behind the podium is a banner that reads: "Charles Darwin Centennial -- Brigham Young University -- 12 February, 1909."*

AT RISE: LIGHTS UP as RALPH CHAMBERLIN, 28, as he steps into the light and behind the podium.

RALPH: On this day throughout America we celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the birth of our beloved Abraham Lincoln. By happy coincidence this is also the centennial of the birth of Charles Darwin, and the civilized world is uniting in paying tribute to his greatness and in acknowledging its indebtedness to him. It is primarily as Americans and patriots that we are moved with admiration and love for Abraham Lincoln; it is as members of the broader brotherhood of mankind that we must honor and revere the memory of Darwin. So long as the present race of men shall last and the continuity of intellectual and moral progress be not wholly broken, so long will Darwin's influence be felt and merit for him from his fellows admiration, gratitude, and reverence, and a place among the greatest of their kind.

SCENE 2 -- *SETTING: Late September, 1909. PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH'S OFFICE -- LDS Church Headquarters, Salt Lake City, Utah.*

AT RISE: LIGHTS UP on President of the LDS Church JOSEPH F. SMITH, 65, sitting at the table, reading some papers. HORACE HALL CUMMINGS, 35, Church Commissioner of Education is seated near SMITH's desk. HORACE carries a leather case under his arm. His demeanor throughout this scene is obsequious to the extreme. SMITH continues reading for just a bit then stops, takes off his glasses, looks up.

HORACE: Yes. Well.

Pulls out a paper from his folder, slides it across the table to SMITH.

I have here a formal request from the Board that ... uh ... you, as President of the Board of Education, and ultimately as the final voice in all university matters... reconsider instituting football as a viable school sport--

SMITH raises his hand, stops HORACE in mid-word.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: What did you tell them when they asked you about this situation?

HORACE: *(nervous)* Yes. Well. I reminded them that my predecessor, Karl G. Maeser, under the direction of President Wilford Woodruff, had officially banned the sport, calling it -- I quote -- "a barbarous, brutal exercise not to be dignified by the title of a game." End quote. Then I quoted them the words of Superintendent Goddard -- and I quote -- "I cannot find one particle of good arising from indulgence in either yells or football games, but can see a great amount of evil. I advise utter abandonment of the sport by all Latter Day Saints." End quote.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: And that wasn't good enough for them?

HORACE: President, they thought that perhaps, whereas several years have passed since that incident of 1897--

JOSEPH F. SMITH: "Incident?" You're referring to that "game" that ended in a slugging match? On Christmas

Day, mind you.

HORACE: Yes. Well.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: Just wanted to make sure we were talking about the same thing.

HORACE: Anyway ... since it has been several years ... it was felt that you might have changed your mind--

JOSEPH F. SMITH: We haven't.

HORACE: (*obsequious*) And I, of course, concur. However, I did feel it was my duty to at least make the request.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: (*firm*) We believe now, as did our predecessor, that any sport that would lead to our young men, who are supposed to be preparing themselves to serve as ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ, into drinking, swearing, and engaging in fisticuffs should not be indulged in. The elevated standards of Mormonism are entirely incompatible with the base and savage posturings of football. Brother Cummings, you may tell the Board of Trustees that our mind has not changed on this matter. Now, about this other matter ...

HORACE: Yes. Well.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: Brother Cummings, we've gone over your preliminary report.

HORACE: Yes. Well.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: And let us say, first of all, that, as superintendent of church schools, you are doing a fine job.

HORACE: (*false humble*) Thank you, President Smith.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: Yes. A fine job indeed.

HORACE: I do take my job seriously, President. And, like my mentor, Brother Maeser, I do believe that the value of church education is in the development of the spiritual rather than the intellectual capacities of man.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: As do we, Brother Cummings.

HORACE smiles proudly.

So we view the conclusions of your report with the same apprehension as do you.

HORACE: Yes. Well.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: As you know, the Young University was begun by President Young as a -- "protest," you might call it -- against the secular schools of the world. We are not prepared now to relinquish that charge. We must continue on, however ... difficult that battle may seem from time to time. So it pains us greatly to learn of the fact that evolution is being taught at the university.

HORACE: Then perhaps you might be interested to hear the contents of a letter I received about an hour ago.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: By all means, we most certainly would be interested.

HORACE takes a letter out of his briefcase.

HORACE: This is from a disgruntled father. "When my daughter was home for the holidays, I found there was something wrong in school in regards to Professor Edwin S. Hinckley's geology class. Hinckley has mixed up evolution with geology, and my daughter got the wrong idea that man originated from the monkey or that all animals originated from the jelly fish. I hope she has a mis-understanding in regards to this. But, if not, I thought it was my duty to let you know about it."

JOSEPH F. SMITH: Brother Cummings, are there other teachers who are doing the same?

HORACE: I have reports that there are, but no names to this point.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: What, to this point, have you done about it?

HORACE: Well, in regards to the letter, I have been in communication with President Brimhall and he has assured me in a letter that the young girl must have gotten the wrong impression. He insists that neither the academy nor any of the teachers believe or accept the doctrine of man's ancestors being the lower animals.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: You've come to us, isn't that true, because you don't believe that statement?

HORACE: I've received too many complaints to believe this is just an isolated matter.

(quick)

Which is not to say that I think President Brimhall is mis-representing the facts by any means. It's just that, what with all the other matters on campus that he must deal with, perhaps he has "fallen out of touch" with his faculty members.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: Those things happen with any large organization. Goodness knows the church has had its share of problems in that area.

SMITH laughs, HORACE laughs, and when SMITH stops laughing, so does HORACE. SMITH picks up the phone.

Brother Cummings, you might be interested in something that Brother Whitney is doing for us. It's along these same lines. It has relevance.

Looks at a list on his desk, dials a number, makes a mistake, hangs up the phone in frustration.

We'll never get used to this contraption.

Goes to the door and yells.

Brother Orson! You are needed!

SMITH returns to his desk, is just about to sit down, when ORSON F. WHITNEY, 30, ENTERS.

ORSON carries a sheaf of papers in his hand, his sleeves rolled up, and a pencil in his ear.

ORSON: Yes, President Smith? Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you called me ...

JOSEPH F. SMITH: Don't go anyplace, Orson. We did call you. You know Brother Horace Cummings, superintendent of church schools?

ORSON: Yes, of course.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: Well, Brother Cummings is having a little problem concerning evolution on the campus of the Brigham Young University. We thought he might be interested in hearing a little bit of the statement we asked you to write for us.

ORSON: Yes, of course, President Smith. I have it right here. I was working on it when you -- uh -- called.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: Would you care to share some of it with Brother Cummings, and ourselves, as a matter of fact, since we haven't seen it yet?

ORSON: Shall I just read it then?

JOSEPH F. SMITH: Yes. Go ahead.

ORSON fumbles through the papers.

ORSON: Let's see. Where should I begin --? Oh, this is a good place ... the ... uh ... beginning ... "Inquiries arise from time to time respecting the attitude of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints upon questions which, though not vital from a doctrinal standpoint, are closely connected with the fundamental principles of salvation. The latest inquiry of this kind that has reached us is in relation to the origin of man. It is believed that a statement of the position held by the Church upon this important subject will be timely and productive of good."

JOSEPH F. SMITH: Very nice, Brother Orson. You have quite a way with our words.

As he laughs, so do the other two, stopping when he stops.

Go on.

ORSON: "In presenting the statement that follows we are not conscious of putting forth anything essentially new; neither is it our desire so to do. Truth is what we wish to present, and truth -- eternal truth -- is fundamentally old. To tell the truth as God has revealed it, and commend it to the acceptance of those who need to conform their opinions thereto, is the sole purpose of this presentation."

JOSEPH F. SMITH: That should cause some intellectual eyebrows to rise, shouldn't it, Brother Cummings?

HORACE: Yes, indeed, President Smith.

ORSON: Shall I go on?

JOSEPH F. SMITH: Yes, we like how we're sounding so far.

ORSON: " 'God created man in his own image.' In these plain and pointed words the inspired author of the book of Genesis made known to the world the truth concerning the origin of the human family. Moses was not voicing a mere opinion, a theory derived from his researches into the occult lore of that ancient people. He was speaking as the mouthpiece of God, and his solemn declaration was for all time and for all people. Truth has but one source, and all revelations from heaven are harmonious with each other.' "

JOSEPH F. SMITH: That's enough. Brother Orson, when that's finished and we have a chance to look at it, we want you to see that it gets published in the Improvement Era.

ORSON: Of course, President Smith.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: What do you think, Brother Cummings?

HORACE: Very good. It certainly sets the record straight.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: It's clear, but not offensive. Anything the matter, Brother Cummings? You seem uneasy.

HORACE: Well, I am a little disappointed that the statement wasn't ... I don't know ... a bit more specific ...

JOSEPH F. SMITH: You mean, you wish we had "denounced" Evolution by name?

HORACE: Uh ... well ... yes.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: Well, we didn't.

HORACE: Yes. Well.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: *(an uneasy pause)* Thank you, Brother Orson. You may go.

ORSON EXITS.

Brother Cummings, we want you to go down to Provo and fully investigate this matter. Find out which teachers are teaching Evolution, and assess the damage, if any, that such teaching is causing.

SCENE 3 -- SETTING: 12 February 1909. The podium.

AT RISE: LIGHTS UP on RALPH, continuing his speech from the first scene.

RALPH: *Darwin was strong and exceedingly active physically; and in things of the mind his tastes were broad. He loved hard intellectual work, and a complex subject pleased him more than an easy one. The clear geometrical proofs of Euclid delighted him; and the work in chemistry held him till late hours. He sat for hours reading Shakespeare, Milton, Scott, and Byron; he greatly admired some odes of Horace and even later when on his voyage around the world, when only one good book could be carried with him on expedition, he chose Milton.*

SCENE 4 -- SETTING: Late November 1910. GEORGE BRIMHALL'S OFFICE.

AT RISE: LIGHTS UP ON GEORGE BRIMHALL, 50, President of Brigham Young University, stands to one side of the desk. HARVEY FLETCHER, early 20s, a physics professor, stands on the other side. They are in the middle of a conversation.

GEORGE: Am I correct? Is that what you said?

GEORGE consults a paper on his desk.

HARVEY: Yes. I did say that.

GEORGE: So you did say to your class that if two horses were pulling a wagon down the street that -- "the wagon would pull back with the same force that the horses pulled forward?"

HARVEY: Newton's Third Law of Motion, sir.

GEORGE: Really? And what are the first two laws? "A physics professor will not use common sense while teaching" and "The bigger the lie, the more they will believe it?" Brother Fletcher, I will have to insist that you refrain from speculating on such theories --

HARVEY: In all due respect, President Brimhall, they are hardly theories. At least not as you define a theory. I have --

HARVEY stops in mid-sentence to catch something that GEORGE has thrown to him: an umbrella that GEORGE has deftly removed from an umbrella stand.

GEORGE: Grab one end of that umbrella, if you would, Harvey.

HARVEY: Really, President, I don't --

GEORGE: Go on. Reverence my gray hairs young man. And I'll grab the other. I understand you physics professors are rather fond of practical demonstrations in the classroom. Well, we're going to have one in my office. Now, Brother Fletcher, I want you to pull on your end of the umbrella, and I'll pull on mine. Since you're younger, you're no doubt stronger, but

GEORGE: I want you to pull on your end with the same force that I'm pulling on mine. Are we ready?

HARVEY: I fail to see how --

GEORGE pulls on his end, forcing HARVEY to pull on his. The umbrella stays relatively stationary over GEORGE's desk.

GEORGE: There! Do you see now, Brother Harvey Fletcher? Both of us are pulling on opposite ends of this umbrella with the same force. Is the umbrella moving? No. Anyone can see it is quite stationary.

GEORGE suddenly releases the umbrella. HARVEY, still pulling, back steps once before regaining his balance.

It's quite obvious that, if the wagon were pulling back with the same force as the horses, the wagon would not move!

HARVEY: I must respectfully disagree, President --

GEORGE: Of course you must. You're young, full of piss and vinegar, convinced that your way is right. But when you have a little more experience, you will see the fallacy of this statement.

HARVEY: (*frustrated*) President Brimhall, I --

GEORGE: (*smile*) That's all I have to say on the matter, Harvey.

A pause. HARVEY turns, shoves the umbrella into the stand, gathers up his winter coat from the stand and EXITS. GEORGE collapses into his desk, holding his stomach. He takes a few deep breaths, then gathers himself enough to pick up a letter on the table, glances over it. It seems to upset him greatly. He puts down the letter, picks up the telephone and dials a number.

Who's next on the list? Has he arrived yet? Well, send Brother Chamberlin in as soon as he gets here.

(*brightening*) She is? Let her in!

FLORA, 20, GEORGE'S POLYGAMOUS WIFE, ENTERS. She wears a coat, scarf, and carries an umbrella. GEORGE and FLORA embrace.

Flora! How happy I am to see you! But, why are you here? I've told you many times --

FLORA: (*playfully sarcastic*) "Not to be seen in public!" I know, George. Since the Manifesto has reduced all of us second wives to living in seclusion --

GEORGE: Now, Flora --

FLORA: (*with rising intensity*) -- not even able to be seen in public with our lawful husbands. I realize I am endangering you, the university and the church and myself, but --

FLORA cries. GEORGE comforts her.

GEORGE: Dear, sweet Flora, what's the matter? You can tell me.

FLORA: (*pulls herself together*) I'm sorry, George.

GEORGE leads her to one of the chairs by the desk. He sits next to her; takes her hands.

FLORA: (*continuing*) It's just that ... the only time I get to see you is ... is when you can manage to get away from things here at the university. You have to go through all kinds of effort to hide your tracks so the Federal agents won't discover what you're doing. I feel like ... a mistress instead of your wife. As a matter of fact, it would be easier if I were your mistress. The government wouldn't care if you were seeing a whore on the side. But a second wife? Throw the adulterer in jail!

GEORGE: I understand how you feel, Flora, but what can I do?

FLORA: I don't know --

GEORGE: And it's not as if I'm the only one who's forced to neglect his family. All the brethren who live the Principle have to --

FLORA: I know, Dear. I know. But that doesn't make it any easier. George, when you asked me to be your second wife, I was so happy! I couldn't imagine that anyone could be happier than I was! And happy wasn't the only thing I felt. I felt honored that a man like you would want a girl like me for a wife. You don't know how much I idolized you!

GEORGE: Yes, I do.

FLORA: Go on!

GEORGE: I do. I really do. I saw you looking at me there in theology class.

FLORA: I never!

GEORGE: You did. I would move away from the podium to drive home a particular salient point of my lecture and your eyes would follow me --

FLORA: Of course I was watching you! You were the instructor!

GEORGE: But it was more than that. Sometimes during reading assignments, I would see you hazard a glance in my direction.

FLORA: For you to see that, you must have been looking at me.

GEORGE: I was. I was quite smitten with you. And you talk about your feeling honored that I was attracted to you. I was literally amazed that a woman so beautiful, so ... so young as you would find me appealing. I couldn't understand why, with all those firm young bucks around --

FLORA: There's more that makes a man than his brawn. And besides, being someone else's first wife was too risky. You never knew if he would turn out to be somebody who runs around, or who beats you. But you ... you were known. And well respected.

GEORGE: And so that's why you married me, because you "respected" me?

FLORA: "Respect." "Love." Is there a difference?

GEORGE kisses FLORA.

Thank you. And do forgive me for coming out of the clear blue like this. I just couldn't wait until next weekend.

GEORGE: Is everything all right? Do you need any money? Are the children all right?

FLORA: Yes. I have enough. And yes, the children are fine. I just needed to be reminded that I'm important, that I actually exist, that I'm not just an ornament you keep on a shelf down in Spanish Fork.

GEORGE: And have you been reminded?

GEORGE kisses FLORA again. Suddenly lost in thought, he looks at his pocket watch, then picks up the letter on his desk. FLORA lets the pause linger before interrupting.

FLORA: Something's troubling you.

GEORGE: Hmm? Well, it seems that, in my efforts to upgrade the faculty at this institution by hiring Doctors of Philosophy in various disciplines, I have inadvertently opened a Pandora's box of troubles.

FLORA: What sort of "troubles?"

GEORGE: Well, certain instructors on campus have been teaching Darwin's Theory of Evolution, with, it would appear, a little more enthusiasm than such a theory warrants.

FLORA: I don't know much about Evolution, and I couldn't care less to tell you the truth. But I do know you, George Brimhall. You'll manage. You always do.

Suddenly, GEORGE clutches his stomach in pain.

Your stomach again? How long has it been bothering you this time?

GEORGE: I'll be all right. It's my cross to bear.

FLORA: It and me.

GEORGE: And this university. Other men should be so lucky. I'll be right back. I must excuse myself for just a moment.

GEORGE EXITS, running and clutching his stomach. We HEAR RETCHING from off-stage. FLORA moves to investigate when RALPH ENTERS. FLORA whirls. RALPH stops suddenly upon seeing her. Their eyes meet in the midst of an awkward pause.

RALPH: *(pleasantly surprised)* Flora!

(correcting himself)

... Sister Brimhall. They told me to just come on in ...

FLORA: *(a bit stiff)* Ralph. How are you?

RALPH: As well as can be expected, I suppose, under the circumstances.

FLORA: *(dream)* Circumstances. Yes, circumstances.

(back in the conversation) Are you talking about the impending visit of the superintendent of church schools?

RALPH: Yes, "The Coming of Cummings." So George has told you all about it.

FLORA: *(bitter?)* Not at all. George seldom tells me anything. He wears the presidency of this university like the mantle of a prophet. What happens at the BYU is far too "important" to burden a wife with. Especially a second wife.

RALPH: I understand.

FLORA: *(skeptical)* Do you? Yes, I suppose you do, being the "Eastern Intellectual" that you are.

RALPH: *(a slight laugh)* What are you talking about?

FLORA: You must know how much you and your colleagues are held in suspicion.

RALPH: Suspicion of what? That we'll bring too much of the world into Zion?

FLORA: There's too much of the world in Zion as it is.

RALPH: Not enough, as far as I'm concerned.

FLORA: *(laugh)* My, Ralph Chamberlin, how you've changed!

RALPH: *(a smile)* For the better I hope.

FLORA: I'm not the one to judge that.

RALPH: So I've changed. In what way?

FLORA: You mean you really don't know? You're not at all the optimistic zealot you were back at the U. You wear your contempt for tradition on your sleeve.

RALPH: Like the "mantle of a prophet," you mean.

FLORA: A radical with a cause. How intriguing.

RALPH: What's wrong with being a radical? Joseph Smith was a radical. So was Jesus Christ.

FLORA: (*approaching anger*) And you are neither of those men, unless I missed the announcement at the last General Conference.

RALPH: The church itself used to be radical. Doesn't it strike you odd that a religion which less than a generation ago was one of the most revolutionary forces for religious and societal change in the world should today be slipping into respectability with nary a fight?

FLORA: Don't forget that one of the major features of the nineteenth century radicals was plural marriage -- a principle which, unless I miss my guess -- you despise.

RALPH: (*quiet, then shrugs*) You've caught me. I'm riddled with inconsistency.
Again, the SOUND of GEORGE RETCHING, off.

Is he all right?

FLORA: Just some indigestion. It'll pass.

(*calling*) George! Are you all right?

GEORGE: (*OFF*) I'm fine.

FLORA: Brother Chamberlin is here to see you.

GEORGE: (*OFF*) Tell him I'll be out in just a moment.

They move away and fall again into an awkward silence.

RALPH: I suppose all this campus controversy is wearing on him.

FLORA: You don't have to worry about George Brimhall. He's a rugged man.

RALPH: I meant no disrespect, please understand.

(*looks away, wistful*)

Flora, do you ever regret it?

FLORA: Regret what?

RALPH: The fact that both the church and the government seem to have conspired against your happiness.

FLORA: Is that it, you think? A conspiracy? Or is it just that I'm a victim of a bygone age? An age when people could live their religion and not have their rights trampled on by their own government. I'm fully aware of your feelings on the Principle, Ralph. But to some of us, it is still a sacred practice.

RALPH: Though now an outlawed one, even by the church.

FLORA moves away, obviously hurt.

I'm sorry, Flora. I know how much it means to you to be the wife of George Brimhall. I was unkind. Please forgive me.

FLORA: (*slight pause*) As you've forgiven me for marrying George instead of you?

RALPH: I've learned to live with it, shall we say?

FLORA: (*sad*) Let's say.

RALPH: Flora ...

(*searching for words*)

Do you ever wonder what it would have been like if ... you know, if the two of us ...?

FLORA: Dear, sweet Ralph, I think you have done wondering enough for both of us. And look at all the trouble it's caused.

GEORGE RE-ENTERS. He wipes his face on a handkerchief and shakes RALPH's hand.

GEORGE: Brother Chamberlin, I'm glad you could make it.

FLORA: Well, I'd best be off.

FLORA gathers up her coat and umbrella, wraps a scarf around her head.

There! Do you think I'm disguised enough? Will the Feds recognize me?

FLORA gives GEORGE a kiss on the cheek, nods to RALPH.

Nice to see you again, Ralph.

RALPH: The pleasure was mine, let me assure you.

FLORA EXITS.

GEORGE: Her being here ... I hope it didn't make you uncomfortable. I'm not unaware of the feelings you once had for Flora, you know.

RALPH: On the contrary. It was a bit like old times.

GEORGE: (false cheerful) "Old times." I could use some of that myself. But, unfortunately, it's the future we have to deal with, specifically the visit to our campus by Brother Horace Hall Cummings. I assume you've heard all about it?

RALPH: What I've heard doesn't please me, I can tell you that much.

GEORGE: Take a seat and let's talk about this.

RALPH: What's this all about, George?

GEORGE: I sense some alarm in your question, Ralph. There's no need for that. This is purely a formality. Let me get straight to the point. I'm expecting Superintendent Cummings any minute now. He has asked to speak with several of you brethren in particular about --

RALPH: Evolution? Higher Criticism? Isn't that it?

GEORGE: Yes, there is some concern at high levels that --

RALPH: Has someone complained?

GEORGE: Not someone. Several. Superintendent Cummings just wants to ask you a few questions.

RALPH: What about?

GEORGE: Why don't we wait till he gets here? It would be useless to speculate on his intentions.

RALPH: Why? He's speculating on mine, isn't he?

GEORGE: You seem overly anxious. This is not an inquisition. That sort of thing doesn't happen in the true church. When the superintendent gets here, all you have to do is tell him your side of the story, and I'm sure he'll understand.

RALPH: Very well. I'll withhold judgment until the superintendent arrives --

GEORGE: There. That's the sensible way to --

RALPH: Then I'll give him a piece of my mind.

GEORGE: Ralph, how much do you know about Horace Hall Cummings?

RALPH: Actually, not very much.

GEORGE: And, normally, you would never have occasion to know much about him. His responsibility is primarily with those of us entrusted with the administration of the church's schools. And he takes that responsibility very seriously. As well he should. I think we both can agree on that.

RALPH: (*reluctant*) Yes, of course.

GEORGE: Brother Cummings is, for the most part, a self-educated man. Just between you and me, I don't think he fully understands our mission here at the Brigham Young University. He has ... how shall I say? ... a mistrust of persons with advanced degrees. The reason for that, I suppose, is his failed attempt to obtain an advanced degree himself. Not to mention that he claims to have received a blessing from one of Orson Hyde's widows -- in tongues, mind you -- that he would be a great tool in setting in order the church's educational institutions, or some such.

RALPH: Are you suggesting he's on some divine witch hunt?

GEORGE: I want you to know something, Ralph. And I mean this very sincerely. You and the Peterson brothers are the first three Ph.D.'s this school has ever had. As such, you all hold a special place in the yet-to-be-written history of this institution. I am in no way opposed to either your curriculum or the way in

which you teach it. I've conducted my own studies on the theories of Charles Darwin and I do not find them in the least harmful to one's faith in God. If the truth be known, I'm somewhat of an evolutionist myself.

RALPH: *(not convinced)* That's reassuring.

GEORGE: So when you are called in to talk with Brother Horace Hall Cummings, know that I stand behind you squarely.

RALPH: *(smile, finally at ease)* Of course.

GEORGE: Then we should have no problem at all. Thank you for coming in.

RALPH EXITS. GEORGE holds his composure for a little bit, then he can stand it no longer. He collapses to his chair in pain as LIGHTS DIM.

FLASHBACK BEGINS. HORACE ENTERS, stands just inside the light. GEORGE looks up with a pained expression.

HORACE: "I'm somewhat of an evolutionist myself?"

GEORGE: I was speaking ... in the spirit of camaraderie, you understand.

HORACE: "Just between you and me, I don't think he fully understands our mission here at the Brigham Young University?"

GEORGE: And isn't there the element of truth in that? That is why you've come, isn't it -- to learn the truth of things here?

HORACE: Yes. Well. And it certainly seemed to start off rather well. I speak of our meeting earlier this morning.

LIGHTS up full. GEORGE's pain disappears; he is now fully in the flashback.

GEORGE: You mentioned in your letter to me the nature of your visit. This evolution business, is it?

HORACE: Precisely. I've been sent by the First Presidency to investigate the situation here and to make any suggestions.

HORACE: for improvement I deem necessary to realign this school with its stated purpose, which is, and I quote: "We have enough and to spare, at present in these mountains, of schools where young infidels are made because the teachers are so tender-footed that they dare not mention the principles of the gospel to the pupils."

(pause)

I will be visiting various classes to observe for myself if what I have been told is true.

GEORGE: I can assure you, as I did in my letter, that these stories are greatly exaggerated. All of my faculty are righteous men who faithfully follow the teachings of the church.

HORACE: I hope you're right, President Brimhall. Because, you see, it would be a sad day in Zion, if I were to discover that such heresies were being taught at the Lord's university.

GEORGE: I would hardly call the theory of evolution "heresy," Superintendent --

HORACE: You have read the First Presidency's statement on that subject, have you not?

GEORGE: Yes I have. It's right here, as a matter of fact, and I found no clear refutation of Evolution contained in it.

HORACE: I admit the First Presidency was not very specific on the matter.

GEORGE: The statement defends, from my view, a physical as well as a spiritual creation.

HORACE: But with Adam as primal parent of the race, created in the image of God. Such are not the views of Mr. Darwin.

GEORGE: Yes, that may be so.

HORACE opens his briefcase and takes out some papers.

HORACE: President Brimhall, I have here a whole sheaf of documents, letters to me from as far away as

northern Mexico, concerning

HORACE: certain "teachings" that are not setting well with the parents who have trusted the spiritual and emotional well-being of their children into our care. In these letters there are several teachers who are named whose classes I will be visiting this next week, among others. They are Ralph V. Chamberlin, and Henry and Joseph Peterson.

GEORGE: Rest assured that these brethren have impeccable credentials from some of the best colleges in the East. And their faithfulness to the teachings of the Church cannot be denied.

HORACE: Previous faithfulness and good character are no assurance against the loss of one's faith, I'm sure you will agree, President Brimhall.

GEORGE: (*lacking sincerity*) Yes, of course.

HORACE: Yes. Well. If the reports I've received are true, the theories of the Petersons and the Chamberlins seem to portend a move away from the religious simplicity and gospel purity that I am duty bound to protect.

(*rises to go*)

Yes. Well. I've taken enough of your time. I would appreciate it if you tell your faculty that I will be observing their classes, talking to students, for the next few days. They are to carry on as if I am not there.

GEORGE: I don't think you have anything to worry about, Superintendent. While I believe that the Petersons and the Chamberlins are, from their point of view, perfectly right, still I think they are perhaps a trifle... over-zealous in their desires to bring people to their point of view. As they look at it, their teachings are in perfect harmony with the principles of the gospel, and, therefore, it seems to me a little patience will be in keeping with greater wisdom on their part.

HORACE: Yes. Well.

LIGHTS DOWN on HORACE, DIM on GEORGE. GEORGE clutches his stomach and, letting out a great sigh of agony, crumples in pain. FLASHBACK ENDS.

SCENE 5 -- *SETTING: 12 February 1909. The podium.*

AT RISE: RALPH continues his speech.

RALPH: Darwin was next sent to Christ's College in the University of Cambridge, with a view to his preparing himself for the career of a clergyman. It was characteristic of the young man that he took this step only after making sure that he could conscientiously support the thirty-nine articles of faith. When speaking of his education experiments, he later wrote: "My time was wasted, so far as academic studies were concerned, as completely at Edinburgh or at school. "To this sweeping statement, however, he excepts the study made of Paley's works: Evidences of Christianity, Moral Philosophy, and Natural Theology.

SCENE 6 -- *SETTING: Late November, 1910. A WAITING ROOM outside GEORGE's office.*

AT RISE: JOSEPH PETERSON and RALPH CHAMBERLIN sit in two chairs in the waiting room, while HENRY PETERSON paces nervously.

HENRY: How long has Harvey been in there? Cummings must really be raking him over the coals.

RALPH: There's nothing to worry about. Just relax. President Brimhall assured me that he would stand behind us whatever the outcome.

HENRY: And you believe that? It was that Judson student, that's who it was. He's the one. I could read the expression on his face. He kept looking at me as though I were preaching blasphemy --

JOSEPH grabs HENRY by the shoulders and sits him down. HENRY seems to calm almost immediately.

JOSEPH: I'm serious, Henry. You need to calm down. If indeed Brother Cummings is after our hides -- which, by the way, I don't believe -- showing fear is the worst thing you can do.

HENRY: For heaven's sake, Joe, I'm supervisor of the College of Education. I've served on the Sunday School board. The fact that he is even thinking of talking to us ... well, it's somehow insulting.

JOSEPH: I know. I know.

RALPH: And he's talking to everyone on campus. It's not as though he's singling us out.

The door off right opens, and HARVEY FLETCHER ENTERS, shutting the door behind him.

HARVEY: (to the three) He'll be ready for you in just a moment. I suppose he's making notes of our interview.

HENRY: (nervous) How was it, Harvey?

HARVEY: (mock serious) Let me say this. If he offers you his hand, don't forget to kiss his ring.

HENRY: I knew it! It's the damn Inquisition all over again.

HARVEY: No, really, it wasn't that bad. At least not as bad as my talk with Brimhall was. Ol' George tried to convince me that Newton's Third Law of Motion was incorrect.

RALPH: He told me he was an Evolutionist. I could almost hear Darwin roll over in his grave.

JOSEPH: You know, Harvey, you really ought to think of growing a beard.

HARVEY: I don't want to grow a beard.

JOSEPH: Oh, but you must. How do you expect your students to take you seriously when you look so like a boy? No, a dedicated teacher at the Lord's University must have a beard. At least a mustache. All the brethren do.

They all laugh this time, even HENRY.

HARVEY: I know it's only a tradition. But the way things are going, I wouldn't put it past this school to someday enforce a dress code.

They laugh again, so loud that HARVEY doesn't hear the door behind him opening. HORACE is standing in the doorway and overhears the following.

And if he starts to tell you the story about how he got his first job as an answer to prayer, act interested.

HARVEY sees the expressions of his companions, who see HORACE in the doorway. HARVEY suddenly stops, turns.

Superintendent Cummings ... I'm s-sorry ... ! I'm --

HORACE: (ignoring Harvey) Brother Joseph Peterson? Whenever you're ready.

JOSEPH: I'll be right there.

JOSEPH stands as HORACE goes back into his office.

HARVEY: Good luck.

HARVEY EXITS.

RALPH: Joseph, just one question before you go in. Where do you want to be buried?

The three share a good-natured, if somewhat nervous laugh. LIGHTS DOWN on Waiting Room, UP on GEORGE's Office. HORACE is seated at GEORGE's desk. JOSEPH ENTERS GEORGE's Office. HORACE gestures for JOSEPH to sit in chair opposite the desk. JOSEPH sits.

HORACE: (good-natured) Yes. Well. Thank you, Brother Peterson, for seeing me. First of all, let me put your mind at ease. I've only been here a few days, and already I've heard rumors that I've come on some divine mission to cleanse Zion of its intellectuals -- a "witch hunt" were the words I heard.

JOSEPH shifts uneasily at hearing RALPH's own words used against him.

Nothing could be further from the truth. I am merely seeking information. Is that understood?

JOSEPH: (wary) Certainly.

Their gazes lock and hold for a brief moment. HORACE is the first to turn away, to some notes on his desk.

HORACE: Yes. Well. Let's talk about you, now. Let me get to know you a little bit. Let's see. Joseph Peterson.

JOSEPH: Yes, sir.

HORACE: You have the distinction of being the school's very first doctor of philosophy, is that correct?

JOSEPH: Yes, I was hired --

HORACE: In 1907. You were hired by President Brimhall to oversee the academy's psychology department.

JOSEPH: That's correct.

HORACE: And you graduated from the BYA in 1902, then taught LDS Seminary in Oakley, Idaho. Very impressive. Very impressive, indeed. And you later received both a baccalaureate and doctorate degree from the University of Chicago. Hmm.

(pause)

I've always been suspicious about these Gentile universities. Be that as it may, let's talk a little about what you teach.

JOSEPH: You're aware, I suppose, that I teach nine separate courses in general and experimental psychology. Having worked with Dr. John B. Watson, the famous behavioral psychologist, I have developed a course of study in an area unique to this university: "The Psychology of Religion," which stresses scientific principles and the relationship between scientific philosophy and Mormon doctrine.

HORACE: And how are your classes accepted by the students?

JOSEPH: No complaints so far.

He laughs, but is not joined by HORACE.

HORACE: If I may, Professor Peterson, your work on what you call "cognitive theory" often leads into discussions in class of will and behavior which, if I correctly understand the matter, treats the traditional concept of the soul rather indifferently if not disparagingly.

JOSEPH: I wouldn't say, disparagingly. Correctly, rather.

HORACE takes out another set of papers in a folder from his briefcase.

HORACE: I have here a summary of your lectures, Brother Peterson. It appears to me that your interests are more scientific than they are philosophical.

JOSEPH: There is nothing wrong with that, is there?

HORACE: Not on the face of it, I suppose. But when one's interests in science start to conflict with religious truths, then there is something wrong with that indeed.

JOSEPH: I suppose you have something in mind.

HORACE: You suppose correctly. Brother Peterson, have you ever, in any of your classes, attempted to teach that Joseph Smith's visions were psychological phenomena?

JOSEPH: Brother Cummings, I share the same first name with our beloved founder/prophet. I have nothing but the greatest respect for what Joseph accomplished. I am firmly convinced that Joseph believed with all his heart that he had literally seen the Father and Son in vision.

HORACE: (*undeterred*) In your capacity as head of the school's psychology department, you have no doubt come in contact with the works of the Jewish physician Sigmund Freud.

JOSEPH: I am aware of him, yes.

HORACE: You are more than merely aware of him, Brother Peterson, if my information is correct. You have

referred to him in some of your psychology classes, and have even quoted from a book of his entitled, Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality. Are you aware that this book is not on the approved list of textbooks for the teaching of the church's youth? I know you've seen the list. President Brimhall has had it for quite a while now.

JOSEPH: It was not a textbook. I merely used passages from it to illustrate a point.

HORACE: Did you relate the passage in that book where Dr. Freud says that he, as a child, had become sexually aroused at seeing his mother naked?

JOSEPH becomes suddenly livid, almost rising from his chair.

JOSEPH: I did no such thing! And anyone who said I did is a damned liar!

HORACE: (*benign smile*) Relax, Brother Peterson. I have received no complaints to that effect. But I fail to see the worth, even as the "illustration of a point" of a book which suggests that children possess sexual urges that frequently involve their parents.

JOSEPH: (*a bit calmer, but not much*) I did not mention that part of his writings. I was careful to steer clear of such parts, knowing how it might affect my...impressionable students.

HORACE: I'm glad to hear that.

(pause)

I've read Brother Chamberlin's speech at the Charles Darwin centennial and am aware of the high regard in which he holds Professor Darwin. How do you feel about Dr. Freud?

JOSEPH: He is merely a curiosity. His theories are new. Perhaps time will vindicate him, perhaps not.

HORACE: "Perhaps not" is exactly right. Time will never vindicate the theory that children are possessed of perverted sexual inclinations. The Book of Mormon teaches us that children are both pure and without sin. No amount of intellectual posturing will change that inalienable scriptural fact.

JOSEPH: (*seething, but containing*) No, sir.

LIGHTS OUT on JOSEPH.

HORACE: You supervise the College of Education, is that correct?

LIGHTS UP on HENRY, sitting where JOSEPH had been sitting.

HENRY: Y-yes, sir.

HORACE: According to my records, you received your bachelor's degree from Chicago and a master's degree from Harvard.

HENRY: (*a bit too quick*) Shortly after my arrival in Provo, I was called to serve on the boards of the church's religion classes and Sunday school program. And I was later appointed a member of an ad hoc church committee to study the problems of church youth.

(pause, tries to recover)

I just thought ... you ... uh ... should know that. Also.

HORACE: I do know that, Brother Peterson. My notes are very complete.

HENRY: Oh, I'm sure they are. I hope you didn't get the impression that I was suggesting otherwise. Because I wasn't. Suggesting that your notes were incomplete, I mean. Because they're not...

HORACE: Brother Peterson, I --

HENRY: Yes? Oh, I'm sorry ...

HORACE: I have here a copy of the White and Blue --

HENRY: Is that my article on the value of scientific exploration?

HORACE: Yes, in which you urge students to gain faith in the scientific method. Faith, Brother Peterson? In Science?

HENRY: Certainly. Science, despite its great advances, doesn't know everything. Some element of faith is

needed in the face of uncertainty, wouldn't you agree, Brother Cummings?

HORACE: Yes. Indeed.

LIGHTS DOWN ON HENRY as HORACE opens a folder, scans the first sheet of a stack of papers. LIGHTS UP on RALPH, sitting where HENRY had been sitting.

Ralph V. Chamberlin. You certainly have some very interesting credentials. You joined the faculty in 1908. Previously, you had been the chair of the University of Utah's biology department and dean of its medical school.

RALPH: That's correct, sir.

HORACE: My old alma mater. I received a degree in education in 1906 from there. Yes. Well. Let's see ... what else? Ah, yes. You graduated from the University of Utah and taught math, science, language, and biology at the LDS College in Salt Lake City. So teaching at the BYU is not your first experience with the church educational system.

RALPH: No, sir.

HORACE: So one would think that you would be familiar with the church's ... shall we say ... unique position on the education of our youth.

RALPH: Yes, sir.

HORACE: After teaching these classes at the LDS College, you continued your graduate studies at Stanford and then at Cornell, receiving your doctorate in 1905. You are currently the chairman of BYU's biology department.

RALPH: That's all correct.

HORACE opens his briefcase and pulls out some papers.

HORACE: Yes. Well. Let's get on with the business at hand.

HORACE pauses, looks up from his letter to judge RALPH's reaction: there is none.

Brother Chamberlin, in 1909, you delivered a speech in which you said that Darwin was one of the greatest scientific minds of the 19th Century.

RALPH: No doubt your notes also indicate that the White and Blue agreed with my speech, saying, and I quote, "Undoubtedly among the great men of the nineteenth century the foremost place should be given to Charles Darwin."

HORACE stares at him in amazement.

Yes, I memorized it. How often does a biology teacher receive fan mail?

HORACE: It matters not to me what the school newspaper said about your speech. It's published by students, anyway, and as we all know, students are notoriously impressionable. Do you think that Joseph Smith was an equally great scientific mind

HORACE: of the era?

RALPH: Normally, I'm not in the habit of comparing prophets and scientists. But since you brought it up, Joseph received his knowledge from visions, Charles Darwin from good old-fashioned scientific deduction. I hardly think the two can be compared in that regard.

HORACE: Brother Chamberlin, what are your feelings about Joseph Smith?

RALPH: I was under the impression that you were here to observe our teaching in the classroom. I was not told that our personal testimonies would be called into question. I would prefer that you attend my Tuesday classes on the Book of Mormon and judge for yourself my feelings about Joseph Smith.

HORACE: Thanks for the invitation, Brother Chamberlin. I just may do that. Now Brother Chamberlin, just a few more questions, if you don't mind.

RALPH: As you wish.

HORACE: And again, let me remind you, that this is merely the investigation phase of my visit. I am not passing judgment.

RALPH: Very Well, Elder Cummings.

HORACE: Please, there's no need for such formality.
(Slight pause)

"Superintendent" Cummings should be sufficient. Yes. Well. You have taught classes on the Bible here at the BYU, have you not?

RALPH: Yes, I have. I enjoyed it very much.

HORACE: And did you teach the Bible in the orthodox manner? As the Sunday schools teach it, as the word of God, so far as it is translated correctly. Is that the Bible you taught?

RALPH: (hesitant) Since I'm a teacher of college-age students, I feel it my duty to teach the Bible in greater depth than do the Sunday schools.

HORACE: Is it not true that you use a scholarly technique known as "higher criticism?" And what is the main thrust of this technique?

RALPH: Basically, higher criticism examines the Bible more as a book of literature, not so much as a book of scripture.

HORACE: So, which is it -- the Bible? Literature or Scripture?

RALPH: It is both, sir. Some of the greatest poetry in the English language comes from the Bible.

HORACE: That's true. The Psalms come to mind.

RALPH: Yes. Very beautiful, sir. And very inspirational.

HORACE: (Refers to his notes) Did you not once refer to the book of Job as a "work of fiction?"

RALPH: Not exactly. That is to say, I said something to the effect that it didn't matter whether the book of Job was fact or fiction. The story it tells, of Man's endurance in the face of great adversity, is in essence true regardless.

HORACE: And you find no fault with telling the youth of the church that a certain book of Holy Writ is false?

RALPH: The Prophet Joseph said the song of Solomon was not an inspired work.

HORACE: (harsh) Yes, he did. But Joseph Smith was a prophet of god. As far as I know, you are still a Ph.D. Unless Harvard is handing out higher degrees than I had heard.

RALPH: (ignoring the chastisement) It was an intellectual exercise. I was hoping that by "standing back" so to speak, my students could gain a better understanding of the overall themes of faithfulness to God that are shown in the book of Job.

HORACE: How do you interpret passages of scripture, Brother Chamberlin, if it is not by listening to what the prophets have to say about them?

RALPH: When a passage of scripture taken literally contradicts a fundamental, natural law, I take it as allegorical; and in the absence of divine authority, put a construction on it that seems to harmonize with my experience and reason.

HORACE: What possible good can a student derive from pretending as though a book of scripture is not a book of scripture?

RALPH: (confident) It allows them a fresh look, sir.

HORACE: Doesn't it rather allow them a false look?

RALPH: No more false than the Parables of our Lord.

HORACE: I'm afraid I don't see the connection.

RALPH: The parables are stories, works of fiction if you will. Yet the morals of those stories are certainly worthy of our repeating. I'm sure you'll agree with that.

HORACE: (*flabbergasted*) Yes. Well. Naturally.

RALPH: In suggesting that the book of Job might be viewed as a work of fiction, I was teaching my students that fiction sometimes can be as forceful as truth in teaching moral principles.

HORACE picks up a piece of paper from his desk.

HORACE: Allow me to quote from the writing of George Q. Cannon, specifically from The Deseret Evening News, October 8, 1893: "The kind of evolution we believe in is that of man until he shall become a god ... not the evolution of man from some low type of animal life." How do you feel about that?

RALPH: Evolution presupposes man's eternal nature, since that nature conditioned God's activity in creating for man his body. It paves the way for belief in the resurrection which would mean the renewal of God's activity in response to man's needs. Finally, it helps us to realize in a concrete way the greatness and love of God. This being true, we should welcome the law of evolution which science has so fully established, and feel grateful to the scientist for yet another blessing.

HORACE: Brother Chamberlin, please confine your answer to the question: What precisely do you think of President Cannon's statement?

RALPH: The statement is true -- at least the first part is. I believe that man has the potential of evolving into a god. But I also believe that President Cannon would not have made that statement if he understood the concepts of Evolution as I do. Evolution explains not only the origin of life but also the growth of man's belief in God. As a source of truth, it goes hand in hand with scriptural criticism, which unveils the constant growth, the constant evolution in the Bible, the progressive unfolding of the Divine. Line upon line, precept upon precept if you will.

HORACE: You're aware that some students and authorities in the church disagree with your interpretation of the theory of Evolution.

RALPH: Not everyone agreed with me when I was a missionary. I have no problem with that. I'm not out to win a popularity contest.

HORACE: Then you should have no problem with the fact that a predecessor of yours, theology professor Joseph B. Keeler, taught in 1891 that fossils of extinct life forms were nothing more than the remains of other planets which were broken up and remodeled and made into the one in which we live. What have you to say to that theory?

RALPH: That the earth was made from spare parts from God's workshop?
(derisive laugh)

I fail to see why you find it so difficult to accept Evolution if you can give that theory any credence. And while we're on the subject of predecessors, the immediate past president of Brigham Young Academy, Benjamin Cluff -- a graduate of the University of Michigan, mind you -- an

RALPH: Eastern University -- taught a seminary in Theology, covering such topics as Ethics, Psychology, and the Theory of Evolution, in which he took a decidedly positive position on Evolution. So what I and my colleagues are doing is not so out of the ordinary. The BYU has been teaching evolution in one form or another since 1895. Why all of a sudden is it causing such a scene?

HORACE: (*cool*) Yes. Well. I believe we have come to the end of our little conversation. I will be here for nine days, so I suppose I will see you again.

HORACE rises, as does RALPH.

RALPH: Yes, I suppose you will.

HORACE: (a devious smile) Definitely Tuesday and your theology class.

HORACE offers his hand. RALPH accepts it and they shake hands. RALPH EXITS into the Waiting Room. JOSEPH and HENRY stand. In the other room, HORACE opens a notebook and

starts to write.

HENRY: All right, tell us. What was your impression?

RALPH: *(shakes head)* I can tell you this. If we ever needed proof that Man descended from lesser mammals, then Brother Cummings is that proof. Only the mammal is not the ape. Not the ape by a long shot. Horace Hall Cummings has descended from the fox. The shrewd, cunning fox.

LIGHTS DOWN on RALPH et al.

SCENE 7 -- *SETTING: 12 February 1909. The podium.*

AT RISE: RALPH continues his speech.

RALPH: Now admitting at the outset that each species of animal has been created, the question that is pertinent and proper is by what method? This is the problem over which Darwin pondered; and the answer belongs to Science. It does not touch the question by whom, which belongs to Theology.

SCENE 8 -- *SETTING: 21 January 1911. SMITH'S OFFICE.*

AT RISE: SMITH sits behind the desk. ORSON sits to the side, making notes on a pad. HORACE stands before the desk.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: Brother Horace, we cannot convey to you our dismay at hearing such news.

HORACE: *(petulant)* But what I found even more disturbing was the manner of my treatment when news of my visit spread across campus.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: We're listening. Orson, are you getting all this down?

ORSON: Yes, President Smith.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: Do you need Brother Cummings to speak more slowly?

ORSON: No, I can follow quite well.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: *(to Cummings, with a wave of his hand)* Go on.

HORACE: Yes. Well. Always before, when visiting the campus, I had been treated with a friendly, respectful spirit. That spirit this time was replaced with one of opposition and fault-finding. I discovered that both faculty and students alike were saying that I wanted to destroy the academic liberty of some of their best teachers, and would kill the school. I have acquired the reputation of a bluekill-joy whose office is to detect and ferret out inerectitude, waywardness, and sin. I am merely tolerated, except by college graduates seeking teaching positions in church schools. Students have struck back with semi-ribald yarns regarding my "ultra piety and purity." For instance ... begging you indulgence, President ...

(Smith waves his hand in agreement)

One tale claims that while traveling, I was unable to sleep in my hotel room after noticing a bathroom door from which two letters were missing, which read, "Women To let."

A snicker from ORSON, stopped abruptly by a stern look from SMITH, himself just barely hiding a smile. The prudish HORACE is completely unaware of the humor.

But you know, President Smith, that it has never been my intention to destroy the school. I was only following your orders to investigate charges of evolution and secular biblical teachings.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: Your loyalty is not in question, Brother Cummings. Please be assured of that. We are aware of the sentiments of the students whose parents took the time to write us. What are the other students saying?

HORACE: The defenders argue that theological work has never been so interesting and well patronized. The "new thought" is making a new school of the BYU, they say.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: "New thought." Old lies. Continue.

HORACE: Because of this spirit of questioning, there are profound differences of opinion among both students and teachers upon many other important points of doctrine and belief. Because the theory of evolution is treated as a demonstrated law, its application by these teachers to gospel truths has given rise to many curious and conflicting explanations of scripture.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: How so? Please be specific.

HORACE: The theory of evolution is most damaging to the faith of the students in regard to its relation to the fall, the atonement, and the resurrection. Teachers and students alike struggle when the new thought is being presented to them. It's like the sorrow when a little child is first told there is no Santa Claus.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: We are interested in your opinion as to the possibilities of a resolution.

HORACE: Conditions in Provo are currently unfavorable for a solution to this difficulty without intervention from church headquarters. There are enough faculty defending the new teachings to form a coterie having similar views, and the opposition they receive from others keeps them drawn together and determined to defend their views.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: And what should we do -- church headquarters -- in your opinion, to nip this in the bud?

HORACE: Yes. Well. If the teachers in question were ... separated, or given other lines of work to do where their theories would not be continually called into activity, I think their attitudes might eventually change for the better. President Brimhall assures me that the teachers in question will be clearly warned, and even pleaded with if necessary, for the sake of the school, not to press their views with so much vigor. If their zeal overcomes all counsel and they seem even more determined if not defiant to push their beliefs upon the students, or if they seem to feel they have a mission to protect the young from the errors of their parents, then I feel sure that the conditions at BYU need changing as soon as practical.

JOSEPH F. SMITH: We've looked over your report again, Brother Cummings. You mention a certain group of teachers that you feel are the most intractable in regards to their teachings on evolution and higher criticism. Are you prepared to name those teachers at this time?

HORACE: Yes. Well. The offending teachers are Henry and Joseph Peterson and Ralph Chamberlin.

SCENE 9 -- *SETTING: 12 February 1909. The podium.*

AT RISE: RALPH continues his speech.

RALPH: It is clear that the millions of kinds of living things that have existed, did not come upon the earth simultaneously but that they have appeared in a long succession. Now the question that must first be answered is: "How were all the forms now living created?" It is an old maxim that "all life comes from life." Each one of us, every living thing, typically began as a very simple particle of organized matter which in a marvelous way becomes gradually more and more complex until the highly complicated adult results. Such a development is termed evolution. Through such an evolution process, then, and according to definite laws, each individual living thing today has been created. This doctrine of decent, or evolution, demands an

ultimate cause and bold it is to pay a much greater tribute to the power and majesty of the creator; for uniformity of method is an indication of strength, while irregularity or discontinuity of method is ever a sign of weakness.

SCENE 10 -- *SETTING: January 1911. GEORGE's office.*

AT RISE: GEORGE stands looking out a window in the door at RALPH and the PETERSON's in his Waiting Room. A sour expression is on his face and he rubs his abdomen. LIGHTS UP ON FLORA, standing off to one side in GEORGE's office.

FLORA: You'll have to see them eventually.

GEORGE whirls in surprise.

GEORGE: Flora, what are you doing here?

FLORA: You brought me, don't you remember?

GEORGE: Yes, I suppose I did. You always understood me best. How I wish you were really here.

FLORA: But I am here, George. I may be just a chimera, but I am here in the only way that really matters. In your heart.

GEORGE: What should I do, Flora?

FLORA: You know what to do.

GEORGE: Yes, yes, I know. But what will I say?

FLORA: Tell them the truth. That they've been singled out by Superintendent Cummings.

GEORGE: They'll think I've turned traitor. I told Ralph I was on their side, that I would put in a good word for them. I even told him I'm an evolutionist.

FLORA: And are you? An evolutionist?

GEORGE: I don't know. So many great and learned men believe it. Who am I to say they are wrong? And Ralph has such a way of explaining it as to make any disagreement between science and religion non-existent.

FLORA: Did you tell Ralph that part, about how he explained things so well?

GEORGE: I think I showed my hand too early when I expressed sympathy for his views. I can't appear to be too much on their side. I am the president of BYU, after all.

FLORA: And that means what? A president must be aloof from those over whom he presides?

GEORGE: Not aloof, really. But there is the matter of authority. One must firmly plant the flag of one's authority and not retreat.

FLORA: You make it sound like a war.

GEORGE: Isn't it? A war between old beliefs and new philosophies, religious truth and scientific theory.

FLORA: Does it have to be a war?

GEORGE: You always know the right thing to say, even when I conjure you up.

He falls silent.

FLORA: There's something else bothering you, isn't there?

GEORGE: *(pause)* The last time you were here -- when Ralph came in -- I saw a -- a look pass between you two.

FLORA: It was nothing.

GEORGE: Were you fanning old embers?

FLORA: George, how can you ask that, after all these years?

GEORGE: Flora, I'm not blind. I'm fifty years old. Ralph is more your age. You have a history. You have more in common.

FLORA: No, we don't. We don't have you in common. And that's all that matters to me. Did I ever tell you why I chose you over Ralph?

GEORGE: I know I'm probably making this whole thing up, but I'd like to hear it anyway.

FLORA: Ralph was very charming, there's no denying that. Handsome? Definitely. And as keen an intellect as one could imagine. But for all that Ralph was, there was no guarantee what Ralph would become. You, on the other hand, were a given. Your loyalty to the Church had been proven time and time again. Your status was secured. Your ability to provide a wife with the key to eternal life -- though I may not be your first wife -- was beyond question. Ralph was an unknown. Would he remain loyal to the church? Probably, but I couldn't know for sure. Could he guarantee me exaltation in the Celestial Kingdom? Again, I couldn't be certain of that. Do you see what I'm saying?

GEORGE: Are you saying that's the only reason you married me?

FLORA: No, it was the primary reason I was attracted to you in the first place. Love -- that came later. And stayed.

(pause)

I've got to go now, George. Please let me go. Your friends are waiting for you.

LIGHTS OUT on FLORA. GEORGE opens the door to his office. RALPH, JOSEPH, and HENRY ENTER.

RALPH: George, you don't know how close I've come to cold-cocking Henry while you've kept us waiting. He's been driving us crazy with his worrying.

JOSEPH: Why all the secrecy? Why couldn't you have told us what this was all about?

HENRY: I know what it's about --

RALPH: Shut up, Henry.

HENRY: It's Cummings, isn't it? Isn't it?

GEORGE: Why don't we all sit down and talk about this like rational men?

Everyone sits. An awkward pause.

HENRY: You're going to fire us, aren't you?

GEORGE: No. No one's going to be fired. Just put that thought right out of your head. Before anyone fired you, I would resign myself.

RALPH: *(not convinced)* Thank you, George. We appreciate that.

JOSEPH: It's nice to know that somebody is sticking up for us. After what's gone on here this past week, I feel like I don't have a friend in the world.

GEORGE: I'm on your side, brethren. Please believe me.

RALPH: All right, so we're not getting fired. But they are upset about what we're doing.

GEORGE: "Upset" may be too strong a word. I think --

RALPH: Please don't patronize us, George. I think you owe us that much. Just tell us the straight truth. No euphemisms, all right?

GEORGE: In filing his report, Cummings named you three as the principle ... culprits in what is affectionately known in Church leadership circles as "the BYU Problem."

RALPH: What else did the little weasel say in his report to them that he didn't in his report to the faculty?

GEORGE: Let me suggest that criticism of leaders should be kept in the background, especially at this institution. I urge you to be loyal to the heroes of Mormondom.

RALPH: Mormon-"dumb" is the exact phrase I was looking for.

HENRY bursts out in a high-pitched giggle, JOSEPH smiles, GEORGE frowns.

JOSEPH: George, is the die cast? What I mean by that is, can we offer more evidence in our favor?

HENRY: (*grasping*) Excellent idea. Many of the students have claimed how our teachings have increased their testimony.

JOSEPH: If not that, then how about this idea? Can we call for a ... a general resolution of some kind, inviting the authorities of the church to appoint a committee to investigate the points of doctrine upon which we've been criticized?

GEORGE: I don't think that would be a good idea. It would surely give the brethren the idea that you were in a combative mode. If they interpret this as a war ... well, there's no reason to do that. It doesn't have to be a war, does it?

RALPH gets up, starts pacing angrily.

RALPH: I'm sorry, George, this makes me so angry, I can't see straight. Cummings has either intentionally mischaracterized our positions or he is too ignorant to understand what they truly are. When a man like him is so bound with prejudice and tradition that he is blind to the beauties and light of the grandest conception that science has yet won for man ...

(Dies out in frustration)

You know what it reminds me of? Castelli! You remember Castelli? When the pope was about to inflict punishment upon Galileo for his demonstration of the movements of the earth, Castelli pleads before him: "Your Holiness, nothing that can be done can now hinder the earth from moving."

GEORGE: Ralph, you have to cease such talk. For your own good --

RALPH: Why for my own good, George? Do you intend on running up to Salt Lake and tattling on us?

GEORGE: You know I won't do that. I'm on your side in this thing. I told you that already. I hired you three, remember. I wouldn't have done that if I didn't think you were the best for the school.

RALPH: I guess we can content ourselves in the fact that, whatever they do to us, they can't change the reality of Darwin's discoveries. Ultimate cause and meaning remain untouched and as impenetrable as before.

JOSEPH: Yes. The Survival of the Fittest will yet save the day.

RALPH looks at JOSEPH. HENRY looks at JOSEPH. GEORGE doesn't seem to get the joke.

An additional 20 pages make up ACT TWO.