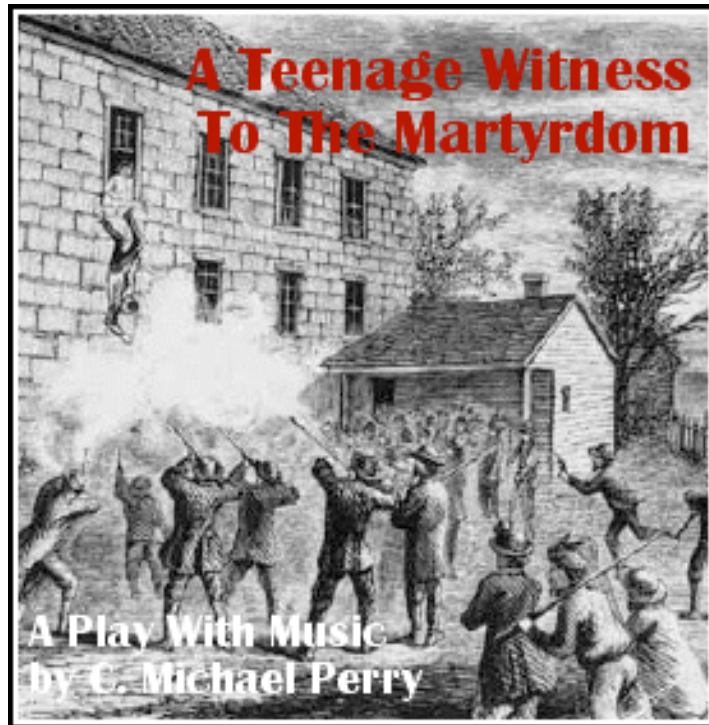


PERUSAL SCRIPT



www.ziontheatricals.com

© 1984 by C. Michael Perry
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION:

Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that

TEENAGE WITNESS TO THE MARTYRDOM

being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States Of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion Of Canada, and the other countries of the Copyright Union, is subject to royalty. Anyone presenting the play without the express written permission of the Copyright owners and/or their authorized agent will be liable to the penalties provided by law.

A requisite number of script and music copies must be purchased from the Publisher and Royalty must be paid to the publisher for each and every performance before an audience whether or not admission is charged. A performance license must first be obtained from the publisher prior to any performance(s).

Federal Copyright Law -- 17 U.S.C. section 504 -- allows for a recovery of a minimum of \$250 and a maximum of \$50,000 for each infringement, plus attorney fees.

The professional and amateur rights to the performance of this play along with the lecturing, recitation, and public reading rights, are administered exclusively through ZION THEATRICALS without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be made. For all other rights inquiries may be made to the authors through ZION THEATRICALS Any adaptation or arrangement of this work without the author's written permission is an infringement of copyright. **Unauthorized duplication by any means is also an infringement.**

FOR PUBLIC PERFORMANCE RIGHTS YOU MUST APPLY TO THE PUBLISHER OR YOU ARE BREAKING THE LAW!

The possession of this SCRIPT whether bought or rented, does not constitute permission to perform the work herein contained, in public or in private, for gain or charity. Proper prior application must be made and license granted before a performance may be given. Copies of this SCRIPT and all other rehearsal materials may be bought and/or rented from:

ZION THEATRICALS
PO Box 536 Newport, ME 04953-0536
www.ziontheatricals.com
Printed in the United States Of America

Whenever this play is produced the following notice should appear in the program and on all advertizements under the producer's control: "Produced by special arrangement with Zion Theatricals, Newport ME" In all programs and posters and in all advertisements under the producers control, the author's name shall be prominently featured under the title.

NOTE: Your contract with Zion Theatricals limits you to making copies of this document for persons directly connected with your production. Do not distribute outside of your cast and crew. Following your performance run you must destroy all photocopies, preferably by shredding them. If we sent you the document in printed format, you must return that document to us. if we provided you with an electronic PDF file, simply trash that on your computer so that it cannot be recovered. The electronic document may only be on ONE computer -- it may NOT be duplicated. This is also a part of your contract with Zion Theatricals

TEENAGE WITNESS TO THE MARTYRDOM CAST OF CHARACTERS

Nellie Jean Chamberlin — a true pioneer woman made of hardy New-England stock. A widow who is raising five children. An understanding mother with great concern for each child. Late 30's.

Susan Chamberlin — Nellie's eldest daughter. A mirror image of her mother, kind, concerned and very loving.
17

Jason Chamberlin — the eldest son, who worshipped his father and still hasn't come to terms with his death at the hand of the mobs of Missouri. He is frustrated by the lack of divine intervention in his own life and the lives of his family. He is bright, eager and sensitive but he sometimes acts like a child, because he is a child but he is also almost a man.

Joshua Chamberlin — a boy in every way including the total adoration for and emulation of his brother, Jason. He is 12 and has all the impetuosity of the pre-adolescent.

Robert Chamberlin — a fun loving boy of 10.

Maria Chamberlin — a bright, inquisitive girl of 6 or 8.

Four men — members of the anti-Mormon mob

Doctor Henry Geer — the family doctor to the Chamberlins

Joseph Smith — the Mormon Prophet

Hyrum Smith — Patriarch to the Church and Joseph's brother

Captain Dunn — a commissioned officer in the state militia

Sherriff — fair but luke warm to the Mormons

Five or six soldiers

Five or six mobsters

Townespeople of all sort

SETTING

Scene One — The Chamberlin cabin — inside and out — just on the outskirts of Nauvoo, Illinois

Scene Two — the same -- the next day

Scene Three — the same — three days later

Scene Four — a street in Nauvoo, two days later

Scene Five — another street, near the Masonic Hall. later that day (Around June 24th)

Scene Six — the Chamberlin Cabin — late at night on June 27th, 1844

Author's note — The author requests that this note be printed in all programs

This is a story of my imagination as far as most names and circumstances are concerned. Some of the happenings in the play are factual. The initial idea came from an article in the ENSIGN magazine of the LDS Church, June 1974 issue, "Teenage Witness To The Martyrdom" by Golden R. Buchanan. His story served as the basis for the idea for this play but his story and characters are not told herein. Only the title and the age of the main character come from Brother Buchanan's story. And I gratefully acknowledge his permission to use it.

C. Michael Perry

NOTE: To handle the skin pricking, stage blood and knives that hold and squirt the blood can be purchased from theatrical supply houses. (Ask for a Sweeney Todd knife.) So that as each man "pricks" Jason, he lightly squeezes the handle of his knife and leaves a little mark of stage blood on Jason's skin.

TEENAGE WITNESS TO THE MARTYRDOM

SCENE ONE -- *The Chamberlin household -- outside Nauvoo, Illinois, June 1844, NELLIE JEAN is preparing dinner for her family. After a few seconds we hear gunshots far off in the distance.*

NELLIE: Susan, call in your brothers and sisters! Then board up the windows.

SARAH: Yes, Mama.

(Goes to door)

Joshua! Robert! Maria! Jason! Come in!

JOSH: *(Off stage as others adlib.)* What for?

SUSAN- Mama said to! Come now!

ROBERT: *(Entering)* What for, Mama?

(Others follow)

NELLIE: I need you in here.

JOSHUA: But why? We can't have dinner. Ain't got nothin' ta eat. They burned the storage and we can't trust them danged mobocrat storekeepers!

NELLIE: Joshua, that's enough! Please -- get the guns loaded. Jason get the key to the locker.

(No answer)

Joshua, where's Jason?

(Silence)

Robert?

(Silence)

Will any of you tell me?

(Silence)

SUSAN: He made us promise.

NELLIE: Promise what?

ROBERT: Not to tell...

MARIA: ... That he went to Carthage.

(Other children shush her)

NELLIE: Oh, dear Lord... not him, too! He's too young! First the father and now the son.

SUSAN: He'll be all right, Mama, Daddy'll watch over him.

NELLIE: I've got to get to him!

KIDS: *(variously)* But, Mama, you can't...*(etc.)*

JOSHUA: Mama, don't you think that if we're gonna need the guns in here that you'd better not go out there?

NELLIE: But I can't just wait! I waited for your father and he never came home.

SUSAN: Mama, please!

NELLIE: Susan, I can't sit and do nothing. I did nothing and your father died!

JOSHUA: But, Mama, you couldn't have helped him. We would have lost you too,

(Shots, shouting, celebration and carousing are heard outside at a short distance.)

NELLIE: Everybody under the table! Susan, the candle!! Joshua -- the lamp!

(The lights are extinguished and the family hides. We see the action now outside the cabin)

MAN 1: *(Still offstage)* Rid of 'im fer good!

MAN 2: Ol' Joe'll be no more trouble here!

MAN 3: Maybe now, these Mormons'll clear out and leave the land to decent folks!

MAN 4: Naw! With Smith in jail we'll just have ta run 'em out like we did in Missouri.

(The MEN have entered the stage during the lines previous. They now hear a rustling in the bushes)

MAN 1: Hey, what's that??

(Rustling continues as the MEN hide. Soon JASON enters breathless, his clothes are torn and he has been crying. He stops to rest for a moment. He is still a ways from the cabin. As he leans against a tree or something, the MEN come out of hiding)

MAN 2: What's got you so skeered, boy?

JASON: Nothin'.

MAN 3: Who you runnin' from then?

JASON: Nobody.

MAN 4: I think we got ourse'ves a Mormon brat. What do you think, Boys?

MAN 1: I think you jest may be right,

(The MEN begin to circle JASON as they pull their knives)

MAN 3: You a Mormon, Boy? Cause if you are we're gonna skin ya and hang ya out to dry.

(they poke at him with their knives.)

You reckon he's a big enough mouthful fer the buzzards, fellas?

MEN: Yes. Sure. Looks likely. etc.

(The MEN rip JASON'S shirt off. He stands strong and defiant)

MAN 4: How 'bout it, boy. You a Mormon?

ROBERT: Momma, what's happening?

NELLIE: I don't know ... I can't see! I can't hear!

*(Two of the MEN grab JASON'S arms and tie ropes around his wrists. The other ends of each rope are tied, one to the well and one to the fence post. JASON is somewhat suspended between them, Then all the MEN circle in even closer and begin to prick JASON'S chest & back with their knives. * See NOTE on cast page * He is stoic as the MEN laugh and ad lib, taunts and teasing and keep piercing his skin. JASON ends up hanging limp from the pain, And he finally lashes out at them)*

JASON: I ain't no Mormon -- just leave me alone!!!

MAN 2: Hear that? He ain't Mormon!

(laughs)

And I'm President Tyler!

(He laughs as others join him. He cuts ropes)

MAN 1: Come on, boys -- looks like the brat learned a lesson. You better clear out, boy, next time you'll die.

(The MEN go off laughing and joking and looking back at JASON. All JASON can do is kneel where he is and sob)

JASON: *(calls weakly)* Mama?

(NELLIE ventures a peek out the cabin door -- she sees no one and rushes out to JASON)

NELLIE: Oh, Jason...Oh, son -- what have they...?

(She cradles him in her arms as he sobs loudly)

It's all right, shh, it's all right.

(JASON regains his composure.)

It'll all work out! We'll be all right, you'll see! It's just...

JASON: No, Mama! It's not all right, It won't work out! Don't you see? If God loves us so much why does he let this happen? He could stop it! He could save us!! And he would if he were really there!! But he isn't. I just can't believe it anymore.

(All of a sudden JASON collapses. NELLIE notices for the first time that her son is bleeding.)

NELLIE: Jason! What did they do? Oh, no dear God, why? He's just a boy!! You can't take him from me!!

(The action stops for a moment. NELLIE freezes as JASON approaches the audience.)

JASON: I never forgot that moment -- that very moment of denial, betrayal. That's how I looked at it years later. I never forgot the pain and humiliation either. You can't imagine what it's like or how it feels for the cold dirty steel of a bunch of misfits to pierce into your flesh on every side. I was hot-cold-hot again. And not only hot with pain, I was hot with anger. And my anger wasn't at these devil's agents. I was angry at the God who was making me suffer the pain. The God who held my tongue while my blood ran down the outside of my skin. The God who held me like a steel trap while I suffered at the hands of my enemies. That's what I thought -- then. I have never nor will I ever forget my thoughts and words of that terrible moment. "I ain't no Mormon -- just leave me alone!"

(He is silent for a moment before he rejoins the action and takes his place in his mothers arms)

NELLIE: Susan -- Joshua!! Come out here quickly!!

SUSAN: What's wrong Ma?

JOSHUA: It's Jason! What happened?

NELLIE: Never mind that now. Just help me get him into the house.

JOSHUA: *(Running to the house)* No!! Those scum are going to pay for this!

(He emerges with a pistol)

NELLIE: And just what do you think you can do against the men who did this to your brother?

JOSHUA: Kill every stinking one of them! That's what!!

NELLIE: *(shaking her head)* And end up like Jason?

SUSAN: Mother's right, Josh -- hurry, please! Help us!

JOSHUA: *(dropping the gun)* Oh, Momma, I'm sorry.

NELLIE: You're a brave boy, Joshua. But you're still just a boy,

JOSHUA: Will Jason be all right, Momma?

NELLIE: I think so. If you'll help us get him into the cabin.

(They carefully move JASON into the cabin as the lights dim)

SCENE TWO -- *The same. Interior and exterior of the cabin. Inside SUSAN is tending to JASON. The children are out behind the cabin playing. NELLIE is outside at a well. She is pensive. She is singing. Soon SUSAN joins her song from the interior of the cabin.*

MUSICAL # 1 -- MY SON -- MY BROTHER

NELLIE:

SUCH A LITTLE WHILE AGO HE WAS CRADLED TO MY BREAST
 SOON HE SCRAPED HIS KNEE BY FALLING FROM A TREE
 THEN THE BOY I BORE BECAME A PEST!
 BUT THAT TOO PASSED WHEN HIS FATHER DIED,
 HE TRIED TO HIDE HIS TEARS --
 THE LITTLE BOY INSIDE WAS OLD ENOUGH TO SHED HIS FEARS.
 THIS YOUNG MAN IS DRIVEN TO AVENGE HIS FATHERS PAIN.
 I HOPE THE BOY I KNEW AND LOVE WILL STILL REMAIN,
 MY SON TRIES TO BE
 WHAT HIS FATHER WAS TO ME.
 BUT I'M SO AFRAID
 HE'LL BECOME A RENEGADE.
 MY SON -- MY SON
 I NEED HIM NOW HIS FATHERS GONE.
 MY SON--MY SON
 IF I LOSE HIM I CAN'T GO ON.

(Scene shifts to inside and SUSAN)

SUSAN:

MY BROTHER IS A BOY
 WHO'S FORCED TO PLAY A DIFFERENT ROLE
 TO FILL HIS FATHER'S SHOES
 HE MUST ACQUIRE HIS FATHER'S SOUL!
 BUT FATHER WAS A MAN WHO LOVED
 AND LAUGHED WITH ALL HIS MIGHT;
 AND MY BROTHER'S STILL TOO YOUNG
 TO KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT.
 MY BROTHER -- MY BROTHER --
 I LOVE HIM, I RESPECT HIM, BUT IT SEEMS A LOT TO ASK
 MY BROTHER -- MY BROTHER
 HE'S YOUNG, HE'S STRONG, BUT HE'S NOT UP TO THE TASK.
 HE NEEDS SOME TIME TO GROW AND LEARN
 WHILE SEARCHING FOR HIS SOUL.
 AND THOUGH HE RARELY FALTERS

HE IS SO FAR FROM HIS GOAL.
 HE SEES A MAN WHO'S STRENGTHENED
 BY THE PASSING TESTS OF TIME,
 WHILE HE REACHES HE FORGETS HE HAS TO CLIMB.
 MY BROTHER -- MY BROTHER --
 A LEADER, A FIGHTER WHO WILL SERVE THE LORD SOMEDAY;
 MY BROTHER--MY BROTHER --
 I HOPE, I PRAY THAT HE WON'T GET LOST ALONG THE WAY!

SUSAN:

HE NEEDS SOME TIME TO GROW AND LEARN
 WHILE SEARCHING FOR HIS SOUL.
 AND THOUGH HE RARELY FALTERS HE IS
 SO FAR FROM HIS GOAL. HE
 SEES A MAN WHO'S STRENGTHENED BY THE
 PASSING TESTS OF TIME, WHILE HE
 REACHES HE FORGETS HE HAS TO CLIMB!
 MY BROTHER -- MY BROTHER I
 HOPE, I PRAY THAT HE
 WON'T GET LOST
 ALONG THE WAY.

NELLIE:

MY SON TRIES TO
 BE WHAT HIS
 FATHER WAS TO
 ME! BUT
 I'M SO A-
 FRAID HE'LL BE
 COME A RENEGADE.
 GONE. MY SON -- MY SON
 IF I LOSE HIM
 I CAN'T AND
 I WON'T GO ON!

(At the end of the song the children come running around from the back of the cabin)

MARIA: Mama? Will Jason be all right?

NELLIE: Yes, Maria -- with God's help.

MARIA: Does God care if Jason dies?

JOSHUA: Of course He does, Maria! You ask too many questions!

NELLIE: Now, Joshua, I remember you asking the same questions three years ago when your father died.

(He is silent)

Jason is doing fine and in a day or so he'll be up playing with you like he used to.

ROBERT: Can we see him now? Please?!

NELLIE: I think so, if he's awake,

(They go into the cabin where SUSAN has JASON sitting up eating some broth. The children rush into the cabin and NELLIE slowly follows. She is tired)

MARIA: Jason, Jason!! Momma said we could see you!!

(JASON almost scalds himself as he catches the broth that SUSAN dropped as the children invaded)

JASON: Yeeow!! Careful Susan. You'd think the Indians were attacking.

NELLIE: Children! Settle down, please. Jason isn't healed yet.

JASON: And won't likely be if Susan adds burns to my scars.

SUSAN: I'm sorry, Jason. But they scared me.

(To NELLIE)

I thought you said Jason needed his rest?

NELLIE: He does, but I couldn't hold them back any longer. They've been out there all day. It's starting to get dark out.

MARIA: Will you swing me, Jason?

JASON: Not now, Maria.

JOSHUA: I bet I could beat ya in a wrasslin' match!

JASON: For once, yeah, I bet you could.

(JASON chuckles painfully)

JOSHUA: Wanna try it?

NELLIE: Joshua!

JOSHUA: I was only kidding. I can't wait for you to get better, Jase.

JASON: I can't either.

ROBERT: Maybe if we all prayed then you'd get better faster. God'll help us won't he?

JASON: No! I got no use for prayers right now!

SUSAN: But Jason, what...

JASON: Did ya hear me?! I don't wanna pray -- and I don't want none of you prayin' for me either. I'll get better all by myself.

NELLIE: Jason, I think...

JASON: No, you don't, Momma, Please, just leave me alone now.

NELLIE: All right, Children, go and get washed up for dinner. Susan, will you help me?

SUSAN: Sure, Momma.

(She takes the things from JASON'S bedside)

NELLIE: Jason ...

JASON: Momma, I'm sorry fer yellin' at ya -- but I need to be alone. Can I sit up by the fire?

NELLIE: I think that might be all right. Need some help?

JASON: I'm not a baby, Momma.

(He rises with difficulty and suddenly sits back down on the edge of the bed. NELLIE doesn't see this.

He tries again slowly and makes his way over to the rocking chair by the fireplace which is on the fourth wall downstage. He sits painfully. SUSAN is looking in his direction as he winces out loud)

SUSAN: *(Coming closer to him)* Jason, you're bleeding again! Oh, Momma, he's bleeding again!!

JASON: I'm fine, Susan. I'll take it easy.

(SUSAN looks to NELLIE who nods. JASON leans back and is soon sound asleep, his head lolling to one side)

SUSAN: What's gotten into Jason, Momma? He's never refused a prayer before.

NELLIE: He's confused and a little bitter, I suppose. Who wouldn't be after what he's been through.

SUSAN: I wonder ... why did those men stop?

NELLIE: Susan?!

SUSAN: I mean so many of the other Saints have been stripped and beaten, tarred and feathered even after they were cut up. Why didn't it happen to Jason, too?

NELLIE: I'm sure the Lord's unseen hand intervened and saved your brother.

SUSAN: But then why is he bitter?

NELLIE: He doesn't yet realize that God did help him. That his Father does love him

SUSAN: But then, why did...

NELLIE: Why did it happen?

SUSAN: Yes.

(JASON stirs fitfully in his sleep.)

NELLIE: Jason, is a special young man -- he's going through the refiners fire -- so to speak. I think the Lord must have some special task in mind for Jason and he's testing him to see if he'll bear up under even greater pressure. He's given Jason the responsibility to look after this family -- something that he's managed very well. He's a lot like your father. Strong & stubborn, even rebellious. He'll soon realize that he can't do it all by himself, And he'll call for help.

JASON: *(Still asleep he stirs again and begins yelling and thrashing)* NO!! Don't do it again! I can't take it anymore! Leave me alone! No! No!! Please!

(He sobs and stands to run and trips over the rocking chair)

Please!!

(NELLIE goes to him.)

Momma?

NELLIE: *(Holding JASON)* Sh! It's all right! It was just a dream.

(JASON moans and passes out limp)

Susan! Go get Doc Geer! He's dying! Your brother is dying!

(BLACKOUT as SUSAN bolts out the door)

SCENE THREE -- *The same, NELLIE in the rocking chair over by JASON'S bed. It is three days later. She is rocking, maybe humming a snatch of her melody from the previous song. We see SUSAN and the children outside playing games but we hear little noise. DOC GEER enters and knocks.*

DOC: Nellie, It's Doc Geer.

NELLIE: Oh, Henry, come in!

DOC: How's Jason doing?

NELLIE: Shouldn't I be asking you that question?

DOC: Maybe so. Has he eaten?

NELLIE: He's been asleep since he fell.

DOC: *(checking the wounds on his chest)* He's pretty much healed. Been any more dreams?

NELLIE: No. He's been peaceful.

DOC: Good. There's been a lot of confabbin' around town. A lot of the Saints are wantin' to leave. Joseph's off with Porter and Hyrum somewhere. I hope he comes back although it maybe better for him if he stayed away. The mobs got their back up. No one, especially Joseph, will be safe.

(We hear the children scream. The same four MEN enter to see what trouble they can stir up this time. NELLIE & DOC get up and go outside the cabin.)

DOC: You're not wanted here. Go on and leave us in peace.

MAN 2: You're the one ain't wanted here -- so maybe it's you should do the leavin', old man!

(MAN 2 pushes DOC and the MEN laugh. ROBERT & JOSHUA run at the MEN and the MEN knock them down. SUSAN grabs up MARIA and runs to NELLIE near the cabin door as the MEN again pull their knives. Meanwhile JASON has awakened and heard the goings on. He procures the pistols from their hiding place, checks them and slowly makes his way to the door.)

NELLIE: You heard the Doctor -- get out of here! What are you to pick on women and children and unarmed men! I can't wait to see you on your day of judgment -- you'll burn in your own hatred! And your eternity will be a living hELL.

MAN 3: Well, now ain't you somethin'? I like the way yer eyes blaze when yer , angry -- pretty sassy

MAN 4: Yea, she's pretty all right -- let's just see how pretty, eh boys?

(They move to NELLIE, DOC tries to take on one of the MEN who clobbers him with the butt end of his knife. They move forward but stop all of a sudden)

JASON: Touch her and you're dead men!!

MAN 11: Well, if'n it ain't our little Mormon Brat -- too bad -- maybe we'll do the job right, this time.

(As the MEN move forward DOC & SUSAN pick up a stick of wood and maneuver to behind the MEN. As NELLIE runs for a weapon JASON discharges his pistols and two MEN go down. DOC and SUSAN clobber another one, and in his frantic effort to retreat the last MAN drops his knife and is tripped, kicked and beaten by the other CHILDREN and NELLIE. He barely escapes with his life)

JASON: Momma, are you all right?

NELLIE: Oh, yes Jason, yes I'm fine.

(She hugs him and all the children run to embrace in a big circle)

JASON: Thanks for lending a hand, Doc.

DOC: My pleasure, son. It looks like you're feeling better.

JASON: Much. What are we going to do with the bodies?

DOC: We'll have to report this to the authorities, they'll come and get 'Em and take 'am for burial. I'll go on into town. Just leave 'am. We'll be back shortly.

NELLIE: Let's go inside, children. God deserves our thanks for our deliverance.

JASON: God didn't deliver us, I did. I killed those men -- not God. You go ahead and do your prayin'. I'll stay out here.

JOSHUA: I'm stayin' with Jason!

ROBERT: So am I!

NELLIE: Robert, you'll do no such thing! Joshua.

JOSHUA: I'm old enough to make up my own mind!

NELLIE: *(Grabs ROBERT and leads him and the girls off)* I'll not forget this Joshua! You've got a lickin' coming!

(She exits into house)

JOSHUA: Jason, you were great. I hope I can be like you!

JASON: Well, ya can't. You just remember who gives the lickins around here. It's me, not Ma. So remember this...

(JASON hits JOSHUA on the rear with a flat hand, again, again and JOSHUA stands there as stoically as JASON did before, one more flat handed hit and JASON can't stand it so he punches JOSHUA in the stomach. JOSHUA doubles over to land on his knees. JASON runs to the house and then runs back to JOSHUA mortified at what he did to his brother.)

Josh, I'm sorry ... I didn't think you... I didn't mean to...

(JASON sobs, trying to put his arms around JOSHUA. JOSHUA violently shrugs him off. JASON moves to comfort JOSHUA again and JOSHUA stands defiantly)

JOSHUA: I hate you!! I hate you!! You're a big bully! You just can't take it! God can forgive but you can't! I wish you weren't my big brother -- I'd show you!

(JOSHUA runs past JASON and as he does JOSHUA shoves JASON who loses his balance and ends up in a broken heap on the floor.)

JASON: *(Sobbing)* Why? -- Why? -- Why?

(LIGHTS slowly fade to black.)

SCENE FOUR -- *A street in Nauvoo, can be played in front of a curtain, drop or scrim that hides the cabin. Women & Children are crossing back and forth, shopping. A few men are around a barrel on one side of the stage, mostly older men. Some boys are playing stick ball in the street. JASON enters, kicking stones. As he walks by the boys they call out "Hi, Jase", "How ya doin', Jase", "I heard what happened" and the like. JASON doesn't seem to pay attention. The boys look at each other and shrug. They return to playing their game. At that moment a few OLDER BOYS enter from the other side of the stage, laughing and joking. They stop, silent when they see JASON. The older men notice the sudden silence and so do the boys playing games. The Mormon boys begin to whistle and whittle and surround the OLDER BOYS who approach JASON, The men silently get their weapons ready for a fight.*

BOY 1: You Jason Chamberlin?

JASON: Could be? Who're you?

BOY 2: *(pushing him)* None o' your lip, brat,

BOY 3: Answer the question!

JASON: What question?

BOY 1: *(Slaps him across the face and knocks him down)* You Jason Chamberlin? The scum that killed my pa?
(Silence, JASON sits, unmoving)

I want an answer, brat!

(JASON scuttles away and quickly rises)

JASON: I killed two men who threatened my family and were gonna rape my ma.

BOY 1: Liar! You shot 'em in cold blood!

(He is working up the nerve to charge, even though he is twice JASON'S size)

You killed my pa!

JASON: *(Ripping his shirt off as he backs up)* All of you, see these scars, that's what his pa and his friends did to me four days ago and what they were gonna do to my family before I shot them.

BOY 1: Liar! Liar! Liar!

(He charges leaving his comrades behind. The MEN now step in between the comrades and JASON and the BOY.)

MAN: Don't try it fellas.

(BOY lunges again at JASON who dodges, the BOY is frantic, JASON is nervous but wary. The Sheriff enters and starts to break up the two BOYS.)

SHERIFF: All right, son.

(Grabbing hold of BOY 1)

That's enough!

BOY 1: But he killed my pa!

SHERIFF: You Jason Chamberlin?

JASON: Yes, sir.

SHERIFF: You'd better go home. Your name isn't good for much more than killing around here. Hurry! Git!

BOY 1: *(Watching JASON go)* But Sheriff, he killed my pa!!!

SHERIFF: I know it, son. And I don't like him nor his kind any more than you do!

BOY 1: Then why didn't you let me git him?

SHERIFF: Hotheads like you and yer pa I like even less. It's bad enough ta kill 'em 'cause they're Mormons, but yer Pa and his friends don't have ta rape the women and children. Now go home. Straight home!! I don't wanna hear 'bout you botherin' the Chamberlin boy again. You fellas too, go on git!

(The OLDER BOYS shuffle off)

MAN: Thank you, Sheriff.

SHERIFF: *(Gives him a look)* You Mormons go about yer business! The sooner you leave Illinois, the better off we'll all be,

BLACKOUT

6 more pages to the end