

PERUSAL SCRIPT

Lavender and Exile

by **Matthew Ivan Bennett**

Episode 2 of the **RADIO HOUR** Series



Newport, Maine

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LAVENDER and EXILE

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CHARACTERS:

CAST of LAVENDER — 3f 3m 1either

Old Henry / Young Henry
Mrs. Tanner
“Lavender”
Warren
Emily
Old Neighbor (Gender Neutral)
Young People (doubled by various cast members)
EFFECTS (F/X)

Suggested doubling — 2f 2m

Actor 1: Old Henry / Young Henry / Young People
Actor 2: "Lavender" / Young People
Actor 3: Mrs. Tanner / Emily / Young People
Actor 4: Warren / Old Neighbor / Young People

CAST of EXILE 5f 6m 1either

Narrator (Gender Neutral)
Jean Baptiste
Mrs. Baptiste
Mr. George Clawson
Policeman Henry Heath
Sexton Jesse C. Little
First Girl
Second Girl
Outraged Woman
Miss Penny
The Voice of Wilford Woodruff
The Voice of Brigham Young
Mob
EFFECTS (F/X)

Suggested Doubling to 2f 2m 1either

Actor 1: Narrator (Gender Neutral), possibly Voices
Actor 2: First Girl, Miss Penny, Mob (if narrator is female, Actors 1 and 2 can combine)
Actor 2: Jean Baptiste, Voice of Wilford Woodruff, Voice of Brigham Young, Mob
Actor 3: Mrs. Baptiste, Second Girl, Sexton Jesse C. Little, Outraged Woman, Mob
Actor 5: Mr. George Clawson, Policeman Henry Heath, Mob

NOTE: because of the unique way this was produced originally, with two live foley artists, it's hard to double EXILE, as the foley artists were used for some characters.

Period Costumes or contemporary clothes

Radio Station setting

Sound Effects required (can be Foley, recorded, or a mix of both. Music required.)

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NOTE: The ‘commercial’ between the two short plays is optional and can be edited from the performance by segueing directly from “*F/X: Young Henry BREATHING. Lavender’s LAUGH.*” To “**ACTOR TWO:** Only once. **ACTOR THREE:** Oh.” MARKED IN SCRIPT.

LAVENDER & EXILE by *Matthew Ivan Bennett* (52 minutes) 5f 6m 1either can be doubled to 2f 2m 1either. Simple costumes, setting. SFX essential. Staged Radio Drama, Radio Broadcast, Fully-Staged Production, or Virtual Theatre. Two original plays for Halloween — Lavender & Exile — based on ghost stories from Salt Lake City. In *Lavender*, a young man falls for a Scottish young woman who appears to be new to town. This sweet and haunting love story riffs on the familiar stories of ghosts and love at first sight. This haunting love story will tax your reason and twist the cockles of your heart. *Exile* spins a chilling yarn about a real-life grave-robber at the Salt Lake City Cemetery circa 1860, whose apparition is allegedly still seen on the shores of the Great Salt Lake. RADIO HOUR is a co-production between Salt Lake City’s Plan-B Theatre Company and the University of Utah’s Public Radio station KUER's Radio West. **ORDER #3236**

MATTHEW IVAN BENNETT is a resident of Plan-B Theatre, listed by American Theater magazine as one of 14 companies nationwide exemplifying social action and civic engagement. At Plan-B, he’s premiered several stage and radio plays, including an adaptation of “*Frankenstein*” that won a Utah Broadcasters Association award and “*Eric(a)*”—which won Best Drama at the United Solo festival in New York. He received the Holland New Voices award from the Great Plains Theatre Commons, has twice been a finalist in screenwriting at Austin Film Festival, and in 2016 was an O’Neill finalist. His short plays have appeared at Chicago's Circle Theatre, Rising Sun in New York, Monkeyman in Toronto, and the Source Festival in DC. Matt is a member of the Dramatists’ Guild.

LAVENDER AND EXILE

MUSIC UP

ANNOUNCER: Welcome. This segment of Radio Hour is brought to you by Shakey's ice-cold crackinated cola. Four out of five doctors agree a steady intake of crack strengthens the heart, purifies the liver, and enhances the nerves.

F/X: A glass BOTTLE BEING OPENED.

Shakey's: Getting The Shakes Never Tasted So Good.

COMPANY: (*jingly*) Shakey's.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you, as always, for inviting us into your living rooms through the magic of radio-waves. We have a stupendous program coming up, so keep those dials set right here. And now, introducing: the sonorous and sparkling [NAME OF ACTOR ONE]

(ACTOR ONE enters and bows.)

(ad-lib; F/X)

The tell-the-tale-to-me-trippingly-on-the-tongue [NAME OF ACTOR TWO]

(ACTOR TWO enters and bows)

(ad-lib; F/X)

The indefatigable and effervescent foley artist [NAME OF ACTOR THREE]

(ACTOR THREE enters and bows)

(ad-lib; F/X)

The maven of make-believe audio, the wizardess of weird sounds, the stereophonic sensation, foley artist [NAME OF ACTOR FOUR]

(ACTOR FOUR enters and bows.)

(ab-lib; F/X)

And last, but certainly not least talented, myself: the jocular and jingling, the jazzy and jubilant, the jocund, the makes y'wanna jump fer Jesus, the jungle-like—

ACTOR FOUR: —The juvenile.

ANNOUNCER: (drawing out the name of ACTOR FIVE, who is “himself”)

F/X: A whoopee cushion.

(clearing the throat; recovering)

How are you on this fine day [NAME OF ACTOR ONE]?

ACTOR ONE: I'm swell, thanks.

ANNOUNCER: And you [NAME OF ACTOR TWO]?

ACTOR TWO: Keen, thank you.

ANNOUNCER: And how are you Mr. [NAME OF ACTOR THREE]?

ACTOR THREE: Very gay. I appreciate your asking.

ANNOUNCER: Terr-ific. As I said, ladies and gents—

ACTOR FOUR: —I'm peachy. Thank you.

ANNOUNCER: Super... And—

ACTOR FOUR: Ahem! I'm good, too.

ANNOUNCER: Yes. Good.

(Sotto voce)

Sorry.

(Back in the swing)

As I said, you're in for quite a treat as we present two radio dramas based on little-known Utah ghost stories. The first, Lavender, is a haunting love story that will tax your reason and twist the cockles of your heart. The second, Exile, is a chilling yarn about a real-life grave-robber at the Salt Lake City Cemetery. And now, [NAMES of THEATRE COMPANY and RADIO STATION] and Shakey's ice-cold crackinated cola—

ACTORS: *(singing)* —Shakey's—

ANNOUNCER: —Present...Lavender.

F/X: Henry BREATHES HEAVILY. Lavender LAUGHS.

MUSIC UP "LAVENDER" (haunting, romantic)

F/X: A soft warm WIND RUSTLING in a poplar tree; a MAGPIE.

OLD HENRY: (to the audience) They say you never forget your first love. In my case that's a double truth— not because of her haunting beauty, though she was devastating; but because it all happened in one night: the twenty-fourth of July, Eighteen-Sixty. Pioneer Day. On the night of the biggest dance of the year in the frontier settlement of Salt Lake City...

F/X: FIREWORKS (in the B/G throughout); the sounds of a SHOES being BRUSHED as Young Henry HUMS.

MRS. TANNER: Henry, those shoes couldn't be blacker if ya dipped 'em in tar. You're gonna be late.

F/X: More POLISHING.

YOUNG HENRY: I want to look hantsome, Mother.

MRS. TANNER: Henry, the girls will not be lookin' at your Sunday shoes.

YOUNG HENRY: *(nervous, stops polishing)* Where will they be lookin'?

MRS. TANNER: They—they look—they look at your manners, Henry.

YOUNG HENRY: Oh.

MRS. TANNER: So be at your best and the girls will take ta ya.

YOUNG HENRY: Thank you, Mother.

MRS. TANNER: You're a fine dancer.

YOUNG HENRY: Do ya think so?

MRS. TANNER: I seen you and I know so. And, besides, who taught you?

MUSIC UP (in the middle of the next speech)

OLD HENRY: *(to the audience)* The dance hall was a dream: white drapes and lanterns everywhere, the room thick with dancers and rose perfume and sweat and gold light. A piano, a fiddler, stern-faced chaperones, and her: a slender purple shadow moving from boy to boy, leaving them speechless.

MUSIC UP

F/X: Young people SQUARE-DANCING, CHATTING and CLAPPING.

YOUNG PEOPLE:

(in the B/G; a girl:) ...The gall!

(a boy:) ...Jist ask ‘er!

(a girl:) ...Looks like a wilted pumpkin.

(a boy:) ...I wasn’t tryin’ nuthin’, you could fit a Book ‘a Mormon between us!

(a girl:) ...That boy is bad.

(a boy:) ...Smells like a flowerbed threw up in here.

WARREN: Hey, Henry!

YOUNG HENRY: Howdy, Warren.

(they shake hands; Henry sniffs)

‘S that kerosene?

WARREN: *(smells himself)* Goldarnit! Yeah—Cin ya smell that? I had my jacket hanging on the back of a chair in the sittin’ room and my liddle sister comes tearin’ through and knocks a over a lamp. B’lieve that? ‘S itchy, too.

(he itches)

You jist git here?

YOUNG HENRY: Yep. Did I miss anything?

WARREN: Nuthin’ much. Couple handkerchiefs fell outta Harriet Henderson’s dress when she was twirlin’.

YOUNG HENRY: Really?

WARREN: Yep. Never bin too curvy under the collarbones.

(the BOYS laugh)

F/X: PHLEGMATIC SNORTING as Emily approaches CLOPPINGLY.

EMILY: *(from twenty feet or so)* Yoo-hoo! Henry!

WARREN: Uh, oh. Here comes You-Know-Who.

YOUNG HENRY: Where?

WARREN: Time fer some summer air, I think.

(whispering)

She may be a Bishop's daughter, but the Lord sure didn't favor that family when it comes to faces.

YOUNG HENRY: *(under his breath)* Warren! Don't—

EMILY: *(dowdy)* Hello Henry Tanner.

YOUNG HENRY: Oh, Emily, hello.

WARREN: Cetch ya after, Henry.

(leaving)

Emily.

EMILY: *(icily)* Warren. 'Bye.

F/X: Warren PATS Henry and WALKS AWAY.

EMILY: Do you like my dress?

(Emily SNORTS)

YOUNG HENRY: Uh, yes, it's very...yellow. It reminds me of...butter.

EMILY: *(snorting, giggling)* Thank you.

(immediately)

Hey, I waved at you Sunday last and you did not wave back.

YOUNG HENRY: You waved at me?

EMILY: I was standing in plain sight, Henry Tanner.

(snorting)

You were on your way to the church and I was on my porch.

YOUNG HENRY: Hmmm. I, I remember that you were missing from church. Were you sick? ...Again?

EMILY: *(snorting)* You know perfectly well I was. My mother told Mrs. Clawson who told your mother. It is sweltering in here.

YOUNG HENRY: Is it?

EMILY: Under a dress it is.

(a longer snort)

YOUNG HENRY: I would not know.

EMILY: Well I should hope not, silly.

(cackling)

Are you gonna apologize?

YOUNG HENRY: Uh—

EMILY: At the very least you could ask me to dance.

YOUNG HENRY: You—aren't—too—sweltering?

EMILY: (*sighing*) Good Christmas. You really aren't so dandy, Henry. I would not rebuff me.

MUSIC UP (the song they dance to)

OLD HENRY: (*to the audience*) Out of pity I danced with Emily. I danced with other girls, too, but Emily always required long apologies for any slight, so we danced quite a few. But halfway through a song, I saw her for the first time: wearing a lavender dress and a matching shawl. Lavender like the twilight, like lilacs in the rain. Her hair was auburn, long and wavy; her eyes were mossy, the bottom of a crystal clear creek bed—from across the room I felt I was wading in them. And her hands. From thirty feet I knew that they let off a heat, touched you like sun, filled you with carelessness. I was dancing with Emily, but inside I was inches from that strange girl, studying her pale round face, breathing her lavender blossom breath.

F/X: Wind RUSTLING in a poplar tree.

EMILY: Owww! Watch it, you big Clydesdale! That was my foot!

(EMILY snorting)

F/X: Henry and Emily DANCING; far-off FIREWORKS.

YOUNG HENRY: Hey Emily, do you know who that girl is?

EMILY: What girl?

YOUNG HENRY: The girl in purple. She's danced every dance.

EMILY: Never seen her.

(another snort from EMILY)

YOUNG HENRY: Huh.

EMILY: Why?

YOUNG HENRY: I was wondering who she is. She looks...different.

EMILY: Different? Different in what way?

YOUNG HENRY: Not from here.

EMILY: Meaning?

YOUNG HENRY: From somewhere else?

EMILY: Meaning you think she's exotic.

YOUNG HENRY: Ummm, I suppose.

F/X: Emily STAMPS.

EMILY: Oooh, you are such a boor, Henry! Dancing with me and calling another girl "exotic"? I have a half a mind to stop helping you socially; your manners are atrocious.

(EMILY snorting)

YOUNG HENRY: Fine by me.

EMILY: *(the longest snort of all her snorts)* Oh. My mother, and your mother, shall be hearing of this.

F/X: Emily's shoes CLOMP OBNOXIOUSLY as she leaves; SNORTING.

OLD HENRY: *(to the audience)* My mother did hear of it, but my punishment was light: I was told never to talk to Emily again. In retrospect, though, I sometimes wish I had kept dancing with other girls. I wish I hadn't been as drawn to the girl in purple as I was.

YOUNG HENRY: Hey, Warren—

WARREN: *(panting)* Howdy, brother. Woo.

YOUNG HENRY: Do you know who that girl is?

WARREN: What girl?

YOUNG HENRY: That girl there.

WARREN: *(looking)* Her? The one in all purple?

YOUNG HENRY: Yeah.

WARREN: Wow.

YOUNG HENRY: I know.

WARREN: Sweet Peter's fishin' pole.

YOUNG HENRY: I know.

WARREN: No handkerchiefs hidin' there.

YOUNG HENRY: Who is she?

WARREN: Search me. Ya gonna ask 'er ta dance? Cuz if you ain't I am.

YOUNG HENRY: Yes, I'm gonna ask 'er.

WARREN: ...Now?

YOUNG HENRY: Soon as she comes over, hold your horses. The song's about to end.

OLD HENRY: *(to the audience)* The chance came when she lingered next to me by the punch bowl. I almost didn't speak, I was so hypnotized by her. She smelled like mountains, like a juniper berry that's been crushed open, like rock wet with rain. And, up close, the eyes were even deeper: looking into them I was lost in a deep wood.

F/X: WATER being LADLED into a glass.

YOUNG HENRY: Hello there.

LAVENDER: *(softly, slightly ethereal, a Scottish accent)* Hello.

MUSIC UP ("Lavender's Theme," lowly)

YOUNG HENRY: Pardon me—Hello there—I've been, uh—

WARREN: *(from across the room)* Lookit, Henry!

(a bunch of BOYS laugh)

YOUNG HENRY: *(going on)* I've been, uh, wanting to—

LAVENDER: Yes?

YOUNG HENRY: —Tell you: your dress. Is beautiful.

LAVENDER: Oh. Thank you. It's the only one I've got, really.

YOUNG HENRY: Are you new to town?

LAVENDER: No—been about quite a while.

YOUNG HENRY: Oh. I haven't seen you at the dances.

LAVENDER: *(giggling)* I'm at every one.

YOUNG HENRY: *(puzzled)* Huh.

(Henry SIPS)

—Would you like a refreshment? Water? Let me bring it to you. Or take mine. Would you?

LAVENDER: No, thank you.

(a giggle into a little cough)

YOUNG HENRY: Are you all right? Are you sick?

LAVENDER: I'm fine. Just a cough.

F/X: Henry "Hmmm's", SLURPS his water nervously, TAPS his foot.

YOUNG HENRY: I'm sorry, forgive my forwardness, but you are a—You're—I mean to tell you—Lovely.

F/X: LAVENDER LAUGHS; it reverberates.

LAVENDER: Thank you.

YOUNG HENRY: And I like your laugh. And, uh, your accent.

LAVENDER: I like your way with words.

YOUNG HENRY: *(an anxious chuckle)* My name is Henry Tanner.

LAVENDER: Lavender.

YOUNG HENRY: Lavender? Your name is Lavender?

5 MORE PAGES TO THE END OF LAVENDER

MUSIC OUT

WHAT FOLLOWS IS A COMMERCIAL/INTERLUDE BETWEEN THE TWO SHORT PLAYS THAT IS ENTIRELY OPTIONAL BEING INCLUDED IN THE SCRIPT

[*OPTIONAL EDIT WOULD BEGIN HERE***]**

ANNOUNCER:

Welcome back to our studio, ladies and gentlemen. Wasn't that Lavender wonderful? It warms and chills at the same time. Makes you wonder, though: if Henry had gotten to second base, would he have felt boob? Or
(a ghost impression)
boo-b?

ACTOR FOUR:

I think that could be the lamest joke ever told on the radio.

ACTOR THREE: Whoa. Are we allowed to say "boob"?

ACTOR ONE: Only twice, [NAME OF ACTOR THREE].

ACTOR FOUR: Oh. Whoops.

ACTOR TWO: *(going on, to the ANNOUNCER)* Did you write that tripe?

ANNOUNCER: *(to ACTOR TWO)* Excuse me, who is the announcer of this show?

ACTOR FOUR: Sounds like the guy from Movie Phone.

F/X: A droll DRUM and CYMBAL.

ACTOR THREE: Are we allowed to say "boob" as in dullard?

ACTOR ONE: Not in the same show we say "boob" as in—

ANNOUNCER: —Moving on folks, please enjoy this brief commercial break with a preview of *Dracula at the OK Corral*, brought to you by [RADIO STATION NAME] and Shakey's ice-cold crackinated cola.

ACTORS: *(jingly)* Shakey's.

MUSIC UP; a sting.

F/X: A RATTLESNAKE. A "The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly" WHISTLE.

NARRATOR: *(booming bass voice)* In a different time...

F/X: The SHINGING of spurs.

...In a different world...

F/X: A coyote YOWLS.

WYATT EARP: *(to a shopkeeper)* Awright, gimme three torches, ten 'a them wooden stakes, a box 'a silver specials, and uh, oh yeah, some 'a yer holy water. The eight ounce bottles.

SHOPKEEPER: Right away, Mr Earp. Will that be paper, or burlap?

NARRATOR: *(Continuing)* ...One man...

WYATT EARP: *(to the shopkeeper)* Uh, burlap.

NARRATOR: ...In a fight against evil...

F/X: Bats SCREECHING and FLAPPING.

DRACULA: *(in a Transylvanian accent; menacing)* I em Drakooluh.

WYATT EARP: You're who?

DRACULA: Drakooluh.

WYATT EARP: I didn't cetch that.

DRACULA: *(annoyed)* Drak-oo-luh!

WYATT EARP: *(pause)* ...'R you sayin' "spatula"?

F/X: Bats SCREECHING and FLAPPING.

NARRATOR: *(continuing)* ...In a race against time...

MUSIC UP; a sting.

F/X: Horses GALLOPING.

WYATT EARP: Hya!

NARRATOR: ...One man risks everything...

MUSIC UP; a love theme, like Tchaikovsky's "Romeo and Juliet."

WYATT EARP: I luv you, Mina. An' don' you ever fergit that.

MINA: *(a Standard British accent)* In these past three minutes, Wyatt Earp, you have taught me the very meaning of love.

NARRATOR: ...To restore the balance of all existence in all dimensions in the universe...

F/X: A GUNSHOT.

DRACULA: Owwww!

WYATT EARP: Ya like that, Spatula?! Cuz there's five more where that come from!

F/X: Five GUNSHOTS and then an empty CLICKING.

WYATT EARP: Uh-oh.

DRACULA: I'm a vampahr, you goatish varlet. Ya can't gun-kill me.

NARRATOR: ...Next Halloween...

WYATT EARP: Who're you callin' "goatish," you clap-ridden foot-licker?

NARRATOR: ...From the theatre company that brought you [NAMES of the last two shows produced by the theatre]

DRACULA: Vamparhs can't git the clap.

WYATT EARP: They can't?

DRACULA: No.

WYATT EARP: ...Oh. Well, you're still a foot-licker!

NARRATOR: ...Comes a radio play that will re-define the genre of Spaghetti Western slash Horror slash Shticky Comedy radio plays...

DRACULA: (*muffled singing; loud and clear as the coffin opens*) "IT'S RAININ' MEN, HALLELUJAH! IT'S RAININ' MEN—!"

F/X: A coffin CREAKS open.

RENFIELD: (*a high nasally, cravenly, concerned voice*) —Master?

DRACULA: (*stops singing; clearing his throat*) Yes, Renfield, whattaya want?

RENFIELD: I heard shouting from the coffin. What were you doing, Master?

DRACULA: Nothin'.

F/X: A GUNSHOT. Dracula's LAUGH.

NARRATOR: ...Dracula at the OK Corral...

F/X: Bats SCREECHING and FLAPPING.

...Coming Soon.

MUSIC OUT

ANNOUNCER: Zowee. How can you go wrong with cowboys and vampires? Keep your ears pricked, my friends. Dracula at the OK Corral is coming soon.

ACTOR THREE: Are we allowed to say “pricked”?

ACTOR TWO: Only once.

ACTOR THREE: Oh.

[*OPTIONAL EDIT WOULD END HERE***]**

ANNOUNCER: And now, the second half of our program: a story of deep depravity, of graveyards, of a spectre seen in the valley of the Great Salt Lake. [NAME OF THEATRE COMPANY and RADIO STATION] and Shakey's—

ACTORS: Shakey's!

ANNOUNCER: ...give you...*Exile.*

“EXILE” MUSIC UP

F/X: The B/G sound of SEAGULLS CRYING and of a FREEWAY. WATER LAPS in the F/G.

(Two young women WALK IN THE SAND.)

FIRST GIRL: (*sniffing; put out*) God, this lake stinks.

SECOND GIRL: I know. 'S the brine shrimp.

FIRST GIRL: It's like a sewer with sand. Who told you it was "awesome" out here?

SECOND GIRL: Sarah.

FIRST GIRL: (*sses*) Yeah, figures, Sarah can't smell anything with her new and improved nose. You wanna go back? 'S getting dark.

SECOND GIRL: (*stopping*) Whoa. Look at that wacko. What is he doing?

F/X: An OTHERWORLDLY BUZZ. WET FOOTSTEPS.

FIRST GIRL: Where? What are you talking about?

SECOND GIRL: That guy. Is he carrying clothes?

FIRST GIRL: What guy?

SECOND GIRL: Down the beach? Guy with big wet bundle of clothes? You don't see him?

FIRST GIRL: Um, pretty sure I don't see anything.

F/X: The footsteps stop. The BUZZING fades.

SECOND GIRL: He's gone.

FIRST GIRL: Are you okay?

SECOND GIRL: He's gone.

MUSIC UP (sharp; a guitar, a harmonica)

NARRATOR: The story of Jean Baptiste, The Exile, is bound to the shores of the Great Salt Lake. It's said he was branded on the forehead and left on Fremont Island for his crimes. Public record says nothing of it, but the story lives: in the journal of Wilford Woodruff...

F/X: A pen SCRIBBLING.

THE VOICE OF WILFORD WOODRUFF: (*from his journal*) "Damnable, diabolical, satanical, hellish sacrileges...!"

NARRATOR: (*continuing*) ...In the testimonies of policeman and judge...

THE VOICE OF HENRY HEATH: (*as if telling a reporter years later*) "Imagine our shock and our surprise...In my breast rankled the unconquerable determination to kill him there and then should my suspicions be confirmed...!"

NARRATOR: (*continuing*) But most importantly, perhaps, the story lives in Baptiste's specter seen along the lake.

F/X: The BUZZING again; WATER LAPPING.

SECOND GIRL: (*as before*) "Down the beach? Guy with big wet bundle of clothes? You don't see him?"

NARRATOR: *(continuing)* Yes, the story of Jean Baptiste—a story of depravity, of banishment and of the dead—is bound to the shores of the Great Salt Lake; it begins, however, with the slicing sound of a shovel in the winter of 1862.

*F/X: A man SHOVELING in a slow rhythm. The ground is hard. The grass WHISTLES.
(Another man RUBS his hands together.)*

NARRATOR: The sky was a gray haze, the sun invisible behind it; the wind was sharp. Mr. George Clawson compulsively smoothed his sandy-colored hair, hovering by the grave, livid and impatient, as the coffin was dug up. His yellow teeth clattered and a vein throbbed in his left temple. His breath condensed in huffs of pompous irritation.

GEORGE CLAWSON: *(educated)* Could we do this with haste, please? The cold is stabbing.

LITTLE: Sorry, Mr. Clawson. The ground's frozen solid.

NARRATOR: Inside the coffin was Moroni Clawson, George's brother. A week earlier he had been arrested by Orrin Porter Rockwell, and was shot by police after attempting an escape. Despite his falling in with outlaws, however, his family wanted him in the family plot—not in a pine box in Salt Lake City.

F/X: The shovel THUDS against wood.

LITTLE: Here he is, sir.

(tapping)

Almost finished.

GEORGE CLAWSON: I would like to see him, Mr. Little.

LITTLE: Oh, ya don't wanna do that, sir. Best ta think 'a him—

GEORGE CLAWSON: Show me.

NARRATOR: Mr. Clawson knew his brother had been wrong in joining the attack on the Territorial Governor—even if Governor Dawson was a lecher and a jackass, sent only to tax the Mormons for a war in the South, he had been wrong. But did he deserve to be shot in the street for it? Even if he ran?

F/X: Little DUSTS OFF the coffin and PRIES it open.

LITTLE: *(to Mr. Clawson)* Prepare yourself, sir.

NARRATOR: Mr. Clawson steadied himself and stepped closer, gaping down into the casket.

GEORGE CLAWSON: *(aghast)* Oh Lord.

LITTLE: *(surprised)* Oh my. This isn't—

MUSIC UP (a creeping doom)

GEORGE CLAWSON: This is how my brother is buried?

LITTLE: No, sir, he was—

GEORGE CLAWSON: Naked? Face down?

LITTLE: He was clothed, sir. Mr. Heath, the policeman, he bought ‘im clothes.

GEORGE CLAWSON: Thrown in?!

LITTLE: I-I don’t understand it, sir.

GEORGE CLAWSON: That’s a terrible thing to do—to bury a man like that!

F/X: The BUZZ again; WATER LAPPING. Then the sound of a HORSE AND BUGGY. WINTER WINDS. A man dismounts, takes a few short steps over GRAVEL, wearing SPURS. He climbs a couple of steps and KNOCKS on a DOOR; a DOOR opening.

HEATH: Afternoon, Mr. Little.

LITTLE: Officer Heath.

HEATH: I ‘spose ya know why I’m callin’.

LITTLE: ‘Spose I do.

F/X: Heath enters. The DOOR CLOSES and the sound of the winter wind is dampened. A FIRE CRACKLES.

LITTLE: *(to his hired help)* ‘Scuse us, Miss Penny.

MISS PENNY: I cin finish the cleanin’ later, Sir.

F/X: Miss Penny LEAVES.

NARRATOR: Henry Heath, a barrel-chested man with a neat, reddish beard, surveyed Mr. Little’s home.

Scriptures sat open on a table by the fire; the walls were bare except for a sepia photograph of a staring, wrinkled woman; it smelled of bacon grease. Heath turned to the round, balding Mr. Little. Was this the home of a pervert and grave-robber?

HEATH: The Clawson family’s mighty upset, Mr. Little.

LITTLE: Reckoned they would be.

HEATH: *(going on)* And I’m startin’ an investigation on Judge Smith’s permission.

LITTLE: I heard.

HEATH: Now grave robbin’ is a felony, Mr. Little. And wicked in the eyes of God.

LITTLE: And I don’t know a thing about it. We dressed the Clawson boy in the clothes you were kind ‘nough to buy, Mr. Heath.

HEATH: *(overlapping)* Ya dunno anything?

LITTLE: And I’ll swear it on the Book. I wouldn’t bury a devil like that and I wouldn’t disturb no grave. The job ‘a sexton is a sacred responsibility and don’t think I don’t know it.

HEATH: Huh. Well, I’m gonna have to talk to your staff. Who ya got diggin’ fer ya?

F/X: The BUZZ again; WATER LAPPING.

NARRATOR: Mr. Little gave a name...

LITTLE: *(as if in conversation with Heath)* Jean Baptiste. Lives ‘bout K Street.

NARRATOR: *(continuing)* It was the only name he needed to give.

MUSIC UP (driving, dark)

F/X: HORSE and BUGGY

NARRATOR: *(continuing)* En route to the Baptiste home, Henry Heath thought of his hazel-eyed daughter. He thought of the dandelion bouquets she pushed against his sleeping nose, giggling as he woke with a start. He thought of her playing dolls by the oven because she loved the smell of warm bread. Then he thought of her like Moroni Clawson, lying in a crooked, nude heap, her bones poking through her gray flesh as maggots fed. His daughter, too, had been buried in the Salt Lake cemetery. His hands tightened against the reins.

F/X: LEATHER being GRIPPED.

HEATH: *(stopping his horse)* Whoa! Easy, girl!

NARRATOR: *(continuing)* Heath wasn’t certain that Mr. Little, the sexton, was blameless; but he was certain that whoever was to blame would feel his fist.

F/X: Heath KNOCKS on the door of the Baptiste home. A dismount and LIGHT FOOTSTEPS precede its OPENING.

MRS. BAPTISTE: *(empty-headed)* Hello?

HEATH: Howdy, M’am. I’m Officer Heath, investigatin’ a matter up at the city cemetery. Are you Mrs. Baptiste? Wife of Jean? [pronouncing it “John”]

MRS. BAPTISTE: I am.

HEATH: Good. Cin I come in?

MRS. BAPTISTE: What’s the matter?

HEATH: It’s about an investigation, M’am.

MRS. BAPTISTE: An investigation ‘a what?

F/X: AN ICY GUST. Heath’s horse, nearby, complains.

HEATH: M’am, it’s a bitter day today. Cin I just come in?

MRS. BAPTISTE: Well, I—

(nervous)

Alright.

F/X: She lets him in. Heath STOMPS his boots. The DOOR CLOSES, but the WIND WHISTLES under the door.

NARRATOR: Henry Heath could see his exhalations inside the house. He noticed that Mrs. Baptiste’s chapped, bony hands were trembling. She looked unkempt. Her hair was pulled back into a bun, but several

wiry hairs had escaped and curled like dead spider legs over her forehead. Her pointed face was pasty and her eyes were sunken. Her thin lips were perfectly horizontal, not smiling or frowning, but seemed strained. She wore a tattered dress that was markedly out of style.

F/X: The BUZZ again.

HEATH: *(rubbing his knuckles)* No fire?

MRS. BAPTISTE: I'm afraid I let it die.

(a mock-girlish giggle)

HEATH: Ya run outta wood?

MRS. BAPTISTE: Um, yes. Yes.

NARRATOR: Henry looked around. There was a large pile of kindling in the corner, covered by a green wool blanket. But he said nothing. The atmosphere of their home unnerved him. It felt as if he were standing in dog's breath, and he suddenly had a headache. He was certain he could smell a bedpan from a back room.

MRS. BAPTISTE: What's the nature of the investigation, Mr....?

HEATH: Heath.

MRS. BAPTISTE: Right, Heath. What is it concerning?

NARRATOR: Henry noticed boxes, boxes along every wall, boxes stacked one on top of another, full of clothing—much of it white.

HEATH: *(the clothing)* Huh.

MRS. BAPTISTE: Mr. Heath?

NARRATOR: *(going on)* He heard a low gurgling. He couldn't tell from where.

F/X: WATER BOILING.

HEATH: *(the sounds)* What's that?

MRS. BAPTISTE: Mr. Heath? Would you please explain—?

HEATH: What's that sound?

MRS. BAPTISTE: Sound?

HEATH: And whose clothes are these?

MRS. BAPTISTE: Oh, those old things?

HEATH: Yes, who do they belong to?

F/X: Heath RUMMAGES through one of the boxes.

4 MORE PAGES TO THE END OF EXILE