

PERUSAL SCRIPT

THE FADING FLOWER

A PLAY BY
MAHONRI STEWART
(REVISED EDITION)



Newport, Maine

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The Fading Flower: Revised Edition

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Cover Photo by: Greg Deakins

ORDER #2118

*For David Hyrum Smith
Sweet singer,
Thy faith wasn't mine, And yet it is;*

and

For my parents, who labor for Zion.

“Stewart is ever the writer of brilliant dialogue. This piece is so powerful and beautifully written it demands competent actors to match the material. These talented and sensitive actors are up to task and are superb . . .

I am appreciative of Stewart's courage in writing this bold, candid, historically authentic work honoring Emma Hale Smith. The play is an important historical achievement.”

— Nan McCulloch, *AML-List*

“Poignant and tragic.”

—David Allred, *Association for Mormon Letters*

“. . . looking at the issue through the lens of David becomes a powerful and uniquely Mormon reflection on the peril and promise of living in such close proximity to our historical legends. Of course with such a controversial and painful topic at the heart of the play, Stewart could easily have veered into advocating a particular conclusion or lesson, but the play remains too sensitive and nuanced to be reduced to simple morals . . . it only succeeds in so accurately reflecting a Mormon sensibility by having the main characters all view Mormonism (as we know it today) from the outside . . . Stewart succeeds in capturing the historical Mormon sense of longing and exile even in a play about our own history.”

— Nathaniel Givens, *Times and Seasons*

“I'm drawn to works like *The Fading Flower* that uncover previously untold stories from Mormon history. I think Mormon literature needs works that probe these unseen corners of the Mormon past, works that try . . . to get at the truth behind the mysteries and obscurities or go mad in the attempt.”

— Scott Hales, *The Low-Tech World*

THE FADING FLOWER

by Mahonri Stewart

New Play Project's production of *The Fading Flower* premiered in Provo, UT on May 29, 2009, at Provo Theater Company. The characters William Marks and Bertha Madison, not in the original, are in the Revised Edition.

David Hyrum Smith	Amos Omer
Emma Hale Smith	Kathryn Laycock Little
Joseph Smith III	Adam Argyle
Clara Hartshorn	Rachel Baird
Julia Murdock Smith	Jamie Denison
Joseph F. Smith	Alex Barlow
Alexander Smith	Arisael Rivera
Frederick Smith/Amasa Lyman	Adam Stallard
Eliza R. Snow	Heather Jones
Helen Mar Kimball	Sarah-Lucy Hill
Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner	Mary Heaps
Brigham Young/Marsh Jr.	Brannon Killgo/David Dixon
Joseph Smith, Jr.	Will McCallister
Samuel Smith, Jr./John Taylor/	
Parley Pratt, Jr.	Brennan Cartwright
Lewis Bidamon/George Q. Cannon	Mahonri Stewart

Director	Mahonri Stewart
Producers	David Dixon, Adam Stallard, Mahonri Stewart
Costume and Set Designer	Anna-Marie Johnson
Lighting Designer	Mandy Lyons
Music	Fiddlesticks (used with permission)

CAST LIST

David Hyrum Smith
Emma Hale Smith
Joseph Smith III
Clara Hartshorn
Julia Murdock Smith
Joseph F. Smith
Alexander Smith
Frederick Smith*
Amasa Lyman*
Eliza R. Snow
Helen Mar Kimball
Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner

Brigham Young

Marsh Jr.

Joseph Smith, Jr.

Samuel Smith, Jr.**

John Taylor**

Parley Pratt, Jr.**

Lewis Bidamon***

George Q. Cannon***

(*) (**) (***) — may each be played by the same performer

THE FADING FLOWER by Mahonri Stewart. RUN TIME: 2.5 hours. CAST SIZE: 15 with performers playing multiple roles (6 women, 9 men). David Hyrum Smith is the youngest son of Joseph Smith, the first prophet of Mormonism. Yet, David never knew his father who was murdered by a mob before he was born. Raised by his powerful mother, Emma Smith, David must chart a new spiritual course as his brother Joseph III distances their family from Brigham Young's version of Mormonism in Utah, while still seeking to honor their father's place in the Restorationist movement. David's search for the truth, however, brings him on a path full of peril, as he seeks deeper and deeper into his family's past. **ORDER #2118**

Mahonri Stewart is an award-winning writer and educator. He has written over two dozen plays, most of which have been produced throughout the U.S. and Europe, including productions in Los Angeles, Scotland, and Switzerland. In 2004, his premiere play *Farewell to Eden* won the Kennedy Center's American College Theater Festival's National Playwriting Award (Second Place) and their National Selection Team Fellowship Award. Since then he has also received numerous other awards and honors and continues to expand his writing into various mediums, including screenplays, comics, poetry, and novels. He received his MFA degree in Dramatic Writing from Arizona State University. He received his bachelors degree in Theatre Arts from Utah Valley University. He's a former Playwright in Residence at the Noorda Regional Theater for Children and Youth.

But, howsoever thou pursuest this act, Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught: leave her to heaven And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge, To
prick and sting her . . .

—*Hamlet*, Act I, Scene V

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown! . . . And I, of ladies most dejected wretched, That
sucked the honey of his music vows, Now see that noble and sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh; That unmatched form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy . . .

—*Hamlet*, Act III, Scene I

One woe doth tread upon another's heel, So fast they follow . . .

—*Hamlet*, Act IV, Scene I

Act One

SCENE ONE

The play begins in the 1860s and spans about two decades in various places in the American Mid-West and West, chiefly Nauvoo, Illinois, and Salt Lake City, Utah. On opposite sides of the stage are two pulpits. Enter JOSEPH SMITH III. He stands behind the far stage right pulpit.

JOSEPH III: I come not here of myself, but by the influence of the Spirit. You who call yourselves the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have invited me to take a place among you as your leader. I would address a few things first: regarding the much talked about principle of polygamy—I have been told that my father taught such doctrines. I have never believed it, and never can believe it. I believe my father was a good man, and a good man never promulgated such doctrines. Despite what any of you believe about my lineal right to replace my father, I have done so only because the Spirit of God has rested upon me and prompted me in this decision. If the same Spirit which prompts my coming prompts also my reception, I am with you.

(Exit JOSEPH III. Enter BRIGHAM YOUNG, who takes the opposite podium.)

BRIGHAM: What of Joseph Smith's family? What of the boys? What is Brother Brigham's opinion concerning the matter, you ask me. I have prayed from the beginning for Sister Emma and for the whole family. There is not a man in this Church that has entertained better feelings towards them. Joseph said to me, "God will take care of my children when I am taken." They are in the hands of God, and when they make their appearance before this people, full of His power, there are none but what will say we are ready to receive you." —"Amen!"

(Exit BRIGHAM. Lights rise on DAVID HYRUM SMITH. He is in his twenties. He writes thoughtfully. Through sound and light, it is portrayed that DAVID is sitting behind a small waterfall. This place is called "David's Chamber." Enter JULIA MURDOCK SMITH MIDDLETON, his adopted sister. She is several years his senior.)

JULIA: I knew you would be here.

DAVID: Julia, you must know that I am not going to forgive you.

JULIA: Aren't you, now?

DAVID: Certainly not. You are a very bad sister.

JULIA: Very bad, indeed.

DAVID: I'm glad that you see my position.

JULIA: Believe me, I wish I could I could stay.

DAVID: I'll just have to kidnap you away from that husband of yours.

JULIA: It would serve him right.

DAVID: It's settled, then. Where should we go? Europe? India? China, perhaps?

JULIA: No, no, we'd just go back to the Mansion House. Dress me up as a servant so that John wouldn't recognize me until he was gone.

DAVID: Well, you have to wear a turban, at least.

JULIA: Done. I think a turban is a marvelous disguise. John will think that I'm a mysterious Easterner.

DAVID: From Turkey?

JULIA: From New York.

DAVID: I'm going to miss you terribly, Julia. Right now, St. Louis seems very far away from here.

JULIA: David—our beloved, our pet of the family.

DAVID: No more talk of pets. I am a man now.

JULIA: I wish you could have stayed a child. I wish we could have kept all of us in that time. Perhaps this waterfall of yours leads to a fairy land, or Avalon—the Otherworld...

DAVID: Believe me, I've been searching.

JULIA: "David's Chamber." Where you compose your beautiful poetry. Do you sing in here?

DAVID: Sometimes.

JULIA: A trapped prince behind sheets of water and all we can hear is his melodious singing. Worthy of Tennyson.

DAVID: "*Tirra lirra, tirra lirra...*"

JULIA: Who should we have save you from your prison? An enchanted princess, perhaps? Or a knightly king?

DAVID: A knightly king. Our father, called back from the dead to save his son.

(JULIA becomes emotional. They hold hands, then she snuggles into him.)

JULIA: I'm going to miss you.

DAVID: Please, write me.

JULIA: I'll spill ink constantly.

DAVID: And I will do the same.

JULIA: I just want to stay. John—well, he just can't stick to anything. Never can stay rooted in one thought, one place.

DAVID: But you'll get to see new places, meet new people—

JULIA: And then there was Elisha! A magician and a tailor! How he could perform that magic! If he could have conjured up a little money now and then, perhaps things would have been better.

DAVID: He certainly made you disappear.

JULIA: Not that it protected him from—

DAVID: Julia, why are you—?

JULIA: A bride at 17 and a widow at 22.

Oh, ever thus from childhood's hour;

I have seen my fondest hopes decay;

I never nursed a tree or flower,

but it was the first to fade and die.

DAVID: Thomas Moore?

JULIA: Oh, who am I going to quote poetry to without you or Mother?

DAVID: The wanderer, outward bound.

JULIA: This is a strange world, I think. The longer we live, the more it puzzles me to account for some things. I don't think everything is as fine as it looks now. I think in childhood we see everything through a colored glass; it colors everything in most brilliant light and pleases our eye. We grow older and see things through a glass still—but it's a different sort of glass. It's a magnifying one and we see things as they really are.

DAVID: Except that a magnifying glass bring things out of their proportion. Maybe you see these griefs as too big.

JULIA: I wish I could take you with me—to cheer me up! Maybe I'll kidnap you.

DAVID: Only if I get to wear the turban.

JULIA: The mysterious Easterner.

DAVID: From New York.

JULIA: I wouldn't have it any other way.

DAVID: St. Louis will be good to you. John will be good to you.

JULIA: I'm going to miss the Fourth of July.

DAVID: I think they celebrate it in St. Louis, too.

JULIA: On the contrary, I am sure that they don't. Not like here. Do you remember the one in 1855?

DAVID: The one with the elephant.

JULIA: Yes! The elephant! And the parades and the games and everything in motion! The fun alive!

DAVID: See? See that? Keep that with you. Keep all of those memories with you and let them light your fire in St. Louis.

JULIA: But it's our singing together that I will miss the most. Gathered together, singing hymns and folks songs and— David—

DAVID: When shall we sing again?

(An emotional, quiet moment. JULIA regathers.)

JULIA: One thing I am glad I won't be here for is this whole "reorganized" business.

DAVID: What do you mean?

JULIA: Well—I'm a Catholic, David.

DAVID: Yes, because you married John. But—

JULIA: *I'm* a Catholic.

DAVID: You're also the daughter of Joseph Smith.

JULIA: Adopted daughter.

DAVID: You've never made the distinction before.

JULIA: I—I didn't mean it like that.

DAVID: Joseph is following in Father's footsteps.

JULIA: And he has my blessing.

DAVID: But not John's.

JULIA: That doesn't matter. Look, David, this issue has caused enough contention with Joe and me. Let's not let religion drive a wedge between us, too.

(Pause.)

DAVID: Agreed.

JULIA: Good. I'm not spending my last day in Nauvoo in theological debates. Now come on, we'll have one last day of fun alive!

DAVID: All right then! Fun alive!

(Blackout.)

SCENE TWO

The Smith household. Enter EMMA SMITH BIDAMON. EMMA crosses and sits in a rocking

chair, gazing out of a window. Old age is catching up with EMMA, as she is time-worn and has known too much pain and disappointment. Enter JOSEPH SMITH JR., a tall, well-built man in his forties. He's dressed in a suit of pale grays, whites, and other ghostly colors, and is a number of decades older in style than the rest of the characters. EMMA continues gazing out the window as she "talks" to JOSEPH JR, never looking at him. She fingers a strand of gold beads that hangs about her neck.

JOSEPH JR: Emma, will you teach my sons to walk in their father's footsteps?

EMMA: Joseph, you're coming back.

JOSEPH JR: Emma, will you teach my sons to walk in their father's footsteps?

EMMA: You're coming back.

JOSEPH JR: Will you teach my sons to walk in their father's footsteps?

EMMA: You're coming back!

JOSEPH JR: Well, if they don't hang me, then I don't know how I'll die.

(JOSEPH JR exits. The sounds of a MOB and distant guns are heard. Then a MAN'S VOICE crying, "O Lord my God!" EMMA cringes and grips the beads tightly in grief. Enter FREDERICK SMITH, ALEXANDER SMITH, JOSEPH F. SMITH, and SAMUEL H. B. SMITH.)

FREDERICK: Mother—Mother, you have visitors.

(EMMA doesn't respond; she doesn't hear him.)

Mother?

EMMA: Yes, Frederick?

FREDERICK: Mother, do you know these young men?

(EMMA, for the first time, turns around.)

EMMA: Joseph?

JOSEPH F: Hello, Aunt Emma.

EMMA: Joseph? As I live, it is Joseph! Why, I would have known you in hell, you look so much like your father.

ALEXANDER: Mother—

EMMA: Oh, yes, where are my manners?

(To SAMUEL.)

And who are you?

JOSEPH F: Surely you recognize another nephew, Aunt Emma?

SAMUEL: I visited you two years ago. Samuel. Son of your brother-in-law, Samuel.

EMMA: Oh, of course! You've filled out since then.

FREDERICK: We get a lot of visitors here. It's hard for Mother to remember them all.

EMMA: Well, isn't this a pleasant little reunion?

(Enter JOSEPH III.)

JOSEPH III: Is it true? Joseph?

JOSEPH F: Joseph?

ALEXANDER: This could get mighty confusing.

(JOSEPH F. and JOSEPH III laugh and shake hands.)

JOSEPH III: You were barely a child when I saw you last!

JOSEPH F: Which would have made you no more than a boy!

EMMA: Oh my.

FREDERICK: Mother?

EMMA: To see you two together—

ALEXANDER: Mother—

EMMA: You both look so like them—and then you, Samuel. Your father didn't survive much longer—

ALEXANDER: Mother, perhaps it's not best to dwell on morbid thoughts of the past.

JOSEPH F: Excuse me, Alex, but your mother may benefit from such reflections.

ALEXANDER: Now don't you try to trap her into your religion, too. We get visitors from *all* the Mormon factions!

JOSEPH F: That was not the intent of my comment.

EMMA: Boys—

ALEXANDER: You're missionaries. That's why you're here, isn't it?

SAMUEL: We're here to see our family.

ALEXANDER: Is it? Is it really?

FREDERICK: Now Alex, let's not be—

ALEXANDER: Let Joseph answer for himself, Fred.

JOSEPH F: My purpose is always to bring souls unto Christ, Alexander. Whatever motives I have, they are noble ones.

EMMA: Really, boys, please—

ALEXANDER: My family has had enough of posturing Mormon sects trying to bring us into their various versions of the past!

EMMA: Now that is enough!

JOSEPH III: Mother is right, Alex. Joseph may have different religious views than my mother and me, just as you and Frederick have different views from us, but we are still family.

EMMA: Thank you, Joseph.

ALEXANDER: (*To JOSEPH III*) You're no different than they are.

JOSEPH III: We are all just following our consciences.

ALEXANDER: I don't believe that for a minute.

JOSEPH III: Well, you're entitled to your views, just as I am.

ALEXANDER: Acting in such divine disinterest! All while your followers claim you to be the second coming of Joseph Smith!

EMMA: Alex!

ALEXANDER: Well, I was his child, too, and so was Fred, and, Julia, and David. What makes you so damn special?

JOSEPH III: I never claimed to be special.

ALEXANDER: You didn't have to, your legion do it for you. This group of Briggs' and Gurley's has no more claim to father's legacy than do the Brighamites!

FREDERICK: Alex, please, we can talk about this later when we're a little more level-headed, and not among guests.

ALEXANDER: The "Reorganized" Latter-day Saints? What gives them that authority?

JOSEPH III: Authority was given as it always is—by the Spirit and influence of God.

ALEXANDER: Joe has become a prophet to a religion looking for a pole to hold them up! Coerced just so they can tout the name of Joseph Smith again!

EMMA: Show more respect when you speak of your father!

JOSEPH III: Come, cousins—I'll show you the house.

(Exit JOSEPH III, JOSEPH F., and SAMUEL.)

ALEXANDER: *(Pause.)* I'm sorry, Mother. But aren't you the one who taught us to avoid these groups?

EMMA: Until you were old enough to govern yourselves. You now must all make your own ways, and I personally support Joseph in this decision. It is about time that your Father's name be attached to something nobler than what is happening in Utah.

ALEXANDER: Aren't you afraid that it will all start over? We've been safe in Nauvoo because we haven't tried to disturb things, but what if the locals find out that they have Mormons in their midst again? Aren't you afraid that the mobs will do their own reorganizing?

EMMA: I'm terrified! I've had death up to my waist, my son, and I am sick with it. But Joseph, like your father, just may be called of God.

ALEXANDER: The Brighamites say the same of Brigham Young and his apostles.

EMMA: God could not condone such practices!

ALEXANDER: Do we pretend to know the mind of God?

(Exit ALEXANDER. EMMA looks to FREDERICK, who comes over and holds his mother by the hand.)

EMMA: And yet your father claimed to know that very thing.

FREDERICK: The mind of God?

EMMA: He had glimpses, surely.

FREDERICK: Even thousands of miles away in the wilderness, they haunt you.

EMMA: You've been pretty quiet on the subject.

FREDERICK: I don't pretend to know what God wants. I'm satisfied with the peaceful life you gave us.

(FREDERICK kisses EMMA on her forehead and then turns to leave.)

EMMA: Thank you, Fred.

FREDERICK: I love you, Mama.

EMMA: I've been given the best of families. You're good boys.

(Exit FREDERICK and EMMA.)

SCENE THREE

(Enter CLARA HARTSHORN, a young woman. She kneels and begins to garden. Enter DAVID.)

DAVID: Good evening, Miss Hartshorn. A little late to be gardening, isn't it?

CLARA: Oh, Mr. Smith! Well, yes—I'm just finishing up.

DAVID: *(Noting the garden)* Why, clematis and dahlias! They are my favorite.

CLARA: I know.

DAVID: You do?

CLARA: Yes—we've talked about gardening before, remember?

DAVID: Have we?

CLARA: Well, yes—Oh, never mind that, I—

DAVID: Now I remember—the harvest dance.

CLARA: (*Nervously going back to her gardening*) Pardon me, Mr. Smith.

DAVID: Pardon you?

CLARA: I'm sorry I—

DAVID: Why—oh.

CLARA: Oh? Oh. No, no, I assure you, Mr. Smith, there is no “oh.” Absolutely, positively no “oh.”

DAVID: Oh no, let me help you up. You mustn't—

CLARA: But I have dirt on my fingers—

(*DAVID helps CLARA up. Startled, neither of them lets go.*)

DAVID: All the better. It looks good on your hand. I'm not one to shrink away from honest earth, Miss Hartshorn.

CLARA: Clara.

DAVID: Pardon me?

CLARA: Clara. I . . . like . . . very much like to be called Clara. That is—oh.

DAVID: Oh.

(*CLARA pulls away, gathering her bonnet, basket, etc.*)

CLARA: Please, please, pardon me. I'm always so—well, I don't know what I am, but truly I'm sorry, Mr. Smith, I—

DAVID: David.

CLARA: Pardon me?

DAVID: I—I very much like to be called David.

CLARA: David.

DAVID: Yes.

CLARA: Goodnight, David.

(*Trying to escape the awkwardness, CLARA turns until DAVID panics.*)

DAVID: I like walks!

CLARA: Walks?

DAVID: That's why I'm out, I mean. I like nature and walks and—and was much surprised by such a beautiful flower!

CLARA: Oh...

DAVID: I—we've known each other quite a while now, haven't we, Clara?

CLARA: Yes, I suppose so. At a distance.

DAVID: Then it wouldn't be too forward of me to invite you to dinner at my home? They've asked me to sing—you've heard me sing in church?

CLARA: Oh, yes! Well, I mean—

DAVID: Would you like to come?

CLARA: I—well—oh.

DAVID: Oh? If you don't want to—

CLARA: David, that “oh” meant yes.

DAVID: Oh!

CLARA: And what did that “oh” mean?

DAVID: *(With a smile.)* That, my lady, is private.

CLARA: Private?

DAVID: Will you take my arm?

CLARA: I—oh dear.

DAVID: We've graduated to oh dear!

CLARA: *(Laughs.)* I would love to.

(Exit CLARA and DAVID.)

SCENE FOUR

It's after dinner at the Smith household. JOSEPH III, EMMA, ALEXANDER, FREDERICK, LEWIS BIDAMON, SAMUEL, and CLARA all listen to DAVID and JOSEPH F. sing a beautiful harmony from a song written by DAVID.

DAVID and JOSEPH F:

THEN LET US BE PURE AS LILIES,
AND JOYOUS AND GLAD AS THE ROSE,
SO WHEN JESUS SELECTETH HIS JEWELS,
IN ZION WE'LL FIND REPOSE.
THEN PRAISE YE THE LORD FOREVER AND AYE,
FOR GLORY AND HONOR ARE HIS,
WITH SONGS AND FLOWERS WE'LL STREW THE GLAD WAY,
FOR ROSES AND LILIES ARE HIS.

EMMA: Bravo, boys.

JOSEPH F: It's an honor to sing for the Elect Lady.

EMMA: It's been a long time since I've been called that.

JOSEPH F: You've been a gracious hostess.

BIDAMON: Don't forget that there are hosts as well as hostesses here.

JOSEPH F: Yes, Mr. Bidamon, you have been very kind to us. Thank you.

BIDAMON: You're just as smooth as oil, aren't you?

JOSEPH F: Pardon me?

EMMA: Now, Major—

BIDAMON: You Mormons are the same whether you live in the East or the West—anything to get more sheep in your fold.

EMMA: Major!

JOSEPH III: Major, we are not here tonight to argue—

BIDAMON: The whole purpose of organized religion: get as many on your side as possible.

JOSEPH III: You know that is not the reason I've made myself a part of this.

ALEXANDER: Some of us don't care about your reasons.

BIDAMON: No, he's right, Alex. I apologize for my behavior, especially towards our guests. You must understand, though—this all just re-opens old wounds.

EMMA: Forgive as you've been forgiven, Lewis.

BIDAMON: And there's the salt.

SAMUEL: I'm not sure I understand.

BIDAMON: Maybe you've seen a little boy running around?

SAMUEL: Yes, I was wondering who he was.

BIDAMON: That's my bastard child.

EMMA: Don't use that word in connection to Charles.

BIDAMON: Emma's been good enough to raise the boy, as Nancy can't—Nancy's the boy's mother, you see, a fine woman.

SAMUEL: Really, Major Bidamon, I'm not sure if this is any of our business.

BIDAMON: No, young Mr. Smith, I think this is relevant to all of us. I have been judged plenty by this family and by this community since I married Emma. I was divorced, I have been an adulterer, so call me whatever you wish. I assure you, I've heard worse and said worse. Yet, as you throw stones at me in your hearts, know that I see the hypocrisy in you coming here and preaching to us the polygamous gospel of Joseph Smith.

(This last statement causes a stir.)

JOSEPH III: I will not stand by and hear father so slandered!

LEWIS: Quite the contrary, Joe. Your father was good to me, and my credit was always good enough for him in his Red Brick Store. He was not a man who would have judged me as you do.

DAVID: No one here has said that they judge you. Please, can we just—?

BIDAMON: One more thing, David, one more thing. Joseph, if you're really going to lead this little Church of yours, I can respect that. I didn't believe a word your father said about any of his visions or whatnot—but I believe that *he* believed it. Follow your heart, my boy, it's your right under the Constitution. But Mormon, Protestant, or Jew, just leave me out of it.

ALEXANDER: None of us can be left out now. Joseph's dragged us all back into the pit with him!

DAVID: All of you, remember our guests—

ALEXANDER: It's the practices of our guests who have made this prejudice against us!

DAVID: Our cousins aren't the only guests here—

CLARA: No, David, it's all right—

EMMA: Let's keep our dignity.

ALEXANDER: Dignity! Yes, let's pretend that we are all one content, perfect little family.

DAVID: Is this how gentlemen behave, Alexander?

ALEXANDER: I've had enough of this.

(Exit ALEXANDER.)

JOSEPH III: I'll talk to him.

(Exit JOSEPH III.)

FREDERICK: Religion's just gonna divide us all, isn't it?

(To JOSEPH F. and SAMUEL)

My apologies. I'm just a simple family man with a farm, you see.

(To DAVID and CLARA)

David, would you and Miss Hartshorn like to walk with me? Let's allow everyone to calm down a bit, and then you two can—connect.

DAVID: Thank you, Fred. Clara?

CLARA: Yes. Of course.

(Exit CLARA, DAVID, and FREDERICK.)

BIDAMON: What a mess. I'll be off to the tavern for a while, Emma—

EMMA: Major, please, don't go.

BIDAMON: Just a little tonight, Emma. I promise. I'll play some cards, have a few drinks, and be right back.

(Exit BIDAMON. EMMA sighs.)

JOSEPH F: Are you all right, Aunt Emma?

EMMA: Oh, boys, boys—

SAMUEL: It's not a simple path anymore, is it?

EMMA: It was never a simple path.

SAMUEL: I suppose not.

EMMA: When you're finished here, are you off again to do more—wandering? Do you enjoy it?

SAMUEL: Of course.

JOSEPH F: Honestly, I miss home. I've been doing missionary work since I was 15 years old.

EMMA: It will be a splendid day when we all can just stay home with our families.

JOSEPH F: Those of us who still have families.

EMMA: Oh, I'm so thoughtless . . .

JOSEPH F: I have my sister—and the Church.

EMMA: And you have me. And your cousins.

JOSEPH F: Thank you, Aunt Emma. I appreciate the sentiment.

EMMA: It is important to hold onto what family you have. That's what I see in this new Reorganization, boys—my family. It's almost like the Church revolves around my family now, not my family revolving around the Church.

SAMUEL: Aunt Emma—

EMMA: You both could be a part of that, you know. Away from the stigma of polygamy and into the arms of your family.

JOSEPH F: Aunt Emma, you know that—

EMMA: Family. Isn't there some loyalty there instead of some religious autocrat in the desert?

SAMUEL: Aunt Emma, please, Brigham Young is a prophet of God, like your husband was—

EMMA: Brigham Young took advantage of my husband's death and stole the reigns of the Church!

JOSEPH F: He was President of the Twelve Apostles. He was given the right by—

EMMA: No, no, the Doctrine and Covenants clearly states that the Twelve were only to be traveling ministers. They had no authority to—

SAMUEL: There are those who say that in visions they saw and heard the mantle of Uncle Joseph clearly fall onto—

EMMA: Folklore!

JOSEPH F: Not to those who experienced it.

EMMA: My boy Joseph was the son of a Prophet. He has that lineal right. You are the sons of Joseph's brothers. There's power in that; people will follow that. Be careful with that power.

JOSEPH F: Are you careful with the power given you?

EMMA: *(Tense pause.)* Let's not bicker. We are family.

JOSEPH F: "Who is my mother? And who are my brethren? . . . Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." When we are among the Saints, then we are among our family.

EMMA: And what of polygamy and all other hellish practices?

JOSEPH F: We're in it for the long haul, Aunt Emma.

EMMA: Well, that's easy for the men to say.

JOSEPH F: That's not fair.

EMMA: Fair was never an option—especially for the women. Now, I will get Joseph to bring you to your rooms. Good night, boys.

SAMUEL: We didn't mean to—

EMMA: I said good night.

SAMUEL: Good night.

JOSEPH F: Good night.

(Exit JOSEPH F. and SAMUEL, EMMA clutches at the beads at her neck. Enter JOSEPH JR.)

JOSEPH JR: Emma, will you teach my sons to walk in their father's footsteps?

EMMA: Joseph, you're coming back.

JOSEPH JR: Emma, will you teach my sons to walk in their father's footsteps?

EMMA: You're coming back.

JOSEPH JR: Emma, will you teach my sons to walk in their father's footsteps?

(EMMA pauses, JOSEPH JR standing right behind her. There is a moment where EMMA almost turns around to actually see JOSEPH JR, but then she is overcome and exits. JOSEPH JR fades into darkness.)

SCENE FIVE

A Smith household bedroom. Enter JOSEPH III, JOSEPH F., and SAMUEL.

JOSEPH III: I hope you enjoy this room.

SAMUEL: Thank you, Joseph.

JOSEPH III: I believe you'll find the beds comfortable. Be sure to tell me if you have any dreams.

SAMUEL: Dreams?

JOSEPH III: Our cousin John said he had a significant dream in this room. I've had several here as well. I would like you to remember what you dream here tonight and let me know.

JOSEPH F: Certainly.

JOSEPH III: Now, cousins, there is something I would like to ask you.

SAMUEL: Feel free.

JOSEPH III: You know what I have recently accepted—

JOSEPH F: Joseph—

JOSEPH III: I want you to be part of this with me.

SAMUEL: Joseph, we know that you mean well—

JOSEPH F: You haven't the authority to take that place for yourself.

JOSEPH III: My father gave me that authority. When I was a child and visited him in Liberty Jail, he placed his hands on my head and said, “You are my successor when I depart.”

JOSEPH F: We’ve heard about the infamous blessing Uncle Joseph gave you. And the leadership of the Lord’s Church may one day be yours, if you take your place. Brother Brigham has repeatedly—

JOSEPH III: I don’t care what that man—

JOSEPH F: Brigham Young said that you are welcome to take your place in Church leadership. But just as with Esau, as with the sons of Israel, that birthright can be lost through apostasy.

JOSEPH III: I am not apostate.

SAMUEL: As we believe we are not.

JOSEPH III: Go no further on your missions. Stop and reflect. No, don’t say a word. Reflect and then sleep. Good night.

JOSEPH F: Good night.

SAMUEL: Good night.

(Exit JOSEPH III.)

JOSEPH F: He means to convert us.

SAMUEL: As we mean to convert him.

JOSEPH F: Do we?

SAMUEL: What do you mean?

JOSEPH F: *(Pause.)* Let’s get some sleep.

(Lights fade.)

SCENE SIX

(Enter FREDERICK, DAVID, and CLARA.)

CLARA: Will you look at those stars tonight! Orion—he’s larger than I remember him being,

DAVID: Clara—

CLARA: Yes?

DAVID: I’m sorry for the disturbance in there tonight.

FREDERICK: Our family’s in a—transitional period.

CLARA: Your family has been touched by God.

DAVID: When you come away from the squabbling and see those stars, there’s such . . . such . . . order. Light and order.

CLARA: You have the heart of a poet, David.

FREDERICK: Recite a bit of your poetry to her, David.

DAVID: I only burden my poetry on those with whom I’ve had a further acquaintance.

CLARA: I am not without my own appreciation of the finer things, sir.

DAVID: Then I hope you don’t mind a bit of melancholy.

CLARA: I think that a bit of melancholy would cheer my spirits nicely.

DAVID: *My father stood in manhood prime,
At the door of death on the share of time,
The latch was raised by an unseen hand,*

*And he passed within the better land.
It seems to me that I see his face,
And I sometimes think of his loving ways,
His eyes from pain wore a piteous look,
His Form was bent, his low voice shook,
So I am his poor little fatherless one,
Whose father has passed away.
I must bid him farewell and journey on,
Along life's stormy way.
(Pause.)*

I wrote it for a little girl who lost her father, but—well—

CLARA: I love it.

DAVID: Thank you for not ridiculing it.

CLARA: You never knew your father, did you?

DAVID: No. His butchery happened before I was born.

CLARA: Then you are like me, a convert who admires a man they will never know in this life. You do him honor.

FREDERICK: On that we can all agree. He deserved honor.

DAVID: Well, my friend, I am certainly glad you came tonight.

CLARA: Can I truly count you as a friend?

DAVID: You passed the highest standard I put upon anyone: you liked my poetry.

EMMA: (*Off-stage*) David! David, will you come here for a moment?

DAVID: Oh—uh, yes, Mother! I'll be right back, Clara.

FREDERICK: I'll take care of her for you, brother.

(*Exit DAVID.*)

Not only can David sing and write, but he draws, and paints, and he's a bit of a scientist and naturalist.

CLARA: Yes, David and I have discussed —flowers.

FREDERICK: I do count but one offense against him.

CLARA: It's not possible. He's perfect.

FREDERICK: That he was so ignorant as to not notice that he had your heart long ago.

CLARA: My heart?

FREDERICK: It's obvious—you love him.

CLARA: I—I most certainly do not!

FREDERICK: I'm a married man. I know those feelings when I see them.

CLARA: You think you know the secrets of my heart?

FREDERICK: Well, isn't that why you're upset? Because I guessed it so readily?

CLARA: Mr. Smith, I am not upset!

FREDERICK: Be good to him. Marriage isn't as easy as you suppose.

CLARA: *Marriage?*

FREDERICK: Forgive me for being personal, but it takes effort. How long have you been acquainted?

CLARA: Since—well, it's been nothing intimate, you understand, but I've been . . . aware of him for a couple of years, at least.

FREDERICK: My, you have loved him a long time then!

CLARA: I—DO—NOT—LOVE—HIM!

FREDERICK: Don't fret, I'll keep it a secret.

CLARA: Let me repeat myself, Mr. Smith—

FREDERICK: Do you know any man in your acquaintance whom you value more?

CLARA: Of course not, but I—

(She considers this.)

Oh my.

FREDERICK: As I said.

CLARA: This is terrible.

FREDERICK: Yes, a very grave situation.

CLARA: No, you don't understand, it's—

FREDERICK: Just remember, act naturally around him. If you don't, then he'll suspect you. Or maybe you want him to suspect you?

(Enter DAVID.)

DAVID: That was peculiar.

FREDERICK: You know how protective Mother gets.

DAVID: What do you mean?

FREDERICK: Nothing. I just believe Miss Hartshorn is glad to have her poet back.

CLARA: Fred—

DAVID: Honestly, Fred. They really are nothing more than dabblings.

FREDERICK: He's being humble.

DAVID: No, no, I'm not. It's embarrassing, actually. Perhaps I have the poet's heart, but neither his tongue, nor his pen.

CLARA: *(Looks at FREDERICK, then gives a resigned, happy smile.)* I don't know about that. Let me look at you, David.

DAVID: Ah! I'm being analyzed. Is this a new kind of phrenology?

CLARA: Shush, I need to concentrate. Now stand up straight. Roll those shoulders back; how am I supposed to tell what you are if you hide it with bad posture?

DAVID: I have very good posture!

CLARA: Just roll the shoulders back.

DAVID: As you wish.

CLARA: Hmmm . . . frmmm . . .

(Starts humming.)

Aha!

DAVID: Aha what? What does "Aha!" mean?

CLARA: I just remembered the title of a song that I've been trying to recall all day.

DAVID: The analysis, the analysis!

CLARA: Patience, David. This is a delicate art.

DAVID: I never fancied you a folk scientist, Clara.

CLARA: From my deductions, you might have the forehead of the poet, but you certainly don't have the nose of the poet.

DAVID: It's more like the nose of the turnip.

CLARA: And your hair. What do you think of his hair?

FREDERICK: Hmm. The hair of the banker. Perhaps the lawyer.

DAVID: Lawyer! I'll shave off the offending mop!

CLARA: The ears of the politician—

DAVID: Of course, to catch the sound of public opinion.

FREDERICK: I do believe he has the shoulders of the laborer.

CLARA: But the arms of the painter.

DAVID: What is that supposed to mean?

CLARA: It means that I don't expect that you could lift more than a paint brush. Now your hands—

FREDERICK: I think you may have to inspect them more closely, Clara.

CLARA: Give them to me, David.

DAVID: My hands?

CLARA: I need to get a closer look.

(DAVID offers CLARA his hands and she takes them in hers, turning them over, inspecting them.)

DAVID: What's the verdict?

CLARA: *(Looks up and then, startled by his gaze, looks back down.)* They're—quite soft.

DAVID: First I have weak arms and then soft hands!

CLARA: No, no, it's not an insult. They are the hands of—

FREDERICK: Yes?

CLARA: The hands of the gentle romantic.

FREDERICK: And his eyes?

CLARA: His eyes?

FREDERICK: Yes, his eyes.

CLARA: *(Looking back into DAVID's eyes.)* His eyes.

FREDERICK: Look deeply. Are they the eyes of the poet?

CLARA: No.

DAVID: No?

CLARA: They're the eyes of the saint.

FREDERICK: And his lips?

DAVID and CLARA: My/His lips?!

FREDERICK: Are you brave enough to investigate his character in that regard?

(Exit FREDERICK.)

DAVID: Fred? Fred! Get back here!

CLARA: No. Don't call him back.

(CLARA gazes at DAVID, and grabs his hands again. DAVID is startled.)

Shall we continue with our investigation?

DAVID: You mean—

CLARA: Yes.

(Slowly, they go into a kiss. They separate calmly.)

DAVID: Well?

CLARA: I think I need another analysis.

*(They kiss again, with more energy. **Blackout.**)*

SCENE SEVEN

A Smith household bedroom. The lights raise on JOSEPH F. and SAMUEL, packing. Enter JOSEPH III:

JOSEPH III: Are you preparing to leave so early?

JOSEPH F: We've imposed ourselves too long already.

JOSEPH III: You are no burden.

SAMUEL: We have much work to prepare for.

JOSEPH III: You will have breakfast, at least?

JOSEPH F: Yes, that should be fine.

JOSEPH III: Did you have any dreams?

SAMUEL: No.

JOSEPH III: Truly?

JOSEPH F: I had one.

JOSEPH III: Truly!

JOSEPH F: I am not sure if you will like it.

JOSEPH III: Let me decide that. You made a promise.

JOSEPH F: I thought I was standing on a large pine raft and was fishing with a hook and line. I pulled out the fish almost as fast as I could bait my hook. I could see into the water at a great depth. Soon I dropped my hook as usual, and no sooner had it sunk below the surface than I saw a huge gar making directly for it. Fearing I would lose my hook, I drew it rapidly out, but the gar was so determined to nab it that he ran out of the water more than half the length of my arm, in vain, endeavoring to snap it. However, I saved my hook and line and carried away my fish.

(JOSEPH III stands silent at the dream and, somewhat offended, turns to exit.)

SAMUEL: Joseph? He had a dream just like you wanted.

JOSEPH F: Yes a dream, but not just like he wanted; he figured out its meaning. We mustn't ever try to catch that fish, Sam. If he ever stood at the head of those of us at Utah, he would snap all of our lines and lose all of our hooks.

JOSEPH III: Believe me, cousin, if I wanted to be in Utah, I would be. God gave me a choice.

SAMUEL: And he still does. Our cousin here may not want you with us, but some of us feel differently.

JOSEPH III: I appreciate that, Samuel, but it is not stubbornness that brought me where I am, but the Spirit.

SAMUEL: How can you be so sure?

JOSEPH III: Listen, years ago, I took up the challenge to get to the bottom of all of this. I was in the midst of my study, when I was shown a vision.

(Enter the ghost of JOSEPH JR, unseen.)

JOSEPH F: A vision?

JOSEPH III: Do I have your attention now, cousin?

SAMUEL: You certainly have mine.

(Subtly, the lights and attention shift, so it is as if JOSEPH III is caught up in the vision again.)

JOSEPH III: The room suddenly expanded and passed away. I saw stretched before me towns, cities, busy marts, court houses, and assemblies of men. It was the world, where men win place and renown.

JOSEPH JR: You have the ability to achieve preferment in this place, but if you do, you must go into the busy whirl and be submerged by its din, bustle, and confusion.

JOSEPH III: In the subtle transition like a dream, I then could see a prairie land. No mountains were to be seen, but as far as the eye could reach, hill and dale, hamlet and village, homelike farm houses, thrift, industry, and . . .

JOSEPH JR: . . .the pursuits of happy peace.

JOSEPH III: This must be a happy people.

JOSEPH JR: Which would you prefer: life, success, and renown among the busy scenes that you first saw; or a place among these people, without honor or renown? Think of it well, for the choice will be offered sooner or later, and you must be prepared to decide. Your decision, once made, you can not recall it, and must abide the result.

(The lights and focus shift back to the bedroom.)

SAMUEL: But what does that have to do with us or your Church?

JOSEPH III: I was confident that I would be given a choice someday, an important one. So I went into my studies of law, researched the various sects of religions that followed my father's example, and prepared for the coming day.

(Another shift in lights and focus.)

One day I was talking to a neighbor, Christopher Yates, a friend to the Saints during our hardest times in Nauvoo. He had suffered much at the hands of the mobs for defending us. The subject drifted to Mormonism.

JOSEPH JR: *(Taking on the persona of YATES.)* You could go to Utah. You could do good there.

JOSEPH III: Among those Brighamites?

JOSEPH JR: You could take the lead away from Brigham, assert your rightful place. You know they would rejoice to have their prophet's son with them again, your whole family would be like— royalty. Famous, rich, powerful, with honor and renown.

JOSEPH III: And their—practices?

JOSEPH JR: Be a reformer *within* the movement. Remake it as you see fit, breaking up the system of things there. Excise polygamy and anything else you object to.

JOSEPH III: Would they let me, do you think?

JOSEPH JR: If not, you could adopt the style of things there, become a leader, get rich, marry three or four wives and enjoy yourself. Honor and renown.

JOSEPH III: Perhaps renown, but I don't see that as honor.

JOSEPH JR: Then what do you see? Are you so certain of your way? Why not go to Utah and set yourself up there?

(Another transition of lights and focus.)

JOSEPH III: His words haunted me. Utah. There, in that place, are the men who were with my father. There, a large part of my family. There, also, seem to be the only ones making a profession of the belief in Mormonism who appear to be *doing* anything. Does not duty demand that I go there and clear my name and the charge of ingratitude to my father's character? Am I—am I wrong about polygamy? Could

it be correct, and my objections nothing but prejudice and tradition?

(There is a noise, a rush of a breeze. JOSEPH III gazes upward as the light encompasses him.)

I then saw descending towards me a sort of cloud; funnel-shaped with the widest part upwards. It was luminous and of such color and brightness that it was clearly seen, though the sun shone in its summer strength. It descended rapidly and settling upon and over me completely so that I stood in its radiance.

As I stood in the light, I was told:

JOSEPH JR: Do not join them. The light in which you stand is greater than theirs.

(Blackout. After a moment, the lights slowly raise back on JOSEPH III, JOSEPH F., and SAMUEL. There is tense silence until EMMA is heard offstage calling them to breakfast.)

Breakfast with us, cousins. If you don't remember, mother's bacon and omelettes are excellent.

(Exit JOSEPH III.)

JOSEPH F: Are you packed now?

SAMUEL: Yes.

JOSEPH F: Let's have breakfast and get out of here.

(Blackout.)

SCENE EIGHT

EMMA is alone on stage, in a chair, once again clutching her gold beads. JOSEPH JR. enters. He looks about, confused.

EMMA: Joseph! I thought you had already left to Carthage. What's wrong?

JOSEPH JR: Emma, have I forgotten anything?

EMMA: Forgotten?

JOSEPH JR: Do you need anything? Do—do you feel anything?

EMMA: I don't know what you mean, Joseph.

JOSEPH JR: Never mind.

(JOSEPH JR. exits, then re-enters.)

I've gone to my horse to leave three times!

EMMA: Joseph?

JOSEPH JR: Emma, the Lord has a blessing to give and he won't let me leave until I give it.

(JOSEPH JR goes over to EMMA and places his hands upon the back of her head.)

Emma, thou shalt bear a child, and though he should be incarcerated in solid rock, yet he shall come out and make his mark in the world. Call his name David.

(JOSEPH JR raises his hands and goes to leave.)

EMMA: Suppose it be a girl?

JOSEPH JR: Call him David.

(Exit JOSEPH JR. Enter DAVID.)

DAVID: Mother—Mother, you sent for me?

EMMA: Yes—yes, I did.

DAVID: Are you all right?

EMMA: Your father prophesied about you, my son.

DAVID: I'm aware.

EMMA: God's servants, there are hard things required of them—and their wives.

DAVID: Yes?

EMMA: Have you thought about marrying?

DAVID: Of course I have.

EMMA: What sort of woman?

DAVID: I—well—

EMMA: Do you care for Clara?

DAVID: I have not informed anyone of such, if I do.

EMMA: You have your pick of the girls within the Church, at least.

DAVID: Clara's within the Church.

EMMA: I just want you to marry well.

DAVID: Mother, you must love Clara, for your boy does, and if you cannot love her, love me enough to make it up. She'll be my wife someday, if all goes well.

EMMA: David, you can't know that.

DAVID: Don't tell anybody—if you do, I will be cross.

(Enter JOSEPH III, distressed.)

JOSEPH III: Mother!

EMMA: What is it, Joseph? What's wrong?

JOSEPH III: It's Frederick! He was just lying there in his bed, sick, in agony. It's—it's bad.

EMMA: What?

DAVID: But where was Anna Maria?

JOSEPH III: From what I could discern of what Fred said, she took little Alice and abandoned him.

EMMA: And not telling us that he was sick! Detestable woman!

JOSEPH III: I told him I would come fetch you! You'll know what to do!

EMMA: Of course. David, go get Alexander.

DAVID: Yes, I'll get Alex! Immediately!

(Exit DAVID.)

EMMA: If anything happens to Fred, I'll never forgive that woman.

(Exit EMMA and JOSEPH III.)

SCENE NINE

It is the early hours of the morning. FREDERICK lies dead with EMMA sitting beside his bed in grief, handling her gold beads around her neck. JOSEPH JR. enters.

JOSEPH JR: Emma, will you teach my sons to walk in their father's footsteps?

EMMA: Joseph, please come for me.

JOSEPH JR: Emma, will you—?

EMMA: Joseph, please—I'm so tired.

JOSEPH JR: Emma—

EMMA: Joseph—

(Enter JOSEPH III.)

JOSEPH III: You called for me?

EMMA: *(Startled.)* Joseph?

JOSEPH III: Mother, did you call for me?

(At this moment, JOSEPH JR. brings FREDERICK to his feet. EMMA and JOSEPH III do not react to this, as if he is still dead in the bed frame. FREDERICK looks about, marveling at the afterlife, and then squarely looks at his father. He embraces him with an ecstatic, emotional joy. FREDERICK and JOSEPH JR. exit.)

EMMA: Oh—no, no, I don't think so.

JOSEPH III: Mother—

EMMA: Joseph, I loved your father. I love him still—

JOSEPH III: I know, Mother.

EMMA: What if I told you that—that he—

JOSEPH III: Told me what?

EMMA: Old griefs plague me at times like these. But your father was a good man.

JOSEPH III: I know. There was no—no blemish on his character, right, Mother?

EMMA: No blemish. But he's dead. Like our poor Fred. Another child gone.

JOSEPH III: You must be tired. Let's get you to bed.

EMMA: I am not tired.

JOSEPH III: Mother, you'll be exhausted—

EMMA: This is my last chance to see my son's face in this world.

JOSEPH III: All right, Mother.

(Exit JOSEPH III. EMMA handles the beads around her neck again. The sounds of the MOB, JOSEPH JR. crying "O Lord, My God!" and gunshots. Lights dim on EMMA and rise on JOSEPH III, DAVID, and ALEXANDER, sitting separately.)

ALEXANDER: How much can one family endure? It isn't fair.

JOSEPH III: No, it's not.

ALEXANDER: Joseph? I had an experience.

JOSEPH III: What sort of experience?

ALEXANDER: The Spirit came on me to comfort me about Fred. It said, "Grieve not; Frederick's condition is pleasant; and the time shall come when baptism can be secured to him."

JOSEPH III: Then today is a day of joy mingled with sorrow—joy mingled with sorrow.

ALEXANDER: Perhaps there's something to what you're doing, after all.

(Lights dim on JOSEPH III, DAVID, and ALEXANDER.)

SCENE TEN

(Enter BRIGHAM YOUNG to the stage left pulpit.)

BRIGHAM: One of the Prophet's sons, Alexander Smith, has been among us of late, trying to convert our people. I will speak on this subject for the benefit of a few who are inclined to be giddy-headed, unstable in their ways, and enthusiastic about something they don't understand. The sympathies of the Latter-day

Saints are with the family of the martyred prophet. I never saw a day in the world that I would not almost worship that woman, Emma Smith, if she would be a saint instead of being a devil. The Twelve Apostles would have been exceedingly glad if the prophet's family had come with us when we left Nauvoo for the valleys of these mountains. We would have made cradles for them if they had required them, and would have fed them on milk and honey. Emma is naturally a very smart woman—she is subtle and ingenious. She has made her children inherit lies. Yet there is no good thing I would refuse to do for her if she would only be a righteous woman.

(Exit BRIGHAM YOUNG. Enter EMMA to the stage right pulpit.)

EMMA: I look upon the case of the Brighamites and the Smith family in Utah as a hard one. May be that God will consider them in their ignorance and convict and convert them, and cleanse them from their abominations, and make them fit for more decent society. I hope he will, that is, those who were taken there when too young to know better.

(EMMA steps from the pulpit. Enter JOSEPH III.)

EMMA: Is it true?

JOSEPH III: How are you enjoying Plano, Mother?

EMMA: Don't avoid the question. Is it true?

JOSEPH III: Is what true?

EMMA: That you're sending David to Utah.

JOSEPH III: I've nearly made up my mind to do so.

EMMA: You mustn't do it, Joseph.

JOSEPH III: He's been implying and dropping hints, and I can deny him only so much. Alex went—why not him?

EMMA: Deny him to Doomsday. David needs to be protected—

JOSEPH III: He's a man now—

EMMA: He's sensitive—

JOSEPH III: He's a prophet's son. You can't shelter him forever.

EMMA: But why David?

JOSEPH III: David is our most eloquent, our most intelligent, our most diplomatic, our very best missionary. If anyone is going to slay that wild, desert Goliath, it is our David.

EMMA: Joseph—

(Enter DAVID and ALEXANDER, unnoticed.)

JOSEPH III: Mother, do you trust me?

EMMA: It's not a matter of trust.

JOSEPH III: David needs to make his own decisions now. If he accepts the call, I intend to announce his and Alex's mission to Utah and California.

DAVID: Are you serious?

EMMA: David, how long have you been there?

DAVID: Is it true?

JOSEPH III: Do you accept the mission?

(DAVID whoops and embraces JOSEPH III.)

I'll take that as a yes.

DAVID: Yes, yes, yes!

JOSEPH III: It's decided then.

ALEXANDER: David and Alexander Smith—we'll be the sons of thunder, echoing in mountain canyons!

DAVID: Mother, isn't it wonderful?

EMMA: David—

DAVID: There's only so much a man can take of writing poetry and being Major Bidamon's chore boy without feeling as if his manhood is worthless! Now you will see your son become a man! Now I can make my mark in the world!

EMMA: No, listen, you must listen. I know what you're both going to face. You are going on a mission to save souls. There are souls here right at home which are of just as much value to God as any of those to whom you are being sent, and so far as I'm concerned of far greater value.

DAVID: But, Mother, these people followed Father once. Surely, there are many who would, once they see us, once they hear us—

EMMA: You need not flatter yourself that you are going to win those old members of the Church back, at least none of those who were leaders here before they went West. They will none of them return, they have sinned away the day of grace.

ALEXANDER: But we *do* have hopes, Mother—*great* hopes—that the Lord can soften the hearts of some of those men who knew the truth once. Perhaps we can bring them back again to their primitive faith.

JOSEPH III: Yes, Mother, isn't that any missionary's great hope, to bring souls to Christ?

EMMA: It's a beautiful hope, my sons, but I'm trying to warn you with what's in my heart and put you on your guard.

DAVID: You speak from a place of pain, Mother. A place of fear. Let's speak with faith!

EMMA: Oh, my dear, innocent, beautiful boy. Don't you ever allow yourself to feel hurt or bad at anything they may say about me. Don't let it worry you at all, for I had rather they would say evil things of me than good; they cannot hurt me, and it need not hurt you.

DAVID: Anyone who truly knew you, cannot speak anything but your praises!

EMMA: I know them, and I know the spirit they are of. I hope you can win over members who were deceived, but I know Brigham and those who surround him, and I tell you again you will never win any of them over to the Church.

(Blackout.)

SCENE ELEVEN

(Enter JULIA.)

JULIA: Dearest Mother,

I wish when you write, you would tell me about the fuss at Salt Lake, for I have never heard a word about it.

Your Affectionate Daughter, Julia.

(Exit JULIA. Lights raise on BRIGHAM, sitting at a desk, surrounded by a number of men, including JOSEPH F., SAMUEL, GEORGE Q. CANNON, and JOHN TAYLOR.)

BRIGHAM: Brethren, I'm glad you came so quickly. I've had them waiting out there for a while; they may be upset.

JOHN: We're with you on this.

SAMUEL: Won't such a large group seem combative?

BRIGHAM: You have your part to play in this, Samuel. They need to see we have our own Smiths to present to the Saints. That they have family here, too, with us, away from the claws of their mother. Let them in, Joseph.

JOSEPH F: Yes, President Young.

(JOSEPH F: exits and then returns with alexander and DAVID. They are surprised to see so many men.)

ALEXANDER: What is this? Is this why you left us out there waiting so long, Mr. Young, so you could assemble your den of wolves?

DAVID: Alex—

ALEXANDER: I don't need an editor, David.

BRIGHAM: Boys, if you were only on the right track, I could almost embrace both of you. You do not know how much your father meant to us.

DAVID: We thank you for the sentiment, Governor Young.

ALEXANDER: Yes, that's almost gracious of you.

BRIGHAM: What can I do for you that would take the "almost" out of your statement, Alexander?

ALEXANDER: It is our understanding that you often allow other Churches the use of the Tabernacle on occasion.

BRIGHAM: That is true.

DAVID: That is good of you, sir. We—

ALEXANDER: Would we be allowed to use it, Governor?

BRIGHAM: *(Sitting back, studying alexander for a moment.)* You've been to Salt Lake before, Alexander. Three years ago? You said some rather unflattering things about me.

ALEXANDER: I report things as I see them, sir.

BRIGHAM: And yet you come to us when you need our help?

ALEXANDER: Do you wish me to say to your face what I think of you?

DAVID: And here we go . . .

BRIGHAM: Would you be willing to retract the statements from your prior mission?

ALEXANDER: I most certainly would not, sir. They were strictly true, and I stand ready to prove them.

BRIGHAM: You oppose your father's friends vehemently.

ALEXANDER: If my father were still alive, I really do wonder whether he would still consider you his friends.

JOHN: We are only following the instructions he left us. Why are you so set against us?

ALEXANDER: You've done our family great harm. You've disgraced our father's name, you've disgraced him while you so earnestly give him empty praise, empty adulation.

JOHN: Empty? When other men who you have in your Church's midst abandoned your father because of the principles he taught, we stood firm by him. I still have bullets embedded in my skin from when I was with your father when he died.

DAVID: We know the friendship you personally showed our father in in the end, Elder Taylor, but—

BRIGHAM: We are often as a people misconstrued and misunderstood. Where did you receive your information? From your mother?

ALEXANDER: I have lived through the experiences of many of the events I referred to, and do not need anyone else to inform me.

GEORGE: Emma—strong as stone, as smart as a serpent, boys. She was a grand first lady to your father—but she wouldn't bare up under the principles which we had to carry without her.

ALEXANDER: If you mean polygamy, we understand plenty well your views on that.

BRIGHAM: Has she ever taught you a thing about your father's connection to polygamy? Does she discuss it?

ALEXANDER: Yes, sir, and I have more confidence in her statements than yours.

BRIGHAM: She is a liar. The damnedest liar that ever lived! I am sure she—she tried to poison your father—twice! She stole the portraits of your father and Hyrum, your father's ring—things that should have belonged to the Church!

ALEXANDER: No, sir, you tried to steal things that rightfully belonged to our family, and you coveted and lusted after things that did not belong to you, to bolster your claims with the shreds that were left of my father, trying to punish his family because they did not support you in the adulteries in the Church my father was in the midst of fighting against.

BRIGHAM: Lies! Fakes!

ALEXANDER: His and my Uncle Hyrum's fervent fight against the polygamy your ilk was raising are right there in the Nauvoo newspapers, including the one which my father was editor. These are a matter of the public record.

BRIGHAM: Take all of this back, or you won't have a single place to preach in all of Utah.

ALEXANDER: William Marks has told us that our father was in the midst of organizing your excommunication, and that of all the polygamists, right before his death. If he had lived to lead the Church just a little longer, you would have had no place in it.

JOHN: President Young, perhaps it's best to—

BRIGHAM: No, don't you see? Even thousands of miles away, that woman still fights against me! She still tries to rob us of our right to lead the Church that we built with our labor in England, bringing a multitude of converts when it was dying on the vine and being eaten from within by crows like their mother.

ALEXANDER: Stop your slanderous tongue! What you say is false and you know it is false.

DAVID: You may as well try to rub silver off of the moon as destroy the purity of my mother's character.

BRIGHAM: Liar that she is, Emma is a powerful woman of influence. I, of all people, know that.

DAVID: You can't diminish her character with your words, sir. Why is it not better to talk of men and principle, and not attack the character of a mother in Israel, whose life is at home, and whose occupation with the care of her family?

JOSEPH F: David, as a mother in Israel, she had the responsibility, the powerful responsibility, to raise you in the truth!

ALEXANDER: And now our mother is attacked by her own family!

JOSEPH F: You weren't thinking so much about family when you attacked my reputation on your last mission, Alexander.

ALEXANDER: I saw the influence that family ties ought to have when I was last here, Joseph, and you know it well. You and our cousin Samuel here both stood by and saw me and my things detained in a manner you knew was unjust. Samuel showed his character with prompt action on the night we were

talking in front of the theatre, as he placed himself between me and danger, while you stood aloof.
Samuel, I thank you for your friendship to me that night.

SAMUEL: And I would do it again.

(Exchanges conflicted glances with BRIGHAM.)

But you still must understand—

JOSEPH F: What you and your awful, unrestrained mother *must understand* is that my loyalties don't belong to you, but to a higher power.

DAVID: Joseph, how can you say such wicked things about our Mother? You've met her, you've partaken of her hospitality.

JOSEPH F: Hospitable, yes. But she severely neglected her duty to your religious education, her duty to teach you to carry on your father's work!

ALEXANDER: And we do not do our father's work because we don't have a row of wives lined up behind us like you do?

JOHN: Please, let's all calm ourselves. We love you, boys, for your father's sake.

ALEXANDER: That makes no impression upon me. I expect to live long enough to make for myself a name, and the people of God to love me for my own sake.

BRIGHAM: A name, a name, a name! You have not got God enough about you to make a name. You are nothing at all like your father. He was open and frank and outspoken, but you—there is something covered, something hidden, calculated to deceive.

DAVID: No such thing, sir. It is the truth you see, and it blinds you.

ALEXANDER: I challenge you, Brigham Young, or any other Church representative to a debate.

BRIGHAM: No, I do not care to put your seducing words into this people. They have the Spirit of God; they can tell well enough between light and darkness without you interfering.

ALEXANDER: You say you have the truth, what need you fear? You are men in full vigor of mind and reason; we are but boys. If it is as you say, you can easily overcome us, if we are in the wrong; but if it proves that we are right, the sooner you get right, the better. Unfortunately for us, a Mormon legislature has made laws prohibiting preaching upon the streets of Utah, so we are denied means used by your missionaries to convert thousands. Yet, you have not made it a misdemeanor to preach on the mountainside, and we propose to get the ears of this people!

DAVID: *(Trying to placate now)* But we would prefer the Tabernacle. Will you let us use it as you have allowed other faiths? To show your fairness?

ALEXANDER: Let's go, David. It is useless to prolong this controversy.

DAVID: President Young?

BRIGHAM: Boys, don't let this be your last visit; come again. I would gladly take you, if I did not think it would be taking a viper to my bosom that would sting me to death.

ALEXANDER: Do not be alarmed, sir. After this reception, you need not expect us to visit you here or at your home ever again.

DAVID: Please, sir. The Tabernacle—

BRIGHAM: *(Pause.)* What are your sentiments, Brethren? Shall we allow them to use our Tabernacle?

(EACH of them, unanimously, in turn, says, "No," even SAMUEL, who hesitates.)

I'm sorry, David, we don't think it is best..

GEORGE: So far as I'm concerned, I can as soon express myself. After we whose hair has grown grey in

the service of God, and after we have borne the heat of the day in the persecution and suffering on land and sea, and have labored long and hard in the heat and the cold to build up a name for their father. For these boys to come now and tear down what we have been so many years in building up, to me, is the height of impudence, and I will not give my consent to it.

DAVID: We won't deny that you have traveled far, suffered much and labored hard to build up a name for our father, but what sort of name is it? A name that we his sons are ashamed to meet in good society, and it shall be our life's work to remove from our father's name the stain you have heaped upon it.

JOSEPH F: We are not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

ALEXANDER: But we are ashamed of the gospel of Brigham Young.

(Exit DAVID and ALEXANDER.)

JOHN: Well—that could have gone better.

BRIGHAM: Thank you all. Now, if you will excuse me—

(They move to leave.)

Except for you, Joseph.

JOSEPH F: Yes, sir.

(Exit JOHN TAYLOR, SAMUEL, and GEORGE CANNON.)

BRIGHAM: They're your family, Joseph, your blood—

JOSEPH F: The Church and my little sister are the only family I have now.

BRIGHAM: Joseph, I'm going to ask you to do something very hard.

JOSEPH F: I do not shy away from hard things.

BRIGHAM: Joseph's boys—Alexander is fierce and David is eloquent.

JOSEPH F: You have my full support.

BRIGHAM: We'll need more than your support. We'll need your voice. You're going to give the evidence we need. Get affidavits, get dates, get whatever you can to prove that it was Joseph Smith who received the revelation on polygamy, not me. It will be important that this information comes from you—you are in the best position to tell the truth about your uncle.

JOSEPH F: I will do my best, sir.

BRIGHAM: You've been loyal, Joseph.

JOSEPH F: I won't disappoint you, sir.

(Exit JOSEPH F. Lights dim on BRIGHAM.)

SCENE TWELVE

(Enter JOSEPH III and WILLIAM MARKS, a former Stake President of Nauvoo in the the LDS Church under Joseph Smith, Jr., and now a member of the RLDS First Presidency. They are mid-argument.)

WILLIAM: Joseph, please, listen to me—

JOSEPH III: President Marks—William—when the Church came to me, it was under the auspices of opposition to polygamy.

WILLIAM: Of course! But We also have stated this from the beginning. . .

JOSEPH III: No, no, it was explicitly stated. . .

WILLIAM: Look at the first issue of the *Saints Herald* . . .

JOSEPH III: Isaac Sheen's fault, he hardly even knew father. His editorial interference misrepresented the facts based on the information he received from—

WILLIAM: Your father's involvement is difficult to gauge—there are conflicting stories.

JOSEPH III: No, let's stay on topic. This isn't about me.

WILLIAM: It's all about you! Your father's blessing and pronouncements, the patriarchal blessing from your grandparents, they are all prophetic utterances that you are the one to put the Church back in order.

JOSEPH III: To rid it of polygamy.

WILLIAM: Yes!

JOSEPH III: Because my father never practiced it.

WILLIAM: I can't say for sure—

JOSEPH III: That is *not* going to be the Church's position.

WILLIAM: "Facts are stubborn things." Your father was experimenting with new ideas. Whether it was just this idea of sealing, or whether it extended to what the Brighamites have adopted—to what extent your father was involved in that or not, I can't deduce for myself, nor can I discern though the ticket of lies that have grown about him among the Brighamites in the meantime.

JOSEPH III: To have one of the First Presidency so turned about!

WILLIAM: There was a revelation read to the Council. What it said, it could be interpreted as his teachings on sealings, or—

JOSEPH III: What are you playing at here? I thought you were on our side!

WILLIAM: I am. It was your mother and I, against nearly the whole leadership in Nauvoo, who stood up against the dark principles that threatened to destroy the whole Church and cut us off from God. When Sidney Rigdon ran away to Pittsburgh, when the Laws and the Higbees resorted to threats, violence, and overthrow, your mother and I were the ones who stayed and tried to protect the Church from threats without and within. We were the ones who knew that we needed to stay in our callings and influence your father directly to counter the growing shadow, to save the Church and its people.

JOSEPH III: My father was a prophet of God.

WILLIAM: He certainly was. But he was also a man.

JOSEPH III: A *good* man!

WILLIAM: Even a good man can be deceived.

JOSEPH III: I don't believe you. I don't know why you're saying this.

WILLIAM: Because the truth will make you free. I am not certain either way, but we can find out the truth together.

JOSEPH III: Make no mistake. There is only one conclusion here! My father's multiple public denials and fierce opposition to those horrid practices that were being perpetuated in his name are a matter of public record.

WILLIAM: Joseph, calm down and listen. I am—

JOSEPH III: Father had no wife but my mother, Emma Hale, to the knowledge of either my mother or myself, and I was twelve years old nearly when he was killed. Not a child was born to father, except by my mother, not one!

(Exit JOSEPH III, angrily. Exit WILLIAM.)

SCENE THIRTEEN

(Enter DAVID onto the stage right podium. He addresses the audience.)

DAVID: They say to me, “My dear young friend, your father taught polygamy and practiced it, and I know it.” Well, then in the name of all consistency, why did he in the *Times and Seasons*, under the date February 1, 1844, just prior to his death, pronounce it a “false and corrupt doctrine,” and why did his brother, Hyrum Smith, in the same volume declare that “no such doctrine was taught here, neither is any such thing practiced here?” This was March, 1844, and the summer following, he was killed.

(During David’s speech, JOSEPH F has taken his place on the podium on stage left and now begins his own speech, also addressing the audience.)

JOSEPH F: Many will run after the young Smiths simply because they are the sons of Joseph. These same dizzy-headed people would treat with contempt any other person who preached the same doctrine. In view of this fact, it has been determined to hold a series of meetings in this and other wards, to answer the statements of David Hyrum, and before we are through, we purpose to present testimony to convince any honest mind who hears it, and damn any one who rejects it.

DAVID: Be it remembered that the date of this pretended revelation in favor of polygamy is as early as July 12, 1843, but that it was never published until September, 1852.

JOSEPH F: I have now in my possession and will present the affidavits of twelve women, now living, that they were spiritual wives of Joseph Smith, and so continued to the time of his death. I have the evidences of hundreds of men who had been taught the doctrine of Joseph and Hyrum.

DAVID: In April, 1844, Hyrum Smith made an address to the elders starting on a mission in which he emphatically denied the doctrine and forbade their teaching it.

JOSEPH F: I cannot help the position this places my father and Joseph as to their denials, I only know these facts. But everybody knows the people were not prepared for these things, and it was necessary to be cautious. They were in the midst of enemies, in a state where this doctrine would have sent them to the penitentiary.

DAVID: They say to me, “Why, my dear young man, his life was in danger, and he was justifiable in telling a lie that he might save it.” Christ says: “Break not my commandments for to save your lives.”

JOSEPH F: Christ says: “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before the swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.” He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

DAVID: “Thou shalt not bear false witness.”

JOSEPH F: The Old Testament patriarchs were polygamists. Were they corrupt men?

DAVID: In order to get me to swallow polygamy, you roll up another dose nearly as bad about his lying. Neither will I down.

JOSEPH F: Christ, in effect, told His disciples that they should keep secret His Messiahship, that they should keep secret the transfiguration on the mount, that they should keep secret many of His miracles. He told them to hide the truth, until the time was right, so that the Jews wouldn’t seek His life before it was His time.

DAVID: Furthermore, my father labored day after day, persecuted, hated, and despised, to bring before men the Book of Mormon—the Book of Mormon says, “For there shall not any man among you have save it

be one wife; and concubines he shall have none.”

JOSEPH F: The Book of Mormon says that polygamy is forbidden, except in a certain situation: “If I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up a seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things.” This is the exception written of in that book!

DAVID: See with what consistency they profess to teach me to respect my father, and yet ask me in the next breath to throw aside his valuable, dear-bought, blood-sealed works and testimony for a thing utterly contrary to them in letter, in spirit, that they have given to the world long after he slumbers with the silent dead.

JOSEPH F: The brethren were not free in Nauvoo as they are here; the Devil was raging about Nauvoo, and there were traitors on every hand, men who are now with the Reorganites like William Marks.

DAVID: I am sick, but not of Christ’s gospel or sacred books, that I should throw them away for that which is contrary and evil . . .

JOSEPH F: And when Joseph and Hyrum left Nauvoo, while the mob was after them, and crossed into Iowa, intending to come to the Rocky Mountains and pick out a ridge for the people . . .

DAVID: But I am sick of seeing this people. Many, many of them go about with that within they dare not declare, fearing for the sake of their bread and butter to speak the convictions of their souls, yielding to the stream of oppression because they dare not stand upon their feet and be men free in the gospel and beneath the flag of our blessed land.

JOSEPH F: It was that man, William Marks, and Emma Smith who joined in writing them a letter, in which they called them cowards. Joseph’s great heart was overcome, and he said, “If that is all my best friends care for my life, then I don’t care for it,” and he and Hyrum came back, gave themselves up, and were taken to Carthage and murdered.

DAVID: O! Saints of God, arise, assert your rights! Be men and women, free and pure; cease to bow submissively to the arm of flesh and the doctrine and commandments of men. Open the word of God and read the doom of evil. Shake the harp of Zion until its harmonies shall drive away the spirit of bondage forever.

JOSEPH F: And the blame rests upon that woman, their mother, Emma Smith. This is hard, but I want these men to know that if they came here to raise their party, we will give them facts, and some of these facts will cut, and if they don’t want them told, let them go away and keep their mouths shut. And I say in plain fact, that the blood of Joseph and Hyrum is upon the souls of William Marks and Emma Smith, and there it will remain until burned out by the fires of hell!

(Exit DAVID and JOSEPH F.)

END ACT ONE

36 PAGES IN ACT TWO