

# LIBERTY JAIL

by Orson Scott Card  
with Emily Janice Card

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Music to "Jailbreaker Jed" copyright © 2005 by Robert Stoddard

TIME: Late 1870s, flashing back to 1837  
PLACE: Liberty Jail, Clay County, Missouri

## **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

Each actor plays someone in the "present" and also one or more characters in the long "flashback" sequences that constitute most of the play

	PRESENT	PAST
ACTOR 1	Smith	Joseph Smith
ACTOR 2	Elder Humphreys	Hyrum Smith
ACTOR 3	Jack, the foreman	Sidney Rigdon
ACTOR 4	Elder Alexander Macrae	
ACTOR 5	A boy	Joseph Smith III
ACTOR 6	A young man	(young) Alex Macrae
ACTOR 7	Hank	Lyman Wight
ACTOR 8	Bill Johnson	Caleb Baldwin
ACTOR 9	A Man	Doniphan; Judge Turnham; Brother Hathaway
ACTOR 10	A Man	General Lucas; Nasty Guard
ACTOR 11	A Man	Old Guard; Brigham Young; Sheriff
ACTOR 12	A young man	Aide; Young Guard; Don Carlos Smith
ACTRESS 1	Mrs. Johnson	Mrs. Harvey
ACTRESS 2	Annie Parker	Emma Smith
ACTRESS 3	A Woman	Sister Smead
ACTRESS 4	A Woman	Sister Albert
ACTRESS 5	A Woman	Mary Fielding Smith
ACTRESS 6	A Woman	Mercy Thompson

However, depending on the size of your cast, parts can be doubled up even further. It is unlikely you can perform the play with fewer than 9 men, 1 boy, and 3 women (and, of course, you can cast the entire play with young men and women playing older parts).

## **AUTHOR'S NOTES**

For six months in the fall and winter of 1837-38, the First Presidency of the Mormon Church was locked in a two room jail in Liberty, Missouri. Joseph Smith and his counselors, Sidney Rigdon and Hyrum Smith, were joined by Lyman Wight, later an Apostle, and two who were virtually unknown to history, Caleb Baldwin and Alexander Macrae.

We know little of what went on in the tiny prison -- only comments from several letters hint at the events there. But two of Joseph Smith's most powerful revelations came from the experience -- Sections 121 and 122 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Why were they in prison? The answer well-known to most Mormons is that the mobs of Mormon-haters had driven the Saints from the land they had hoped to turn into Zion, and in the process sought to kill the Prophet and his two highest lieutenants. And there the average Mormon stops.

But why did the Non-Mormon Missourians hate the Saints so much? Because they were jealous of the hard-working Saints accomplishments? Perhaps. Because they feared that the Mormons -- almost all Yankees -- were about to abolish slavery? Much more likely.

But no one reason was the cause of all the hatred. One of the contributing factors was certainly the actions of some of the Saints. Like Sidney Rigdon, who in a stirring Fourth of July speech called for the non-Mormon Missourians to be "exterminated or driven from the state" -- the very words that Governor Lilburn Boggs would soon use against the Mormons. And like the vengeance-seeking Danite Band, Mormons who rode the night, trying to terrorize the anti-Mormons into leaving the Saints alone, but succeeding only in justifying their actions in the eyes of many who might have been sympathetic to the Church.

### **Note on 2005 version**

The original productions of *Liberty Jail* had music in various configurations, but in reviving the play for a church production during the Joseph Smith bicentennial year, I decided it played best as a drama. My daughter, playwright Emily Janice Card, was kind enough to revise the play to omit all the songs except the comical "Jailbreaker Jed," which the inmates in Liberty Jail sing with each other. My friend and longtime collaborator Robert Stoddard wrote the melody.

### **Note on Sets and Properties**

*Liberty Jail* lends itself to arena or thrust staging, with two raised 12x12 platforms abutting each other, one noticeably higher than the other. The higher platform represents the upstairs portion of the jail, and should have a stairway leading to it from the side opposite the lower platform. The "out of scene" actors remain on stage, either behind the platforms or on the floor around them, watching.

A barrel, a few stools, and piles of bedding constitute the furnishings of the set.

Properties include a couple of muskets, tin pails and plates and rudimentary utensils for eating, and paper, pen, and inkwell for writing, as well as several letters folded and sealed.

Actors who are not in a particular scene can be seated in the front row of the audience.

The play moves in and out of flashback without any pause. Lighting effects can signal the changes, but the audience can grasp the transitions without any effects apart from the changed attitudes of the actors.

### **Note on Language**

Views of what constitutes "bad language" have changed over time. Language deemed offensive for the intended audience may be changed. No other rewrites are permitted.

### **Permissions**

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# LIBERTY JAIL

## ACT ONE

*JACK, the Foreman, enters the upstairs of the jail, looks around. MR. AND MRS. JOHNSON are downstairs drinking cider.*

JACK

Where is everybody?

*No answer as the JOHNSONS hastily cap the jugs.*

Isn't anybody here?

MRS. JOHNSON

I don't know about anybody else, but Mr. Johnson and me is down here.

JACK

Well, then I hope that you're Mrs. Johnson!

BILL JOHNSON

More's my sorry she is!

*She cuffs him lightly.:*

SMITH (*entering*)

I have the wrong day? Or am I early?

JACK

The right day, all right; so let's get busy tearing down the jail.

BILL (*coming upstairs*)

We aren't going to tear it down right away. Annie Parker's comin' and we're gonna have ourselves a picnic.

SMITH

This ain't a barn-raisin', Mr. Johnson, it's a jail-tearin'.

BILL

But food is always food!

ANNIE PARKER (*entering*)

Is everybody here? Bill Johnson said to bring cider and pie because the jail's comin' down.

JACK

The jail doesn't just come down, Miss Parker. Strong men are supposed to pull

it down. The county's paying those strong men.

*Four more men and two women enter carrying more food and cider.*

WOMAN

More food! Make way for the meal!

JACK

How many people did you invite to this occasion?

BILL

Just what you see here.

ANNIE

And anybody we happened to pass along the way!

JACK

Did any of them think to bring tools?

BILL

Patience, Jack. Patience! We ain't bein' paid by the hour. I say let's eat, drink, and be merry for Liberty Jail and all the famous people who've been locked up in here! Then we'll tear it down.

MRS. JOHNSON

And who was ever locked up in here that was famous?

BILL

Me, for one!

MRS. JOHNSON

And they never should have let you out!

SMITH

And Joseph Smith.

MRS. JOHNSON

Who's that?

JACK

He was a Mormonite. They shot him in Illinois. He said he was a prophet.

MRS. JOHNSON

Smith, huh? Any relation to you?

SMITH

There's a lot of Smiths in the world.

ANNIE

But how many go crazy and start churches?

BILL

If our Smith here ever lost his mind, he wouldn't make a religion, he'd just ask Annie to marry him.

MRS. JOHNSON

Bill!

ANNIE

Why, Mr. Johnson, it's not polite to listen in on a girl's prayers.

SMITH

Or steal a man's idea.

BILL

The day you get down on that knee, no one will care if I ruined the surprise.

MRS. JOHNSON

Stop it, all of you, it has to be bad luck to talk about weddings in a jail.

BOY

Whose wedding?

HANK

Yours. And don't you stick one more roll in your pocket.

*MACRAE and HUMPHREYS enter.*

MACRAE

Excuse us. The young lady shouted that all were welcome.

Annie waves.

BILL

By all means, gentlemen, grab some cider! It's quite a change to have people actually wanting to come in here.

JACK

Isn't there gonna be any work done around here today?

MRS. JOHNSON

So tell me about this other Smith -- Joseph the Mormonite. What makes you say he was crazy?

ANNIE

That's what they all say. He came from a respectable, hard-working family, good folks. But the boy started goin' around telling people he talked face to face with God and Jesus.

MRS. JOHNSON

Oh, dear.

BILL

Don't forget that angel who gave him the golden book.

BOY

A golden book? What was in it?

HANK

Where were you when the angel was handin' them out? My gold book's in my other pants.

BILL

Hoo, I'll give Joe Smith this -- the boy could tell a tale!

MACRAE

And every word was true.

The group is surprised into silence, regarding the stranger warily.

JACK

Who did you say you were?

HUMPHREYS

We're missionaries from the Mormon Church.

HANK

Mormons here? I thought we runned you out a long time ago!

MACRAE

I heard you were tearing the jail down. I came by to see it. It just so happens that on the road we also got invited.

ANNIE

Beg pardon, sir, for all our talk about your leader just now. We meant no harm by it.

MACRAE

Thank you, ma'am. I only hope you'll allow me to talk with you a little, and tell you what I know of Joseph Smith.

SMITH

Did you know the man? Yourself?

WOMAN

Course he did. He's a Mormon, ain't he?

SMITH

Shows what you know. Joe Smith was killed more'n twenty years ago.

MACRAE

I knew him. And I knew this jail too. We both spent some time here. It holds great value for me.

JACK

Imagine that, gettin' all sentimental about a jail.

MACRAE

My life began here.

SMITH

I heard a lot about Joe Smith. From my aunt. She met him when he was jailed here.

MACRAE

Did she?

SMITH

She thought he was a faker, and she came to see. But before she died she always told me, Joe Smith's no fake. He really saw God.

MACRAE

I think I remember the woman.

JACK

Enough palaverin'. Let's get to work.

BILL

Come on, Jack. We've got all day. I want to hear about Joe Smith. I never heard a Mormonite afore.

*Ad libs from crowd "yes" etc.*

MACRAE

I'll be glad to tell you, if you want me to. If you'll help me.

JACK

Oh, go ahead.



MACRAE

Well --

*A meaningful look at HUMPHREYS*

I'm Elder Alexander Macrae, and this is Elder Humphreys. First, I want you to imagine what it was like coming in here. We were all from New York and Ohio.

HANK

I knew it! A bunch of consarned Yankees!

HUMPHREYS

Maybe you don't know it, sir, but Yankees come in two varieties, consarned and not consarned. So do Missourians.

HANK

Maybe. Myself, I'm consarned and proud of it!

MACRAE

There was myself -- but I was only seventeen then. And Hyrum Smith, the prophet's brother -- would you help with Hyrum?

*He indicates the actor who will play the part.*

HYRUM

Sure.

MACRAE

And Joseph Smith --

*Touches Smith's shoulder*

You, sir, would you mind?

SMITH/JOSEPH

Not at all.

MACRAE

And there was Lyman Wight. A firebrand if ever there was one.

*Touches the shoulder of the appropriate actor.*

And Sidney Rigdon, of course, the hottest preacher ever made.

SIDNEY (*anxiously*)

Always hankered to give a rip-roarin' sermon!

MACRAE

Fine. And a man who wasn't even Mormon -- Caleb Baldwin.

*Touches the appropriate actor.*

CALEB

Me?

MACRAE

Are you a Mormon?

CALEB

No!

MACRAE

Well, then, you're perfect. And a couple of guards, strong and tough . . . and not very bright.

*All look at the same two men, who look miffed; all laugh.*

Shall we start?

*All move to places.*

And then the walls of Liberty Jail. Hot when we first came here. Freezing cold all winter . . .

*The "crowd" ad libs as they mock the "prisoners".*

CROWD

About time they locked you up!

Don't bother with jail!

Hang 'em!

Shootin's too good for them!

Danites!

Traitors!

Yankee abolitionists!

GUARD *(to crowd)*

Shut up you stinkin' Missouri mules.

*(To prisoners)*

Inside!

CALEB

It's dark!

GUARD

You'll get used to it.

*Caleb tumbles down the stairs.*

CALEB

Yow! Why didn't you tell me there was a step!

GUARD

Why don't you look where you're goin'!

CALEB *(to Lyman)*

Couldn't you find a better place to sit?

LYMAN

I couldn't find a rocking chair.

ALEX

It's so small.

GUARD

Hurry up!

LYMAN

It stinks in here!

CALEB

If the rats can live with it so can we.

ALEX

Rats!!?

SIDNEY

Better than the company we'd have outside.

HYRUM

Is this all?

CALEB

The parlor's downstairs. And it has a large front yard.

LYMAN

Hope you don't mind an indoor privy.

*He kicks a large barrel.*

CALEB

The rent's low and the food's free.

LYMAN

Oh, wonderful. I'm stuck in jail with a fellow who likes to look at the bright side.

HYRUM

Where's Joseph?

JOSEPH (*over the noise of the crowd*)

Good afternoon, gentlemen.

*Enters.*

A light, a roof, four walls. Better than I thought.

CALEB

Sorry, Lyman. The bright side again.

JOSEPH

Not what I'd choose as home, but we'll make do. We'll make do.

SIDNEY

At least we're alive.

CALEB

You call this livin'?

HYRUM

Cheer up. Maybe they'll kill us quick.

*All laugh.*

\* \* \* \* \*

MRS. JOHNSON

How come they was in prison?

MACRAE

Troublous times, Ma'am

HUMPHREYS

There was a traitor, Ma'am. More than one. We had plenty of enemies from outside the Church -- but there was a man named Samson Avard.

AVARD

My name is Samson Avard, your honor, and I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help me God.

*Pause.*

Well, sir, I have been an Elder in the Mormon Church for many years now.

*Pause.*

I am an Elder to this day, sir, though after this day I want nothing further to do with Joseph Smith and his band of thieves and killers, sir. Yes, thieves and killers! It was about four months ago that Joseph Smith started up his band of thieves and killers, called the Daughter of Zion. Later on we called it the Danite Band.

BOTH MACRAES *(to Lyman)*

What a liar he is!

LYMAN *(privately, to Alex)*

Liar? I was a member of the Danites.

AVARD

Joseph Smith taught that it was the right thing to take the worldly possessions of the gentiles, because the gentiles are the lowest scum on the face of the earth and don't deserve to own property. We paid everything we stole into the church as tithing. Tithing is the money that Joseph Smith gets to keep.

BOTH MACRAES

I don't believe a word of it!

LYMAN

Avard's a snake, Alex, but I was in those raids, and I paid that produce to the bishop.

ALEX

And you heard Brother Joseph say to do it?

LYMAN

Not with his own mouth. But he wouldn't, would he? It was a righteous cause.

AVARD

It's the doctrine of the Mormons, sir, that we are as bound to obey Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon and Hyrum Smith, as much as we are bound to obey Almighty God!

ALEX

Brother Joseph -- is any of this true?

JOSEPH

When I came to Missouri with Zion's Camp, I thought we would make war on our enemies. But the Lord said no. He never said yes.

HYRUM

The first we heard of this Danite Band was when Samson Avard said we started it.

SIDNEY

Once again the Devil has snared the Saints with a lie.

LYMAN *(to Alex)*

Speaking of lies, I heard Sidney Rigdon himself speak at a meeting of the Danites. Have no mercy on the gentiles, says he. God will protect you in battle. We are the avenging angels of the Lord.

ALEX

Did he know you were actually going to do it?

LYMAN *(looks at him like he's an idiot; then:)*

It's no surprise he's lying about it. We were sworn to secrecy.

SIDNEY

I can't get over a high priest like Avard suddenly turning against us, Joseph. It seems that you can't trust anyone anymore.

LYMAN

But he can trust me to keep my oath.

*Lyman rejoins the others.*

ALEX *(knowing he won't be heard by Lyman)*

Except you just told me.

CALEB *(in a fury)*

My name is Caleb Baldwin and I'm the meanest old coot to live to see his fiftieth birthday in the state of Missouri! I ain't never married cause no Missouri woman's stupid enough to have me, and I ain't never made no money cause no Missouri man's stupid enough to loan me any. If a man died owin' me money, I'd pick his pockets right in the coffin. But nobody's ever seen me as mad as I am right now.

JOSEPH *(laughing)*

That's as fine a boast as I ever heard.

CALEB

I'm so tough I could tackle a charging buffalo and bite his ear off afore he knew what hit him! And if they don't let me out of this jail in five minutes, I'm gonna kick a three foot hole in the wall.

HYRUM

I wish you could.

LYMAN

Quiet down, Baldwin!

CALEB

The whole idea of jail is stupid. If you don't like a fellow, why stick him in a hole? He'll come out madder'n ever anyway, plus you had to feed him! Hangin's cheaper. And you can re-use the rope.

ALEX

Don't go givin' 'em ideas, Mr. Baldwin.

CALEB

The stupidest thing of all is that I'm not even a Mormon. Not even close! (To Joseph:) Not even plannin' on it. I'm in here because I got mad when I saw a half-dozen drunken apes tryin' to rob a helpless old lady Mormon and her three kids.

ALEX

Did you shoot 'em?

CALEB

Shoot 'em? And where would I be gettin' a gun? NO! I dented their heads with a rock. (Beat.) And it broke the rock.

LYMAN

When's dinner? I'm hungry.

CALEB

You got boots. Start chewin'. (To all:) My dear lunatic Mormon friends, how long do you plan to sit here in this overgrown root cellar?

HYRUM

Until they let us out.

SIDNEY

Shouldn't be long. It's illegal to hold us here. They'll have to let us go.

CALEB

Where? To Illinois? Or to Heaven? They may decide to let you Latter-day Saints join the early-day ones. And what worries me is that they might decide to let this latter-day sinner go, too.

LYMAN

I'd bribe them to let us go, but I'm clean out of money.

CALEB (*hefting the barrel*)

I was thinkin' more along the lines of keepin' our guards busy wakin' up from a knock on the head while we scamper to the Mississippi.

LYMAN

Hey, now, a man of action! I'm with you!

CALEB

So is everybody else, right here in this outhouse, till we decide to leave.

JOSEPH

Do you have a plan?

CALEB

I've been watching the guard, Mr. Smith.. When he comes in with the food we've got about fifteen seconds that he's got his back to the door. If right at that moment somebody cuts and runs, what will he do?

HYRUM

Shoot him dead, Mr. Baldwin.

CALEB

Yes, that's what he'll try to do, but first he'll follow him to the door. He'll have to cock his musket. During that time, a few rather quick fellows might actually be able to pull him down and take his gun away before it goes off and wakes up the city.

LYMAN

I say we do it tonight!

HYRUM

Somebody could get hurt.

ALEX (*quietly*)

Killed.

CALEB

Somebody could get killed sittin' on his backside waitin' for the hangin'.

HYRUM

I'd feel better about it if I knew that we had the approval of the Lord.

SIDNEY

I suggest that we have a time of fasting and prayer first.

CALEB

I'm all for not eating the food.

ALEX

Brother Joseph -- do you think the Lord would tell us what to do?



JOSEPH

I'll ask if you like, Alex. But only if you all agree to abide by His answer.

SIDNEY

I've long abided by the word of the Lord to you in every other matter, Joseph.

LYMAN

Following you got me in here. Maybe it'll get me out.

WOMAN

Come on now! Did you really think they'd kill you?

MACRAE

When a mob gets up in Missouri they get pretty mad.

SMITH

We saw that right enough in the war between the states. Everybody killin' anybody.

MACRAE

There was folks as sure meant to kill us, and came close more than once. General Lucas even gave the order.

*LUCAS and AIDE at table. Enter DONIPHAN.*

DONIPHAN (*saluting*)

General Lucas?

LUCAS (*to aide*)

Read Doniphan his orders.

DONIPHAN (*takes the order and reads aloud*)

"Brigadier General Doniphan, Sir -- You will take Joseph Smith and the other prisoners to the public square and shoot them at nine o'clock tomorrow morning. Samuel D. Lucas, Major General, Commanding."

*Doniphan pockets the orders and then speaks to Lucas:*

It's cold-blooded murder. I won't obey your orders. My brigade shall march for Liberty tomorrow morning at 8 o'clock. And if you execute these men, I will hold you responsible before an earthly tribunal, so help me God.

*Doniphan exits.*

LUCAS

What an arrogant, self-serving Mormon-loving traitor! Does he think he can frighten me?

AIDE

Shall we proceed with the execution ourselves?

LUCAS (*"are you crazy?"*)

With Doniphan in possession of a written copy of the order? With my name on it?

MACRAE

The Judges weren't too eager to keep us alive either.

JUDGE

This court finds evidence sufficient enough to hold you over for trial on charges of treason, murder, burglary, arson, robbery, and larceny. You will be committed to prison without bail in the city of Liberty. Naturally, Mr. Smith, we'll provide an armed escort to protect you on your way.

JOSEPH

Are these the escort your honor?

JUDGE

I believe so, yes.

JOSEPH

Then you'd be doing us a favor to keep these men at home with you. I give you my word of honor that we'll make no effort to escape. But these men plan to kill us on the way.

MILITIAMAN 1 (*sheepishly*)

Only if you try to escape.

JUDGE (*realizes the plan is out in the open*)

I'll send only enough men to make sure you keep your word, Mr. Smith. Your safety is out of my hands.

CALEB

I can think of about fifteen places I'd rather have my safety than in his hands.

MACRAE

On the road to Liberty, we were ambushed anyway.

CALEB

Don't look now, Smith, but here comes our welcoming committee.

HYRUM

Only if "welcome" means "murder." Those men are here to kill us.

JOSEPH

Not today, Hyrum.

MILITIAMAN 2

Are you Joe Smith?

JOSEPH

I am sir -- and you don't know how glad we are to see you. This has been a long and tiring trip from Richmond, and we have a long way to go, unarmed. We've been afraid that some cowardly men with evil in their hearts might try to murder us. But now that you're here to protect us, our journey to prison will be safe.

MAN

Uh, you don't . . .

JOSEPH

I know your heart and there is no will to murder there. I can trust you to be a true man. Thank you.

MACRAE

And so we rode on to Liberty with an armed escort. Not a hair of our heads was touched. Joseph was the last man into the jail. There was a crowd outside, watching . . . mocking.

MEN and WOMEN

Joe Smith! Make a miracle and save yourself!  
Show us an angel!  
Lousy Yankee abolitionist land-stealin' Mormon!  
You'll hang before you leave this place, Joe Smith!

JOSEPH (*raising his arm*)

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen

JACK

Old Joe Smith showed them! No stupid Missourian can put one over on him!

ANNIE PARKER

You're a Missourian, Jack.

JACK

Oh, yeah.

BOY

Hey, Mr. Mormon?

MACRAE

Yes?

BOY

I heard tell they fed you on human flesh when you was in jail.

MACRAE

The guard told us he had fed us on Mormon beef. He might've meant a cow stolen from a Mormon -- or he might've meant something else. But my guess is that he was trying to make us feel more miserable than we already did.

SMITH

How did you stand it?

*Sudden, embarrassing silence.*

I mean, it's so cramped up in here. So small. And never any privacy.

MACRAE

It wasn't easy. But once they stopped keeping us entirely downstairs, we kind of made an agreement. We all lived upstairs, where there was light. And then anyone who wanted to be alone could go below.

*Lyman is downstairs, praying.*

LYMAN

Lord, don't you know they're killing your people out there? What are we doing in here, helpless? If ever there were a time for the Danites to ride in thy righteous fury, and avenge thy murdered children, it is now!

SIDNEY (*coming downstairs*)

It's dark down here. Makes upstairs look almost cheery by contrast. Like the Lord said -- opposition in all things.

LYMAN

While our enemies have everything their way!

SIDNEY

"Fools mock, but they shall mourn."

LYMAN

Then let the Danites act! We must strike to save the Church!

SIDNEY

We surrendered to the mob and gave up all our guns.

LYMAN

So it's all for nothing. All we built in Missouri taken from us, the Saints scattered abroad in the dead of winter, and the Prophet himself shut up in this jail. What happened to all the Lord's promises about building Zion here?

SIDNEY

The Lord has his own hidden plan for all things --

LYMAN

He hides his plans so well that it looks exactly like what you'd expect if Brother Joseph wasn't ever a prophet in the first place.

SIDNEY

If the Lord isn't protecting the Prophet, why aren't we dead? And since you actually did the things you were charged with, I'd say the only reason you're still alive is because the Lord is looking out for his Prophet. And those who are with him.

LYMAN

And who's looking out for the Saints while we're in here, waiting for the Lord's hidden plan?

SIDNEY

The Saints will see the hand of God in our release! And until then, they will live by faith.

LYMAN

Faith is a mighty thin soup.

SIDNEY

If we are steadfast, they will be, too. (Pause.) As long as we don't stay here too long.

LYMAN

As long as we don't stay here past tomorrow night.

SIDNEY

Oh, yes, the escape attempt. Well, I do have my misgivings. We'll have the Lord's confirmation or we won't do it.

*LYMAN starts upstairs, just as Alex is coming down.*

LYMAN

Alex, what time do you think it is?

ALEX

Got no watch and I can't see the sun. How should I know?

LYMAN

Look at that, Sidney. Young Alex won't even give me the time of day.

*Lyman laughs and goes upstairs.*

SIDNEY

Alex, you look worried.

ALEX

I haven't heard from my family.

SIDNEY

The time of killing is over.

ALEX

What about the time of starving and freezing?

SIDNEY

Do you doubt that the Lord can provide for his people?

ALEX

I know he can. But the Lord doesn't think dying's all that bad, he's just bringing his children home. Only I don't want 'em to go home yet!

SIDNEY

The power of the Lord is with his people, Alex, even if faithless eyes can't see it. Your eyes, though -- what have you seen?

ALEX

That night they held us at Richmond jail, and the guards were bragging on what they were doing ...

*Upstairs now seems different -- another jail -- and just outside the cell three GUARDS are boasting and laughing.*

YOUNG GUARD

I wasn't there. I didn't see it.

NASTY GUARD

All right, tell him.

OLD GUARD

We got 'em all holed up in one room. Every stinkin' Mormon, all in that one room at Haun's mill. We just gathered around and started shootin' through the walls and the windows. Got 'em all. Like shooting ducks on the water.

YOUNG GUARD

Killed every one?

NASTY GUARD

You don't think we'd miss at that range, do you?

OLD GUARD

And then Bill Reynolds --

NASTY GUARD

No names.

OLD GUARD

Ol' Bill's proud of it, Morton!

NASTY GUARD

I said no names.

OLD GUARD

Anyway, he found a little crawlin' one, little caterpillar, couldn't be more than four years old. Got him point blank with a musket ball. They was one Mormon lover with us who says, "What you doin' shootin' a little kid like that!" But, Bill, he told him -- oh, beg your pardon -- This fellow whose name we ain't gonna mention, he told him, "Nits breed lice!"

*Old Guard and Nasty Guard break up laughing. Young Guard doesn't.*

OLD GUARD

Meanin' that if you don't kill the nit, he'll grow up to be a louse. Get it?

*JOSEPH stirs, HYRUM is weeping.*

NASTY GUARD

Well, I run into some boys, they see a bunch of Mormons tryin' to get away. The Mormon man, he runs off like a chicken as knows it's near suppertime. The woman, she tried to hide the kids behind her, but they didn't care about no kids! (Leering laugh.)

OLD GUARD

And here we are stuck on guard duty.

NASTY GUARD

We don't get none of the fun.

YOUNG GUARD

They can hear you.

*Nasty and Old Guards laugh all the louder.*

NASTY GUARD

I heard we got one wagon, burned it right up with the Mormons still on it.

OLD GUARD

Did you hear the one about the ugly Mormon boy hid himself in a haystack?

NASTY GUARD

Bayonet practice!

*More laughing; even the young guard joins in tentatively, so they don't despise him.  
JOSEPH rises to his feet.*

JOSEPH

Silence, ye fiends of the infernal pit! In the name of Jesus Christ! I rebuke you, and command you to be still. I will not live another minute and hear such language. Cease such talk or you or I die this instant!

*They are silent. NASTY GUARD tried to laugh but it peters out. After a long time  
JOSEPH lies down again.*

SIDNEY

Alex, don't worry, most of these stories were probably lies.

ALEX

Oh, they're true, all right. But when Joseph stood up like that and spoke with the power of God, I felt like -- I felt like everything was worth it. Everything would work out in the end. Because God was still with the Prophet.

SIDNEY

I wish all men could have your faith.

ALEX

Me? Oh, I'm just nobody.

SIDNEY

Do not underestimate your eternal potential, once the hand of God is upon you!

ALEX

Oh, no, Brother Rigdon. I'm not the sort that ever becomes important. I expect I'll always just sort of make a living and go to meetings. Maybe someday they'll ask me to go on a mission or something.

SIDNEY

You have a dismal view of your future.

ALEX

That's the way I want to live. I don't want a calling where I got to tell other people what to do. I don't know what they should do.

SIDNEY

Does anyone?

ALEX

I don't know anymore, Brother Rigdon. Lyman Wight's been telling me things.



SIDNEY  
Oh, Lyman.

ALEX  
Why, is he lying?

SIDNEY  
Depends on what he said, doesn't it?

ALEX  
He said -- he was a member of the Danites.

SIDNEY  
Oh! Did he now!

ALEX  
And not only that, he said that you and Joseph knew about the Danites. You sent them out a-robbin' the Gentiles and burnin' down houses. I know the mobbers did it first, but aren't we supposed to be different from them?

SIDNEY *(a little ashamed?)*  
The Gentiles always hate the Saints. It's the way of the world.

ALEX  
That's not what I'm asking. I want to know if Joseph Smith knew about them!

SIDNEY  
There are times, Alex, when violence is the Lord's way. Jesus said, "Turn the other cheek," but he also said, "I come not to bring peace but a sword."

ALEX  
Then Samson Avard was telling the truth.

SIDNEY  
Alex, I can honestly tell you that Joseph Smith never formed any such group as the Danites, and he never told anyone to break any law whatsoever. He is perfectly innocent.

*HYRUM begins to make his way downstairs.*

ALEX  
What about you?

SIDNEY  
I didn't give orders to anybody. Hyrum!!! Coming down to visit us?

HYRUM  
Not if I'm interrupting anything.

SIDNEY

I was just going up. It's too cold down here! Come on up with me, Alex!

*Alex doesn't respond. Sidney goes upstairs. HYRUM sits on a stool and starts to write. Then he looks at ALEX.*

HYRUM

Something wrong? Do you want to be alone?

ALEX

Lyman says one thing and Sidney says another -- I feel like everyone's lying to me. And I can't figure out why they're lying about anything! I'm thinkin' I shouldn't be here. It doesn't do any good to see prophets up close.

HYRUM

Alex, my friend, this can't go on! Joseph's never done anything dishonest in his life! I'm his brother, and believe me, I should know.

ALEX

What about Sidney?

HYRUM

Alex, why did you join the Church?

ALEX

Because when I found out there was a prophet of God on the earth again, I had to be part of his church.

HYRUM

So go on trusting in Joseph and don't bother with anyone else. He's the only one you can count on.

ALEX

What about you?

HYRUM

Me? I plan to hang on faithful to the death. But don't put your faith on any man but the Lord's anointed.

ALEX

All these men are called of God.

HYRUM

Called of God, yes! But for what purpose? Some men are called like Joseph because they're clean and strong. They can endure the fullness of the Gospel and live by it. And some are called because they're capable, and their talents are needed to help build up the Kingdom of God. Maybe that's Sidney. Sure isn't me. If I got any talent, it's still the Lord's little secret.

*(beat)*

But when some people are called they fail the test, and I think maybe the Lord is testing us, too, to see if we can stay close to the Church in spite of the worthlessness of some of the men set over us. But, you see, he had to call those men, so they could show just who they are.

ALEX

The Lord already knows their heart.

HYRUM

But does anybody really know his own? At the judgment day, some men are bound to whine and moan and say, "But Lord, if you'd only made me a bishop or an apostle, then what a great and good man I would have been!" So the Lord gives them a high enough office that they can prove to everybody's satisfaction, including their own, that they're worthless to the Lord and a little irritating to the Devil as well.

ALEX *(laughs)*

So who can I trust?

HYRUM

Listen to everybody and make up your own mind, I always say. Time brings out truth -- enough for you to know how to serve the Lord.

ALEX *(yawns)*

Time takes so long.

HYRUM

You're young, Alex. You've got plenty of time. Now go upstairs and sleep!

ALEX

I don't have all that much time if I've got to spent half of it sleeping.

*Alex goes upstairs.*

HYRUM

Number me among the men of simple hearts, Lord, and I'll be content.

*The door opens upstairs and MRS. HARVEY is ushered in by a GUARD.*

MRS. HARVEY

Thank you, sir. I'll be quite all right from here.

GUARD

They say I'm supposed to go in with any visitors.

MRS. HARVEY

And I say I'll be quite all right from here.

GUARD

Yes, ma'am.

*Mrs. Harvey strides down the stairs, stops at the bottom and looks around.*

MRS. HARVEY

Where's Joe Smith?

ALEX

That's Joseph Smith, Ma'am.

MRS. HARVEY

Mr. Smith, are you the man the Mormons worship as their God?

JOSEPH

It's awfully kind of you to come, Ma'am. We don't get many visitors.

MRS. HARVEY

I have neither time nor use for social amenities. Do you claim to be the Lord and Savior?

JOSEPH

I'm nothing but a man. A minister of salvation sent by Jesus Christ to preach the gospel.

MRS. HARVEY

Well, then, what they told me isn't true.

JOSEPH

I don't know what they told you, Ma'am. But I know that I've taught nothing but the truth to this people, and those who listen with a sincere heart always believe.

MRS. HARVEY

Always?

JOSEPH

With a sincere heart.

MRS. HARVEY

Jesus Christ sent you himself?

JOSEPH

Yes.

MRS. HARVEY

Have you seen him?

*Pause.*

JOSEPH

Yes.

MRS. HARVEY

Then He does live?

JOSEPH

With a body of flesh and bone like ours, only more glorious than the sun -- the Father also.

MRS. HARVEY

The Father -- a body?

JOSEPH

They're so alike that they can't be told one from the other. I've heard them speak. And if I've ever known any joy in my life, it's been in serving my Savior and doing his will. Yes, Ma'am. He lives.

MRS. HARVEY

Mr. Smith, I don't know whether what you've said is true or not. But I believe you believe it.

JOSEPH

And so do you.

MRS. HARVEY

Good evening, Mr. Smith. You have disturbed me greatly.

*She exits.*

CALEB

That woman is strange.

JOSEPH

Seekers after truth always are, Caleb.

*JOSEPH goes downstairs where HYRUM is resting in the corner.*

JOSEPH

Well, brother, I can't decide if I have nothing to say or if nothing needs saying.

HYRUM

Everything needs saying, but there aren't any words.

JOSEPH

If you don't need me to encourage you, Hyrum, then would you do me the favor of encouraging me?

*HYRUM holds out his hand and Joseph pulls him up. Then they embrace.*

HYRUM

Joseph, they can't stop the Lord's work. You know that.

JOSEPH

But I have no promise about my family. My little Joseph and Frederick and baby Alex -- and the twins. I can't forget the babies who died, little Alvin and Louisa and Thaddeus. I can lose the ones I love the best, the Lord makes me no promises, no more than anyone else.

HYRUM

You're telling me, Joseph? After I lost my Jerusha?

JOSEPH

And now your new bride, Mary, she's expecting a baby, and here you are. How do I dare to complain when you don't know from hour to hour ...

HYRUM

But I do know. If the Lord wanted me with them, then I'd be with them. If he wants my baby to be born healthy and strong, then he will be. And if he wants me to know about it, then he'll find a way to tell me.

JOSEPH

Oh, I know, everything that happens in this world is the right thing. Maybe not good. Maybe not anything a man can ever like. (Sighs.) But it's right.

HYRUM

I gave up outguessing the Lord long ago, Joseph.

JOSEPH

But you see, he used to let me in on the secret now and then.

HYRUM

So, is it like the apostates always say? That you're a fallen prophet?

JOSEPH

I'm a prophet without a prophecy at the moment, Hyrum. A seer who can't see.

HYRUM

Well, don't tell that to Alex, he's worried enough already.

JOSEPH

Alex Macrae. A good boy!

HYRUM

Getting older by the day, like the rest of us.

JOSEPH

Everyone's getting too old too fast. I feel like I'll die of old age before I turn forty.

HYRUM

Me first.

JOSEPH

When can this people be at rest! When will the gentiles leave us alone!?

HYRUM

More to the point, when will the Saints start acting like Saints. I wonder how you put up with all the traitors in the Church.

JOSEPH

You work with what you're given, Hyrum. They just get a whiff of power and want to build their own kingdom. Thomas Marsh, John Corrill, William Phelps, Orson Hyde, Oliver -- Oliver, and David Whitmer! They saw angels! Oliver was with me when ... he knows. Yet here you are. Where is he?

HYRUM

Not all the traitors are "out there," Joseph.

JOSEPH

You've never cared for Sidney, but he stood with me, Hyrum.

HYRUM

Just because he didn't publicly attack you doesn't mean he wasn't doing ... dangerous things inside the Church.

*JOSEPH's silence seems like a rebuke.*

I'm sorry, Joseph. I don't know. You tell me.

JOSEPH

Sidney is an able man.

HYRUM

Sidney is an able man.

JOSEPH

Sidney's ambitious -- who isn't?

HYRUM

Well ...

JOSEPH

Besides you, I mean. Hyrum, a strong man makes enemies.

HYRUM

Sidney has filled many places that didn't belong to him.

JOSEPH (*looks long and hard at Hyrum*)

Sidney never filled a place that was full.

*Relenting.*

The past is full of proof that God leads the Church but not my own life. Why am I here when my people need me? We've lost everything again, and again and again. I can see their fear and suffering. I want to reach out to them, but my hands stop at the walls.

HYRUM

Sidney and Samson Avard were very close.

JOSEPH

Have a little mercy on me tonight, Hyrum.

HYRUM

They were Campbellite preachers together.

JOSEPH

So was Parley Pratt.

HYRUM

Joseph, the Danites weren't invented! Somebody convinced a lot of otherwise righteous Saints that the Prophet wanted them to burn down gentiles' houses.

JOSEPH

I have to trust Sidney Rigdon or what is this Church? I'll die sooner or later. What will happen to the Church if all the strong men are gone? I have loved and trusted again and again and how many are left? I can't decide which is more foolish. Giving authority to a man, or giving him my friendship. I pray about calling a man to office, and the Lord directs me. I pray about giving my heart and the Lord says give it to everybody.

HYRUM

It's only fair. So many people have given their hearts to you.

JOSEPH

Men like Alex? He loves the Prophet. He loves the spirit of God in me. Who loves a farm boy with no education? Who even knows he exists?



HYRUM

I do.

JOSEPH

Howd'y'do? I believe I know you.

HYRUM

I met you when you were a tadpole who couldn't even say my name.

JOSEPH

Your name ... is comfort. Your name is silence when a man needs some good strong silence to shout into. Your name is home to a man who's got nowhere to go. Your name is trust, to a man who's been betrayed by all others.

HYRUM

With all those names, it's a wonder I ever get called to supper. What about your own name?

JOSEPH

I'm like a rough stone rolling down a hill. You don't give it a name, you just get out of the way.

*They laugh.*

There was once somebody ... who spoke to me in a voice I believed. He called me Joseph.

HYRUM

Now that's a good name.

JOSEPH

But what does it mean? So many people have used my name since then, and no two of them were speaking to the same man.

HYRUM

I know who I mean when I say it.

JOSEPH

If you can once get ahold of a thing by its name, really know it, the whole name, the whole life of the thing, its past and its future, then you know how to use it, what it's good for.

HYRUM

Which is why I'd like to know what Sidney Rigdon is good for.

JOSEPH (*sighs*)

You are the most stubborn ...

HYRUM

Afraid to name him for what he is?

JOSEPH

No!

HYRUM

Angry at me for asking?

JOSEPH

You're not asking. You think you already know the answer.

HYRUM

Find out Sidney's name, Joseph. Find out that it isn't anything like yours.

JOSEPH

I'm tired, Hyrum. I want to sleep, and I need to pray first.

HYRUM

Mention my dear Mary's name, will you?

*Joseph claps him on the arm. Hyrum goes upstairs. Joseph sinks to his knees.*

MACRAE

Joseph spent the night downstairs alone. He'd do that now and then. I kind of had the private opinion that those were the nights that he wrestled with the Lord like Jacob. Or maybe those were the nights that he missed his wife and children. Or maybe he just couldn't get used to Caleb's snoring. I know I never did.

JOSEPH (*coming upstairs, Alex is at the top*)

Good morning, Alex, did I wake you?

ALEX

I was just thinkin'.

JOSEPH

What about?

ALEX

Nothin'.

JOSEPH

It must matter, that nothing, not to sleep.

ALEX

Oh, don't bother about it . . .

JOSEPH

Were you thinking about home?

ALEX (*turning away in tears*)

No, I'm sorry.

JOSEPH

Can't grieve unless there's something you love.

ALEX

I try to act like a man. But I'm not doing so good.

JOSEPH (*quietly*)

You're not acting, Alex. You are a man. So whatever you do, that's what a man does.

CALEB (*waking up*)

You finally come back up to the land of the living, huh? How can you sleep down there? I'd suffocate.

JOSEPH

Shivering keeps me warm.

CALEB

Now, religion ain't my line, but did you and God come up with anything about getting us out of here?

JOSEPH (*nodding*)

We'll get out if we go today.

CALEB

By gum, that's the most useful prophecy I ever heard.

JOSEPH

And as soon as we get out of here, I'll be happy to baptize you.

CALEB

Not in this weather!

*They laugh.*

LYMAN

So we've got everything set, huh?

CALEB

Except who's going to be the decoy. I would, but I don't run very fast these days.

ALEX  
I'll do it!

HYRUM  
Good man, Alex.

*The door opens, all turn -- startled; did the guards overhear their plan?*

GUARD  
Ten minutes.

*DONIPHAN enters.*

JOSEPH  
General Doniphan, my good friend, welcome!

CALEB  
Doggone it. For a minute there I thought they was bringin' us breakfast.

DONIPHAN  
Sorry. I was lucky to get in at all.

SIDNEY (*facing it bravely*)  
Have they decided to carry out the sentence of death?

DONIPHAN  
It wouldn't be me here if they had. Mr. Rigdon, I just came early to avoid onlookers. Ever since I agreed to be your defense attorney, I haven't been a very popular man in northern Missouri.

JOSEPH  
I'm sorry.

DONIPHAN  
People are fickle. When this is all over, they'll respect me again.

SIDNEY  
Why are you here, then?

DONIPHAN  
News -- and news!

CALEB  
Start with the news.

DONIPHAN

I just got a letter from Brigham Young. He wants me to come and reassure you that he and Heber Kimball are overseeing the gathering of your people in Illinois. Quincy, mostly. Brigham would have come to you himself, but now that the mob knows that he's leading the Church, they'd be just as happy to throw him in here too.

SIDNEY

Brigham! Running the Church!

JOSEPH

We aren't there to do it, Sidney. He's president of the Twelve.

SIDNEY (*muttering*)

If brains were flints, you couldn't use Brigham's whole head to start a fire.

DONIPHAN

He wanted me to tell you that the Lord instructed him to go ahead and ordain John Taylor and John E. Page to the Twelve Apostles.

SIDNEY

He ordained -- he actually --

CALEB

Somebody pour water on him before he explodes.

JOSEPH

Brigham has the authority, and the vacancies on the Twelve needed to be filled.

SIDNEY

He's taking too much into his own hands!

JOSEPH

Our hands are in here. His hands are out there, where the Lord can use them.

DONIPHAN

Now that it's clear your people are moving out of the state, the mobs are content to let them go. So the shooting's over. But there are many sick. And winter isn't going to be kind to them. There isn't transportation for most -- they'll be walking. No shelter. Precious little food. I'm sorry, but -- there's no help for it.

GUARD

Time's up!

JOSEPH

Isn't there any comforting news? What about Emma?

GUARD

Come on, Doniphan, or I'll lock you in all day.

DONIPHAN

I haven't heard. I don't know. If anything had happened, though, Brigham would have told me.

*He is gone.*

SIDNEY

I think it's time for a presidency meeting. Downstairs.

*SIDNEY thunders downstairs. HYRUM looks at JOSEPH and raises his eyebrows. JOSEPH smiles and claps his arm around HYRUM's shoulder, they go downstairs. LYMAN follows as if he belongs but JOSEPH turns and sees him and LYMAN moves back to his place upstairs.*

JOSEPH

Well, here we are.

SIDNEY

We've got to put a stop to Brigham Young's usurpation of power! If he's left in control, you won't have a Church when you get back!

HYRUM

I think he's doing all he can to save the Church, and we ought to be praying for him.

SIDNEY

For the poor Saints, you mean! We've got to do something to maintain our authority.

JOSEPH

What can we do, except send a letter to the Saints.

SIDNEY

Excellent! Hyrum, will you scribe?

*HYRUM, a little resentful at Sidney giving him assignments, sits down to write.*

JOSEPH

What are we going to say?

HYRUM

What do they need to hear?

JOSEPH

Comfort and support.

SIDNEY

We're writing to a people who've lost everything.

JOSEPH

People who have sacrificed everything for their faith.

HYRUM

We should also use the letter to give some support to Brigham.

SIDNEY

Endorsing his high-handed actions? It's going to be hard enough to put him back in his place when we get out.

HYRUM

He's doing a hard job. He could use our help.

SIDNEY

This letter is from the Prophet to the Saints. Comfort for everyone, not just Brigham.

JOSEPH (*ending the argument, he hopes, by dictating the letter*)

Your humble servant, Joseph Smith, Junior, prisoner, under the exterminating order of Governor Lilburn Boggs.

SIDNEY

I think it's important they remember why we're in here.

HYRUM (*"are you insane?"*)

Remind them of all the leaders who apostatized and joined our enemies?

SIDNEY (*"let the grownups talk, please"*)

We are imprisoned for the sake of Jesus Christ.

JOSEPH

I don't know, Sidney. Should we make martyrs of ourselves?

SIDNEY

We didn't put ourselves in here! How about -- "Your Humble Servant," etc., "prisoner for the Lord, Jesus Christ's sake, and for the Saints," then ... "and held by the power of mobocracy" -- getting this, Hyrum? -- "under the exterminating order of his excellency the Governor."

HYRUM

Is this all right, Joseph?

JOSEPH

Sidney has a way with words. I think we need to assure them that the Lord has not forgotten them.

SIDNEY

But first we must list the wrongs done to us.

JOSEPH

Do they need to be reminded?

SIDNEY

They need to have it written down in the Prophet's own words.

HYRUM (*ironically*)

There's an idea.

JOSEPH

Is something wrong, Hyrum?

HYRUM

I'm wondering if any of the Prophet's own words are going to go into this letter.

JOSEPH

It's from the presidency.

SIDNEY

If you'd rather write it alone, Joseph --

JOSEPH

I have counselors, Hyrum, so they can give me counsel.

*Upstairs, CALEB and LYMAN are quarreling and ALEX is trying to hold CALEB back.*

CALEB

Joe Smith, come up here and keep my hands off the throat of this lily-livered chicken-plucker!

JOSEPH

What's Lyman doing now!

*They rush upstairs.*

CALEB

I swear there are times when the patience of Job would break!

LYMAN

It's my right!

CALEB

It's your right to hang yourself, too, you --



SIDNEY

Calmly, calmly, gentlemen! What's the cause of this dispute?

CALEB

The man's a fool, that's what.

LYMAN

I say I have a right to say my say!

CALEB

Then say your say you lousy little sayer --

JOSEPH

Please! Caleb, quietly please, what's the problem?

LYMAN

How can you ask him? You'll go to a gentile before you'll ask me?

JOSEPH

I thought you could be more patient. What's the problem, Lyman?

LYMAN

Don't look at me, it's him!

*Alex snickers.*

You can shut up!

CALEB

He doesn't want to make the escape tonight. He thinks he knows better!

LYMAN

It's not the right time to do it. It's just plain wrong!

CALEB

We've got to do it together!

LYMAN

I've got a feeling just as strong as anybody here that it's the wrong night.

CALEB

You're just mad because you didn't think of it yourself!

*LYMAN roars, swings at CALEB and misses.*

CALEB

Try that ten years ago and I'll knock you flat.

*All laugh except for LYMAN who is humiliated.*

JOSEPH

I told you I'd seek the will of the Lord if you all promised to abide by the answer. But nobody will make you go.

LYMAN

You couldn't make me if you tried.

*He goes downstairs. SIDNEY follows.*

ALEX

But if we don't go tonight, will it work tomorrow night?

JOSEPH

The Lord said it would work tonight.

*SIDNEY and LYMAN are alone downstairs.*

LYMAN

Sidney, don't try to persuade me.

SIDNEY

You're a reasonable man, Lyman. Just tell me the reason.

LYMAN

I just don't feel like going tonight. Reasonable enough for you?

SIDNEY

But the Lord says that --

LYMAN

You mean Joseph says. Well, Joseph's said a lot of things and here we are in this stinking prison with our families starving to death halfway between here and Illinois! I have as much right to have my way as he does!

SIDNEY

So the man of action plans to sit and watch?

LYMAN

It's a free country.

SIDNEY

Said the man behind bars.

LYMAN

You. Samson Avard. Joseph Smith -- it's hard to see much of a difference. Do things my way because my way's the Lord's way. (Spits) I do what I want, when I want.

MACRAE

So that night we all just sat and watched as the guard came in with our supper.

*As the GUARD serves the gruel his back is to them for fifteen seconds.*

GUARD

Stay back -- A little something extra for you tonight, boys. I think there's some meat in the gruel. At least, I'm pretty sure that's where the rat disappeared to! (Laughs) Eat up boys!

*Guard exits.*

CALEB

Did you see that! Door wide open, his back turned, we could have tipped our hats and walked out. And now he's gone and here we sit! If there wasn't a prophet in the room I'd say my opinion in words that a certain hog-slopper wouldn't mistake.

LYMAN

Look, old man, now we know for sure it will work.

HYRUM

Some of us already knew, Brother Wight.

JOSEPH

No hard feelings. What's done is done.

LYMAN

We'll just do it tomorrow night.

ALEX

But there wasn't a promise about tomorrow night.

LYMAN

You saw! It's going to work!

ALEX

I don't feel good about it.

LYMAN

Then don't be the decoy. I'll lead it off if you haven't got the guts without somebody holding your hand.

CALEB (*defending Alex*)  
That's about the limit.

ALEX  
That's all right Mr. Baldwin. I am afraid to do it now.

JOSEPH  
Come on, brethren, let's enjoy our rat soup.

CALEB  
The perfect meal for this occasion.

HYRUM (*to Alex*)  
Blessed are the peacemakers.

LYMAN  
You make me sick, boy.

ALEX  
I'm not afraid of you, Mr. Wight.

LYMAN  
Get on my wrong side, boy, and you'd better start having nightmares about me every night.

ALEX  
You're a lucky man, Mr. Wight.

LYMAN  
And how's that?

ALEX  
You never have to see yourself from the outside.

*LYMAN grabs ALEX ready to punch him but halts when everyone else leaps up, poised to stop him..*

LYMAN  
I never beat up a child before, and I ain't gonna start now.

MACRAE  
I had plenty of nightmares, but not about him. I'd seen a man I looked up to shot down right in front of me. It was a miracle I slept at all. But it wasn't all grim. We got used to being in jail. We even had us some good times.

CALEB  
Jailbreaker Jed was an onery man.  
With a club for a foot and a file for a hand!

With a bayonet nose and a ram for a head;  
 there wasn't no jail could hold  
 Jailbreaker Jed!

HYRUM

Jailbreaker Jed had a stinger that stung.  
 Broke bars with his teeth.  
 Picked locks with his tongue.  
 Got out one night, tied the sheriff in his bed.  
 Signed his name on the nightshirt --  
 Jailbreaker Jed!  
 Jailbreaker jed!

LYMAN

Wee haw! My turn!  
 Well, the sheriff he quit, and the deputy, too.  
 All on account of you-know-who!  
 The ladies got scared and the men saw red --  
 they're gonna lynch  
 Jailbreaker Jed! Jed!

*LYMAN motions to ALEX.*

ALEX

Me? All right.

They caught old jed and strung him to a tree.  
 He said, "Who knows more 'bout jails than me?"  
 You got no sheriff -- I'm no good dead --  
 So he got him a badge -- Jailkeeper Jed!

ALL

jailkeeper jed --

CALEB

Time to finish this'n up --

JOSEPH (*coming upstairs*)

I'll do it!

Now, Jed keeps the tightest jail in the state --  
 Haven't been many escapes of late.  
 And here we are guarded by Jailkeeper Jed --  
 Just give me a chance, and I'll break his head!

ALL

Jailkeeper Jed!  
 Jailkeeper Jed!

*All laugh and exchange "good mornings."*

CALEB

Our singing didn't drag you up here, did it?

JOSEPH

You call that singin'?

*All laugh.*

CALEB

You didn't happen to pray about us getting out tonight, did you?

JOSEPH

I didn't think to ask again, after the Lord gave me such an answer yesterday.

LYMAN

The Lord didn't say no, did he? That's permission enough for me.

CALEB

Me, too. There's times for religion and times for good old fashioned head-bashing.

JOSEPH

I'm trying to think where the Lord said that, Brother Caleb. Was it the Sermon on the Mount?

CALEB

Now, don't you go brotherin' me, Mr. Smith. I ain't been baptized.

LYMAN

It's fifteen years since you bathed!

CALEB

You don't care much about keepin' your teeth, do you?

*Sound of the GUARD coming up the steps, fumbling with the door. Lyman gets in position.*

LYMAN

Everybody look natural, so he doesn't know anything's wrong.

CALEB

I was thinkin' of making' monkey faces!

*The door opens and the OLD GUARD and the NASTY GUARD come in together -- not part of the plan. NASTY GUARD stands at the steps holding the gun, while OLD GUARD comes down with the kettle. All the prisoners look at JOSEPH, who looks at CALEB,*

*who shakes his head. LYMAN, furious, moves.*

LYMAN

What kind of slop we gettin' now?

OLD GUARD

Better than you deserve, mister, and worse than I'd feed my hogs.

*LYMAN saunters toward the gruel, then launches himself backward, knocking down the armed NASTY GUARD. LYMAN is outside in a moment. The GUARDS quickly recover, and have the guns leveled on the others before they can do much more than stand up..*

One thing our friend didn't know -- we got five of our boys out there, all good shots and all fast runners. He ain't got the chance of a hog at harvest time.

*To Nasty*

Did he hurt you?

NASTY GUARD

Only bashed my head on the floor, that's all.

*LYMAN is shoved into the room and half tumbles down the stairs.*

NASTY GUARD

Welcome home, my son. Did they shoot you anywhere?

LYMAN

Not so I noticed.

NASTY GUARD

Break any bones?

LYMAN

Not likely!

NASTY GUARD

Then I guess it's up to me.

*NASTY GUARD rams his knee into LYMAN's gut, bashes him on the back of the head and, when he is down, gives him a final kick in the side.*

NASTY GUARD

I got a pain in my head from you.

*GUARDS exit.*

ALEX  
Are you all right, Lyman?

SIDNEY  
Good try, Lyman.

CALEB  
For a doggone fool, that is.

JOSEPH  
Caleb, the man's down.

CALEB  
He started out at the bottom. How can you tell when he's down?

JOSEPH  
A man can be wrong, and still get respect for his courage, can't he?

*Joseph goes downstairs.*

CALEB  
Did I say something wrong?

HYRUM (*sadly*)  
Now and then Joseph gets a little sick of the human race.

LYMAN  
Well, that excludes Caleb Baldwin.

*Caleb controls himself. Barely.*

SIDNEY  
They left us some food. Let's eat it before the maggots wake up and start moving around.

*All gather around the food as HYRUM goes downstairs.*

HYRUM  
Not going to eat?

JOSEPH  
Who's hungry?

HYRUM  
Won't accomplish a thing for you to starve to death. What're we going to do?  
We can't tear down stone.



JOSEPH

I can try!

HYRUM

Why not use your muscles against something that can fight back?

JOSEPH

You? I could throw you before I was ten!

HYRUM

You've never thrown me!

JOSEPH

I've had you down a dozen times.

HYRUM

And I've had you down at least that often!

JOSEPH

You'll want to take your coat off.

HYRUM

You're going to get that nice clean shirt of yours dirty.

*They wrestle. It should be more to the comic side with laughter and lots of groaning and grunting. JOSEPH finally pins HYRUM.*

JOSEPH

There's not a man living who can say he threw me!

HYRUM

I'm having a little trouble breathing!

JOSEPH

So am I.

HYRUM

Little brother, you're bigger than me!

JOSEPH

Big brother, nobody's bigger than you.

HYRUM

Am I to spend the night down here?

JOSEPH

Tell me what I'm supposed to do.

HYRUM

Start with letting me up.

JOSEPH

An idea first.

HYRUM

Finish the letter. Better still, call Sidney down and let him finish it.

*JOSEPH leans on HYRUM more heavily.*

I repent! Finish the letter. Brigham will carry out your instructions.

*JOSEPH lets him up.*

JOSEPH

What instructions?

HYRUM

The Lord's instructions, I imagine.

JOSEPH

The Lord's not speaking to me. Not since I got in here.

HYRUM

He told you about the escape attempt.

JOSEPH

And we both saw how that worked out.

*(beat)*

I plead for answers, and he says nothing. It's happened before -- when I was angry, or when I was disobedient, or proud. But I'm not angry, Hyrum, and I'm trying to obey, and the Lord surely knows that I'm not proud.

HYRUM

Then it must not be your fault.

JOSEPH

The Lord is there. I'm the one who's not worthy.

HYRUM

Why does it have to be about you? Your worthiness? Maybe it's the whole Church! Torn apart by arguments and squabbling over ... over nothing. And whenever they get angry, they turn against you. Call you a fallen prophet, lie about you. Maybe they're not worthy of receiving answers from heaven!

JOSEPH

Most of the Saints were obeying the Lord and minding their business.

HYRUM

I know.

JOSEPH

I feel like I've lost -- something. Something small but very, very important. Remember how it was back in '30 and '31? I knew every member of the Church by name. I knew what they were thinking, what they were saying.

HYRUM

And they nearly kicked you out of the Church, as I remember.

JOSEPH

They were rebellious children, but I knew them. I loved them. Now when I have something important to say, I write letters, I make speeches, I send messengers, and then people try to figure out what I meant, even though I was as plain as can be.

HYRUM

Everybody wants to pretend that you really said what they wanted to hear.

JOSEPH

I can't be Joseph Smith walking down the street. I have to be the Prophet.

HYRUM

Is there a difference?

JOSEPH

Joseph wrestles with the boys in the street, but the Prophet walks by with dignity.

HYRUM

The Prophet just threw the Second Counselor onto the floor, and nearly suffocated him.

JOSEPH

The good sisters would cluck their tongues and say it wasn't proper to fight like a hooligan.

HYRUM

They just don't know how hooligans fight! You didn't gouge out my eye or bite off my ear. You were a perfect gentleman as you threw me down.

JOSEPH

Nobody knows who I am, Hyrum. No man knows my history. No one knows my heart.

HYRUM

Not even me, Joseph? Not even Emma?

JOSEPH (*near despair*)

Why did the Lord call me to this work, if He wasn't going to give me the power to do it? I've gone and done the things the Lord commanded me, but he hasn't opened a way for me to accomplish them! It's all thrown down, broken! There's no hope of building up Zion now.

HYRUM

"I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." If the Lord wants Zion built, then it'll be built, wherever he wants it, whenever he wants it.

*Joseph laughs self-mockingly.*

JOSEPH

But I want to build it, Hyrum.

HYRUM

You aren't dead yet, you know.

JOSEPH

I want to build it with my friends! With Oliver and David, Thomas, Orson, all of them! And my children beside me, all of them. With Emma, with you, all of us together, filled with love and hope and light! And here I am in darkness, with so many of them lost, and the rest scattered, and so much anger and fear and loss and ... despair ...

HYRUM

Well, you still have Sidney.

*Joseph gives him a look of anguish.*

HYRUM

I'm sorry.

JOSEPH

I need Sidney, like Moses needed Aaron.

HYRUM

Isn't that how they got them a golden calf?

JOSEPH

I can't do everything myself! Most of the work has to be done by other hands!

HYRUM

Why his?

JOSEPH

Because all the others, the ones I trusted most, they all started to covet more authority, and one by one, they tried to take my place.

HYRUM

Sidney thinks he already has it.

JOSEPH

I can only use the people the Lord gives me. And for all I know, that's how the Lord feels about me. How often he must think, Since I can't have Moses or Elijah, I reckon I'll have to make do with Joe Smith.

HYRUM

The Lord decided when you'd be born, Joseph. He saved you up for now.

JOSEPH (*savagely*)

And gave me Sidney Rigdon for a counselor. Don't try to take away the last strong man I can trust.

HYRUM

Last strong man! What about Brigham? Heber? What about Emma? Here you are locked in prison and the Church is surviving, going on. Why? Because of the faith of the Saints out there who are determined to live by the words God spoke to you!

JOSEPH

They're great people, aren't they?

HYRUM

We're just a small version of the Church in here, Joseph. The loyal and the disloyal, the friend and the stranger together. Can you tell one from the other?

JOSEPH

Let me guess. You're a friend.

HYRUM

I'm like a brother to you.

JOSEPH

Then, my brother, my friend, take up your pen. For the Lord is whispering to me.

*Hyrum gets in position to write.*

JOSEPH (*quietly*)

The ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name, and fools shall have thee in derision, and hell shall rage against thee; while the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand.

HYRUM (*whispering*)  
The Lord knows you, Joseph.

JOSEPH (*still dictating*)  
And thy people shall never be turned against thee by the testimony of traitors.

MACRAE (*talking to the Missourians*)  
We still have the words the Lord gave to him.

HUMPHREYS  
And if with a drawn sword thine enemies tear thee from the bosom of thy wife,  
and of thine offspring ...

MACRAE  
... and thine elder son, although but six years of age, shall cling to thy  
garments, and shall say, My father, my father, why can't you stay with us? O,  
my father, what are the men going to do with you? And if then he shall be  
thrust from thee by the sword, and thou be dragged to prison, and thine  
enemies prowl around thee like wolves for the blood of the lamb ...

HUMPHREYS  
Know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall  
be for thy good.

MACRAE  
The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?

JOSEPH (*dictating to Hyrum*)  
Therefore, hold on thy way, and the priesthood shall remain with thee; for their  
bounds are set, they cannot pass. Thy days are known and thy years shall not  
be numbered less; therefore, fear not what man can do, for God shall be with  
you forever and ever.

Hyrum leaps to his feet and embraces Joseph.

**END OF ACT ONE**

# LIBERTY JAIL

## ACT TWO

JACK

All right! Let's get back to work!

BILL

Aw, go eat mud, Jack.

JACK

At this rate, we'll never get this jail torn down.

MRS. JOHNSON

What I want to know, Mr. Mormon, is what Joseph Smith's wife was doing all this time.

HUMPHREYS

Running the church.

MACRAE

Elder Humphreys!

MRS. JOHNSON

What do you mean?

HUMPHREYS

Nothing. Nothing at all.

MRS. JOHNSON

What is this? Why are you afraid of him?

MACRAE

Oh, he's not afraid of me.

MRS. JOHNSON

Then tell me; I want to know.

MACRAE

Well, most of the time that we were in prison, the only contact with our wives, friends, and families was by mail. And the U.S. Postal Service wasn't too good at meeting schedules on the route from Illinois to the western edge of Missouri. Differences of opinion arose among those trying to guess what Joseph wanted them to do.

EMMA

Brother Brigham, the only way the Church can survive is if the Saints gather together and stay that way.

BRIGHAM

Sister Smith, the only way the Saints can survive is if the men find work. The good people of Quincy have taken us in, but we cannot live on their charity for long, and there are simply too many men here and not enough jobs.

EMMA

Letting these men leave Quincy will be a disaster the Church may not overcome.

BRIGHAM

Their families are staying here, while they go to other parts of Illinois and Iowa. They can send money back.

EMMA

And how long will they really do that? As a woman separated from her husband, it is all I can do not to take myself and our children over to Liberty Jail and demand residence. If the men get work somewhere else, their families will yearn for them, and soon follow.

BRIGHAM

It will only be a short time. Everything about Quincy is a temporary solution until we acquire new land somewhere to build Zion again. The Saints are faithful, and when Joseph is free and God shows us his design, they will heed the call and return to the fold, from wherever they have found refuge for a little while.

EMMA

Joseph said the Saints must stay together!

BRIGHAM

You have another letter from him?

EMMA

He has said it so often in front of you, Brother Brigham, surely you cannot doubt he meant what he said.

BRIGHAM

I don't doubt he meant it, but he didn't know the situation we'd be facing now. If Joseph writes to us with different instructions, we'll follow them absolutely.

EMMA

He may not have even gotten our last letters to him! Who knows when the post will deign to deliver his response to us. In the meantime, you're going ahead with decisions that are against his wishes.



BRIGHAM

Do you suppose we haven't prayed to God in every matter? Instead of guessing at Joseph's wishes, we should look for guidance from the Spirit of God. The Lord knows where His prophet is, and where we are. Why do you think He called on Joseph to ordain apostles, if not for a time like this?

EMMA

So instead of falling apart, the Church will simply scatter to the winds. We have seen the strength of the Saints when we are one. Through every mob, every burned home, every disease, every death, the faithful have held on to one another. God has saved us from many more dangers because He has seen us save each other. What will happen the next time there's an epidemic, and there aren't enough healthy Saints to care for all the sick?

BRIGHAM

You're a great blessing to this Church, Sister Smith, because you see the needs of the Saints and organize the compassion of the sisters so effectively. But disease will not be as devastating as contention and starvation if these men do not find work and feed their families.

EMMA

The Prophet listens when I give him counsel, but with you my words fall on deaf ears.

BRIGHAM

I hope the Lord will never find my ears deaf.

EMMA

I have a woman's voice, therefore you will not hear.

BRIGHAM

I'm not Brother Joseph, therefore you won't listen.

EMMA

And when he returns, will there be a Church left for him to lead?

BRIGHAM

Ill be there. I trust you will be, too.

EMMA

If the only Church he comes back to is you and me, he may ask the Lord for a different assignment.

MRS. JOHNSON

Well, that doesn't sound to me like she was running the Church at all.

BILL JOHNSON

You're just so used to running things you forget what it sounds like.

MRS. JOHNSON

That's a laugh ... and a lie!

MACRAE

It's a hard argument when both people are right.

ANNIE PARKER

The poor woman must have lived with constant worry. I hope the letters she did get from her husband gave her some comfort.

MACRAE

What I know of Joseph, he gave her more than comfort. He gave her all his heart.

Joseph and Hyrum are downstairs, writing letters.

JOSEPH (*speaking softly as he writes*)

I want to see little Frederick, Joseph, Julia, and Alexander, and Joana, and old major. And as to yourself, if you want to know how much I want to see you, examine your feelings, how much you want to see me, and judge for yourself ...

HYRUM

I've only got seven sheets of paper left.

CALEB (*calling from upstairs*)

I can't understand grown men fussin' around with pens and papers like little old ladies.

LYMAN

Can you read, Baldwin?

CALEB

What kind of sissy do you take me for? Of course not!

SIDNEY

Welcome to Missouri.

CALEB

There's an old Missouri saying: If the house is on fire, and you can't get out the front door --

ALEX

Go out the back!

SIDNEY

Unfortunately, we lack a back door.

CALEB

All my life, if I didn't have something, I made it myself.

LYMAN

You mean cut through the walls?

CALEB

Not a big door, you understand. Just a little mouse-sized door that leads to fresh air and sunshine.

SIDNEY

And what happens when the guard comes in and sees this hole in the wall?

CALEB

They won't notice.

SIDNEY

You might as well hope they'll grab a tool and help us dig.

LYMAN (*indicating the walls*)

How do you figure to get through these timbers?

CALEB (*slaps wall*)

*This* wood we don't get through.

(*Stomps on floor*)

This wood we do.

LYMAN

I want to get out. I can go downstairs anytime.

CALEB

We pull up the floorboards, Mr. Wight, and cut through the wall here, where the floor joists go through the outer wall. Job's half done for us.

SIDNEY

No one's ever answered my question about the guards. Can we count on them being blind?

CALEB

Just put down the floorboards and sit on them, and they'll never suspect a thing.

SIDNEY (*after a moment*)

Excellent! We'll do it!

*HYRUM and JOSEPH come upstairs.*

LYMAN

I think it's stupid and it stinks!

HYRUM

And on that note of joy we begin another day.

LYMAN

It's too much work, it'll take too long, we'll be dead before we ever get through those stone walls on the outside, and they'll catch us and shoot us anyway.

HYRUM

And that's your fortune, gentlemen, in a nutshell. Pay your nickel and go home and weep.

LYMAN

I didn't mean to intrude on Joseph's territory, Hyrum.

JOSEPH

What are we quarreling about this morning?

CALEB

A hole in the wall.

JOSEPH

You found a hole?

CALEB

No, but give me a few weeks and we'll find a nice big one. Here, Hyrum, give me a hand with these floorboards.

HYRUM *(as he tries them)*

Hey, they're loose.

SIDNEY

They were built by Missourians.

CALEB *(fixing a cold eye on Sidney)*

When a Missourian builds a jail, he makes sure there's a way out -- cause sooner or later he expects to get locked up.

MACRAE

And so we dug and we scabbled stone and we hacked at the mortar between the outside rocks. And while we were digging it got on toward winter.

*SIDNEY is shivering while CALEB, ALEX and JOSEPH are digging at the wall. HYRUM is sitting by the door listening.*

SIDNEY

I don't mean to say anything, but I'm about to freeze to death.

CALEB

Can't help it if this hole lets in a little draft.

SIDNEY

I don't mind a draft, Mr. Baldwin, but this one is getting to hurricane proportions.

JOSEPH

What about a blanket? If we stuff a blanket up in the top there, it'll stop the worst of the wind.

LYMAN

Just make sure you don't take my blanket. I'm not gonna freeze to death all winter just because of you fools and your stinkin' hole.

CALEB

Don't forget that it's a stupid hole too, Lyman.

LYMAN

Just remember on the cold nights it wasn't my blanket you stuck in there.

CALEB

Just remember on the cold nights that we're warm and snug in Illinois while you're here with a lot of blankets!

JOSEPH

Caleb, don't rise to him.

CALEB

Tain't risin'. It's stoopin'.

LYMAN (*charging downstairs*)

Why did I ever let myself get locked up in here with a herd of mules!

JOSEPH (*after Lyman is gone*)

Maybe you're being too hard on him, Caleb. He's a good man. He always comes through in a pinch.

CALEB

It's a long time between pinches.

*SIDNEY has followed LYMAN downstairs.*

SIDNEY

Lyman.

*Silence.*

There's no point in cutting yourself off from everybody. If you'd fit in, you'd find that staying in prison is almost tolerable.

LYMAN

Fit in? What do you want me to be, another Alex, groveling at your feet, worshiping God's holy prophets? Two-cent, self-serving servants of God.

SIDNEY

Fortunately, Joseph and I both forgive you for your lapses of faith.

LYMAN

Am I intruding on you, or are you intruding on me?

SIDNEY

I have something I want to discuss with you.

*Pause. LYMAN can't resist the spell of being in on information.*

LYMAN

Well?

SIDNEY

I'm leaving here, Lyman, and I want to be sure of you.

LYMAN

Leaving. How?

SIDNEY

Please be quieter, Lyman. Learn to be discreet. It may save your life someday.

LYMAN *(in a whisper)*

How are you getting out of here?

SIDNEY

I'm old and I'm sick, Lyman. The authorities don't want me to die while I'm in custody. It would embarrass them.

LYMAN

Give me a minute.

*He coughs miserably.*

How's that?

SIDNEY

I've got to rejoin the Saints and save the Church from Brigham Young. You're hardly necessary for that.

LYMAN

And who's going to save the Church from you?

SIDNEY

The Church needs leadership, Lyman. I'm going to give it.

LYMAN

And how many Saints'll follow you without Joseph there seconding every word you say?

SIDNEY

Did you think that would sting? I know I'm only second in the kingdom, Lyman.

LYMAN

And you figure one martyr's enough for the Church -- no sense adding you to the total, right?

SIDNEY

If the Lord wanted me to die, no amount of effort on my part would save me. What I want to know, Lyman, is this. Are you with me? Are you still true to your oath?

LYMAN

Oath? Suddenly you remember oaths?

SIDNEY

The Lord needs you, Lyman. I need you.

LYMAN

Go to the devil, Brother Sidney.

*Upstairs the door opens and the guard admits JUDGE TURNHAM.*

TURNHAM

Good day, my friends.

ALL

Judge Turnham.  
Good to see you.  
Do you have any news?

TURNHAM

Is Mr. Rigdon here?

CALEB

Sidney. Get your old bones up here!

SIDNEY

And thus will Gabriel shout on the Resurrection day.

*SIDNEY comes up ... slowly, feebly.*

SIDNEY (*sounding frail*)

Judge Turnham! Good to see you.

TURNHAM

This is going to come as quite a surprise to you, Mr. Rigdon, but some of the most respectable people in Clay county have got up a petition and asked for your release on the grounds of ill health.

SIDNEY (*feigning surprise*)

That's . . . that's very kind of them.

TURNHAM

And the court -- my court, Mr. Rigdon -- has granted their request.

SIDNEY

You mean -- to set me free?

JOSEPH

That's wonderful, Sidney!

CALEB

Think you can slip anybody out under your coat, Mr. Rigdon?

TURNHAM

I'm afraid you're a little large for that, Mr. Baldwin.

ALEX

What about me?

TURNHAM

We're taking a great risk as it is. There are still those who'd hang you in a minute -- and me along with you, if they found out I was letting you go. So we'll take you out late tonight, and by tomorrow you'd better be a good long distance away. Have you any money?

SIDNEY

Enough, I think. But ... I can't go.

TURNHAM

Why not?

SIDNEY

I can't leave my brethren here in this jail.



*Downstairs, listening, Lyman laughs.*

JOSEPH

No, Sidney. I insist upon it. It's too good an opportunity to pass up.

SIDNEY

But, Joseph --

JOSEPH

This can only come from the Lord. He's going, Judge Turnham.

TURNHAM

The guard will open the door at ten o'clock. He'll have a greatcoat for you. And there'll be a horse with a saddle, and food in the saddlebags.

SIDNEY

Thank you.

JOSEPH

The Lord will remember your kindness, Judge Turnham.

TURNHAM *(cheerily)*

I just hope the people of this county forget before next election.

*He exits. GUARD locks the door.*

JOSEPH

Sidney! What a blessing! What good fortune!

SIDNEY

I'm overwhelmed. I only wish it could be you leaving and not me.

JOSEPH

It'll be a good while before the mob consents to let me go.

HYRUM

Will you take letters for us?

SIDNEY

Of course, Hyrum. But perhaps I'd better get my things together.

*SIDNEY goes down and HYRUM follows.*

LYMAN

All according to plan, right Sidney?

SIDNEY

Go upstairs, Lyman.

LYMAN  
I don't hop for any man, Sidney.

HYRUM *(softly from the stairs)*  
Lyman, would you go upstairs, please?

*LYMAN takes his time but goes.*

SIDNEY  
All this time you've had the power to silence him, and didn't choose to use it until now?

HYRUM  
So you're going to Illinois.

SIDNEY  
You don't seem particularly pleased at my departure, Hyrum.

HYRUM  
Not at all. We could use the extra room.

SIDNEY  
The Lord seems to want me with the Saints, Brother Hyrum. And he seems to want you to stay here with Joseph.

HYRUM  
I doubt that it was the Lord's idea to get us into jail.

SIDNEY  
But you're sure it's Satan's idea to get me out.

HYRUM  
The Church in Illinois is in better hands today than it will be tomorrow.

SIDNEY  
When the Lord wants me to stop serving as Joseph's counselor, I'll step down.

HYRUM  
You ran things your own way here in Missouri for quite a while, Sidney, and look what happened. Church councils expelled Thomas Marsh, Oliver Cowdery and quite a few others . Everybody with any strength, everybody who might rival you. Yet in all this excommunicating, you somehow managed to miss Samson Avard.

SIDNEY  
I'm not perfect, Brother Hyrum. I make mistakes.

HYRUM  
I'm surprised at your humility.

SIDNEY

Why? I'm only a man doing his best to serve God.

HYRUM

You turned the Saints into a mob last Fourth of July. "Let our enemies be exterminated or driven from the state!" You said it first -- you taught Governor Boggs the words to use against us.

SIDNEY

So now we're laying blame.

HYRUM

Maybe.

SIDNEY

And maybe we're judging too harshly.

HYRUM

You're a deceitful man, Sidney.

SIDNEY

I'm a useful man.

HYRUM

What does Joseph need to use you for? Besides writing flowery letters.

SIDNEY

Competence, Hyrum. I get the job done. Where would this Church be without me? Disorganized, weak, limping along on the strength of truth and little else.

HYRUM

Truth is enough.

SIDNEY

That attitude is a complete explanation of why I have been counselor for these many years and you have not.

HYRUM

God forgive me, Sidney, but I can't figure out a way to love you as I should.

SIDNEY

There's no man that I don't love, Hyrum. Someday you'll have to learn that. God is love, not envy or jealousy or anger or hatred.

HYRUM

Do you love Joseph?

SIDNEY

Better than a brother.

HYRUM

There's no way into you, is there?

SIDNEY

I have no secrets, Hyrum. I'm open for all to see.

HYRUM

Open indeed. But only an inch deep.

*Hyrum goes upstairs.*

SIDNEY

Only an inch is it? I almost wish it were so, then I might not feel so old. There's rings enough inside me to rival an oak tree. You may not want me by your side, Hyrum, but the Lord does, and He sees to it I'm handy when a battle needs to be won. (*Chuckles*) Who knows? Someday He might need me to conquer hell itself.

MACRAE

And so Sidney gathered together his things, and we sat around and talked over old times, and then late that night, the door opened.

OLD GUARD

All right, Rigdon, let's trot!

SIDNEY

Coming.

JOSEPH

God be with you, Sidney.

SIDNEY

And with you. With you all.

JOSEPH

Have you got my letter?

SIDNEY (*patting his coat*)

Safe as little Moses in the ark.

OLD GUARD

Take your pick, man. Either come now or stay here another month saying your good-byes.

SIDNEY

I'm coming.

LYMAN

Rigdon! When you reach the Mississippi, will it part for you?

SIDNEY

If I can't afford the bargeman's fee.

*He leaves.*

CALEB

You know something? Suddenly I feel like we've been here a long, long time.

MACRAE

Having Sidney go -- well, the group changed. The six of us had been put together like a jigsaw puzzle, and by knocking into each other, all the pieces fit. Now there was a piece missing, and everybody changed. Lyman got nastier to Caleb and nicer to me. I liked him better nasty. And Joseph and Hyrum kind of kept to themselves, and sometimes I wondered if they even noticed the rest of us at all.

*HYRUM and JOSEPH are downstairs.*

HYRUM

Is something wrong?

JOSEPH

I'm all right.

HYRUM

You looked like you were in pain for a moment.

JOSEPH

Did I?

HYRUM *(trying to be cheerful)*

I remembered back to the beginning last night. Not in a dream, but just as I was waking. I remembered how you looked when you came in from the woods that day. You were what, thirteen -- fourteen?

JOSEPH

Fourteen.

HYRUM

You were white as a ghost.

JOSEPH

Mother thought I was sick.

HYRUM

And when you told us what you saw, I must admit I thought you were crazy.

JOSEPH

You and everyone else.

HYRUM

It took me a few minutes to get used to the idea. The Lord wasn't in the habit of calling on New York farm boys.

JOSEPH

And everything started from there.

HYRUM

And went on gloriously! Who would have believed it.

JOSEPH

And it all ends here.

HYRUM

Not quite yet. Why are you grieving? Missing your children?

JOSEPH

I was thinking about Oliver.

HYRUM (*masking a hurt*)

Oliver broke your heart.

JOSEPH

I remember when he came to me, out of the blue, just came, right when the work on translating the Book of Mormon had gotten bogged down because Emma couldn't keep up with the scribing.

HYRUM

A Godsend.

JOSEPH

And he asked me, "Is it all true?" And I told him:

HYRUM

"As Jesus lives."

JOSEPH

As Jesus lives, it's true.

HYRUM

And he wept.

JOSEPH

And he embraced me.

HYRUM

And he worked with you.

JOSEPH

And he became my friend.

*(Long pause.)*

"Pretended revelation," he said. Pretended revelation! The man who saw John the Baptist with me! The man whose head felt the touch of Peter, James and John!

HYRUM

He never actually denied that. I think it was only the revelation about real estate that he disputed.

JOSEPH

"Pretended revelation."

HYRUM

He was hurt, Joseph. Coming to Missouri -- it was his idea, and then suddenly Sidney's running everything and forbidding him to sell his property.

JOSEPH

The Lord forbade him to sell it. This is where Zion is supposed to be!

HYRUM

You weren't here. People forget.

JOSEPH

I don't. I remember how I trusted Oliver, how it was when we were discovering the gospel.

HYRUM

And how you wept when Sidney got him kicked out of the Councils and out of the Church.

JOSEPH

A great river flows from God to me, but where is my ocean? I can't hold it in, but I can't pour it out, either. I've been where few other men in the world have ever been, and yet I'm still asking, Who am I? There it is: my own selfishness. I'm still a prisoner behind a single bar. "I."

HYRUM

You're the one God chose.

*They embrace and HYRUM heads upstairs as JOSEPH kneels to pray.*

JOSEPH

O Father, I bring my heart before you like a stone, for you to touch, for you to turn me to light!

*(beat)*

O God, where art thou? Where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?

*Upstairs CALEB and HYRUM are working at the hole.*

ALEX

Well, Mr. Baldwin, how's the hole coming?

CALEB

Don't tell a soul, but I think I'm through.

ALEX

I don't see any daylight.

CALEB

Well, I didn't want to push the last rock out while the sun's still shining. But it's loose. I figure we can make the break tonight.

HYRUM

The guard's coming.

ALEX

Hurry!

CALEB *(as the door is being unlocked)*

There's no time! --

*CALEB throws down the floor boards, sits over the hole, leaning against the wall, as HYRUM throws him a blanket which he wraps around himself, covering the hole.*

Oh! Ahhh!

GUARD *(entering)*

What's the matter with him?

CALEB

Ung.

ALEX

We think he's sick.

*Joseph comes upstairs, takes in the situation.*

GUARD

What's he got? The ague? The flux? The pox?

LYMAN

Do we look like doctors?

JOSEPH

We hoped you could send for one.



GUARD

I'm not going to bother the doctor till I know what the matter is.

JOSEPH

He won't eat. Can't sleep. He's running a fever. It may be bad.

ALEX

We've been doing what we could.

GUARD

Here, let me look at him.

HYRUM

Are you a doctor?

GUARD

I think he's just shamming.

CALEB (*moaning wretchedly -- and convincingly*)

Oh OH! Ahhh!

JOSEPH

Does that sound like a sham to you?

GUARD

Is he going to throw up?

JOSEPH

I can't see how. He hasn't eaten anything yet.

GUARD

Well, move him away from the wall, anyway. It's colder there.

ALEX

He wanted to sit up and so he has to lean against the wall.

GUARD

My mother always said that lying down is the best cure for any sickness. Here, let me give you a hand.

HYRUM

Don't trouble yourself. We'll move him later.

GUARD

Now's as good a time as any. Upsadaisy.

*He moves CALEB, who moans louder than ever. ALEX and HYRUM move behind CALEB to cover the hole.*

You'll be a lot better off out here away from the wall. I'll go get a doctor.

*He goes to the door, leaves. Immediately ALEX and LYMAN are at the hole, covering it over. But the GUARD reappears almost instantly.*

Do any of you have money to pay the doctor?

*Sees the hole where ALEX and LYMAN are frozen.*

What in tarnation is that?

ALEX

It's the rats, sir. They've been gnawing something fierce this winter.

GUARD

Oh.

*He pauses for a moment to figure this one out. LYMAN suddenly dives into the hole and starts wriggling through. GUARD immediately yells, dives for him, grabs his legs and starts pulling.*

Give me a hand here!

JOSEPH

Whose side do you think we're on?

GUARD

Help! Billy? You out there? They're trying to escape!

BILLY (*outside*)

Here I am!

GUARD

Do you have your musket?

BILLY (*looks in his hands to make sure*)

Sure do!

GUARD

Well, point it at the hole in the wall, you fudge-brained fustigator!

BILLY

Hey! There's somebody trying to get out the hole!

GUARD

Well, shoot him!

*Immediately, LYMAN pulls himself back into the jail as ANNIE smacks two boards*

*together to make a gunshot sound.*

ANNIE

Bang!

LYMAN

Did you see that? Did you see -- I could have been killed! That boy's gun was loaded.

GUARD

Billy, did you have that gun loaded?

BILLY

You said to shoot him.

GUARD

Of course I did! (To prisoners:) You oughta be ashamed of yourselves. And I suppose you weren't even sick!

CALEB

Sorry to practice such a deception on you, but we weren't quite finished with our breach and we wanted to surprise you with it.

GUARD

Never trust a Mormon.

CALEB (*insulted beyond endurance*)

Listen here, hog-kisser, who're you callin' a Mormon?

GUARD

No offense. Now don't none of you start tryin' to get out of that hole. I'm gonna keep Billy there with his gun loaded. And I'm beginning to think shootin' you's the best thing that could happen to this county.

*He exits as CALEB rushes him but only runs into the closed door.*

ALEX

I don't think he likes our breach.

CALEB

I don't see why not. It's a fine breach.

HYRUM

It'll cost the county a good sum of money to repair.

CALEB

He should have ripped your pants up in little shreds and fed 'em to you with mud gravy! That's just like you, Lyman. You don't lift a finger the whole time we're a-diggin' the hole, but who's the first one through?

LYMAN

It was the only chance. None of you was takin' it.

JOSEPH

Well, gentlemen. Our wall-breaching days are over.

HYRUM

I believe we're in here till they let us out.

LYMAN

What did I tell you? I knew the breach wouldn't work.

CALEB

What did you tell us? Let's have it! Who ruined our first escape? Who wouldn't help with the second? Who's the cockle-brained dimwit who . . .

LYMAN

You wait just a minute, Mr. Baldwin, or you'll be pulling your teeth out of your ears.

CALEB

Just try it!!

JOSEPH (*stepping between them*)

Start acting like grown men.

LYMAN (*to Joseph*)

If you lay one hand on me again . . .

JOSEPH

I'll lay more than one hand on you Lyman, if you strike anyone in this jail. We're in this together, like it or not, but while we're here we might as well try not to kill each other. Plenty of people outside are willing to do it for us.

LYMAN

Just tell him to keep his mouth shut!

CALEB (*talking with his mouth firmly shut*)

Muph mmimn!

JOSEPH

Thanks.

ANNIE (*breaking into scene*)

It's a wonder you didn't go crazy, shut up in this place day in and day out with nary a visitor --

MACRAE

Oh, we had visitors --

ANNIE  
You did?

MACRAE  
After a few months, they started letting a few groups of Saints come and see us.  
To bring mail, to ask questions, to get help on problems back home.

GUARD  
Visitors!

ALEX (*yelling downstairs*)  
Visitors!

LYMAN (*from downstairs*)  
Who are they?

*SISTER SMEAD, SISTER ALBERT, and BROTHER HATHAWAY enter.*

SISTER SMEAD  
Brother Joseph.

JOSEPH  
Sister Smead. Sister Albert.

BROTHER HATHAWAY  
Brother Joseph.

JOSEPH  
Brother Hathaway. Come in. It's good to see you.

BROTHER HATHAWAY  
You look half-dead.

JOSEPH  
It's just the light in here.

SISTER ALBERT  
Brother Joseph, you look better than I had feared. Just a bit older.

HYRUM  
But thankfully, no taller.

JOSEPH  
I plan to get older every day of my life.

BROTHER HATHAWAY  
We don't want to worry you, Brother Joseph ----

SISTER SMEAD

But there's things going on that you ought to know about.

JOSEPH

Tell me.

SISTER ALBERT

Brother Brigham is a little ... blunt.

BROTHER HATHAWAY

He has offended practically everybody.

SISTER SMEAD

He is getting things done -- but too slowly!

SISTER ALBERT

He doesn't seem to care how people feel.

JOSEPH

I assure you, Sister Albert, Brother Brigham cares deeply, even if he treads heavily.

BROTHER HATHAWAY

What about Sidney Rigdon? He's saying things that sound like revelation.

SISTER ALBERT

He does speak beautifully.

BROTHER HATHAWAY

But he shouldn't talk as if he was speaking the words of God. Should he? You're the prophet.

JOSEPH

He's ordained as a prophet, seer, and revelator.

BROTHER HATHAWAY

It causes confusion.

SISTER SMEAD

No more confusion than what the Quorum of the Twelve creates on a daily basis.

SISTER ALBERT

It would help if they could agree on what it is they've actually agreed on.

BROTHER HATHAWAY

Perhaps, Brother Joseph, you shouldn't send instructions to the Twelve through your wife. They aren't very keen on it.

SISTER SMEAD

Sister Emma works endlessly for the good of all, and you can't blame the confusion of the Twelve on her.

SISTER ALBERT

We do have good news for you, Brother Joseph. Almost all the Saints pulled through the last epidemic.

HYRUM

Epidemic?

BROTHER HATHAWAY

The faith of the Saints has proved strong through many trials, Brother Joseph, but how many more will there be? If we're God's chosen people, why is there no place where we're safe enough to grow, to build a temple as He commanded?

JOSEPH

Remember how long the Israelites wandered.

LYMAN

They had Moses.

BROTHER HATHAWAY

We have Brother Joseph!

SISTER SMEAD

Or we would have, if they'd let him out of here.

SISTER ALBERT

The Twelve are trying hard, but they just aren't ... you.

JOSEPH

What do you need from me?

SISTER SMEAD

Answers from the Lord.

SISTER ALBERT

What is His will?

JOSEPH

You don't always have to come to me for God's will. Don't you know how to ask him yourselves?

*(They fall into a slightly chastened silence.)*

This is my counsel to you. Go home. Nothing any man can do can hurt you. God has plans for us, and they will be fulfilled. When you're suffering, and you want to know why, ask our Father in Heaven. Be patient with each other, and when you see only enemies surrounding you, remember Jesus Christ, your Shepherd. He understands every pain and every sorrow. He loves you.

*Guard enters.*

GUARD  
Time's up! Visit's over.

*Joseph speaks as he walks them to the door.*

JOSEPH  
The Twelve, Brigham, Sidney, Hyrum, me -- we're only men. Sons of God, just like you, but still men, not perfect. The Lord has called us to lead this Church, and we do our best. I promise God will not allow our weaknesses to ruin his plan, any more than he will let our enemies destroy his people.

*Guard is impatiently ushering them out.*

BROTHER HATHAWAY  
Thank you, Brother Joseph.

SISTER SMEAD  
We pray for you.

SISTER ALBERT  
God bless you.

JOSEPH  
And you.

*Hyrum calls out over the guard's shoulder.*

HYRUM  
And tell my wife Mary that I long to see her! And the baby!

SISTER SMEAD  
Oh, she can't come! She's not well!

HYRUM  
What? Mary's sick? What!

GUARD (*pushing him back in*)  
Get back inside, man! You're a prisoner here, or didn't you know that?

*BROTHER HATHAWAY, SISTER SMEAD, and SISTER ALBERT exit. Hyrum rushes downstairs, and Joseph follows.*

MACRAE  
And then came the visitors that some had been wishing for, and praying for.

NASTY GUARD



Where do you think you're going? You can't go in there!

EMMA

Well, aren't you full of authority!

NASTY GUARD

It happens that I am!

EMMA

I don't think so. No, I think you have very little authority, and that man over there has all the real authority.

SHERIFF

What's the trouble here?

EMMA

I have a sick woman in that wagon.

NASTY GUARD

She doesn't look sick to me.

EMMA (*"are you really this stupid?"*)

The sick woman is lying down in the wagon. Her name is Mary Fielding Smith.

NASTY GUARD

Is she the wife of that pretend prophet in there? I'd like to see the woman stupid enough to marry him!

EMMA

I have the great honor to be the wife of Joseph Smith, Jr. This is his son, Joseph the Third.

JOSEPH III

How do you do, sir?

*Inside the jail, Alex has been listening through the door, and now he goes down into the lower room and brings Joseph and Hyrum upstairs.*

EMMA

My sister-in-law is the woman lying sick in the wagon. She is married to Hyrum Smith. Their new baby is being held by her sister, Mercy, along with her own nursing daughter. And the man who is tending the horses is Don Carlos Smith, the younger brother of our husbands.

SHERIFF

I don't suppose you could draw me a diagram of all that.

DON CARLOS

Can any of you tell me where I can get some feed for these animals?

SHERIFF *(to Nasty Guard)*

Show him to Barker's stable. Try not to offend any more ladies on the way.

*(To Emma)*

Ma'am, I apologize for the apelike behavior of my deputy. You may go inside.

*EMMA goes and fetches MARY, who is very frail. MERCY follows, holding both babies"; JOSEPH III helps MARY on the other side, though she can't put much weight on him. The SHERIFF opens the door; Joseph and Hyrum help Mary through the threshold. HYRUM leads MARY to a stool and helps her sit, kneels beside her. JOSEPH stays by the door with EMMA and kneels down to speak to JOSEPH III.*

*CALEB drags LYMAN and ALEX downstairs.*

HYRUM

Oh, Mary, I longed for you, but I didn't mean for you to make such a journey in illness like this.

MARY

I was not going to die without placing your son in your arms.

*Hyrum looks around.*

HYRUM

My son?

MERCY

Here he is.

*MERCY puts one baby into MARY's arms, and HYRUM parts the blanket to see his face.*

HYRUM

Did you name him?

MARY

With the name you told me he should have, if he was a boy. I named him for your father and your brother. And gave him my family name in the middle.

HYRUM

Joseph Fielding Smith. It's a good name. He's a fine baby.

MARY

I did my best.

*She bursts into tears and hands the baby to EMMA, then clings to HYRUM.*

MARY

I told the Lord that all I wanted was to live long enough to show you our son, but I've changed my mind! I want to live to see you free of this place! I want to

go home with you and live in peace and raise our son together, and other children, too, dozens of children! I want to grow old with you!

HYRUM

That's exactly my own plan.

MARY

But I promised the Lord that it was all right if I died now, and I don't mean it any longer! I'm an oathbreaker!

HYRUM

Hush, hush. What you are is a very tired lady. Just because you prayed something so foolish doesn't mean the Lord will hold you to it. You'll see. I'll yet get out of here and go home to you.

*They continue to hold each other, while MERCY sits on another stool, holding her own baby. JOSEPH takes little "baby" Joseph Fielding Smith from EMMA and then holds him down for JOSEPH III to see.*

JOSEPH

You used to be that small, you know.

JOSEPH III

I never!

EMMA

Smaller.

JOSEPH

You were so small we could hide you under a cabbage leaf.

EMMA

Once you crawled under a napkin and we didn't find you for an hour.

JOSEPH

You were constantly getting lost in the laundry and hung up on the line by mistake.

JOSEPH III

I hope you don't think I believe a word of this.

JOSEPH

You were our little miracle. Our own first baby that we got to keep.

EMMA

But very small.

JOSEPH

We almost named you "Thimble."

JOSEPH III

Papa! Why don't you come home? We don't live in Missouri any more, and everyone asks about you always.

EMMA

Joseph, you know perfectly well why --

JOSEPH III (*loud whisper to his mother*)

He's the Prophet, Mother. He can do anything.

JOSEPH

No, my dear boy, I can only do what the Lord wants me to do.

JOSEPH III

The Lord wants you to come home to us, I know it!

JOSEPH

And I will. In the Lord's own time.

DON CARLOS

All this traveling, and the only thing we get to see at the end of it is the two of you?

*HYRUM and JOSEPH rise and greet their younger brother with hugs.*

HYRUM

Thank you for bringing my wife to me, Don Carlos.

DON CARLOS

I'm just the driver. Emma and Mercy, they're the bringers!

JOSEPH

I'm glad to see you, whatever your title.

JOSEPH III (*to Don Carlos*)

I'm glad to see you, too!

DON CARLOS

You've seen me constantly for a week.

JOSEPH III

Well, I'm still mighty glad!

DON CARLOS

You come on out here with me, then, and we'll be glad and loud outside, while your papa and mama have a good talk.

*DON CARLOS leads JOSEPH III out.*

HYRUM *(to Mercy)*

And thank you, Mercy. I know I hardly so much as spoke to you.

MERCY

Don't be silly. We didn't come all this way for you to talk to me.

HYRUM *(to Joseph)*

And they didn't bring my son for you to hold him.

*HYRUM takes the baby from JOSEPH and returns to MARY.*

JOSEPH

How are Julia and Freddy and Alex?

EMMA

They're hearty and well and happy, and in good hands.

*She touches his face.*

How are you?

*He embraces her, playfully spins her around.*

JOSEPH

Now I'm happy.

EMMA

I won't be happy till you're home and done with all this.

JOSEPH *(soberly)*

I'll never be done with "all this," Emma. Oh, they'll let me out of jail, but when I come home, there'll still be a thousand things, a thousand people demanding my time.

EMMA

But in the few breaks you have, there I'll be.

*They embrace again, pressing their cheeks together. HYRUM is kneeling beside MARY, as they admire the baby.*

MARY

I've been so ill that I haven't had strength to nurse, and now I fear I'll never be able to. Thank heaven my dear sister was there for our baby!

HYRUM

I do thank heaven for you, Mercy.

*MERCY gets up and comes to them, carrying her own baby.*

MERCY

They are the two hungriest babies ever born. I barely have an hour all at once without one or the other needing to be fed, so I have no time for any work at all.

MARY

Nursing two babies counts as work, Mercy.

MERCY

I've finally discovered my purpose in life. The Lord may have put me in a woman's body, but I was born to be a cow.

*(to Hyrum)*

And if you moo at me, Hyrum Smith, I'll tell your son that his father is a bully.

HYRUM *(laughs)*

That was a good one! Bully. I never thought you'd stoop so low.

*(When they don't laugh:)*

"Low"? You know, like a cow?

MARY

That's not actually funny, dear.

*Mercy holds out an arm.*

MERCY

It's milking time, Brother Hyrum.

*Hyrum gives her the baby.*

HYRUM

There's got to be a joke I can make with "coward."

MERCY

Oh, I hope not.

*Heading for the door, MERCY speaks to MARY:*

Are you sure you want him back?

HYRUM *(calling out to Mercy as she goes)*

Don't steer her wrong!

*MARY clings to Hyrum's hand with both of hers.*

MARY

With all my heart I want you back.

HYRUM

The sweetest words I ever ... uh ... "herd."

*MARY slaps his hand lightly, then kisses it. He kneels by her again, as attention focuses back on JOSEPH and EMMA.*

JOSEPH

It's the people watching me all the time, criticizing me. Expecting me to say something prophetic just because they happen to be there to watch. They think they need me to have an answer for every problem

EMMA

I'm glad to hear you're weary of it. Give it all up. Turn the running of the Church over to Sidney and come home with me.

JOSEPH

Even if I could, you wouldn't let me. Admit it, you love being the Prophet's wife.

EMMA

Only if you admit that you love being Prophet.

JOSEPH

What I love, Emma, is when the Spirit comes to me -- came to me like a wind. I exulted in it. I stood and dictated holy words as if their true glory belonged to me. But I always remember: They're not my words. No word of mine has any force to break these walls, or soften the hearts of our enemies, or even give comfort to my family. I'm like a sail -- mighty when the breath of God fills me, but take me from the mast and I go slack. Fold me up, put me away. No one misses me.

EMMA

Little Joseph misses you. Fiercely. And I miss you. I try to speak for you, to keep things going aright, but it's you they need and want. You they listen to.

JOSEPH

When they feel like it.

EMMA

When they're afraid. They're all like little Joseph. Full of spunk and sass when all is right, but when he's afraid, how he wants his Papa!

JOSEPH

I love them, but I can't do anything for them.

EMMA

If there was no love, there'd be no grief.

JOSEPH

If there was no grief, there'd be no joy.

EMMA

The people are chastened, Joseph. Their hearts are broken. They're ready to follow you again.

JOSEPH

But am I ready to lead them? God loves the world, and the world turns away. Does He feel like this?

EMMA

You keep loving them, even when they all seem to turn away.

JOSEPH

I want to reach out and pull them up. Drag them to Heaven by their coattails, if I must, but at least make them see.

EMMA

They will see, Joseph, when they want to. And no sooner.

JOSEPH

Is this my sojourn in the wilderness? I can bear it if I feel like it has a good end.

EMMA

Do you have any reason to think it won't? You have too much knowledge. Maybe the Lord left you here to learn faith. You remember -- it's what the rest of us have to make do with.

*The visitors leave; the prisoners gather upstairs, except Joseph, who goes downstairs to pray.*

MACRAE

And then they left -- and we were still in prison. The same walls, the same miserable food. With spring, it got a little warmer. It was the only change.

JOSEPH

Stretch forth thy hand; let thine eye pierce; let thy pavilion be taken up; let thy hiding place no longer be covered! Remember thy suffering Saints, O our God; and thy servants will rejoice in thy name forever.

*LYMAN comes down the stairs.*

LYMAN

Oh, yes, let's rejoice.

JOSEPH

Lyman -- I'm sorry. I didn't know you were here.



LYMAN

I'm not. Ignore me -- go ahead, talk to God. I want to see the technique.

JOSEPH

How did you get so much poison in you? Where's the Lyman Wight I used to know?

LYMAN

Where's mamma's good boy? He doesn't drown the cat. He doesn't write on the walls. He only does what mamma says to do.

JOSEPH

Lyman, whatever I've done to make you so angry, I'm sorry. Let me set it right.

LYMAN

That's just what Sidney said.

JOSEPH

What did Sidney say?

LYMAN

What do I care what liars say? Or ask.

JOSEPH

Who lied to you?

LYMAN

Thou sayest.

JOSEPH

I never told you a lie.

LYMAN

Oh, you're good! You've fooled thousands, even me. Me, Lyman Wight! Trusted you! HA!

JOSEPH

Accuse me then, Lyman, when did I lie?

LYMAN

When didn't you?

JOSEPH

I didn't lie when I said an angel came to me. I didn't lie when I said Christ established this Church. I didn't lie when I said He called you, Lyman Wight, and commanded you to serve Him.

LYMAN

Serve whom? Christ, did you say? And what about the Danites, Mr. Smith?

JOSEPH  
I never knew about the Danites.

LYMAN  
You're lying!

JOSEPH  
In the name of Christ, Lyman, I swear. I never knew!

LYMAN  
LIAR!

*LYMAN attacks JOSEPH, and the struggle is fierce, with no words, only grunting, until JOSEPH gets the best of LYMAN.*

Let me go!

JOSEPH  
Why don't you believe me?

LYMAN  
You're the Prophet! You're the Prophet! You're supposed to know what's going on!

JOSEPH  
I can't see everything that happens.

LYMAN  
This mattered!

*LYMAN tries to break free. JOSEPH adjusts the hold.*

JOSEPH  
What do you think this Church is like? We aren't puppets with God pulling all the strings. He doesn't step in and save us from our stupidity, not even when it matters. He teaches us as much as we're willing to learn, and then it's up to us!

LYMAN  
You and Sidney, when I'm with you I believe you. When I'm alone I can see better.

JOSEPH  
When I'm alone, I can't see a thing.

LYMAN  
Let go of me.

JOSEPH

No.

LYMAN  
Leave me alone.

JOSEPH  
I don't want to leave you alone.

LYMAN  
You already have.

JOSEPH  
I didn't leave you.

LYMAN  
You left us all! God's best friend, Joseph Smith.

JOSEPH (*letting go*)  
You never understood.

LYMAN  
True. Till now.

JOSEPH  
And what do you understand now? You men who trust in your own minds,  
your own arms, you don't want to be loved, you want to be followed.

LYMAN  
Maybe we want both.

JOSEPH  
God isn't God because he won all the wars! God is God because he loves every  
living soul!

LYMAN  
You are so pious and perfect.

JOSEPH  
You loved me once, Lyman.

LYMAN  
Did I?

JOSEPH  
But you wanted to have things your own way. If you'd only learn to love again,  
then you could have it.

LYMAN  
What are you offering?

JOSEPH

I'm offering you salvation, peace and joy, and you see it as a backroom deal.

LYMAN

You're offering me a chance to be under your thumb till death do us part.

JOSEPH

I'm offering you all I have and all I care about.

LYMAN

And I'm telling you I don't want it!

*JOSEPH stares at him intently for a moment, and then breaks out in a huge smile. He reaches out, and grabs LYMAN in a huge bear hug, and laughs.*

JOSEPH

Thank you. Thank you, Lyman!

LYMAN

If I just did you a favor it was an accident.

JOSEPH

You've finally made it clear to me.

LYMAN

Made what clear?

JOSEPH

Never mind.

LYMAN

I don't understand what's made you all dad-blamed happy all of a sudden.

JOSEPH

Do you want to understand?

LYMAN

Yes.

JOSEPH

Then why don't you?

LYMAN

Because you're talking in riddles, Joseph, so tell me what you're thanking me for and what I've made so clear to you.

JOSEPH

Why, who you are.

LYMAN  
I'm nothing to you.

JOSEPH  
Exactly. I never understood it until now.

*He starts to go.*

LYMAN  
Where are you going?

JOSEPH  
Upstairs.

LYMAN  
You can't leave me now!

JOSEPH  
Watch.

LYMAN  
You owe me something.

JOSEPH  
I've never borrowed anything from you.

LYMAN  
I've devoted my life to you!

JOSEPH  
Too bad. You should have devoted it to Christ.

LYMAN  
So I'm nothing to you? You told me that you loved me.

JOSEPH  
Oh, I did, and I do. But I'm learning how to let go, now. I was called to be a shepherd. But I've been wasting my time trying to gather up the wolves, and bring them into the flock. The wolves have got to go their own way.

LYMAN  
You're calling me a wolf? I'm as much a part of this Church as anyone else!

JOSEPH  
You can be, Lyman. You can. I'm prepared to love you more than you'll understand, if you'll only repent and --

LYMAN  
I haven't done one thing to repent of! I don't need any more hypocrites in my

life. Leave me alone.

JOSEPH

I don't have any other choice. But I'll still hear your cries in the hollow of your heart, and I'll long to let you out. Let me let you out.

*Pause, no reaction.*

My people are suffering. I have no time for you, Lyman, unless you help them. I ask you to come back. But until you do, I have no time for you.

LYMAN

Are you telling me to leave?

JOSEPH

Yes.

LYMAN

And where should I go?

JOSEPH

Where you went a long time ago. Away from me.

LYMAN

Away from you, the only place I can go is up.

*He laughs as he climbs the stairs but the laugh ends before the climb does. Joseph kneels again, and listens, and starts to speak softly the words he's hearing.*

JOSEPH

My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment.

*HYRUM comes down. When he sees JOSEPH he stops and looks at him. And even though HYRUM is obviously directly in JOSEPH's line of sight, JOSEPH gives no hint that he sees HYRUM. Finally, HYRUM sits on a bench again st the wall. JOSEPH's face changes and he looks around dazedly, as if he has just awakened.*

JOSEPH

Hyrum. How long have you been here?

HYRUM

Your long exile is over.

JOSEPH

Here, sit down, Hyrum. Write for me please. There is a time appointed for every man, according as his works shall be. God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, yes, by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost, that has not

been revealed since the world was until now . . .

MACRAE

I'd like to say that as Joseph spoke to Hyrum, we fell silent upstairs, that light filled the room, that we were overcome by the Spirit. But we weren't. Spiritual things don't stop the world. They keep their own time, and the world passes by without noticing. Upstairs the room was in darkness, while downstairs something far greater than a candle lit every corner.

JOSEPH

Then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; And the doctrine of the Priesthood shall distill upon thy soul as the dews from Heaven. The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth, and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee. Forever. And ever.

HYRUM

It's not just a revelation, Joseph. It's a psalm.

JOSEPH

It's what I was waiting for. Now we can go home.

HYRUM

I wish I was sure you didn't mean go home to heaven.

MACRAE

In April we received notice we were to go to Davis County for a grand jury trial. We were being taken from Liberty Jail.

LYMAN

They plan to kill us, I know it.

CALEB

Who cares, just so long as they do it in the open. Goodbye, blanket. I hate you. Goodbye wall. May you fall down and turn into gravel. Goodbye stinks and smells! I hereby vow that I, Caleb Baldwin, will bathe every day of my life, and I'll kill anyone near me who don't!

*He exits.*

LYMAN

Out of one jail into another.

*He exits.*

HYRUM

True enough for him. What are these walls? Only stone.

JOSEPH

These walls have seen fear, and pain, and despair. But in the end, this did turn into holy ground, didn't it? They locked me in a temple, Hyrum.

*JOSEPH, HYRUM and ALEX exit.*

MACRAE

We were indicted for treason, murder, arson, theft and stealing.

CALEB

What's the difference between theft and stealing?

MACRAE

But the judge granted us a change of venue to another county. It didn't matter. If we stood trial anywhere in the state of Missouri, we'd have been convicted and sentenced to death. But in the end, our friends came through.

SHERIFF

Well, gentlemen, here's the mittimus that Judge Burch made for you.

*Hands it to CALEB, who can't read.*

CALEB *(looks at the mittimus, turns it upside-down, puzzled)*

Here, Hyrum, must be for you.

HYRUM

This is a mittimus? It doesn't even name a place.

JOSEPH *(looking at it)*

Or a date.

SHERIFF *(taking it back)*

Why, so it doesn't. I reckon I don't know where to take you, then, do I? Or when you ought to get there. Now that is a pickle. Whatever shall I do?

*He throws the mittimus over his shoulder.*

Here's my plan. I'm going to go into this inn and drink some bad corn likker and ponder about what this mittimus don't say. Then I'll go to bed and think about it some more till I wake up in the morning.

ALEX

That's a plan?

CALEB *(covers Alex's mouth)*

I think it's the best plan I've heard in years.

SHERIFF

I'm so tired of pondering I feel like yawning.



*He does.*

And I'm plumb thirsty. Good night, Gentlemen.

JOSEPH  
Good night.

SHERIFF  
Oh, I hope that any travelers headed for Illinois tonight might take the north road. I hear the south road is full of crowds of unruly men who might want to do bad things to certain prisoners.

JOSEPH  
If anyone should ask, I'll tell them.

SHERIFF  
Sleep tight, boys.

JOSEPH  
And God bless you.

*SHERIFF tips his hat, nods and leaves.*

JOSEPH  
Well, saddle up, boys. Pray to the Lord and ride like the devil.

MACRAE  
And that's how we got away.

JACK  
Fugitives from justice!

MACRAE  
You could say that. But we kind of thought of ourselves as fugitives from injustice.

MRS. JOHNSON  
But what happened? How'd it all turn out?

BILL  
The story is over for Pete's sake.

ANNIE PARKER  
It is not. What happened to everybody?

MACRAE  
Well, as for Caleb Baldwin and me, we haven't ever done much of anything. Many years later I wrote a few letters to the Deseret News, but that's about it. And now I'm a missionary.

HANK

What about Lyman Wight?

MACRAE

He stuck with the Church until Brigham Young led the Saints to Utah. Lyman kind of thought they should've gone to Texas. So he took a few poor fools with him and that's where he died. Excommunicated, of course.

JACK

And Sidney Rigdon?

MACRAE

He and Joseph had a kind of falling out in Illinois. At one conference, Joseph stood up and asked the Saints not to sustain Sidney. But they voted for him anyway. I guess a lot of people liked Rigdon then. But after Joseph died, most of the Saints followed Brigham Young west. You couldn't help liking Sidney, but in a pinch, you'd rather have Brigham beside you.

SMITH

What about Joseph and Hyrum?

MACRAE

They were shot to death in another jail in Carthage, Illinois, in 1844.

MRS. JOHNSON

Who did it! Why! He did no harm!

MACRAE

Oh, Joseph knew it was coming and he went to it willingly enough. It just meant that the burden of leading the Church was lifted off his shoulders for good.

JACK

Mormons are crazy, that's what my father always said, and now I know he was right. Come on, get your tools, let's tear this old jail down.

MRS. JOHNSON

Tear it down! Are you crazy?

HANK

This jail comes down over my dead body!

JACK

We've got a job to do! You were all hired!

HANK

Fire us, then, and tear it down yourself.

MACRAE

Now don't go getting angry about it, please.

HUMPHREYS

Joseph called for a pavilion, a hiding place. A safe place. We can create that no matter where we are, if we reach out to each other.

MACRAE

With pure, loving hearts.

MRS. JOHNSON

This doesn't feel like a jail anymore, Mr. Mormon.

HANK

It still looks like one!

*All laugh.*

MACRAE

Liberty Jail was a temple for me. Not a prison. You can break down the walls but it's still holy ground. Here my faith became unshakeable. My faith in God, and my trust in Brother Joseph.

ANNIE PARKER

Joseph Smith is blessed to have a friend like you to witness for him still.

MACRAE

I'm the one who's blessed, ma'am. What I do now is what he earned from me with every smile, every word he spoke, every moment he listened to the worries of a boy.

SMITH

If he asked you to walk to your death, you'd run.

*A moment of surprised silence.*

MACRAE

Yes, that's the truth. You spoke the words of my soul, sir.

BILL JOHNSON

And how'd you figure on sayin' somethin' like that?

SMITH

Well, I . . . think I know who he is now.

BILL JOHNSON (*pointing at MACRAE*)

Him?

SMITH

Joseph Smith.

JACK

It's just plum wonderful that you all have gotten so weepy-eyed about an old building, but I'm the one that reports to the county, and I'm the one gets blamed when the work don't get done!

MRS. JOHNSON

Jack, the only thing you'll be tearin' into this afternoon is a big piece of rhubarb pie, so hush up and get started on it.

HANK

Now that's a job I'm happy to do for free!

*All laugh.*

BILL JOHNSON

Elder Macrae, do you and Elder Humphreys have a place to stay tonight? My home is open to you, and my wife prepares an astounding supper table.

MACRAE

We're grateful to you, Mr. Johnson. My companion and I have a prior engagement a few miles from here, which includes room and board, but I hope we can take you up on your kind offer when we pass through here again in a week.

BILL JOHNSON

Any time.

ANNIE PARKER (*to SMITH*)

You know, the name Smith has grown on me very much in the last hour or two.

SMITH (*taking her arm*)

Is that so, Miss Parker? Well, I'd be pleased to let you borrow it sometime. Even keep it, if you like.

MRS. JOHNSON

Now remember what I said about wedding talk in a jail, you two.

ANNIE PARKER

But Mrs. Johnson, it can't be bad luck now. You said yourself, this place doesn't feel like a jail anymore.

BILL JOHNSON

Right you are, Annie! In fact, this place seems to inspire people start their lives afresh.

HANK (*with a mouth full of pie*)

The food's gotten better here since *your* time, though, Macrae!

*Laughter, and group mingles and chats and eats now. Several shake hands with MACRAE and HUMPHREYS as they prepare to leave. BOY (who played Alex) shuffles nervously up to MACRAE. (If the same actor plays Alex and adult MacRae, then this should be the woman who played Mercy.)*

BOY/ALEX  
Mr. Mormon?

MACRAE  
Yes, son? [miss?]

BOY/ALEX  
Well, um, I'd just like to say . . .  
*(He suddenly grabs MACRAE's hand and pumps it vigorously.)*  
Thank God for simple men.

HUMPHREYS  
Amen.

MACRAE *(to BOY)*  
Thank you, sir. [ma'am.]

*BOY/ALEX, pleased and embarrassed, runs off.*

MACRAE  
Well, we'd best press on, Elder Humphreys. We have a good distance to walk before we rest. Although -- I feel like I could run the whole way!

HUMPHREYS *(chuckles)*  
I'd like to see the Spirit move you that fast, Elder Macrae.

MACRAE  
There have been far greater miracles than that under Heaven. Under this very roof. The Spirit burned like a fire for me, and I knew a Prophet of God. What more do I need?

*They exit.*

**THE END**