

Monticel'

by
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CHARACTERS: Thomas Jefferson, age 57

Sally Hemings, age 27
Jefferson's slave.

James Hemings, age 35
Sally's brother. Freed by Jefferson five years before the action of the play.

James Thomson Callender
A writer for pro-Jefferson (anti-Federalist) newspapers.

Patsy Randolph, age 29
Jefferson's eldest daughter.

Francis Williams
A Federalist.

SETTING: March, 1801. Monticello, Jefferson's home. As usual, the entire house is in a state of reconstruction. The set is flexible enough so that small suggestive changes locate the action in either the central parlor or in Jefferson's bedroom and his adjacent study.

Note on Music: The songs quoted are genuine slave era songs from Virginia. Sheet music is supplied at the end of the script.

Act I

Prologue

*(In low light, James Hemings at Jefferson's desk.
Liquor on the table.)*

(Isolated spotlight on James Callender.)

CALLENDER

Remind me. Did we fight a war? Did we fight and suffer scores shot dead so that we might have liberty? Twenty-five years gone, did we pay a bloody price that we should hold the trinket of freedom? I thought we did. We fought to unshackle our neighbors, to unslave our brothers, to free our children from the tyranny of a king. And what do we now have? We have an elected king. Fond of fripperies, arrogant with power, reckless with law. He is a king who has upturned the glories of our revolution, and his name is John Adams. "Oh," I hear you say, "oh, but Adams has the blessing of *George Washington*." Let me utter the words that none dare say. Let me pronounce them with clarity and precision: Washington was a nincompoop. We are well rid of him. His peacock Federalists have posted troops to our cities and fired upon our farmers. They have brought us to the very precipice of war with France. All the while, they have made our country borrow money from themselves. At usurious rates.

When all this is gently remarked upon by me and my fellow journalists, how does Adams respond? He and his Federalists pass laws against us. They jail and fine us. Freedom of the press? They shut down our presses. Gentlemen, I'm breaking the law as I speak.

Adams is a villain. But he cannot succeed. For now the game is yours. Vote for the Federalists, Adams and tyranny, or vote for Thomas Jefferson, the Republic, and liberty.

(Spot out on Callender. Isolated spotlight up on Francis Williams.)

WILLIAMS

A quarter century after the Revolution, our nation faces its gravest threat: democracy. Democracy run amok. We've seen the farmers' bloody rebellions in Pennsylvania, in New York, Massachusetts. Grubby men, marching with

pitchforks and axes. Attacking American soldiers. Freedom? Yes. By all means, freedom. But what good freedom when democracy becomes mobocracy? What good freedom when “the people” breed violence? Our sister “democracy” in France has met the goddess of the people and she is named Guillotine. Don’t pretend angry masses won’t use one here.

Gentlemen, we Federalists are for stability. We are for sound governing. We are for order. We Americans have worked too hard, we Americans have sacrificed too much to discover ourselves ruled by farmers. Thomas Jefferson smiles upon the people’s rebellions. He smiles on the French Terror. His naïve belief in “the people” promotes democracy in its worst aspect. He is a coward, a cheat and an atheist. He is a dangerous man. He must, at whatever cost, be stopped.

(Spot out on Williams.)

Scene 1

(The parlor. Late at night. James at Jefferson’s desk, drinking and singing.)

JAMES

(sings) Don’t be weary, traveler,
Come along home to Jesus.
Don’t be weary traveler,
Come along home to Jesus.

(He drinks.)

I look at the world and the world look new,
On that day a’ judgment.

(Sally enters in a nightgown.)

My head got wet with the midnight dew.
On dat –

SALLY

Ah!

(pause)

James?

JAMES

... *(stage whisper)* On dat Judgment Day.

SALLY

You back?

JAMES

Guess so.

SALLY

You here?

JAMES

...

SALLY

You're back! — What.

JAMES

Figure Mr. Thomas Jefferson oughta have good whiskey in the cupboard. Figure I ride two hundred seventy miles over the Blue Hills, lost, scared I'll be jailed for a runaway. Think I'd find some whiskey worth drinking on top this mountain. Mister Thomas Jefferson. But guess not.

SALLY

(Hitting him.) Worried about you all this time.

JAMES

Who?

SALLY

No letter the last two years. I missed you, James. I figured you'd forgot us. I figured you'd took sail 'cross the sea. I figured you cooking supper for Napoleon himself. But you're not across the sea.

JAMES

No.

SALLY

You're here, sneaking around midnight, drinking.

JAMES

Mm.

SALLY

Not sneaking really. You're doing a poor job of sneaking. The drinking you're doing all right.

JAMES

Thank you.

SALLY

The drinking you're doing fine. The singing— ...

JAMES

I sing all right.

SALLY

What you think Miss Patsy do, wake her father your caterwauling?

JAMES

(sings) Hypo-crite and the concu-bine.

SALLY

Quiet.

JAMES

(sung) Livin' out 'mong the swine—

SALLY

You'll wake the house.

JAMES

Just want to sit in Mister Jefferson's chair a minute. Just want to see what it feels like, his chair.

SALLY

Can you sit in it quiet?

JAMES

Just get the *feel* of it.

SALLY

He's asleep through there.

JAMES

Well, bless my ass.

SALLY

You want to get shot at?

JAMES

Christ.

SALLY

He doesn't know you're back.

JAMES

“We hold these truths to be self important ...” Yes. This is a *chair*.

SALLY

For all he knows you’re somebody out cut his throat.

JAMES

May be.

SALLY

Well.

JAMES

You think he’s got a pistol?

SALLY

He might.

JAMES

Think so?

SALLY

I bet he does have a pistol.

JAMES

That’s serious. Think it looks like the one he keeps in here? (*He takes a flintlock pistol from a drawer.*)

SALLY

I do. I think it looks exactly like that one.

JAMES

Then that’s all right.

SALLY

Mister Jefferson be very pleased, come in here find you soused and singing all these years gone.

JAMES

The prodigal.

SALLY

Ready to shoot up the place.

JAMES

Returns.

SALLY

I'm going before he comes in here and shoots you.

JAMES

(stage whisper) It's not loaded.

SALLY

I'll load it. Give it here, I'll load it. He can shoot you blue in the face.

JAMES

Massa very upset ol' James get all slantified drinking his strike-dabby. *(James offers Sally a tumbler of whiskey.)*

SALLY

I don't know Mister Jefferson see the humor you prowling around here secret. I don't know he'll get the joke. I don't know I get the joke. *(She takes it.)*

JAMES

Sure you do.

SALLY

You back for money?

JAMES

Mnh!

SALLY

That it?

JAMES

Money.

SALLY

How much it cost, live life a free man?

JAMES

Costs some, I guess. Up there, a fifty-cent whore costs a whole fifty cents.

SALLY

Must run into a pretty penny.

JAMES

It does.

SALLY

Maybe up there you got to buy your own liquor.

JAMES

It's not cheap it's any good. (*They drink.*) What you suppose a man's worth?

SALLY

What man?

JAMES

Five hundred dollars.

SALLY

That's what a slave's worth.

JAMES

It's the same. I'm a free man up North. Somebody knock me senseless, bundle me up, ship me down here for sale. They do that, they get five hundred dollars.

SALLY

You are not worth that kinda money. That's field hand money. You get five hundred dollars for James Hemings, I say you got the right side of the deal. You sell yourself four, five hundred dollars, you are one salesman.

JAMES

I didn't come back ask him for money.

SALLY

You came back make mischief.

JAMES

Woke up. Brick dust in my hair. Found some money, got a horse, next thing I know I'm yellin' and kickin' that horse hoofs poundin' headed here. Horse isn't in any hurry, so I stop and cut me a switch. Every time I snap it cross that horse's back, I'm gettin' closer. Closer by a gallop, snap! Another gallop, closer the place I swore I'd never see again. Up through the timothy, the blue valley. This damn mountain. Don't know a lick why I did it.

SALLY

James, don't you make a ruckus. Don't you jostle-up things.

JAMES

Mister Jefferson wasn't pleased I left. He wasn't pleased set me free. He won't be pleased, me here drinking his whiskey up.

SALLY

Don't go rile Mister Jefferson.

JAMES

Rile him? That'd be somethin'. Maybe that's why I whipped that poor horse clear up this mountain. Rile him. That's what I'll do, too. Least chance I get turn him around, I'll be looking for it. Any chance comes my way, I'll grab like a fat goose. Break its neck right now.

SALLY

Well, don't do it. Everything's fine here, James. You know Mister Jefferson likes his quiet. Don't you go jostling things for any five hundred dollars. That's too much. He can't give you that.

JAMES

You listenin'? I didn't come back any five hundred dollars. I don't want any favors Mister Jefferson.

SALLY

Why did come you back, then?

JAMES

Sit in this chair, drink this whiskey.

SALLY

Fine. Drink it.

(pause)

JAMES

(sings) Where to go, I did not know.
(spoken) You miss me, Sal?

SALLY

'Course I did.

JAMES

(sings) Come along *home* to ...

SALLY

You're my brother knows me best. Looked after me.

JAMES

(sings) Ever since he freed my soul.
Come along home to.

SALLY

You're the only one really knows.

JAMES

(spoken) Home. Come along home.

(fade to black)

Scene 2

(Lights up on Patsy and Callender in the parlor. A mug of coffee has been brought for Callender.)

PATSY

There, that's ... I—

CALENDER

Lonely out here.

PATSY

If it's cooled, I'll have Sally—

CALENDER

Surprised he spends so much time in this place.

PATSY

... she ...

CALENDER

Secluded.

PATSY

Or if you'd like some preserves.

CALENDER

It's gracious of you to entertain me in your father's absence. Rude of me, really, come all the way out here. No warning. Uninvited and sober.

PATSY

Father welcomes all.

CALLENDER

My things are being seen to?

PATSY

I've instructed Isaac to ... I warn you, the guest bedrooms are—

CALLENDER

—unfinished.

PATSY

—unfinished. Yes.

CALLENDER

Yes. Outrageous to presume to come to the great man's very home, riding three days on an animal more mangle than horse, three days Virginia dust in my teeth and nose because, you see, he wouldn't see me in Washington. Far too busy at this critical time. So I thought here, away from the broils of the federal city he might make a quarter hour for a man to whom he owes a debt of gratitude. **Have you no whiskey?**

PATSY

... I'm certain Sally can ...

CALLENDER

You're very kind.

(Patsy rings a small hand bell to call Sally.)

PATSY

You've had a difficult journey.

CALLENDER

Mm.

PATSY

You've brought results?

CALLENDER

...?

PATSY

Results of the election.

CALLENDER

God, no.

PATSY

Ah. Because it's—

CALLENDER

Oh, yes. Complete mess. Idiots. ... Miss Jefferson ...

PATSY

I beg your pardon, but it's Mrs. Randolph.

CALLENDER

Ah?

PATSY

Wife to ...

CALLENDER

... Mister ...

PATSY

... Randolph. ... Thomas Randolph.

CALLENDER

Oh.

PATSY

For some years.

CALLENDER

I see. Hm. ... Am I to have the pleasure.

PATSY

...?

CALLENDER

Mr. Randolph.

PATSY

Ah. He, his ... illness precludes ...

CALLENDER

May I say that Mr. Randolph is lucky in the refinement of his choice.

(silence)

May I further say—

PATSY

No. ... I'm sorry. I don't mean to be rude. I'm—

CALLENDER

Your father, he, um.

PATSY

He?

CALLENDER

He treats those — his friends, say— he acknowledges his ... It's, I've come some distance.

PATSY

Does he owe you money?

CALLENDER

Money? No, he doesn't owe me money.

PATSY

Ah.

CALLENDER

That's not to say I'm not owed something.

PATSY

It's just that, the expenses of the farm ...

CALLENDER

I should rather say I am owed something.

PATSY

And he helps, often, my sister's family and mine.

CALLENDER

So. He ...

PATSY

My father treats those he respects with every possible consideration.

CALLENDER

Ah.

PATSY

So. You'll. Be.

CALLENDER

Yes, good. "Those he respects." Very good.

PATSY

Oh, my goodness. It's all very exciting, really. I'm a little.

CALLENDER

What.

PATSY

Visitors and ... people coming by.

CALLENDER

Yes.

PATSY

I suppose we'll have to get used to it.

CALLENDER

Mm. When you say, "those he respects," what exactly is your meaning?

PATSY

Well, of course, men, I'm sure, such as yourself—

CALLENDER

Because he wouldn't see me in Washington City. I've had to travel this accursed distance despite all I've done for him. It's possible—

PATSY

Oh, I'm certain that, um ...

(pause)

CALLENDER

I see.

PATSY

Mr. Callender, it's just that I'm distracted. I mean. I hardly dare think.

CALLENDER

Me neither.

PATSY

Although he might not be, but then, what if he is?

CALLENDER

What if he is what.

PATSY

President.

CALLENDER

Ah.

PATSY

For one thing, oh. Everyone would know. That he's a great man. He is a great man, don't you think, in history. Mrs. Madison thinks he'll be remembered as one of the greatest. Along with those very famous Greeks. One of, I think. Yes. ... But, also, it will be, you know, the dinners. Soirees.

CALLENDER

You're worried about the soirees.

PATSY

Of course it's silly. The important things, he would, the burdens. But society, too is important. And without Mother ... (*pause*) Without Mother, he'll need me to help make the parties. My sister, too, of course. But she's busy with her own family.

CALLENDER

And you're not.

PATSY

Oh, yes. I have my family as well. It's just that Father depends on me so. And I've never given a truly proper dinner party. It's a little frightening, where would one begin? Food, of course. Hams ...

CALLENDER

Hams and geese.

PATSY

—and geese.

CALLENDER

Viandes.

PATSY

Yes. Yes, exactly.

CALLENDER

Oh, my dear God. ... You must, my Lord. You think me monstrous. Tramping in here. And then demanding. This time of day. No, no, whiskey is out of the question. Coffee. More coffee, hot, please, if at all possible without inconvenience.

PATSY

But after such a ride, it's entirely understandable.

CALLENDER

No. Coffee. Yes. For the love of god, Miss Jefferson—Randolph—Missus. Mr. Jefferson arrives, finds a raving drunk in his home. No. Mr. Jefferson will indeed arrive?

PATSY

... I should clarify regarding my husband—

CALLENDER

I shouldn't want to impose on you if he's delayed his visit or turned back.

PATSY

His illness is, um of a nervous—. Turned back?

CALLENDER

Because of the danger.

PATSY

Oh, I see. ... What danger would that be?

CALLENDER

The black uprisings.

PATSY

Mr. Callender.

CALLENDER

They arm themselves and eviscerate their masters. Their masters' daughters.

PATSY

Do they?

CALLENDER

It's true.

PATSY

Possibly.

CALLENDER

I've read the accounts.

PATSY

That was months ago. And two counties over.

CALLENDER

As far removed as that?

PATSY

We're quite safe at Monticello.

CALLENDER

Of course, quite safe. Doors missing, half-made walls. Completely alone.

PATSY

Hardly alone. (*Sally enters with biscuits.*) The house servants as well as a plantation of field hands. And you yourself, Mr. Callender.

CALLENDER

(*eating*) Riding through Albemarle, I saw them. Dead of night, singing around a black fire. Half a chance, they'd slice off an ear for a keepsake.

PATSY

Honestly.

CALLENDER

I'd do the same, I'd been kept a work beast. They can't be blamed, they can't be trusted. Look at this one. I hope you don't trust her.

PATSY

... Trust Sally.

CALLENDER

Smiles. Charms. Look in her hovel. Under the straw you'll find the missing silver. Am I wrong, girl?

PATSY

Sally is almost one of the family.

CALLENDER

I have family I don't trust. What is it, girl? When the wild blacks come, will you save your whites or point the way to the hidden cellar door?

PATSY

Mr. Callender, please.

SALLY

There was somebody broke in here last night.

PATSY

Sally, coffee.

SALLY

Broke in this same house. You staying the night, mister?

PATSY

And not a soul was murdered in his bed.

CALLENDER

Well, then it's all right.

PATSY

A passing tramp, I'm sure. There's no need to be worried.

CALLENDER

I've survived this long on constant vigilance.

SALLY

I guess so. Miss Patsy, Mister Jefferson's carriage is at the stream.

PATSY

There, Mr. Callender. Our protection is at hand.

CALLENDER

Huzzah.

PATSY

Excuse me that I may greet my father.

CALLENDER

Mrs. Randolph.

(Patsy goes to exit, then stops.)

PATSY

Sally. If you would come along.

SALLY

Yes'm.

(Patsy exits. Sally goes to follow, then hesitates.)

CALENDER

Passing tramp. One of your paramours more like. Eh? ... Eh? One of your paramours? You're a pretty one. Pretty as a dusky damsel.

SALLY

You here from up North?

CALENDER

They keep any whiskey in here? Fortify the coffee?

SALLY

In the cabinet.

CALENDER

Well? Get me some.

(She goes to the liquor cabinet.)

See that I don't drink too much of it.

SALLY

Why not?

CALENDER

Well said. Yes. You're meant for better recreation. He owes me at least that. That's no Negro cloth. There's white women in Richmond don't wear cotton that fine. There's Philadelphia street-walkers can't afford such stuff.

SALLY

Thank you.

CALENDER

Come here, I'll feel it's quality.

SALLY

It's very high quality.

CALENDER

That's English woven, that.

SALLY

What's it's like?

CALLENDER

Your master gave it you. A slave girl.

SALLY

Philadelphia?

CALLENDER

What?

SALLY

Philadelphia City, what's it like?

CALLENDER

Mud mostly. ... Mud.

SALLY

Oh.

CALLENDER

Philadelphia. Richmond. Washington City. Mud.

SALLY

I thought maybe—

CALLENDER

Swamps. Swamps of betrayal. Railroad tracks, telephone poles, moonlight.

SALLY

People happy there?

CALLENDER

Hubcaps. Concrete.

(pause)

SALLY

What about freed blacks?

CALLENDER

What about them?

SALLY

In Philadelphia, do they ... can they—

CALENDER

Your master takes in visitors?

SALLY

He ... yes, plenty of.

CALENDER

Of course. A procession, I'm sure. Gawking and scheming. Dining. Indulging themselves. Anyone of particular importance?

SALLY

Well. Mister, Missus Madison.

CALENDER

The vivacious Mrs. Madison and her runtish husband. There may be something there. No hurry. I'll learn all in due course. So what d'you say? Past midnight bring a bed-warmer to my room? Don't be difficult. If I have to ask Jefferson for you, it becomes rather tawdry and unpleasant. He's a man of sensibilities, he might be offended.

(Callender drinks.)

(Patsy enters.)

PATSY

Sally. ... You well know you're not to gossip with visitors.

CALENDER

Is he here?

PATSY

I'm sorry, Mister Callender. Yes, Father has arrived.

CALENDER

Saints be praised.

(Sally hurries out.)

PATSY

However ... he, he isn't pleased. He's distressed. To find you here.

CALLENDER

Oh?

PATSY

He's expecting a gentleman to follow shortly. A Mr. Williams.

CALLENDER

... Francis Williams?

PATSY

Father, I'm sorry, seems to think that your presence will upset Mr. Williams. ... At a delicate time. My father asks that you. ... Be discreet, and, if possible, invisible during Mr. Williams' stay. I'm terribly, terribly sorry. Father is usually much more. Polite. He—

CALLENDER

Yes.

PATSY

I'm sure tomorrow, he'll. ... Perhaps. ... The, um. We. ...

CALLENDER

Mm.

(pause)

PATSY

I haven't the proper hat for Washington City. ... We'll have to go to the inaugural no matter the winner. Gloves, yes. I'm well supplied with gloves. I grow so nervous around Father's official friends. I've never felt comfortable in society. If I had the proper hat, I might be all right. If I only could ... Do you think? Do you think I'd be all right with the proper hat?

(Callender abruptly slams his pewter mug to the table.)

(to black)

James' interlude

(Isolated light up on James.)

JAMES

Jesse. Lived in my same rooms, three other men. Me and them came back from drinking, somebody'd busted up the place. Jesse's gone. Sure was. I'm the only one not surprised, but I tried to look it. Blood on the floorboards. Little bits of something. Somebody says, "What's that?"

There's ways to stop a man running away. Hobble. There's ways to do that. We'd gone to the tavern, left Jesse too drunk to walk. Left him still free. Twenty dollars.

Everything costs money, Philadelphia. Every single thing. Can't make it much, generally. So, twenty dollars? You bet. Twenty dollars means some. Four dollars a toe, I guess. All I did: get Jesse drunk; skedaddle down the street. Took all the rest of us, they didn't know what's what. That's twenty dollars work and I'm a black, black fool, because it's sure, I know it, I could've gotten twenty-five.

I expect he'll fetch full price, even lame. Don't need fast in a tobacco field.

But when I said yes, I'll get him drunk, yes, that man put twenty dollars in my hand. That was the first time, the first, five years I'd left here, the first I felt *free*. Real and true. Long last, I was *free*. More free than any of you, sitting out there, more free any of you will ever feel. Think about that your ride home.

'Course, Jesse's not free. Not any more. He's gone, most of him. All but a handful. Five free lumps on the floorboards, left like he'd forgot 'em.

(Spot out on James.)

Scene 3

(Parlor. Patsy and James. Patsy busies herself with needlepoint. James stands.)

JAMES

I was here, down the kitchen, made you all kind of things. Blackberry bread, cracklin' bread, molasses cake.

PATSY

Oh my, yes.

JAMES

Made you spoon bread, pumpkin custard, cherry pie, gooseberry fool. ... I was a gooseberry fool, myself.

PATSY

James.

JAMES

I was.

PATSY

We've certainly missed you here.

JAMES

Been away a long time.

PATSY

Quite a lot has changed since you left.

JAMES

House all tore up for one.

PATSY

My, yes. I suppose you saw Robert's left.

JAMES

Hear Thenia got sold off. Walked down see Jupiter. Suckey says he's been dead a year. Says Great George dead two years. I didn't know to miss 'em. Didn't think a big river'd roll through here, wash everything clean away.

(pause)

PATSY

Sally says I'm not to tell Father you're back. ... She said, and I'm sorry hear that, um. ... That you've run into some difficulty up North.

JAMES

What's she mean?

PATSY

You've come back because of money.

JAMES

No.

PATSY

It must be a considerable amount to come—

JAMES

Sally got it messed around.

PATSY

—all the way here.

JAMES

I'm not back for money. I said something about a man's worth five hundred dollars—

PATSY

James! No.

JAMES

No, I —

PATSY

Five hundred dollars!

JAMES

Miss.

PATSY

Well, I understand your reluctance to ask Father for such a sum. After the ... unpleasantness of your departure. Still, I'm certain he'll be delighted to see you. If he's elected, why then he'll need a chef. A very good chef, a presidential— ... Perhaps it would be too much like before. Free, you want to do new things. I imagine. ... I can't think what I would do ...

(pause)

It's admirable.

(pause)

But, yes. So many changes over the years, since you first came to us. Maria married, I married. We have our own families. Mother gone, all these years. Maria hardly remembers her, nearly twenty years now. ... Mother. She doted on you so, James. Your brothers and sisters, too. She loved you very much. Because you were hers, weren't you? You belonged to her father. She thought of you as keepsakes.

JAMES

Mm.

PATSY

Little girls, Mother would bring us bonny-clabber and berries late at night when Father supposed us asleep. Now he may be president, and Mother not here to see it. ...

JAMES

Yes, Miss Patsy.

PATSY

After she died, Father would take me out on horseback, every day. We would ride hours wandering. Every day. He and I, after she died. *(pause)*

JAMES

I remember.

(pause)

PATSY

Perhaps I could help you.

JAMES

Miss Patsy?

PATSY

My husband and I. Perhaps we. Is it really five hundred dollars?

JAMES

Miss Patsy. I didn't come back any money.

PATSY

I know it must be difficult for you up North. I can see it is. It would please us, James. It's true, we have our own troubles. The crops haven't sold and my husband, he gets ... *anxious*.

JAMES

I can't take it, Miss. I don't want it.

PATSY

You're practically family, James. You did so much for so long. Please.

JAMES

Miss Patsy, —

PATSY

We have missed you. Missed the old days.

JAMES

... Well, sure.

PATSY

The time Father and I journeyed to the west. At the ferry, you helped me scale the big rock. Up and up and up. Father wanted to see where the Shenandoah meets the Potomac.

JAMES

We climbed up there.

PATSY

We did. And way off, a glimpse of the western plain. So blue and sad. ...

JAMES

We found that chunk of wood I carved up. Carved a bowl for Sally.

PATSY

Sally.

JAMES

She's still got it.

PATSY

... Silly, talking of long ago. If I'm not careful, I'll weep. I have such a fear of appearing foolish. I'm afraid I did in front of that newspaperman, today. Foraging around, wants something from Father. ... Well. I'm sure he'll soon be gone. ... It's just that newspapermen can print such terrible things. Hurtful things. That's why Mr. Callender unsettles me. He might misunderstand ... He. It could bring ... *Dishonor*.

JAMES

Don't worry, Miss.

PATSY

If only things could be like long ago. When Mother was still. If only we could *undo*— ... If. ... we ...

JAMES

Miss Patsy?

PATSY

... James?

JAMES

What, Miss Patsy?

PATSY

It must be difficult up there in Philadelphia with no one.

JAMES

I guess so.

PATSY

No Peter, John. No Sally, Critta. You know, whenever you wrote, I'd gather them in the kitchen and read your letter. They'd make me read bits and phrases over and again; parts where you mentioned one of them or told of an adventure. Perhaps if you had someone to help you up North, perhaps if you weren't alone. Perhaps you could take someone back with you.

(pause)

JAMES

Miss Patsy, that's a thought.

PATSY

Perhaps.

JAMES

Maybe.

PATSY

You.

JAMES

Yes.

(to black)

Scene 4

(Isolated spot up on Jefferson, writing in his study. He works for some seconds, then a separate spot up on Williams.)

WILLIAMS

(to audience) Gentlemen. We have been offered a rare opportunity. Defeat, nearly certain days ago, has opened her talons, and we might yet escape. President Adams has lost, yes. Lost soundly. But we, *we* may yet win. Happily, our recent Constitution was written by drunkards. The system for electing a president is a farrago. Our opponents forgot this and have mismanaged the election. They failed to make certain that Aaron Burr, their would-be vice-president, receive fewer votes than Jefferson. The results stand: seventy-three electoral votes for Mr. Burr, the New Yorker, and seventy-three for the egregious Mr. Jefferson. A tie. A tie vote for President of the United States, no matter they are of the same party. And thus our opportunity: miraculously, we have the power to save our country from Thomas Jefferson. The House of Representatives now decides, and there we have the votes to block him. So. Yes, Adams has lost. But Aaron Burr, gentlemen, Aaron Burr is an opportunist. He is without principle. He is a New Yorker. He may well make a deal.

(Light grows to include Jefferson. Late afternoon.)

JEFFERSON

I beg your pardon?

WILLIAMS

Felicitations.

JEFFERSON

Yes.

WILLIAMS

Felicitations, Mr. Jefferson—

JEFFERSON

You're quite gracious.

WILLIAMS

—on your party's ...

JEFFERSON

Yes. (*pause*) It's good of you to—

WILLIAMS

Not at all.

JEFFERSON

—come so far.

WILLIAMS

I have come far.

JEFFERSON

Come so far. In cold weather.

WILLIAMS

Come to the home of the man ... who ... Wrote.

JEFFERSON

Come at what, I'm sure, is some inconvenience.

WILLIAMS

It's not convenient.

JEFFERSON

To my humble.

WILLIAMS

As I said.

JEFFERSON

... to ... Talk.

WILLIAMS

Yes.

JEFFERSON

In my view, our disagreements, unpleasant as they've been, have served a purpose.

WILLIAMS

Mm.

JEFFERSON

It's all to the good that our two sides have disagreed.

WILLIAMS

Oh?

JEFFERSON

When we debate, we test, we *temper* an idea to its true strength. Reason, Mr. Williams, *reason* always wins. Disagreements lead to inquiry, and inquiry to truth.

WILLIAMS

You talk as though the election were decided.

(pause)

JEFFERSON

But you *are* here to help dispel this ... imbroglio.

WILLIAMS

Impasse. Embarrassment, really.

JEFFERSON

You have my every assurance that I'll do what I can to help your side out of your predicament.

WILLIAMS

Generous of you.

JEFFERSON

We both have interest in the practical governance of our country and in an election quickly decided.

WILLIAMS

Yes, yes. By all means.

JEFFERSON

We are in accord.

WILLIAMS

It goes, certainly—

JEFFERSON

—without saying.

WILLIAMS

Because of the predicament.

JEFFERSON

Yes.

WILLIAMS

Which is ...?

JEFFERSON

... the ...

WILLIAMS

As you see it. ... The predicament.

JEFFERSON

The stated intent of some of the more hot-headed of your party to stall my election by cynically voting Burr.

WILLIAMS

Oh, heavens yes. The hot-heads.

JEFFERSON

It's unfortunate that some few of these persist, and I understand that your party cannot simply disavow them. Still, decisions can be presented in such a manner as to dissuade them from making mischief.

WILLIAMS

Ah, ah. ... Ah.

JEFFERSON

In these matters I can elicit the general support of my party, if we can be of help.

WILLIAMS

Yes. Hm. I see. As I said, and yes, your generosity ... and, indeed, you Wrote.

JEFFERSON

Yes.

WILLIAMS

... Mr. Jefferson, forgive me if the ardors of my journey make me blunt, but I must disabuse you of the idea, the fantastical idea frankly, that I came two hard days in carriage, sir, two unpleasant and chilly days in carriage, with the purpose of negotiating terms of surrender.

(pause)

JEFFERSON

Yet you lost.

WILLIAMS

So it appears.

JEFFERSON

Your side lost, sir. My side won.

WILLIAMS

Yes?

JEFFERSON

Mr. Burr and I ended in an unfortunate tie, but my side won. Adams is defeated.

WILLIAMS

Yet providence has given my side a deciding hand in the outcome.

JEFFERSON

The voters intended—

WILLIAMS

What the voters intended, sir, is known only to themselves. The decision rests in the House, and you'll certainly agree that each man there must vote as he sees fit.

JEFFERSON

Voting as one sees fit does not give leave to meddle with an election.

WILLIAMS

Voting as one sees *fit* is a matter of *principle*.

JEFFERSON

Mr. Williams—

WILLIAMS

I have but one simple question for you sir. Do you really, I can't, ensconced here atop your hill, do you genuinely wish to be president?

JEFFERSON

Certainly I wish to be presi—

WILLIAMS

You, who have made no secret of your disdain for politics and your love of

solitude.

JEFFERSON

My wish, sir, is to unseat those undemocratical men who have upended the *principles*—

WILLIAMS

General Washington didn't think you'd make a president.

JEFFERSON

I beg your. General—

WILLIAMS

Don't you agree, in times of crisis, it is to his memory we must turn?

JEFFERSON

I was General Washington's most trusted—

WILLIAMS

Nearly. You were nearly his most trusted. Mr. Hamilton was his most trusted. You didn't care for Hamilton, however. So you left.

JEFFERSON

The situation—

WILLIAMS

You left. You quit.

JEFFERSON

Mr. Hamilton is an unscrupulous schemer.

WILLIAMS

As Secretary of State, once you encountered some adversity, you quit. You hadn't the strength to persevere. You hadn't the fortitude. Hardly presidential maple in any forest.

JEFFERSON

I'm pleased you came such a distance to insult me.

WILLIAMS

I simply point out that it is by no means clear that you're the fittest man for the presidency.

JEFFERSON

Mr. Williams, sir. Despite all I've done, written, despite the Declaration, despite

all of it, I believe defeating John Adams to be the single great accomplishment of my life.

WILLIAMS

Still, you worry that the most zealous of my party, the *hot-heads*, will cause a fuss by delaying your election. Sir, the hot-heads are perhaps more determined than you suspect. There are men in my party, men of some principle, men I admire, who believe that they can block your election altogether, forcing a governmental crisis.

JEFFERSON

A crisis.

WILLIAMS

If neither you nor Burr can win a majority in the House, who then is to be president? The Constitution doesn't consider such a case. President Adams would have no choice but to issue an emergency decree.

JEFFERSON

Retaining power for himself?

WILLIAMS

He needn't continue as president himself, no. It would be simple enough to name as interim president some other plausible man in who is safely Federalist.

JEFFERSON

Are you seriously stating that you would overturn the election?

WILLIAMS

I speak of the hot-heads.

JEFFERSON

I find it quite incredible that even my bitterest enemies—

WILLIAMS

These men have no interest in "tempering" or "testing" ideas. They have no interest in "inquiry." They care only about power.

JEFFERSON

This is why I *oppose them*.

WILLIAMS

Mr. Jefferson, I put it to you. Will you listen to *reason*? Reason, sir, shows us the way. You wish to defeat Adams? Fine. Your side won; you have your wish. If,

in spite of this, your congressmen insist on voting your name on ballot after ballot, we have *deadlock*. The hot-heads will force a crisis and will overturn the election. But. There is an alternative, Mr. Jefferson. What if you were to withdraw? What if, Mr. Jefferson, you were to support the election of Aaron Burr?

JEFFERSON

Support Burr?

WILLIAMS

If your side were to vote Burr, your party still prevails. Burr wins unanimously. In a single stroke you secure the presidency for your party and make a grand, conciliatory gesture that unifies the country, sir. *Unifies the country with your party in command.*

JEFFERSON

It's unthinkable.

WILLIAMS

Is it? Why is it that you, Thomas Jefferson, despite the risk to our fragile nation, despite your deficiencies as a leader, despite the dictates of *reason*, why is it that you personally must be president? Are we to hand you the presidency by divine right because you once wrote some few pages?

(Sally enters)

Can it be that you are so much the superior being?

SALLY

Mister Jefferson.

WILLIAMS

Are you such a paragon, such an exemplar of virtue that all these goods must be sacrificed to your vanity?

SALLY

Supper is ready, Mister Jefferson.

WILLIAMS

Are you such a man as that?

(pause)

Well?

(to black)

Scene 5

(Lights up on Jefferson's bedroom, evening. Sally, wearing a simple shift is standing before a basin of water. Patsy has just entered.)

PATSY

Oh. You're still here.

SALLY

Yes.

PATSY

I heard something, I thought perhaps I'd better ... In case, I thought— You must be freezing.

SALLY

I'm all right.

PATSY

I'll get you a spare blanket. It will be cold in your cottage.

SALLY

Thanks, Miss Patsy, but I don't mind.

PATSY

... I spoke with James.

SALLY

Oh?

PATSY

It's vexing. ... Sally? ... I want to help him, but my husband and I, I've realized ... can't. I wondered ... would— *(pause)* In some ways, you know Father's mind better than I do. *(pause)* Would Father...?

(Embarrassed pause.)

Well. No. Perhaps enough help for James already.

SALLY

Yes'm.

PATSY

James can be so impulsive. And Father has this Mr. Williams visiting — to do with the election. It would be extremely unfortunate if there were trouble. Tell him, please, tell James we're so happy he's come back, Father will be, too, yes.

But. Tell him to be careful ... if he would.

SALLY

I'll do my best.

PATSY

His temper.

SALLY

Oh, I know.

PATSY

Because, you see.

SALLY

I've brought in fresh water. There's more in the kitchen.

PATSY

Thank you. ... Sally. The, this man, it's, well, besides James, it's, it's best there not be any ... *misunderstandings*.

SALLY

Oh.

PATSY

Of any kind. (pause) There's a blanket. I'm sure you'll be all right. ... Out there. In your cottage.

SALLY

I'll be all right.

PATSY

Yes. Good night, then.

SALLY

Good night.

(Pause. Sally does not move.)

(Patsy exits)

(Sally dips her hand in the water as before.)

(fade to black)

Jefferson's interlude

(Darkness. Isolated spot comes up on Sally standing at the basin as before. Perhaps she is lit by a candle. Isolated light comes up on Jefferson sitting, facing front. Sally does not acknowledge his presence. Her actions will correspond only vaguely to his words. He does not look at her.)

JEFFERSON

The water is clear. Cold. Clear, cold and black as anthracite. She touches its surface as though soothing a brow. Cold water in a cold room. There is, I think ... music. Yes.

(In fact, the sound of a distant violin has faded subtly in. Sally is enjoying the feel of the cold water against her skin.)

Music, distant and slender. The water against her arms, against her shoulders. The warmth of the wavering candle. The softness of her shift against her. The flame flickers blackly.

In Monticel, nights are still. Hours are slow. Here in Monticel I reach out to ... The water, cold and clear as anthracite. The music. The night. There. You reach out to ...

(Sally in silence, dips her fingers in the basin.)

... as though soothing my brow. The well-water, your hair, your cotton shift, the chill against your flesh. Your shoulders, the wavering candle, the violin, your touch. These are the things I possess. These I own. These are mine.

(to black)

Scene 6

(Night. Parlor. Callender is at Jefferson's table, drinking.)

(James Enters)

(They stare at one another for a moment.)

CALLENDER

Hold it. *(He rummages through his papers.)* Damn. Where's ...? *(He finds the pistol and points it at James.)* Don't, um. ... Don't ... ah!

JAMES

“Don’t come any closer.”

CALLENDER

All right.

JAMES

I’m not.

CALLENDER

Not what?.

JAMES

Not coming any closer.

CALLENDER

Oh. Right. ... See that you don’t.

JAMES

That loaded?

CALLENDER

Possibly. ...

(He looks down the barrel, points gun back at James.)

Who are you?

JAMES

Is it?

CALLENDER

I prefer not to divulge the condition of my firearm. It’s for protection.

JAMES

Sure.

CALLENDER

Against the intruder. The prowling plunderer. The ...

JAMES

—trespassing—

CALLENDER

—rapacious—

—midnight—
JAMES

—cut-throat. That you?
CALLENDER

That'd be a hell of a thing.
JAMES

Well?
CALLENDER

Fire at will.
JAMES

You're a bit of an anti-climax.
CALLENDER

That all for you?
JAMES

CALLENDER
 Why, you want a drink? Of course you do. Any man, top of this hill, buried in porcelain, French pillows, endless discussions. Any sane man'd murder his dad's uncle for a tipple.

(James reaches for the bottle. Callender prevents him from taking it.)

I'm not in the habit of sharing with the help.

JAMES
 I'm not the help.

CALLENDER
 Nobody is much around here. The girl didn't even shine my boots. I'm to confer with his Jeffersonianness in mud-stained boots. Where is she, anyway? It's late.

JAMES
 Sally?

CALLENDER
 That's why you're here. Lurking around the dead of night, panting like a rabbit-hound for some black biscuit.

JAMES
 She's my sister.

CALLENDER

Here in the backwoods, anything goes, I imagine. Still, tonight her *rendez-vous* is *avec moi*. Could you roust her out of her hovel for me? Jefferson won't object. I got him elected, for the love of Christ. He owes me more than that little molasses cake.

JAMES

You got Mister Jefferson elected?

CALLENDER

Me, little, little, me, aye. Exposed their schemes, printed their very words, brought down Hamilton like a grouse. **Yes.** ... **Yes.**

JAMES

What's this?

CALLENDER

It's called journalism.

JAMES

You do it drunk?

CALLENDER

Have to. ... Are you pretending to read?

JAMES

You do this for Mister Jefferson?

CALLENDER

I puncture fat Federalist bottoms with my wee quill pen. A stab and then saw up into the bladder. But is he grateful?

JAMES

For what?

CALLENDER

I went to prison for him. Showed up Adams as a liar, a dupe, a monarchist. They passed a law against pamphlets like mine. Against me, really. Tracked me down and clapped me in shackles.

JAMES

Neck or leg shackles?

CALLENDER

Symbolical shackles, if you must know. Shackles of indignity.

JAMES

Doesn't sound too bad.

CALLENDER

The prison was real enough. Maggoty bread. Drunken guards pissing in my water. And so, yes, I'm owed something. *A job* certainly. Postmaster, say. Postmaster of Virginia. Rattle a few packages, apply the official seal, then a tumbler and a nap. "Those he respects." In the capitol city, his man gave me fifty dollars in a bag. Presidentially generous; fifty dollars, a man caged in prison while his wife dies of gangrenous scurvy. Yes. Fifty dollars drunken rum, then sent to hide in the reaches of this drafty barn. And here you sit in judgment like a big black pudding.

JAMES

Fifty dollars.

CALLENDER

Yes.

JAMES

That's what he gave me, he set me free.

CALLENDER

For the love of god, *can you go out and rummage through the straw for the girl?*

JAMES

You won't get anything.

CALLENDER

I beg your pardon.

JAMES

You won't.

CALLENDER

I'm quite capable.

JAMES

She won't tell anything. She won't give up any gossip.

CALLENDER

... Won't she?

JAMES

You think Mister Jefferson get generous you know some gossip on him. You

figure a house slave like Sally sees folks come, go, knows things. You figure she'll maybe tell you a thing or two. You could really knock him out his stirrups, Sally told some things. ... Yes, you could ... It's no good. She won't do it.

CALLENDER

Who are you?

JAMES

There's things to know, she won't tell you.

CALLENDER

Ah?

JAMES

I'll tell you.

CALLENDER

You.

JAMES

That's right.

CALLENDER

Any particular reason?

JAMES

Maybe I want to shake Mister Jefferson a little, see what that looks like.

CALLENDER

I see.

JAMES

See what he's made of.

CALLENDER

What are we speaking about, exactly?

JAMES

You got to have dreams this life.

CALLENDER

I do have dreams.

JAMES

Ever dream about a river?

CALLENDER

A river?

JAMES

A snowy cold river.

CALLENDER

A cold river.

JAMES

Ever dream something like that? Something like a river?

CALLENDER

... Maybe.

JAMES

Clear night. Ice.

CALLENDER

Yes.

JAMES

Ever dream you step off the bank. Ice breaks. Ever feel the cold water rush in your boots. Ever dream you take a step, take another step, another step, 'til the water turns warm 'gainst your face.

(pause)

How much this Jefferson gossip worth to somebody?

CALLENDER

... Ten, fifteen dollars.

JAMES

Mine's worth more than that.

CALLENDER

I just need the least little story.

JAMES

I don't have the least little story. Story I've got, nothing least about it.

CALLENDER

Good.

JAMES

You pay enough, you'll use it. One hundred dollars.

CALLENDER

I'm sorry?

JAMES

Thomas Jefferson oughta be worth one hundred dollars.

CALLENDER

I'm buying Thomas Jefferson?

JAMES

Cash.

CALLENDER

Say twenty dollars.

JAMES

A hundred.

CALLENDER

Twenty-five.

JAMES

No.

CALLENDER

It's that good? ... I have twenty, thirty, thirty-five, thirty-seven dollars.

JAMES

Not enough.

CALLENDER

It's everything I've got.

JAMES

That's a shame.

CALLENDER

... Tell you what. If what you tell me's any good, I'll get you the rest. You have my solemn word on it.

JAMES

Your word's no good.

CALLENDER

No, but you have it.

(Pause. They shake.)

JAMES

Deal.

JEFFERSON

(offstage) Who's there? Patsy?

CALLENDER

Who's that?

JAMES

Sounds like ol' massa Jefferson's woke up. Dead of night.

CALLENDER

(Hiding the pistol and the liquor.) Christ. Catch me tippling with the field hands.

(Enter Jefferson. James drinks.)

Mr. Jefferson.

JEFFERSON

James.

(to black)

(End Act I)

Act II

Scene 1

*(Morning. The next day. Jefferson's study.
Jefferson and Patsy.)*

JEFFERSON

Possibly four ...

PATSY

It's that—

JEFFERSON

Maybe more. I think could get more.

PATSY

I know, Father, how—

JEFFERSON

Yes.

PATSY

But, Tom, he.

JEFFERSON

He's—

PATSY

Gotten worse. I ...

JEFFERSON

Patsy. They're getting on. Four hundred for the pair. We could get more if we split them.

PATSY

We can't—

JEFFERSON

If we must.

PATSY

It's ... we need five hundred.

JEFFERSON

I'll instruct Gabriel if he can't get four hundred the pair, he shall split them to get it otherwise.

PATSY

Perhaps four-fifty.

JEFFERSON

We'll make every effort not to split them.

PATSY

It would break my heart.

JEFFERSON

When your husband is better, these troubles will be forgotten.

PATSY

... I think it might be best if we don't tell Tom.

JEFFERSON

(pause) Don't tell him?

PATSY

I'm anxious he doesn't see this as charity.

JEFFERSON

There's no question of charity.

PATSY

Already his admiration for you ... it's—

JEFFERSON

Patsy.

PATSY

It's too much for him.

JEFFERSON

There is no mistaking this gesture for charity. We will draw up loan documents proper as we always have.

PATSY

Yes.

JEFFERSON

I'm only sorry I didn't know about this earlier. The urgency is troubling. Tom said nothing about this last I saw him.

PATSY

He's embarrassed. So many ... embarrassments. You've done so much for us. Perhaps he needn't know about this last favor.

JEFFERSON

Patsy, I don't understand you. If you produce, as by magic, four or five hundred dollars, he will certainly guess it's origin.

PATSY

He.

JEFFERSON

There's no reason for embarrassment. He well knows that I myself have difficulties.

PATSY

Let me present the documents to him. ... I know him best. He's suffering from his distractions.

JEFFERSON

He will get better. We'll tell him then. And all will be well. Meantime, this will keep you. Ned will understand, and Abby loves you dearly and would do anything. Rest assured, Gabriel will have them at the auctioneer's block by week's end.

PATSY

It's very good of you, Father.

JEFFERSON

We'll see that they're sold somewhere kind.

PATSY

... and ...

JEFFERSON

What?

PATSY

... the ... remaining amount.

JEFFERSON

Oh. Yes.

PATSY

Perhaps we could borrow against ... I don't know what the ...

JEFFERSON

No.

PATSY

... presidential.

JEFFERSON

Salary.

PATSY

If.

JEFFERSON

That won't, I'm afraid, no. ... We mustn't ... I'll see that Gabriel gets good value for Ned and Abbey.

PATSY

You're very kind to us.

JEFFERSON

My dear daughter. You know that you're as precious to me as my life.

PATSY

Father.

JEFFERSON

I'd do anything you could ever ask of me.

PATSY

Yes. ... Yes. (*pause*) Yes.

(to black)

Scene 2

(James and Sally in the parlor.)

SALLY

[Day's slow's molasses, this mountain. Day doesn't move much at all, so's you'd notice anyway. Day lull you to thinking it's just going to be day all week long. Then you got night, though. Night comes quick top this hill. Dark catch the valley right off. Catch the trees, the cabins. Make everything quiet, first. Then waits. It waits, night, gets ready catch the house. Some little moon keep you lit.]

JAMES

[He says, You little, you think I got time, no good. He says, Sneak my liquor, one more time, he says, you're out this job, worthless black no good.]

SALLY

[Candle-y moon under those clouds. Dark catch your hand right in front, leave you pretty much all alone. All alone on top a black, black world.

Then's I light the lamp, he wants to write. Fetch the reading spectacles. And sit. And watch. Watch Mister Jefferson write.]

JAMES

[“Sneak my liquor.” How else I'm gonna get it? “One more time?” Lots more times. Plenty more times.]

SALLY

[And wait.]

JAMES

[Enough times I can remember some things. The fact of it, you got to drink enough remember things. Drink enough, remember somebody I know ran into real bad luck. Luck can gang up on you, look dead at you, sell you down river.]

SALLY

[That's something the night the quiet. That's something isn't it? The night, the lamp.]

JAMES

[That night, drank enough remember, went home, fell asleep the brick dust. Bad dreams. My life, dreamed my whole life this mountain, getting away this mountain, every minute. Dreamed the part about falling asleep the dust. Dreamed what I did next. Woke up and ... What was it I did next? Tried to remember the ride here. I can almost ... what'd I dream next?]

SALLY

[All alone, watch Mister Jefferson write.]

JAMES

[It, I can ...]

SALLY

[It catches you quick, the quiet. The dark. Sometimes, night comes up quick like that, leaves you a little gift.]

JAMES

[... it was ... I can't just about ...]

SALLY

[Bundled the night. His breathing.]

JAMES

[Maybe it was this:] He found me. Mister Jefferson. Found me drinking with the newspaperman.

SALLY

[James won't understand.]

JAMES

Newspaperman tried to shoot me.

SALLY

[My gift.]

JAMES

Lucky nobody in this house knows to load the pistols. "James," he says to me. "James." Like he'd seen me last Monday noon.

SALLY

Oh?

JAMES

"James," he says to me.

SALLY

Well, that's something. He's seen you now. Don't have to skulk around the place.

JAMES

No more skulking. He's seen me plenty. We had quite a chat.

SALLY

You had a chat?

JAMES

Mm-mm.

SALLY

Mister Jefferson. Middle of the night.

JAMES

Hasn't seen me years. Wants to know what's what Philadelphia.

SALLY

He knows Philadelphia.

JAMES

Wants to know about me. I say things. This, that. I say plenty things. Talk around here and there sorta. [Look at her. I'll tell her something.] And then, well, things gets said.

SALLY

All right. ... What do you mean?

JAMES

Things get said, last night, late.

SALLY

What things?

JAMES

Good things. I didn't jostle him. I'm just saying, I say some things, things about how tough it is, can be, and that. And, then, well I guess, next I know, he says, ... Sally, he says it's ok take you North with me.

(pause)

SALLY

He did.

JAMES

He says he sees I need help up there.

SALLY

Mister Jefferson said that.

JAMES

Says you can come help me. He says you can go free.

SALLY

Free?

JAMES

That's right.

SALLY

Mister Jefferson ...? [Free? Off this mountain, alone and my brother, up North. What'll happen to me there?]

JAMES

[There, it's said.]

SALLY

[What'll happen my gift?] Mister Jefferson wants me go North?

JAMES

Free to go, come up there with me. Live a life up there. North. ... You'll like it, Sally. Walk along, see people, things to buy. Up there, people all bundled up cold. Get you some gloves, coat. It's something chilly up there. We'll get you a job, seamstress likely, or help out here, there, something. We'll—

SALLY

I can't, can I?

JAMES

No. We'll, get you work you'll ... seamstress. Very hard, I know, up there, no friends much, everybody far away. It's a change, sure. All these years, ever since a little girl, steal molasses from the pantry. That's long ago now.

SALLY

I can't go.

JAMES

Sure you can. We'll get you a place to live. Get you a job lady's maid, make some money! Free, Sally-girl. Four, five years, we'll come back down here, we'll start buying folks up! We'll start buying up John, Peter, the whole damn family! We— ... We'll—

(pause)

What is it, Sally-girl? You're free. Free. It's a happy day! ... Come on now. You all right?

SALLY

At last I'll be free of him?

(to black)

Scene 3

(Parlor. Full lights on Williams and Callender, both standing awkwardly.)

CALLENDER

That's me.

WILLIAMS

... The journalist?

CALLENDER

Yes.

WILLIAMS

I thought you were in prison.

CALLENDER

It's a bit awkward —

WILLIAMS

James Callender?

CALLENDER

Standing here. You see, I assumed one of the servants, the pretty black button, or Jefferson's man, or the daughter, would be here —

WILLIAMS

But you're not in prison.

CALLENDER

—to offer me a drink. *Because it's thirsty work staying hidden in the nether reaches of this over-thought, half-built manse.*

WILLIAMS

You're here.

CALLENDER

On the topmost floor, the draftiest in Virginia sure.

WILLIAMS

If I may, what are you doing at Monticello?

CALLENDER

Don't worry yourself. I'm here to help you out. You see, I know where the liquor's kept. I don't think it would look particularly bad if *two* guests ...

WILLIAMS

If two guests what?

CALLENDER

If Jefferson found *one* guest imbibing, it'd look like he'd raided the liquor. But *two* guests ... You see?

WILLIAMS

I don't.

CALLENDER

One guest looks bad.

WILLIAMS

Yes?

CALLENDER

Good. It's agreed. (*He goes to the liquor cabinet for two glasses.*) It's cold hell up there in my little limbo. It makes a man ... ah. Here we are. Since you insist.

WILLIAMS

You're the man who's inflicted such harm on my party?

CALLENDER

Well.

WILLIAMS

Broadside after broadside. Attack after attack.

CALLENDER

Yes.

WILLIAMS

Landed you in jail.

Skoal.
CALLENDER

Hm.
WILLIAMS

And I won.
CALLENDER

Did you?
WILLIAMS

I meet with Jefferson this very afternoon.
CALLENDER

And he'll see that you're ...
WILLIAMS

He will, yes.
CALLENDER

WILLIAMS
You think so? To come so far, no doubt at your own expense, to petition for yourself, only to be stashed away in the corners of this house. It strikes me that you have perhaps deceived yourself.

Deceived myself?
CALLENDER

Look at it.
WILLIAMS

Don't worry. I'm all right.
CALLENDER

WILLIAMS
No, it doesn't look good for you, Callender. Sitting, waiting on top this hill. Engaged in demeaning beggary in chilly corridors.

I said I'm all right.
CALLENDER

Oh?
WILLIAMS

CALLENDER

...

WILLIAMS

You've found something. To use against him.

CALLENDER

Hm. Found something to use against him? ... Have I found something to use against him? ... No. Of course not.

WILLIAMS

You found something, or you hope to find something, or you believe there's something to be found. ... Interesting. ... Interesting.

CALLENDER

Nothing interesting about it.

WILLIAMS

Well. It's all moot. Jefferson won't be in a position to help you. He'll never be president.

CALLENDER

Certainly he will.

WILLIAMS

We can easily delay the election long enough to justify emergency measures by Adams.

CALLENDER

You can what?

WILLIAMS

At that point, we'll simply install one of our own men.

CALLENDER

You'll reverse the election?

WILLIAMS

That's the plan. I don't like it myself. Too dangerous. I prefer a better way. ... It occurs to me that you could be of help.

CALLENDER

Me?

WILLIAMS

... You could quite easily be of help ...

CALLENDER

Really?

WILLIAMS

Yes. ... Oh, yes.

CALLENDER

I sense you're about to lure me to my doom.

WILLIAMS

Perhaps.

CALLENDER

This better way is ...?

WILLIAMS

Jefferson sees reason and supports the election of Aaron Burr.

CALLENDER

Jefferson supports Burr.

WILLIAMS

He's already considering it. I planted the idea, but he's not a man of action, your Jefferson. Deliberate, cautious. But you've found something. You have found something ... scandalous? Oh, I'm certain he wouldn't care a whit, but still just the hint that he risks scandal, whatever it is ... He is a man of propriety. The risk might be enough to push him toward the right decision.

CALLENDER

Why would I do a thing like that?

WILLIAMS

Burr is no fool. He'll see that you receive plentiful thanks. Plentiful, plentiful thanks. Not like the ungrateful Jefferson.

CALLENDER

The idea's ridiculous.

WILLIAMS

Preposterous.

CALLENDER

I'd never.

WILLIAMS

No.

CALLENDER

It would be disloyal.

WILLIAMS

It would.

CALLENDER

A betrayal.

WILLIAMS

You're right.

CALLENDER

(pause) What could I get?

WILLIAMS

Almost no limit. Callender. Think of it! Think of the good you'll do. Jefferson steps aside, and the entire country unites in support of one man. Burr. A man of your party. Divisions between Federalists and democrats are healed in one stroke, unity is reclaimed — the country is much the better. And you are amply rewarded.

CALLENDER

Otherwise Adams puts in one of yours.

WILLIAMS

That's right.

CALLENDER

Just like that.

WILLIAMS

I met with Jefferson yesterday. The meeting led to some emotion, the severity of the situation, the threat of crisis and so forth. He's unsure, vacillating, weakened. A mere breath will scatter him like a dandelion.

CALLENDER

No limit.

WILLIAMS

Callender, this is your chance to help your party, your country and yourself.

CALLENDER

(pause) I'm a drunken idiot.

WILLIAMS

Good. It's agreed.

(Williams drinks.)

(to black)

Scene 4

(Jefferson and James in Jefferson's study. Jefferson is drawing lines with a straight-edge and ticking lengths on a piece of paper.)

JEFFERSON

(Pause while Jefferson draws two lines.) James. *(Counts up something.)* What is it you want to see me about?

(pause)

It's a pleasure to see you again. I'm sorry I haven't had the time to.

(pause)

You were unhappy when you left here, those years ago. Well. Monticello is too small for a man of your abilities, yours is not a subservient nature. So I find it doubly affecting that you should choose to visit us in a time when things are perhaps ... not as you would have them. You recognize that this is a place of refuge. For here is your family and, if I may say, here are your friends.

JAMES

Mister Jefferson.

JEFFERSON

Here is—

JAMES

I.

Yes?
JEFFERSON

I came to get something.
JAMES

Ah.
JEFFERSON

... I ...
JAMES

You ...? *(pause)* James?
JEFFERSON

... Mister Jefferson.
JAMES

There's no need to hesitate.
JEFFERSON

I want my sister.
JAMES
(Pause. Jefferson puts down the quill pen.)
I want to take her up to Philadelphia.

JEFFERSON
(Smiles.) I understand that to bring family North might prove a help to you — ...
But James ... Sally.

Sally.
JAMES

Sally is happy here.
JEFFERSON

I think that maybe ...
JAMES

(pause)

JEFFERSON
(He adjusts the position of the ruler.) She is happy here.

JAMES

I want to take her.

JEFFERSON

I'm afraid I don't understand what you're saying. Sally is perfectly content here. She will never agree to leave Monticello.

JAMES

She agreed already.

(pause)

I told her she's free.

JEFFERSON

You told her she's free?

JAMES

She's getting her clothes and things.

JEFFERSON

(He arranges his quill and ink.) You told her she's free.

JAMES

I guess I did.

JEFFERSON

Why did you tell her this?

JAMES

It just happened.

JEFFERSON

You will have to tell her you made a mistake.

JAMES

I can't.

JEFFERSON

You made a mistake. Sally is content here. She has no desire to leave.

JAMES

She's getting ready.

JEFFERSON

You have deceived her into believing she wants to go. Or she says so out of sisterly devotion, but I can assure you she is happy here. Much happier than she

would be up North.

JAMES

I'm taking her away.

JEFFERSON

... Certainly, free life must be difficult. Perhaps from time to time I could allow one or another of your brothers or sisters to come for a long visit. ... Even some months.

JAMES

No.

JEFFERSON

I'm offering a compromise.

JAMES

I don't care.

JEFFERSON

I beg your pardon?

JAMES

I told Sally she's free. She's getting her things.

JEFFERSON

And you must tell her you were mistaken. You cannot provide for her.

JAMES

We'll do fine.

JEFFERSON

Do you have work?

JAMES

I'll find something.

JEFFERSON

Something.

JAMES

I'll—

JEFFERSON

How have you done, free?

JAMES

I—

JEFFERSON

You were better off here.

(pause)

Much better off. And now you'd add the burden of your sister. Your sister, who lives a thousand times better here than she can with you. How will you manage? How will you survive? Will you attempt to live off her labors? Is that it? Is that the great plan, such as it is? And what form are those labors likely to take?

JAMES

What are they here?

JEFFERSON

Enough.

JAMES

Up North, everybody like me's sick, dirty, hungry. That's where I'm taking little Sal. *And she wants to go.*

JEFFERSON

Please have the courtesy—

JAMES

(shouts) Hear that, Sally? Mister Jefferson wants me have courtesy!

JEFFERSON

Please do not raise your voice in this house.

JAMES

Now I've done it. Raise my voice, oh my goodness, the one great sin. Don't want somebody hear me — *misunderstand?*

JEFFERSON

James, you held a privileged position in this house.

JAMES

Oh, my, yes.

JEFFERSON

I gave you the whole of my trust and confidence.

JAMES

Gave me so much.

JEFFERSON

I educated you, gave you money and freedoms.

JAMES

That's right.

JEFFERSON

But no, you cherished your fantasies of life as a free man.

JAMES

I left 'cause—. I— You— ...

JEFFERSON

And now you come back to take her away. You abandoned *me*. By what right, sir, do you lie to Sally? By what right do you stay to the small hours plotting with Mr. Callender, engaged in who can say what schemes? By what right do you put me in such a position?

JAMES

She is my sister.

JEFFERSON

I'm to meet with Mr. Callender. This discussion is over.

JAMES

Oh, yes. Thank you, massa, your time. I's so grateful.

JEFFERSON

She is your sister, and therefore you can drag her off to poverty.

JAMES

My mistake, Massa Jefferson.

JEFFERSON

She won't go.

JAMES

Oh, yes she will.

JEFFERSON

No.

JAMES

She's—

JEFFERSON

She has a child.

(pause)

A son. Just learning to walk. ... She would never leave him — she calls him her “little gift.” You’re willing to drag Sally to muddy squalor? What about her little boy? You know for certain this is the best and safest place for him. Here he will grow, happy and healthy. Sally won’t go with you. She has a child.

(pause)

(Jefferson returns to drawing lines.)

(to black)

Sally’s Interlude

(Sally alone. She sings.)

SALLY

No more peck o’ corn for me.
No more, no more.
No more peck o’ corn for me,
Many tousand go.

No more pint o’ salt for me.
No more, no more.
No more pint o’ salt for me,
Many tousand go.

No more master’s call for me.
No more, no more.
No more master’s call for me.
(She stops.)

No more.

(fade to black)

Scene 5

(The parlor. James and Patsy. James is on his feet, acting out his story.)

JAMES

—the hunks of pork, they're right off the stove. I cook those up and put 'em out right now. Jesse puts 'em on plates with peas and bread, takes 'em out for serving. So, this day, I put up the pork, steaming, Jesse thinks nobody'll miss one, just *one* from all that. He might just up and take one home. He picks up a hunk of pork. It's *hot*, he's throwing it back and forth, oo-ah-oo! Mister Fulton walks in, check on the kitchen. Jesse's can't get caught, pork in his hand, so he slips it in his pocket. Now he's got a steaming hot hunk of pork in his pants. He starts dancing, dancing around, he's doing the hot-pork high step. Mister Fulton all upset, important people coming. He says, "Make sure this. Make sure that," then he stops, says, "What you doin'?" Jesse stops dancing, then he starts hoppin'. He hops over here, hops over here. Mister Fulton: "What?" Jesse hoppin' around, lookin' at Mister Fulton kinda quizzical. I take a step, say, "It's the voodoo, Mister Fulton. Jesse's struck with the voodoo." Mister Fulton doesn't know what the voodoo is, but it gets him scared. "Stop! You stop now!" Jesse's dancing his little jig. Mister Fulton starts hittin' him, "You stop it! What're you doing?" 'Til finally Jesse grabs a pitcher water. Pours it on his pants. "Thas all I needed, Mister Fulton, sir," he says, "a pocketful water." That's all he needed. Pocketful water.

PATSY

My goodness, that's a story! Whatever became of him?

JAMES

What?

PATSY

Your friend in the kitchen.

JAMES

That's a whole nother story, Miss Patsy, what happened Jesse. Nother story.

PATSY

... So. How did things go?

JAMES

What?

PATSY

With Father. (*pause*) About ... Did, um ...

JAMES

Oh.

PATSY

... You spoke with him ... about ... Sally?

JAMES

Oh, yes. Yes, I did.

PATSY

And it went well.

JAMES

My, things be different here at Monticello, Miss Patsy.

PATSY

I should imagine.

JAMES

You're all grown up with your own slaves now.

PATSY

Sally is leaving, then?

JAMES

Lemme fetch you a col' dantified drink, Missy-Miss.

PATSY

She seems a bit flummoxed. I imagine she's—the rapidity.

JAMES

Be all right.

PATSY

And Father. I can't, he depends so on, what did, Sally, what did he say?

JAMES

(*James sits in Jefferson's chair.*) Why James, he says. He says, James, you've got some things overcome up there in the cold, cold North.

PATSY

Yes.

JAMES

He says, We got to do some things, help you.

PATSY

Oh, Father.

JAMES

We'll throw you and Sally a celebration, James. We'll hire fiddlers, invite the county singers. We'll roast oxen, geese. We'll set bonfires, raise a ruckus like Virginia never knew.

PATSY

We'll dance the quadrille!

JAMES

We'll dance and drink till the moon turns blue. I'll play the violin my very self.

PATSY

Oh, dear.

JAMES

I'm pretty good.

PATSY

So you're fond of telling people.

JAMES

I might even read my writings to the crowd. Read 'em some my scientific writings.

PATSY

Why, Mister Jefferson. How extraordinarily fascinating!

JAMES

Yes, I will. I believe I'll read my translation of the almanac into ancient Greek.

PATSY

I'm on pins and needles.

JAMES

Oh, yes, it'll be quite a time. We'll drink ourselves soggy. A toast! A toast to ol' James Hemings and his adventures. Sally! Fetch me some whiskey and tumblers.

PATSY

...?

JAMES

Will you? Sally. A toast to poor James?

PATSY

Oh! (*as servant*) Yes, Master Jefferson. (*Goes to liquor cabinet.*)

JAMES

That's a smart girl. ... Very good.

PATSY

Thank you.

JAMES

Join us, Sally.

PATSY

I couldn't.

JAMES

Sally, your kind ol' master wants you to drink.

PATSY

It's a little early.

JAMES

To James and his sorry luck? Sally.

PATSY

All right, Master Jefferson.

(They drink.)

JAMES

Now, Sally.

PATSY

Mm?

JAMES

I've been in Washington City, you've kept this place up very nice.

PATSY

Oh? Thank you.

JAMES

Very nice, all right. That chair needs a polish.

PATSY

Yes, sir, Master Jefferson.

JAMES

You've done so well, I think I'll teach you a new northern dance.

PATSY

Oh?

JAMES

Come on.

PATSY

I don't really ...

JAMES

Come on.

PATSY

... dance.

JAMES

For James' celebration.

PATSY

... Of course, Father. Master Jefferson.

(They dance a few steps.)

JAMES

There you go, Sally. Little faster, now.

PATSY

Goodness.

JAMES

That's it. And a spin.

PATSY

Oh!

JAMES

(sings) Hypo-crite and the concu-bine.
Livin' out 'mong the swine—

PATSY

Hypocrite and the concubine.

JAMES

Run to god with de lips and tongue —
Come on, girl.
And leave all the rest behind.
Auntie, did you hear when Jesus rose?
Keep going. Work up a sweat,
Did you hear when Jesus rose?

JAMES & PATSY

Auntie did you hear when Jesus rose?

JAMES

He rose and he ‘scend on high.
Sweat and blood. Dance! Dance, Missy-Miss.

PATSY

My!

JAMES

Aunty did you hear where Jesus rose?
He rose and he ‘scend on—

(The alcohol and dancing catch up to her. She stumbles. James catches her.)

PATSY

Master Jeff— James!

(She kisses him.)

(Silence.)

JAMES

(shaken) Oh. Don’t go getting above yourself.

PATSY

... No. ... Sir.

JAMES

Don’t let’s forget who we are, *Sally*.

PATSY

I’m sorry.

(Sally enters.)

JAMES

(sings sotto voce) Ran to the devil with the lips and tongue —

PATSY

I'm sorry.

JAMES

I'm uh ..., and you. *(Downs his drink.)* No, sir. Let's not forget that.

SALLY

Miss Patsy, James, ... supper is ...

PATSY

What is it, Sally?

SALLY

...

PATSY

Sally. *What is it?*

JAMES

You know what he said meant the most, Miss Patsy? He said, James, I trust Sally to you because you were the best of all of them. Best of all. That's what he said.

PATSY

Sally.

(Pause. Jefferson enters with Williams.)

JEFFERSON

This way, Mr. Williams. Please join my daughter and myself for supper.

WILLIAMS

Thank you. Um. Did you meet with Callender?

PATSY

Father.

JEFFERSON

One strict rule at Monticello, Mr. Williams. We don't mix politics with our meals.

Father. **PATSY**

I simply wonder if he— **WILLIAMS**

I must insist. **JEFFERSON**

Father. **PATSY**

Patsy? **JEFFERSON**

PATSY
One of the house servants has behaved insolently and I would have her punished.

JEFFERSON
I beg your pardon?

PATSY
One of the house servants has been insolent and must be punished.

(pause)

JEFFERSON
There's been some misunderstanding —

PATSY
There is no misunderstanding. Sally has insulted me. You must punish her.

JEFFERSON
Patsy.

PATSY
She stood here and sang — ...

JEFFERSON
She sang.

PATSY
I can hardly. The Hypocrite and the Concubine.

JEFFERSON
I'm sorry?

PATSY

There is such a song. She sang it. You will have her whipped.
(*pause*)

Now.

JEFFERSON

... Sally is a house servant.

PATSY

I know Sally's position.

JEFFERSON

She—

PATSY

She insulted me. Father. She insulted everything I hold most dear. It is dishonorable. I am you daughter. She must be taken and whipped.

JEFFERSON

Patsy.

SALLY

Mister Jefferson ...

JAMES

Mister Jefferson.

JEFFERSON

This is a matter between Patsy and myself.

JAMES

I'll buy her out of here.

JEFFERSON

I beg your pardon?

JAMES

I will.

JEFFERSON

Buy Sally?

JAMES

I'll pay five hundred dollars.

JEFFERSON

Five hundr—?

JAMES

Maybe more. I'll have it soon.

JEFFERSON

There's no question of buying Sally.

JAMES

You won't sell her five, six hundred dollars?

JEFFERSON

No.

JAMES

It's more'n she's worth.

JEFFERSON

You cannot buy her.

JAMES

That so?

PATSY

—Father—

JAMES

Why not?

JEFFERSON

You simply cannot.

JAMES

You want me say why?

JEFFERSON

Excuse me?

JAMES

Well?

JEFFERSON

James.

JAMES

You want me say why out loud?

JEFFERSON

She is not for sale. (*pause*) May I inquire how you plan to come into possession of five hundred dollars?

JAMES

That's what I can ... (*pause*)

JEFFERSON

... I see.

PATSY

Father.

JEFFERSON

I see.

PATSY

Father.

JEFFERSON

No.

PATSY

It's—

JEFFERSON

I see.

PATSY

But, Father.

JEFFERSON

No. I have been ... mistaken. (*pause*) Patsy, tell Gabriel to prepare a post. He's to give Sally five lashes. Gather the field hands—this will be for the edification of everyone. Including you, Mr. Williams. You shall see how I run my household.

PATSY

Yes.

JEFFERSON

Patsy, please. *Go.* (*She does.*) Mr. Williams, I am aware of your intrigues with Callender.

WILLIAMS

Mr. Jefferson—

JEFFERSON

I will not bargain for the presidency as if for a barrel of suet. If my election is not respected, I'm prepared to call upon the state militias to march on Washington. Your cleverness, Williams, will lead to war and American blood. ... So we are betrayed. (*Jefferson exits.*)

(*Williams exits.*)

(*pause*)

JAMES

We.

SALLY

What?

JAMES

We should, we can.

SALLY

What? He's going to—

JAMES

We can run.

SALLY

Run?

JAMES

He'll let us go.

SALLY

We can't run.

JAMES

You think he'll track us with dogs? Not us, he won't.

SALLY

I can't.

JAMES

We'll go up Philadelphia like we said.

SALLY

What about Mister Jefferson?

JAMES

Mister Jefferson. Mister Jefferson. We don't care about him.

SALLY

He needs me here.

JAMES

He doesn't need you.

SALLY

He does. You don't know.

JAMES

He doesn't need you. You run off, he just buys somebody new.

SALLY

No.

JAMES

Think about your little boy. You got to get him free. We'll take him with us. He stays here, his uncles teach him make things. Next thing you know, he's making things Mister Jefferson his whole life. Make things Mister Jefferson's grandchildren.

SALLY

No.

JAMES

Make things Mister Jefferson's great-grandchildren.

SALLY

He won't.

JAMES

Sure he will.

SALLY

Mister Jefferson promised.

JAMES

What Mister Jefferson promised?

SALLY

He'll go free. When he's grown, he'll be free. That's why you've got to be all right up Philadelphia, James. You're all right up there, I'll know it's all right for him he's free. He will be all right, won't he? Free up North? James?

JAMES

Mister Jefferson promises don't mean anything. He can promise all he wants, you can't trust it.

SALLY

Yes, I can.

JAMES

There's no promises. He owns you.

SALLY

I got him promise set you free. He kept that.

(pause)

JAMES

You what?

SALLY

You wanted free. I got him promise. ... How you think this all started Mister Jefferson?

(pause)

JAMES

... Sally ...

(Patsy enters.)

PATSY

Sally, Father wants you there while Gabriel prepares the post and folks gather up.

JAMES

We got to run now.

SALLY

He—

JAMES

We'll be free.

Yes. **SALLY**

... Sally. **PATSY**

... Yes'm. **SALLY**

(Patsy exits.)

(Pause.)

(Sally exits.)

(James sits in Jefferson's chair. Callender enters.)

CALENDER
I understand we're in for some entertainment.
(He goes for liquor.)

Funny really. Five years ago, you gallop away from here. The clapping hooves of Liberty. Crest the Blue Ridge, sweaty with hope. Young, vigorous, brimming, eager. Full of ...

(He holds up bottle.)

Life. The Shenandoah stretched out, damp and verdant like a ready woman. I envy you that morning. At long, long last your life had begun. ... But it all comes back here. Back to this. ... Even tonight, he'll comfort her. Her black flesh against his white sheets. It makes me drool in disgust. Ah, but the promise of that morning. ... High atop the ridge, above the bustle of the interstate and the stench of diesel fumes. So long ago.

(He drinks.)

Now here you are, left to chew the bitter leather of your heart. What are you doing?

(James has found the pistol.)

JAMES
You'll see.

CALENDER
That isn't loaded—
(James has the powder horn.)
Oh.

JAMES

(Pouring powder into the muzzle.) Time Mister Jefferson got to pay.

CALLENDER

I beg your pardon?

JAMES

He'll see just how free I am.

CALLENDER

Mr. Jefferson?

JAMES

That's right.

CALLENDER

Oh. ... Look ... How 'bout a drink?

JAMES

No time for that. *(Wraps musket ball in wadding.)*

CALLENDER

You'll feel better.

JAMES

Can't drink now. Too dangerous. *(James tamps down the shot.)* Misfire sometimes.

CALLENDER

Yes, well.

JAMES

People get hurt.

CALLENDER

... Perhaps I'll be taking my leave.

JAMES

You better stay.

CALLENDER

No, I should, um. Jefferson can have my things sent after—

JAMES

Not going to stay around, watch my sister whipped? Miss her punishment? Miss

Mister Jefferson's punishment? (*Grabs Callender.*) Five lashes ain't so many, Mister Newspaperman. Anybody can take five lashes. The trick is: she can't give up. She cannot give up. She got to be ready, make herself strong. It's the waiting. Seems forever, waiting that first lash. If you get past that one, that first one, maybe be all right. That first one, you wait for it, you wait for it, you feel it coming, you get ready for it, get yourself all — **there it is**. That's one. That brings her up. Almost a relief, it finally hit. Hurt so much she hardly feels it. Cut right in there, skin, muscle. Mister Jefferson feel it, too, watchin'. Mister Jefferson feel it, see the blood. Sweat on his face, too. He's thinking how much it hurt her. He's thinking maybe he made a mistake, maybe five's too many. Slender girl like Sally. She made it through, though. First one done now. And then **there's two**. That one caught her unexpected. That one's sure. Open her eyes, things spin around. Ground, sky. All the folks watching. Spin right by. Family, everybody. Her little boy. All spinning. It's almost pretty. Feel blood trickle down her back like raindrops — **there's three**. No foolin' ourselves now. Her back open all to see. She's cryin', callin' out. Everybody cry, see her. Even Mister Jefferson, maybe. But she can't give up. Got to fight harder. Makes it even better. You can make it, Sal. Couple more is all. Just two more. You going to stick it out sure now. You're going to — **there's four**.

(Callender makes a break for the door. James stops him.)

Oh, no, Mister Newspaperman. (*James threatens him with the pistol.*) One more. What you think now? You think Mister Jefferson got something coming? Do you? Think he does?

CALLENDER

Yes.

JAMES

Last one pays everything. Last one settles accounts good.

CALLENDER

No. Please.

JAMES

Just one more. ... One last ... And then you'll ... (*He lets the pistol drop.*) Maybe last one doesn't land. Maybe Mister Jefferson step in stop it. "That's enough. She can't take anymore." Maybe he ...

(Isolated spot up on Jefferson and Sally. Jefferson is tending to Sally's wounds.)

You got to ... keep ... You got to ...

(James can see them.)

Sally? Hey, Sally! ... Sally? ... Sally. Your little boy, it's no good get free once he's grown. Once you're grown, it's all no good. He's got to go *now*, while it's good. Oh, Sally. Those years ago — little sister, I should've ... I should've ...

(Sally turns to Jefferson. He touches her face.)

Oh, Sally. Maybe you hate him, maybe you love him. But here it is, Sal. *(Puts pistol to his temple.)* You'll never forgive him.

(Jefferson kisses Sally tenderly.)

(Sound of pistol shot on blackout.)

(END OF PLAY)

Don't Be Weary, Traveller

Traditional

Melody 

Don't be wear - y | tra - vel - ler | Come along home to

Mel. 

Je - sus | Don't be wear - y | tra - vel - ler

Mel. 

Come a - long home to | Je - sus. | My head got wet with the

Mel. 

mid - night dew | Come a - long home to | Je - sus.

Many Thousand Go

Traditional

Soprano



His a - rre peck i' corn for a e, His

Alto



a rre, ni a rre; His a rre peck i'

Tenor



corn for a e, Man-y ten - sand ge.

The Hypocrite and the Concubine

Traditional



Hy - po - crite and the con - cu - bine liv - in' a - mong the swine



Ran to God with the lips and tongue and leavethy heart be-



- hind Aunt - y, did you hear when Je - sus rose?



Did you hearwhen Je - sus rose? Aunt - y, did you hearwhen



Jes - us rose? He rose and he 'scend on high.