

PERUSAL SCRIPT

A DAY, A NIGHT & A DAY

a Book of Mormon Drama

by Doug Stewart



Newport, Maine

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A DAY, A NIGHT AND A DAY

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CAST OF CHARACTERS -- 11M 2W 1TG 2B 2G + ensemble

NEPHI -- The Prophet
ESTHER -- his wife
ASHNA -- his daughter (16)
KIB -- his son (9)
SARAH -- his daughter (6)

AMULEK -- Assistant to Nephi
ISABEL -- his wife
DEBORAH -- his daughter (10)
JOSEPH -- his son (8)

LACHONEUS -- a Chief Judge
EMRON -- a Judge
PAANCHI -- a Judge
HELAM -- a Judge
ASHRON -- a Judge
PAHOR -- aide to Lachoneus

JACOB -- friend to Nephi
ZELOM -- nephew to Nephi
JARED -- Captain

OTHER MEN, WOMEN & CHILDREN
SEVERAL GUARDS
FIRST BOY, SECOND BOY, THIRD BOY
FIRST GIRL, SECOND GIRL
YOUNG FATHER, YOUNG MOTHER
LAME WOMAN
ELDERLY MAN
BOY FRIEND, GIRL FRIEND

A Day, a Night and a Day was first produced at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, in October of 1967

AUTHOR BIO

Doug Stewart lives in St. George, Utah. One of the most influential writers in the history of Latter-day drama, Stewart was the playwright and lyricist of the groundbreaking Latter-day Saint-themed musical *Saturday's Warrior* (1974), a project staged by California college students independent of institutional Church sponsorship. He followed this up with a sequel, the musical *Star Child*. "Saturday's Warrior" was adapted to a direct-to-video feature film in 1989 by director Bob Williams and producer David West, and has been widely seen by Church members. A "Star Child" video was released in 1999. Stewart also wrote the screenplay for the major Church-produced film "The Lost Manuscript" (1974), which was directed by Wetzel O. Whitaker. He wrote the screenplay for the independent family film "Where the Red Fern Grows" (1974), produced by Lyman Dayton. Doug brings with him a distinguished career in stage and film. He received his MA degree from BYU in 1968. He went on to become the associate producer of the film, *The Fearmaker*. In 1973 Doug won first place in the Utah Playwriting Contest for his book and lyrics to *Saturday's Warrior*. He also wrote the screenplay for *Where the Red Fern Grows*, which starred James Whitmore and Beverly Garland and won the Blue Ribbon Box Office Award, parent's Magazine Citation, and awards from McCall's and the Motion Picture Association. He also wrote the screenplays *Seven Alone* and *Against a Crooked Sky*, which starred Richard Boone. In 1976, he was commissioned by the LDS Church to write the book and lyrics for the Bicentennial Musical, *Threads of Glory*, part of which was performed at Ronald Reagan's Inauguration in 1981. In 1978 he formed his own production company which toured shows throughout the nation, and continues to license shows world-wide. In 1983 and 84, he co-produced the films *Solo* and *The Red Fury*. Other musicals to his credit include *Latter-Day Ruth*, *Star Child*, *A Day, A Night & A Day*, *Dream Street* and *Almost Perfect*. In 1991 Doug first shared his dream of producing the outdoor musical *UTAH!* The magnificent Tuacahn Amphitheater and Center for the Arts are the result of that dream. Doug and His wife Mary are the parents of eight children, and reside in St. George, Utah.

A DAY, A NIGHT AND A DAY A Book of Mormon Drama by Doug Stewart. 12M 2W 1TG 2B 2G + ensemble. About 2 hours. Several Locations or one Unit Setting. (*Can be produced by Professionals, LDS Church Groups, Community Groups and College/University Groups.*) The Birth of Christ announced in the New World, to the Nephites and Lamanites. In a society where it was not popular, profitable or safe to be a Believer, The Children of Christ await the signs promised by Samuel, The Lamanite. The leaders have waited five long years to execute and rid themselves of the Believers who await the predicted sign surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ, a time when they anticipate "a day, a night and a day" of daylight, with no darkness. Soon, there will be no excuse not to execute the Believers. **ORDER #2058**

DEDICATION

To My Mother

*“And whoso layeth down his life in My cause for My name’s sake, shall find it again, even life eternal.
Therefore, be not afraid of your enemies, for I have decreed in My heart, saith the Lord, that I will prove you in all things, whether you will abide in my covenant, even unto death, that you may be found worthy.
For if ye will not abide in my covenant ye are not worthy me Me.
-- Doctrine and Covenants 98: 13-15*

A DAY, A NIGHT & A DAY
ACT ONE

Scene 1: *JUDGMENT SEAT. EMRON dominates the scene. LACHONEUS sits on his throne, NEPHI & JACOB before him. PAANCHI, ASHRON & HELAM are present.*

NEPHI: That question! Will your lips never tire of it? Days and weeks you have hammered it, and from every witness appearing before this bar, the answer has been the same. And still you would have me repeat it? If I, Nephi, rejoin, will your ears be more receptive?

LACHONEUS: You are not here to interrogate this council! Answer as you are instructed!

EMRON: Answer the Chief Judge! What gives you privilege to defy the law?

NEPHI: It is not law! It is oppression! It is subjugation to the vagary of this Council!

EMRON: You proud, insolent people!

JACOB: Yes, we are a proud people, and also a God-fearing people.

NEPHI: And by His will, we shall remain a free people.

EMRON: Curse you, Nephi!

NEPHI: *(Continuing)* Free from the anathema of that deplorable act you call "The Privacy Law!" It must be removed! Stricken from the Chronicles of this free land! We have a right to speak, a commandment to declare God's word, and we shall continue to warn this nation!

EMRON: *(Furious)* You will obey the law!

NEPHI: Lachoneus, give heed to my words. He comes. The prophecy of Samuel must be fulfilled. Repent of this evil. Look to the coming of Christ, and the great sign...

LACHONEUS: Stop!

NEPHI: Look to the sign!

EMRON: And the preaching never ends!

JACOB: Scoff if you will, Emron! But the Prophecy of Samuel will be fulfilled!

EMRON: The five years are up, Jacob!

ASHRON: So where is this sign?

ALL JUDGES: *(Ad lib)* Yes, where? Where is it? Where? Where is the sign?

LACHONEUS: I see no reason to continue this. Nephi you are free to go.

(NEPHI hesitates.)

EMRON: You heard the Chief Judge, Get out!

(NEPHI has a sharp visual exchange with EMRON, then exits with JACOB.)

EMRON: Insolence!

ASHRON: Day after day, catechized... preached at!

HELAM: Accusing us! With their never ending insults!

EMRON: *(Shouting)* Their heresies!

LACHONEUS: Emron, my nerves, please...

EMRON: You need to be shaken! Startled! Aroused! All of you! Or have you not heard? Because of these fanatics we have become the great jest of Zarahemla!

ASHRON: He's right, your Excellency. There is even talk that...

(Uncomfortable Laugh)

That we're afraid of them.

EMRON: Afraid to enforce the Privacy Law!

HELAM: Afraid of their numbers and their resistance.

EMRON: Afraid to do anything, except hold hearings, and more hearings, and if we hold any more...

(Toward Paanchi)

I fear some of us might be converted.

PAANCHI: Or make bigger fools of ourselves.

(Enter JARED.)

JARED: Father, I must speak with you.

EMRON: Not now, Jared.

JARED: Please, it's important...

PAANCHI: So... this is your son, we've heard so much about..

EMRON: Yes, to whom I've given the special mission to quell the growing hatred among Nimrod's followers.

JARED: But with little success, your excellency. For violence is everywhere. Mobs are roaming the streets. Harming innocent people, believers. And all because of the Privacy law. Please, sir, there must be something you can do...

EMRON: Jared, the Chief Judge is sworn to uphold the law. All the laws, including the Privacy Act.

JARED: But they take it as justification for --

EMRON: *(Leading him out)* We are engaged in pressing matters, son...

JARED: Father, I fear for Ashna.

EMRON: We'll discuss it later.

JARED: Please! I must know that she will be protected.

EMRON: *(Aside, firmly)* All right. You have my word. She will not be harmed. Now leave us.

(JARED leaves.)

EMRON: A fine young man, with a bright future.

PAANCHI: Did he say, Ashna? Nephi's daughter?

EMRON: A youthful indiscretion.

PAANCHI: As once was your allegiance to Nephi, Emron? Before he cast you out of his Church.

EMRON: It was I, who left the Church! Because of his heresy! But unlike you, Paanchi, I still remain in God's favor.

PAANCHI: Some would question that.

LACHONEUS: Will you two ever cease? The foundation of our nation in peril, and you squabble like

two old women.

PAANCHI: I say, repeal the Privacy Law!

EMRON: No! Strict Enforcement!

ASHRON: Aye, Enforcement!

HELAM: Aye!

PAANCHI: There is no justice in it! And these people have done nothing to merit its inequity!

EMRON: Are you blind? They preach from door to door and in the streets. They slander good and virtuous people, calling them liars, sinners, adulterers!

PAANCHI: You exaggerate --

EMRON: (*Overlapping*) You call that nothing?

PAANCHI: That law is a curse to human dignity. It undermines the basic freedoms of this people -- freedom to believe, to speak, and yes, even to preach!

EMRON: What about the sanctity of a man's doorstep, the privacy of his religious convictions? How much premium do you place upon these basic rights? Your Excellency, our citizens must have their privacy.

PAANCHI: Yes, Emron. They must have their privacy. Privacy, yes. But freedom, no!

LACHONEUS: Gentlemen, you begin to weary me.

EMRON: But Lachoneus, there is more. What I am about to tell you... I hoped it might not be true.

(Very theatrical)

But the evidence, the evidence is overpowering! There can be no doubt now. It's tragic dimensions are fixed! In ugly horror it looms above us!

LACHONEUS: What are you talking about?

EMRON: I'm talking about Christ! I'm talking about treason, insurrection, murder!

LACHONEUS: Preposterous!

EMRON: This government is to be overthrown! We are to be slain!

PAANCHI: Nephi's people -- these Christians are not capable of treason!

HELAM: By whose word does this come?

LACHONEUS: Explain yourself, Emron.

EMRON: The evidence is overwhelming!

LACHONEUS: What evidence?

EMRON: A devious plot...

(Pause)

to make Nephi King!

LACHONEUS: King?

PAANCHI: That's absurd!

EMRON: You've heard him expound! He declares that a God will come down from heaven and walk among men. But it does not end there. He speaks of a Kingdom, a Kingdom that will topple all governments!

(Unrolls parchment)

And I quote: "We his people, shall be heirs to that Kingdom!"

PAANCHI: A spiritual kingdom! Surely it can mean nothing more.

EMRON: *(Quoting again)* "And it shall conquer nations, kingdoms, and principalities?"

LACHONEUS: *(Unsure)* One quotation is not sufficient evidence for treason. King?

PAANCHI: Your Excellency, I repeat, these people are incapable of treason.

EMRON: In the name of sound judgment, Paanchi, open your numb ears to the truth!

LACHONEUS: But sedition, Emron?

EMRON: I have witnesses! Let them speak!

*(Suddenly PAHOR enters. The sounds of angry mob can be heard outside, chanting:
"Justice!... We demand justice!" etc.)*

PAHOR: Your Excellency...

LACHONEUS: What is it?

PAHOR: Nimrod, sir...

LACHONEUS: Well?

PAHOR: He demands to be heard at once!

LACHONEUS: Impudence! This is a closed session.

VOICE: *(Off stage)* Is this a land of law, or a wilderness of anarchy?

ANOTHER VOICE: Let Nimrod speak!

(Again, the CROWD begins to chant: "Justice! Justice! We demand Justice!")

EMRON: He wields a great influence...

LACHONEUS: Yes, I hear his wolves howling!

PAHOR: He demands that Nephi and his people be punished.

EMRON: For breaking the law, your Excellency.

PAHOR: The Privacy Law!

LACHONEUS: I will not have Nimrod dictating to me in matters of law!

PAHOR: He threatens to take the matter into his own hands unless...

LACHONEUS: *(Shouting)* I will not see Nimrod now!

PAHOR: *(Bowing out)* Yes, your Excellency.

*(The sounds of CROWD are shut out, as PAHOR exits. LACHONEUS appears somewhat
disturbed. He turns to EMRON.)*

LACHONEUS: You spoke of witnesses.

EMRON: Yes, in the adjoining chamber -- many of them defectors from Nephi's Church. Men who know the Prophet well.

LACHONEUS: And if evidence is sufficient to prove treason?

PAANCHI: Impossible!

EMRON: If evidence is sufficient, there is but one course: The Anti-Christ Ultimatum!

PAANCHI: You're insane! That insufferably grotesque act has been thrown out twice before. It is

beneath our dignity to speak of it, let alone reconsider it!

EMRON: I marvel at your blindness, Paanchi.

ASHRON: I, too, must agree. The severity!

HELAM: And the danger!

LACHONEUS: It is a harsh course.

EMRON: This government is about to be overthrown, and we are about to be murdered! I have absolute proof of it. Let my witnesses speak before you condemn this Ultimatum, "insufferably grotesque!" Let their testimonies ring in your ears before you speak of severity, or danger! Give ear to the stark siren of truth, and in the next hour you will cry out for the Anti- Christ, Ultimatum!

(PAHOR comes rushing in again. The sounds of the CROWD are louder: "Punishment to Believers! The Law must be enforced!" etc.)

PAHOR: Your Excellency, Nimrod...

LACHONEUS: Imbecile! I told you what to tell Nimrod! Now...

VOICE: *(Off stage)* Has Lachoneus lost his power?

ANOTHER VOICE: Where is the voice of judgment?

ANOTHER VOICE: It trembles and quails before the voice of Nephi!

(CROWD laughs and taunts.)

LACHONEUS: Get out!

PAHOR: But...

LACHONEUS: Get out!

(PAHOR exits, shutting out noise of the CROWD. There are several beats of silence. All Judges look toward LACHONEUS.)

LACHONEUS: Bring in the witnesses!

BLACKOUT

Scene 2: *CENTRAL SQUARE. NON-BELIEVERS talk and laugh by a well. ESTHER, ISABEL & ASHNA enter carrying water jugs.*

FIRST GIRL: Hey, it's the sign seekers!

FIRST BOY: Ah ha!

(SECOND BOY rushes in front of ISABEL, cutting her off from the well.)

SECOND BOY: Yes yes yes yes yes yes yes...

SECOND GIRL: *(Touching Ashna's face)* Such pretty people.

(CROWD laughs. ISABEL breaks away from the SECOND BOY and starts for the well.

THIRD BOY lunges in front of her, making face and mocking gestures.)

THIRD BOY: Grrrrrrrr!

(CROWD laughter. ISABEL retreats.)

See her run from the awful demon!

FIRST BOY: *(Going to Esther)* Any visions lately?

THIRD BOY: Angels?

SECOND BOY: Dreams?

(More laughter as several dance around the three women, making rude sounds: "ch ch ch ch ch" etc. ISABEL tenses, ready to strike out.)

ESTHER: Patience, Isabel.

(Enter PAHOR & ZELOM.)

ASHNA: Mother, it's Zelom.

ISABEL: And look who's with him!

PAHOR: Well, we meet again. And look, Zelom, your pretty cousin, Ashna.

(ZELOM would rather avoid the three women.)

PAHOR: Poor girl, she has yet to learn of her father's derangement!

ISABEL: Leave the child alone. Be on your way!

PAHOR: Oh, nurse-maid here. Is this your nurse, Ashna?

ISABEL: Hush your mouth, you vile...

ESTHER: It does no good, Isabel, ignore him.

PAHOR: Well, I see that Isabel has a nurse-maid, too. But then It's only right for the Prophet's wife to give orders. Aren't all the holy people taking orders from the Prophet and his wife? Oh, it's a shame, a real shame people can't think for themselves. Shall I tell you what you are? Sheep! Foolishly following the fancy of a lunatic shepherd! Isn't that right, Zelom?

ZELOM: Yes, a false prophet.

ASHNA: Oh, Zelom.

PAHOR: Ashna, Ashna, did we hurt your feelings? We're so sorry.

(She turns away)

Oh, but surely a believer in Christ would not turn her back on two sinners desperately in need of conversion. Unless you teach us, how will we come to believe? You do want everyone to believe, don't you? In Christ, and the great sign -- the one that's coming any day?

(He forces a kiss on her. ISABEL lunges toward PAHOR.)

ISABEL: I won't stand for this, you serpent!

ESTHER: *(Holding Isabel back)* Repent of your iniquity! She's not one of your strumpets, and I won't let you abuse her like this.

PAHOR: Behold the prophetess in her ire!

ISABEL: And you Zelom, partner to all this! You are worse than Pahor, for he taunts and persecutes his own!

ZELOM: Shut up!

ISABEL: Even Ashna, your own cousin have you turned upon... Your mother and father, brothers and sisters, like a wild animal turning upon its young. You are putty, Zelom. Nothing but putty in the

hands of this heathen!

(ZELOM slaps ISABEL's face.)

ISABEL: You prove my point with the dignity of a swine.

ZELOM: You are the putty, all of you! I'm the only one in the family with courage enough to think for myself... To recognize blind faith for what it is -- a thief! A thief of reason, and logic. you call me putty! Who is being molded, manipulated, blindly led? You say you worship a God in heaven. That's a lie. You worship Samuel and Nephi, them and their fairy tales. They are your gods. I am free, my own keeper, my own god!

ESTHER: *(Quietly, sadly)* Yes, Zelom, you have become your own god.

ASHNA: Zelom, listen to me. It's not too late. You can still come back. You haven't forgotten so quickly? The sign is coming, and Christ...

ZELOM: Don't speak to me of Christ. There is no Christ. Don't fall for those lies preached by your father.

ASHNA: He does not lie!

ISABEL: It's no use, Ashna. he's hardened to the core.

PAHOR: You blind fools! You wait so patiently and religiously for a great supernatural sign to announce the birth of a being that doesn't exist. Well, sit here then, waiting and praying. yes, wait for a hundred years, but never, never will that sign appear. "A day, a night & a day without darkness! Ha!

ASHNA: You laugh now, Pahor, and you scoff at us Zelom. But I know what we believe is true. Father is a Prophet, and so was Samuel, and just as he prophesied, there will be a night, just as bright as this day. And Christ will come. He will!

PAHOR: Ha, foolish girl.

ASHNA: Zelom, you do believe; I know you do. Please come and talk to father.

ZELOM: *(Nervously)* No, no, leave me alone.

ASHNA: Then talk to Jared. He was once your friend.

PAHOR: *(Laughing)* Jared? She says talk to Jared?

ASHNA: He still believes, I know he does.

PAHOR: And that's why he was at Nimrod's rally today?

ASHNA: That's a lie! He would never associate with Nimrod.

PAHOR: *(Into her ear)* Ask him yourself. Here he comes now.

(Enter JARED, seeing ASHNA pull away from PAHOR, repulsed.)

JARED: What's going on?

ASHNA: Oh, Jared.

PAHOR: Come Zelom, before their light blinds our eyes!

ZELOM: Foolish believers. There is no Christ. Christ is a myth!

JARED: Ashna, what happened?

ESTHER: Pahor, forced himself on her.

ISABEL: Monster! Kissing her, right here in the square.

JARED: What? I'll kill... Just let me get my hands on him.

ASHNA: He said you were at Nimrod's rally.

JARED: Nimrod's rally?

ASHNA: Were you?

(All eyes are on him. He leads ASHNA apart from ESTHER & ISABEL, who remain the background, during the following:)

JARED: Ashna... You've got to trust me. It's not what it seems.

ASHNA: Then you were there!

JARED: Yes. But only because...

ASHNA: Associating with Nimrod? The man who seeks to destroy my father!

JARED: Ashna... you've got to believe what I'm doing, is for you!

ASHNA: Just answer me. Do you still believe in Christ?

JARED: *(After pause)* I... I thought I did once... but...

ASHNA: Jared!

JARED: My love for you hasn't changed. Why must everyone take sides? What difference does it make, who's right or wrong! If the sign comes, if there is a Christ, I'll be glad. If he doesn't come, I won't love you any less, Ashna. That's what I really care about, is us.

ASHNA: Father was right. You're not the same person.

JARED: I'm just confused, is that a sin? I hear your father speak with such power, and I admit, I feel something, deeply. But my father's arguments are just as convincing. They both quote the scriptures. They both claim to be servants of God!

ASHNA: But they both can't be right! What are we going to do, Jared?

(JACOB enters, carrying Ultimatum in hand, being pursued by anxious BELIEVERS, and GUARDS. They shout: "What does it say, Jacob?" PAHOR, ZELOM and JARED enter, as does ESTHER, ISABEL & ASHNA, just in time to see JACOB post the Ultimatum.)

PAHOR: The verdict!? What's the verdict?!

BOY FRIEND: *(Having read Ultimatum, yelling)* The law has passed!

ISABEL: Law? What law?

PAHOR: Did you hear that, Zelom? We've won! The Ultimatum has passed!

BELIEVERS: *(Ad lib)* What does it say... Yes, tell us! Are they sending us to prison?

PAHOR: *(Laughing)* Prison?

(To Zelom)

They should be so lucky!

ASHNA: Jared, what does it say?

(ISABEL goes rigid, then slowly back away from the ultimatum.)

ISABEL: *(Quietly)* No. No, it can't be.

ESTHER: Isabel, what is it?

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(She rushes from the Square. JARED turns from reading Ultimatum.)

JARED: It's what my father and I have been fighting...

(Grabbing Pahor, Face to face:)

But how do you talk reason to animals!

(JARED cuffs, then slugs PAHOR, knocking him to the ground.)

PAHOR: *(Getting up)* You're a Christian! I should have guessed it. But not so stupid as to admit it now, huh Jared?

(Cuffing him back)

Knowing what the Ultimatum reads?!

(More cuffing; He moves to Ashna)

How about you, pretty one? Are you so willing to admit your belief in Christ? Knowing that it means death?

(YOUNG MOTHER & YOUNG FATHER, hurry to the posting board to read.)

ESTHER: Death?!

ASHNA: Mother...

YOUNG FATHER: *(At posting board)* It does say death!

YOUNG MOTHER: They can't really mean it.

(The BELIEVERS react with growing hysteria.)

PAHOR: Of course unless the sign comes by tomorrow night! Or unless you have the good sense to deny!

(Jumping to high place, shouting)

At long last the myth of Christ is dead! Death to Believers!

(ZELOM & GUARDS join in the chant: "Death to Believers... Death to Believers!" They exit with their chant. JARED pulls ASHNA off. THE BELIEVERS begin to exit, as does JACOB, trying to avoid ESTHER. She goes after him.)

ESTHER: Jacob!

(He stops. YOUNG MOTHER, FATHER & OTHER BELIEVERS, upon hearing the confrontation, remain to listen:)

What have you done?

(No response; forceful)

Answer me!

JACOB: *(Uneasy)* It's not what we say, Esther... but... how we feel inside... is that not most important?

ESTHER: *(Sudden realization)* You have denied? You have denied God's son?

JACOB: I had to, for the sake of the Church!

ESTHER: *(In anguish, looking up)* Oh God in heaven, even the elect?!

JACOB: I only want to carry on God's work, Esther, believe me...

ESTHER: Don't lie to yourself. You are afraid! Jacob, where is your faith?!

JACOB: It's only words, Esther. Flesh. God knows I still believe.

ESTHER: Only words, flesh?! Oh Jacob! What is life, but flesh? And soul, but words? And every act and breath, but what we are? Every word, the sinew of our souls!

(After a visual exchange. JACOB nervously turns to go.)

Jacob! In all this world is there nothing you stand for? No person... or principle... you would die for?

(With bowed head, he exits. ESTHER & BELIEVERS exit. ASHNA and JARED are left alone.)

JARED: You're not going to die, Ashna. I won't let you.

ASHNA: I could never deny Christ.

JARED: You won't have to. There's another way. Come.

(He leads her off. LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.)

Scene 3: NEPHI'S HOUSE. KIB & SARAH work on a puzzle. SARAH hardly takes a breath, as she rambles on.

SARAH: Kib, that piece doesn't go there.

(giggles)

Look how funny it looks -- a tail growing out of his head. Here, try this one. He sure looks better with an ear. You're not very good with puzzles, are you?

KIB: Who cares about this old puzzle anyway.

SARAH: When is Mother coming home? I'm hungry. Why didn't she let us go with her? We never get to go out any more.

(Gasping)

What if robbers came? Two of them tied up Rebecca and her mother and took all their gold, and Rebecca's mother is a big person. I think we're too little to be left home alone, Kib. Ashna says if we keep the doors locked and shout out with a mean voice, no will harm us. But I think we're too young, Kib. Do you think we're too young?

KIB: I think you talk too much, Sarah.

SARAH: At school, Kelna threw dirt in my hair, and everybody laughed. Did I tell you that? All the unbelievers, always make fun of me, and they say rude things about father. They say, "How's the Prophet?", only they say it meaner. Why do they do that, Kib?

KIB: Because they think he's crazy, just like they think we are?

SARAH: But we're not crazy? Just because we believe in Jesus, and the great sign, and in angels?

(Off stage we hear angry voices: "Deny the sign & live. Deny the sign and live. One more day before it's too late! One more day! etc." A small object of pottery is thrown in, shattering on the floor.)

Oh Kib, I'm scared!

(KIB picks up a small roll of parchment that lies next to the broken pottery. The chanting fades.)

SARAH: What does it say?

KIB: *(Reading)* Would a true prophet... lead thousands to their deaths?... Deny the sign and live...

SARAH: What does that mean, Kib?

KIB: It's just a prank. A mean old prank. SARAH starts to cry.

SARAH: I want mother. When is mother coming home?

KIB: Stop it. I thought you were a big girl.

SARAH: No, I'm not. I'm the littlest one in the family.

(SARAH cries all the more. KIB puts his arm around her, and draws her close.)

KIB: Hush now, it's gonna be all right. There's no need to be frightened, Sarah. Not if we believe in Jesus.

SARAH: Yes, but when is Jesus coming?

KIB: I don't know. But I hope it's soon.

SARAH: If I could see an angel, I wouldn't be afraid. Have you ever seen an angel, Kib?

KIB: Of course not. You have to be a prophet to see one.

SARAH: That's not true. All you have to do is have faith. That's what father told me.

KIB: Well, there has to be an important reason. Angels aren't going to appear to little girls for no reason at all.

(Enter ESTHER & ASHNA. SARAH rushes to her.)

Mother!

SARAH: What's wrong, Sarah?

ESTHER: *(Seeing shattered pottery)* What happened?

KIB: *(Handing her note)* This was thrown in through the window.

SARAH: It says father is going to kill people.

KIB: What does it mean, Mother? Why would they say such terrible things?

(ESTHER hands message to ASHNA.)

ESTHER: Has your father been home?

KIB: No.

ASHNA: I'm sure he's heard by now.

KIB: Heard what?

ESTHER: Kib, I wish I knew how to...

(She stops)

It's your father's place. He'll be here soon.

ASHNA: *(Trying to be cheery)* Well, what's my little sister been doing today?

SARAH: Oh, we've been playing, and guess what? We put half the puzzle together.

KIB: It's something bad, isn't it? I can tell because Ashna's been crying.

ASHNA: It's nothing. Everything's fine.

ESTHER: *(To Ashna)* Come, we better start supper.

(They turn to exit, just as NEPHI enters.)

NEPHI: Esther. Children!

(SARAH & KIB rush to NEPHI.)

SARAH & KIB: Father!

NEPHI: What such a frown on my handsome young man? And tears from my little angel

(To Ashna)

Are you alright, Princess? And my darling Esther. Such a joy to come home to.

(He embraces ESTHER. Enter AMULEK and a very distraught ISABEL, and their children, DEBORAH & JOSEPH. AMULEK holds his family back in the shadows, realizing they are intruding. ESTHER begins to cry.)

NEPHI: You've heard. Do the children know?

(Esther nods)

The children, too?

ESTHER: I just couldn't.

KIB: Father? Mother, said you'd tell us.

(Handing him note)

It has something to do with this, doesn't it?

SARAH: Some mean people threw it in. And they were shouting bad things about you!

ESTHER: It happened while we were out.

NEPHI: *(Reading)* Would a true prophet...

SARAH: You wouldn't kill people, father, would you?

(NEPHI crumples the message. ESTHER walks to him.)

NEPHI: Esther, what are we going to do?

ESTHER: Do we have a choice?

NEPHI: We have our agency.

ESTHER: I chose my course the day I was baptized. I could never deny Christ.

NEPHI: And you, Ashna?

ASHNA: *(With emotion)* I'm you're daughter.

ISABEL: We shouldn't be here, Amulek. It isn't right.

ESTHER: *(Seeing them for first time)* Isabel! Of course you're welcome. This is a time we need each other. Come in.

ISABEL: *(Holding back; to Amulek)* Nothing Nephi says is going to change my mind.

AMULEK: All I ask is that you speak to him. Now you promised, Isabel.

NEPHI: Please, Isabel. Come... sit.

JOSEPH: *(This kid has spunk)* Don't be afraid mother, no matter what's wrong, I'll protect you. Even if I have to fight all the Gadianton Robbers single handed!

DEBORAH: I just want to know what's going on!

NEPHI: You're right, Deborah. You have a right to know. He motions for everyone to gather round.

ISABEL: I can't bear to listen.

NEPHI: Children... Today the Chief Judge of our land signed into law, a terrible decree: That unless God sends the sign by tomorrow night, all those who believe in Jesus... *(Pause)* ...must die.

KIB: What?

JOSEPH: No!

DEBORAH: *(To Amulek)* Would they do that, Father?

AMULEK: Yes, Deborah!

KIB: *(With frustration, to Nephi)* But you promised I'd live to see the sign, don't you remember? On the day Samuel prophesied.

NEPHI: The sign will come only when Christ is born.

KIB: But you promised!

DEBORAH: But maybe the sign will come by then, Kib, and we'll be saved.

NEPHI: That is our hope, Deborah.

SARAH: Will we go to heaven if we die?

JOSEPH: *(Angry)* We should kill them first! That's what Ammon, and Moroni would do! That's what Helaman and his stripling warriors would do!

AMULEK: *(Cutting him off)* Son, the answer is not to take up the sword against our brothers.

JOSEPH: They're not my brothers!

(JOSEPH goes off by himself, overcome with emotion.)

NEPHI: This is the greatest test God has ever given any people... If you choose to live, you must deny Christ. It's a decision you must each make for yourselves... If you love Jesus... enough to die for Him.

(The CHILDREN struggle with this. After a beat, SARAH goes into NEPHI'S arms.)

SARAH: I will die! I will die with you and mother.

(KIB goes to ESTHER.)

KIB: Me, too.

DEBORAH: I could never deny Christ.

(Going into Isabel's arms)

Oh, mother.

(JOSEPH is the last. All eyes are on him.)

JOSEPH: I don't want to die! But if that's what God wants me to do...

(He starts to cry)

I do love Jesus.

(AMULEK is quick to enfold him.)

NEPHI: Oh, God in heaven -- Look down upon these little ones in mercy.

ISABEL: *(Cutting him off)* I can't bear any more of this!

ISABEL: I'm sorry, Amulek, but no one can change my mind. Come, Deborah... Joseph, we're going.

AMULEK: Isabel, no! Nephi...

ESTHER: Please let us help. What is it?

ISABEL: You may have courage, Esther, but I can't let my children die. I would die a thousand deaths, but not Deborah... Not Joseph!

NEPHI: And for their lives you would sign away the Son of Man?

ISABEL: Yes! I'm denying Him! For the children's sake, I'm denying Christ!

ESTHER: Don't say that, Isabel!

ISABEL: They have done nothing worthy of death. And if it means losing my own salvation, it's a price I'm willing to pay!

(To Amulek)

There, I've told them!

ESTHER: Isabel, listen to me. We have friends in Bountiful -- non-believers, but good people. I'm sure, if we ask, they'll hide the children, both yours and ours.

NEPHI: No, Esther.

ESTHER: No?

NEPHI: That's not the course the Lord would have us take. We are to remain calm and firm in our faith.

ESTHER: You're right, Nephi.

(To all)

As never before we must place our complete trust in the Lord.

ISABEL: I can't believe God expects us to make such a sacrifice. God couldn't be so vicious, so cruel!

NEPHI: If there is one truth I know, God is not cruel! And when he parts the veil and looks upon the wickedness of men, to see the horror of their deeds, to see the blood of children spilt, he weeps. Behold your husband, Isabel. Was ever there a kinder, gentler man? Would you call him cruel? And Esther, surely a handmaiden of the Lord. And no father could love his children more than I. Would to God I could avert this calamity that would take their innocent lives! If we are not cruel, what is it then that drives us to do what we must do?

(Softening, looking deeply into her eyes)

It is love. It is the pure love of Christ.

ISABEL: No! No! Don't talk to me that way!

(To Amulek)

I've kept my promise. Come children!

(She grabs CHILDREN and starts to leave. AMULEK tries to stop her.)

AMULEK: No, don't do this!

ISABEL: Let go of me!

DEBORAH: Mother, please...

JOSEPH: Father...

ESTHER: *(With great power and emotion)* Isabel, you don't love your children!

(Isabel stops)

Nor do you love Amulek! What woman would desert the man she loved, allowing him to face death alone? What godly woman would dishonor her children by denying Christ, and the power that would bring them eternal life?

ISABEL: I do love them! Don't you tell me I don't love them!

(ASHNA takes KIB, SARAH & JOSEPH off to the side.)

ESTHER: What virtuous woman would desert friends, family and God, to stand in the camp of the enemy, to be one with the wicked?

ISABEL: Stop! I'm not wicked!

ESTHER: The Isabel I knew loved God more than self, loved her children and husband more than life! You are no longer that Isabel! You an impostor! Get out of this house!

ISABEL: *(Hysterical, moving to Esther)* No! No, Esther, don't say that. I can't be as good as you. But I do love my children. I do! I do!

(ISABEL starts to crumble.)

DEBORAH: Mother!

ISABEL: Don't hate me, Esther! I do love them, I do.

AMULEK: Nephi!

(NEPHI quickly joins AMULEK, and together they carry ISABEL to a bed, upstage. DEBORAH kneels beside her, assisting ESTHER.)

DEBORAH: She's so warm.

AMULEK: This afternoon for the first time, I felt alien to my own wife. Have I lost her, Nephi?

NEPHI: She is a choice woman, Amulek. And your faith shall yet renew her.

AMULEK: That's all I have left. That's all any of us have left, is faith.

(We hear angry voices off stage. Enter GUARD, followed by JACOB, who is pushed into the room by PAHOR.)

NEPHI: Jacob, what is it?

ESTHER: I meant to tell you. In the square today... Jacob, he...

PAHOR: We've come to escort you, Nephi. You're to appear before the Chief Judge at once.

NEPHI: No, not you, Jacob? You of all men could not take Christ so lightly.

JACOB: I didn't want to come. They forced me! Lachoneus...

NEPHI: *(Shouting)* Forced! No one forces Jacob to do anything against his will! Jacob... I must hear from your own lips. Tell me you have not denied Christ.

JACOB: Please, Nephi. Not here.

NEPHI: Answer me, Jacob! Have you denied Christ? Have you?

JACOB: *(Crying out)* Yes!

NEPHI: Oh, God in heaven, even the elect?

JACOB: *(Anguished)* Yes, I have denied. I have denied!

NEPHI: Amulek, I'm going before the Chief Judge. Call the brethren together. Organize yourselves.
Administer comfort and relief to the weak.

AMULEK: I will. Deborah...

DEBORAH: I'll watch over her, father, don't worry.

JOSEPH: *(Protecting her ground)* Anybody comes near her...
(To Pahor, with clenched fists)

Watch out!

(AMULEK hugs DEBORAH & JOSEPH, then leaves.)

NEPHI: And now if you don't mind, a moment alone with my family!

PAHOR: *(After pause)* Make it quick!

(PAHOR, GUARD and JACOB leave. JOSEPH joins DEBORAH at ISABEL's side in background. NEPHI crosses to his family.)

NEPHI: I love you each so very much.

(They all embrace.)

Now we must not fear! We must remain firm of faith, placing our trust in the Lord.

ESTHER: *(Closing her eyes, earnestly quoting)* May the gates of hell be shut continually before me...
(Joined by Nephi)

Because my heart is broken, my spirit, contrite.

(Ashna joins them)

I will not be afraid, for the Lord, Jehovah, is my strength and my song.

NEPHI: Stay inside and be careful.

(To Esther)

Together in Christ?

(They clasp palms, entwining fingers.)

ESTHER: Together in Christ.

(NEPHI exits. ESTHER turns back to her CHILDREN.)

SARAH: Mother, I'm afraid.

KIB: Sarah, you heard father. We must be brave.

SARAH: I can't help it!

ESTHER: Not another word, my children. As long as I'm here, no one will harm you. That's the vow I made when I first held you each in my arms. As long as I have breath, no one would harm you.

(Off stage, we hear hecklers: "Death to believers... death to believers... death to believers." This grows louder and louder. Esther holds her children tightly.)

We should have gone with your father, children. He needs the support of all his people. Come, we must join him.

(They go to exit. LIGHTS FADE.)

Scene 4: JUDGMENT SEAT. *The five JUDGES are in council. PAANCHI waves a handful of papers.*

PAANCHI: Are you blind to what's happening? Look at these reports! In every corner of the city, men, women, and children are preparing to die. I warned you! These believers are earnest! Christ is their God, and they will not deny Him, not even to preserve their lives.

EMRON: Have you forgotten Jacob so quickly?

PAANCHI: Look at these reports!

LACHONEUS: What about these reports, Emron?

EMRON: Surely you can see through them? Our plan guarantees...

LACHONEUS: Your plan insured a minimum loss of life!

EMRON: Consider human nature, your Excellency. This spirit of unity and unflinching devotion is to be expected at first. But mark my word, as time wears on, as the hour of death approaches, this display of dedication will break down. They will come forth by the hundreds, the thousands, to deny their foolish belief. A day hence, and our land will be rid of their devilish plot to control us. Only let us watch closely, lest they fabricate some miracle to maintain their hold over this people.

PAANCHI: He's insane! Recall the ultimatum! Risk a little humiliation. Admit it was a mistake, a test, or even a joke.

EMRON: No! We must remain firm.

ASHRON: These figures are not pleasing.

HELAM: Ah, but note the signs of weakening.

EMRON: Time is on our side, Lanchoneus. By tomorrow night you will have united a divided nation, thrown down treasonistic insurrection, and saved the government!

HELAM: He may be right, your Excellency. And if so...

EMRON: You will be revered as the greatest Chief Judge our land has ever known.

LACHONEUS: *(After thoughtful pause)* For now... We shall continue our course. But! We shall follow the reports closely. Very closely.

(PAHOR enters.)

PAHOR: Your Excellency, Nephi.

LACHONEUS: Show him in. And Pahor, bring Jacob.

(NEPHI & JACOB are shown in.)

Nephi... Because I only desire your best interests, I have called you here...

NEPHI: To view the workings of justice?

LACHONEUS: Believe me, we're not against you, or your followers. But we are against lawlessness and treason.

NEPHI: *(Calmly)* I will not deny Christ.

LACHONEUS: Emron, present him with our proposition.

EMRON: Yes, your Excellency. Nephi, we recognize you as being a wise man and a great leader, and of course, a prophet to many thousands of our citizens. Now, we have no desire to see you or your

followers perish... Not for a Lamanite prophecy. Not for...

NEPHI: Hold your tongue! Your words are brazen with hypocrisy and deceit, let me repeat myself in bolder terms: Nothing on earth or in the bitter grasp of Hell can make me deny Christ, or require of my brethren that they deny Him.

EMRON: You would send men, women and children to their graves for this insane superstition?!

NEPHI: *(Calmly)* I will not deny Christ.

EMRON: *(In flustered rage)* Nor his kingdom? The kingdom that you yourself plan to establish? The kingdom that will topple all governments and nations?

NEPHI: Christ shall establish His kingdom, none other.

LACHONEUS: Nephi, has the love for your people, your wife and your children waxed cold?

NEPHI: My love for them burns bright. It is your voice, Lachoneus, that has proclaimed the order for execution, your pen that wields the power to kill, and finally it will be your hands that bear the blood of my wife and children!

LACHONEUS: But they need not die! I don't want them to die, believe me. Deny Christ, and they shall love. Yea, even deny Christ and His Kingdom, and I shall let all your people live! Accept my mercy. Behold, Jacob, your trusted friend. He understands. Jacob, come here. Speak to Nephi. Convince him. Save your people.

JACOB: They are no longer my people.

(During the following, PAHOR enters and hands report to HELAM.)

LACHONEUS: Make us all one. Convince him that he must deny.

JACOB: I cannot.

LACHONEUS: What do you mean? I command you to speak to him.

EMRON: Will you defy the Chief Judge? Speak!

JACOB: *(Crying out)* I cannot speak it! Not to Nephi!

NEPHI: Jacob, repent of this evil!

JACOB: Had I your strength.

NEPHI: Return to us, Jacob.

JACOB: *(Turning away)* I am despised. Hated!

NEPHI: Jacob...

EMRON: He is as weak as clay.

HELAM: Your Excellency, the reports you've been waiting for! Throughout all of Zarahemla, Believers are beginning to deny! In the northwestern sector over two hundred have denied.

(Emron grabs parchment from him)

In the South, one hundred and fifty-six.

EMRON: *(Ecstatic, as he reads)* Ah, yes! And among them, some of your leaders, Nephi. Kaleb, Jershon, Ammoran...

(NEPHI turns to go.)

LACHONEUS: Where are you going? You have not been dismissed!

NEPHI: Would your Excellency deny me, these few hours with those I love?

LACHONEUS: Go then! But remember, Nephi -- Those who must die tomorrow will know that you could have saved them!

EMRON: Butcher!

NEPHI: *(With great energy)* Hear me! Unless you repent and turn away from this savage course, on the morrow, with the going down of the sun, your body shall lie dead in the streets of Zarahemla!

LACHONEUS: Nephi, I --

EMRON: Ignore his bluster, your excellency. You are in charge here.

(Commotion can be heard off stage. Enter JARED, out of breath.)

JARED: Your Excellency!

LACHONEUS: *(To Nephi)* You dare to threaten me, the chief judge? It is a lie! You hear me, a lie!

JARED: Nephi's followers... On the front steps! They demand an audience.

EMRON: Demand? The Chief Judge will not be dictated to by anyone, especially this criminal or his followers. Pahor, the guards!

(NEPHI exits toward the noise, followed by ASHRON & HELAM. PAHOR rushes off in another direction. PAANCHI approaches a very distraught & dazed LACHONEUS.)

PAANCHI: Lachoneus?

LACHONEUS: *(Very shaken)* I shall lie in the streets. Ha! A false prophet! He proves himself a false prophet!

(PAANCHI leads LACHONEUS out.)

PAANCHI: Come, your Excellency. You need to rest.

(EMRON & JARED are left alone.)

EMRON: Jared, where have you been? And what is the meaning of this foolishness in the square.

JARED: Foolishness?

EMRON: Attacking Pahor! Taking sides with the Believers! What did I tell you about staying neutral, Jared? It is imperative!

JARED: Father, I need your help...

ASHRON & HELAM: *(Off stage, ad lib)* Please, listen to me. Your Chief Judge... only wants what is best...

BELIEVERS: *(Variously respond with)* We want justice! Lachoneus must hear us! The government has been overwhelmed by traitors! Emron is playing you for fools!

EMRON: Right now I have more pressing matters...

JARED: But it's urgent...

EMRON: Not now!

JARED: But I have to get Ashna away from here, to safety...

EMRON: *(Cutting him off)* Ashna?!

JARED: Yes! Father, you promised!

EMRON: All right! But I warn you -- Don't cross me!

(ASHRON & HELAM suddenly re-enter, totally flustered.)

ASHRON: They... won't listen to us.

(The BELIEVERS enter from all sides, pushing their way past the GUARDS & JUDGES.)

BELIEVERS: *(Chanting; ad lib)* We demand justice! Repeal the Ultimatum! Recall Lachoneus!
Where is liberty?

(Enter NEPHI with ESTHER & CHILDREN, moving to front of BELIEVERS.)

NEPHI: Please, my people! My people! Remember who you are!

EMRON: Yes, let there be silence. So "God's Prophet" and his wife, can beg for mercy!

ESTHER: We have not come to beg mercy, Emron...

INTRO UNDERSCORING

...But to lend our voice of support to God's Prophet. And publicly declare our faith in Samuel's prophecy, in the promised sign, and in Christ, our Lord!

(Support is echoed among the BELIEVERS.)

SONG: ANTHEM OF FAITH (SUNG ACAPELLA)

NEPHI:

SING FAITH IN YOUR REDEEMER.

NEPHI & ESTHER:

SING FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

BELIEVERS:

HE IS THE RESURRECTION
HE IS ETERNAL LIFE
ALL WHO BELIEVE IN HIM,
WILL NEVER DIE. ALL WHO BELIEVE,
WILL LIVE FOREVER MORE.

(NEPHI has crossed to JACOB.)

NEPHI: Return to us, Jacob.

JACOB: It's too late.

NEPHI: Do you love Christ?

EMRON: What is this, stop at once!

NEPHI: Do you love Christ?

EMRON: Do you hear? Stop this foolishness!

NEPHI: Jacob?

JACOB: *(With emotion)* Yes, I love Christ.

NEPHI: And you are loved.

EMRON: *(Spoken)* Stop at once!

This is treasonous!

Don't you see what he's doing?

He's leading you astray!

Don't fall for his lies!

Where is the proof?

A Day, a Night and a Day by Doug Stewart

(NEPHI embraces him. Other BELIEVERS warmly welcome JACOB back into the fold.)

EMRON: What is this? We ask you to convert Nephi, and he reconverts you.

JACOB: Yes, out of darkness, into light.

(EMRON mumbles in displeasure, waving his arms in the air. ASHNA reaches out toward JARED.)

ASHNA:

SING FAITH IN YOUR REDEEMER

SING FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

(During above, JARED looks from his Father to ASHNA, struggling with his decision, then makes it, crossing to BELIEVERS with ASHNA, where he is warmly welcomed.)

ASHNA & JARED:

HE IS THE RESURRECTION

HE IS ETERNAL LIFE

ALL WHO BELIEVE IN HIM,
WILL NEVER DIE. ALL WHO
BELIEVE, ALL WHO BELIEVE
ALL WHO BELIEVE
WILL LIVE FOREVER MORE!

(EMRON leaves in rage.)

PAHOR: *(Looking out)* What's this? The sun sets again!? But no cause for worry...

(Directly to Esther, sadistically)

There's still one more day!

(PAHOR laughs as he exits. ZELOM is quick to follow.)

EMRON: *(Spoken)* Jared, What are you doing?

EMRON: *(Spoken)* No! Jared, no!

EMRON: *(Spoken with energy)*
Then sing while you may! For with the
setting of tomorrow's sun, you will all
close your eyes in death, because
of him!

20 additional pages in act two