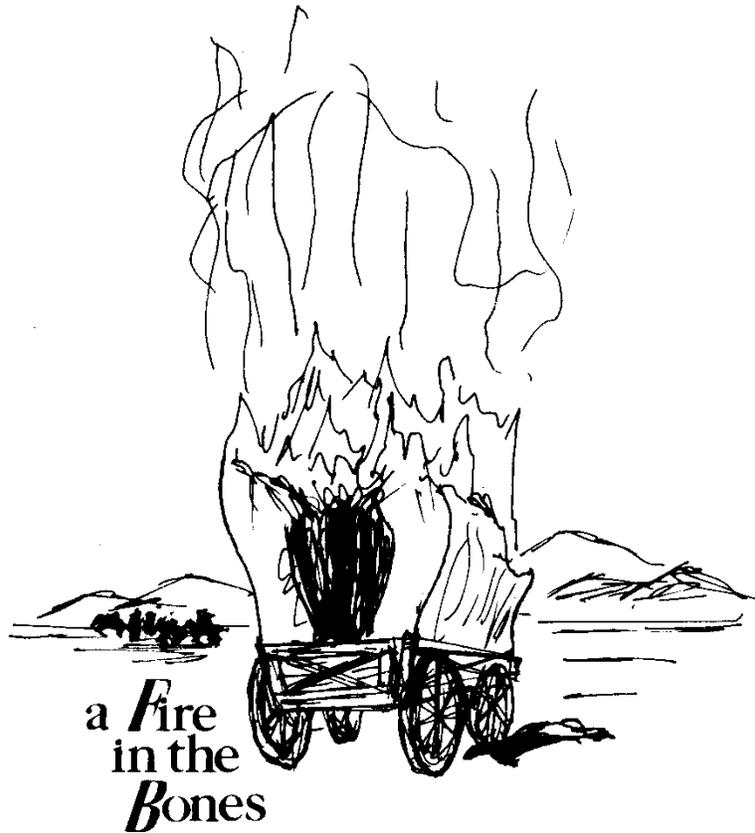


PERUSAL SCRIPT



a modern tragedy
by Thomas F. Rogers



Newport, Maine

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FIRE IN THE BONES

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FIRE IN THE BONES

LIST OF CHARACTERS -- (many can be doubled)

Lieutenant
Five soldiers
Miles Pace
Emma Lee
Rachel Lee
Alma Lee, son
John D. Lee
Secretary
Jacob Hamblin
George Albert Smith, LDS General Authority
Lewis
Haight
Dame
Lott
Morrill
Higbee
Klingensmith
Knight
Aggatha Lee, mother
Mary Ann Lee
Priscilla Hamblin, wife of Jacob
Sammy Lee, son
Sheriff Stokes
Marshall Becker
1st Guard
2nd Guard
Prosecutor
Judge Boreman
Counselor
McMurdy

FIRE IN THE BONES (SYNOPSIS of SCENES)

PROLOGUE--As his wives Emma and Rachel, adopted son Miles Pace and eldest natural son Alma look on, John D. Lee is executed.

I-1--Flashback: Emma Batcheler has just received Brigham Young's approval to become John D. Lee's seventeenth wife. Leaving Young's office, the couple encounter the flirtatious Jacob Hamblin and benevolent apostle George Albert Smith.

I-2--Rachel reminisces on conditions the preceding fall.

I-3--At a High Council meeting in Cedar City, officers of the militia agree to send John D. Lee to contain the Indians. They are generally informed with feelings of vengeance toward those who persecuted them in Missouri and murdered their prophet, Joseph Smith.

I-4--Pressure from the Indians and the cowardice of others in the militia force Lee to assume responsibility for formulating a plan to massacre the Missourians.

I-5--After the massacre, the militia leaders blame each other for what took place. They swear the other white participants to an oath of secrecy.

I-6--Emma visits Lee's home to receive the approval of his other wives. His participation in the massacre is hinted at, and her steadfastness is tested.

I-7--Jacob Hamblin and his new bride Priscilla discover the corpses of the massacred Missourians. She becomes hysterical, and he swears her to secrecy.

II-2--In order to protect his sons, who are threatened by a U.S. Marshall, Lee, who has been in hiding from the law, surrenders.

II-3--In prison Lee is visited by Emma, who is insulted by one of the guards, and by George Albert Smith, who attempts to console him.

II-4--Jacob Hamblin taunts Emma about her husband and attempts to seduce her.

II-5--Following his first trial, which has ended in a hung jury, Lee's friends urge him to leave the country or otherwise better defend his position while out on bail. He refuses.

II-6--During his second trial, other participants in the massacre and also Jacob Hamblin testify against Lee. Lee refuses to defend himself.

EPILOGUE--Just prior to his execution, Lee parts with his loved ones and declares his innocence. The curtain falls just before the moment when he is shot.

FIRE IN THE BONES

LIST OF SCENES with location and characters

- PROLOGUE--March 23, 1877. Mountain Meadows, Utah: Lieutenant, five soldiers, Miles Pace, Emma Lee, Rachel Lee, Alma Lee
- I-1 January, 1858. Salt Lake City. LDS Church offices: John D. Lee, Emma Batcheler (later Lee), Secretary, Jacob Hamblin, George Albert Smith
- I-2--continuation of PROLOGUE: Rachel, Emma
- I-3--September 6, 1857. Cedar City. Meeting of local LDS High Council: Miles, Lewis, Haight, Dame, Lott, Morrill, Fisher
- I-4--September 11, 1857. Mountain Meadows: Johnson, John D., Higbee, Klingensmith, Kanosh, Queetuse, Knight
- I-5--Early the next morning. Mountain Meadows: Dame, Haight, John D., Johnson
- I-6--The next day. Lee's cabin at New Harmony: Miles, Rachel, Mary Ann, Aggatha, John D., Emma, Alma
- I-7--That night. Mountain Meadows: Hamblin, Priscilla Hamblin
- II-1--October, 1870. Skutumpah in the Kaibab Forest. Lee's new residence: Emma, Miles, John D.
- II-2--November 7, 1874. Panguitch, Utah. Home of Rachel Lee: Rachel, Sammy Lee, Mary Ann, Sheriff Stokes, Marshall Becker, Alma, John D.
- II-3--July, 1875. A bench before the guard house, Fort Cameron at Beaver: 1st Guard, Emma, John D., 2nd Guard, George Albert Smith
- II-4--1875. Lee's Ferry at Lonely Dell: Emma, Hamblin
- II-5--May, 1876. Salt Lake City. A cell in the state penitentiary: Lee, Becker
- II-6--September 14, 1876. Courtroom at Beaver, Utah: Prosecutor, Morrill, Judge Boreman, Knight, Counselor, McMurdy, Johnson, Hamblin, John D.
- EPILOGUE--March 23, 1877. Mountain Meadows, Utah (events preceding those of the PROLOGUE) John D., Miles, Rachel, Emma, Alma, Lieutenant, five soldiers

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

The play FIRE IN THE BONES brings to light the complex and tragic circumstances which underlie the catastrophe that in 1857 cast a shadow on the Latter-day Saints. Even today many members fear to know the particulars, while recent detractors, like the author of MASSACRE AT MOUNTAIN MEADOWS: AN AMERICAN LEGEND AND A MONUMENTAL CRIME (T. Y. Crowell, 1976), have only added to the general suspicion.

Faithful to Juanita Brooks' thorough and accurate scholarship, FIRE IN THE BONES completely exonerates Brigham Young as the massacre's instigator, while still suggesting the tragic dilemma into which well-meaning persons, like John D. Lee, are sometimes thrust and the sacrifices that a community, right or wrong, may require of them. FIRE IN THE BONES is a study in tainted conscience and mob psychology, of people's paranoia in the wake of an anticipated extermination (as during the Utah War). In their temperament and their fate, its characters resemble the zealots of every society and every age. Such people--ancient or modern--make tragedy as timely as ever.

For the descendants of John D. Lee, and to the memory of my great grandfather, the founder of Cokeville, Wyoming, who left white society after standing trial in 1878 for the murder of two gentile "emigrants" in October, 1857. With grateful acknowledgement to Juanita Brooks, whose valiant life's work called the subject of John D. Lee to our attention and provided the impeccable research that underlies almost every line of the script. --TFR

Records indicate that John D. Lee had twenty-five living sons and twenty-five living daughters at the time of his death, all of whom married and, except for two, had children of their own.

On April 20, 1961, John D. Lee was re-instated as a member of the LDS Church and his former blessings restored.

"Then I said, I will not make mention
of him, nor speak any more in his name.
But his word was in mine heart as a
burning fire shut up in my bones, and
I was weary with forbearing, and I
could not stay." (JEREMIAH 20:9)

ACT ONE

PROLOGUE

(March 23, 1877. Mountain Meadows, Utah. Just after sunrise. Near a downstage wing two men and two cloaked women stand with backs to the audience, focusing on an object at the rear of the opposite wing. At their feet are blankets, towels, and a basin of water. Upstage center are five armed soldiers and a lieutenant. The soldiers stand in a row. In his hand the lieutenant holds a civilian hat. A coat and muffler are draped over his arm.)

LIEUTENANT: Man your arms!

(The soldiers lower their guns to a firing position, each aimed at the same point of focus offstage. The women and younger man watch unflinchingly.)

LIEUTENANT: Ready! Aim. . .!

DEEP MALE VOICE: *(from offstage in the direction they are aiming)* Aim for my heart, boys!

LIEUTENANT: Fire!

(The soldiers fire. The older male spectator recoils. The guns' report is immediately followed by a muted thud--as of a body dropping into a box. The soldiers slowly lower their arms and resume the position of attention. No one moves.)

LIEUTENANT: At ease!

(He walks offstage in the direction of the target, then returns.)

Dismissed!

(The soldiers move offstage in a direction opposite that of their target. The lieutenant then walks to the four spectators, salutes and addresses the younger of the two men, who is about thirty.)

You may tend to the body.

(Taking the towels and basin, but leaving the blankets, the younger man gestures for the others to stay behind, then goes offstage in the direction they have been facing and in which the soldiers had fired. As they speak, the others turn and face one another.)

MAN: I'll be leaving you now, Rachel. . .Emma. So you can be by your selves.

EMMA: *(in a Cockney accent)* Thank you, Miles.

MILES: 'Taint likely we'll see each other again very soon, I reckon.

EMMA: No, I don't suppose.

MILES: Heard you might be heading south, Emma--into Arizona.

EMMA: That's right.

MILES: How about you, Rachel? Will you stay in Panguitch?

EMMA: Miles, for heaven's sake!

MILES: I'm sorry.

RACHEL: It's all right Emma. Miles means well. He's just trying to distract us, aren't you, Miles?

MILES: No. Not exactly. Forgive me, but before I leave you I need to know. . .did he really kill those two women back then, here in the meadows, like Jacob said he did at the trial? Because if he really did--

EMMA: Then he'd cease to be your idol. . . .

MILES: Rachel, you were with him all those months at the penitentiary. Did he ever tell you he had or hadn't killed those two women.

RACHEL: No.

MILES: No . . . ? And you, Emma--how about you, all the time you and he were there together on the Colorado at Lonely Dell? Did he ever tell you?

EMMA: No.

MILES: No . . . ? But wouldn't he of told you if you'd of asked him?

EMMA: Of course.

MILES: And, knowing that, didn't you feel compelled to ask him? Either of you?

RACHEL: We felt compelled to do just one thing, Miles--to be his wives and, as such, give him the benefit no one else would. Not even you, it seems.

MILES: But didn't Aggatha ever tell you--not even once before she died?

(They do not answer him.)

MILES: *(under his breath)* A damn shame one of you didn't find out!

EMMA: Miles! Just be grateful you were ill the day they called him to the Meadows.

MILES: Doc Fisher--he insisted I stay in bed, or I'd have gone.

EMMA: Be grateful. Or you might have had as much to pay--as much or more-- and not been willing.

MILES: I've thought of that. Today again.

EMMA: I guess you will just have to keep him as your idol and always revere him, Miles--like the rest of us.

MILES: I guess I will

EMMA: We want certainty so badly, don't we, Miles?

(He nods. The young man returns from the wings.)

EMMA: Can we view him, Alma?

ALMA: Not quite. First I need the blankets.

EMMA: *(handing them to him)* Here.

MILES: You're sure I can't help you, Alma?

(Shaking his head, Alma returns to the wings.)

RACHEL: The eldest son has certain privileges. John D. specially re quested that Alma wash and dress him.

MILES: I understand, and I'll leave you now.

RACHEL: Thank you, Miles.

(Miles tips his hat and leaves.)

(embracing Emma)

Emma, Emma, how did it all begin? With those Missouriians, I suppose--those Fanchers.

RACHEL: Things might have been a lot different if Jacob Hamblin had been there to pow-wow with those blood-thirsty Indians. If Jacob hadn't stayed away so long--honeymooning another bride. I've often wondered, Emma, if he didn't just smell trouble and marry her when he did, so they would have to call on someone else to handle those rampaging Lamanites. Handling Lamanites was Jacob's special gift. Maybe because, Lord for give me, he was deep down so very sly.

EMMA: *(as if speaking to someone directly in front of her)* Jacob. . . how you've disappointed some of us. I remember the first time I saw you. You were as winning and handsome as everyone said. But I only had eyes-- then and ever after I'm proud to say--for John D. It was in Salt Lake at the Church offices--the day of our marriage. I'd just met Brother Brigham for the first time. He'd interviewed us and given us his blessing. We were just going out the door, and there you were, waiting your turn. Before we got away I'd also made

the acquaintance of Apostle Smith.

(The lights dim.)

ACT ONE, Scene 1

(January, 1858. Salt Lake City. The lights rise on an office waiting room. A male secretary sits at a desk to one side of an imposing interior door. A wooden bench faces him at the other end of the room. A handsome man still in his thirties, Jacob, sits on the bench, then rises as John D., in his mid-forties, emerges from the inner door, all smiles. Emma removes her bonnet and shawl and, now wearing more youthful apparel, joins John D. at the door as he ends his first speech.)

JOHN D.: Thank you, Brother Brigham. I'll care for her as well as I have all the others.

EMMA: *(chucking John D. on the chin)* And I'll tend him better than the others, Brother Brigham. You'll see.

SECRETARY: You're next, Brother Hamblin.

(Jacob, on the bench, rises and waits for John D. and Emma to pass him.)

JOHN D.: If it isn't the Indian missionary himself.

JACOB: Well, John D. Don't tell me the Lord has blessed you with yet another wife?

JOHN D.: Emma--Jacob Hamblin. Jacob--Emma. She'll be mine after lunch, soon as we're back from the endowment house.

JACOB: They get purtier each time you take one to the altar, John D. But then you have an experienced eye, and young innocents seem fascinated by gray hairs.

EMMA: It depends entirely on who's wearing them, Mr. Hamblin. You'd need to be far grayer than John D., for instance, before you'd ever turn my head.

(They all laugh good naturedly.)

JOHN D.: Left you speechless for once, didn't she, Jacob?

JACOB: *(still eyeing Emma)* They not only get purtier--but more sassy. You'll have to take a switch to this one, John D.

EMMA: He'd better not.

JOHN D.: And I won't.

JACOB: Then you'll spoil her.

JOHN D.: She can't spoil, Jacob. She came here pushing a handcart.

JACOB: That ain't so unusual.

JOHN D.: In the Martin Company . . . and lived to tell about it . . . with all her 'purty' toes intact.

EMMA: John!

JOHN D.: Or so she tells me.

JACOB: I see. But how did you manage? Most of the survivors were crippled by the frostbite.

JOHN D.: She's spunky, Jacob. She took her shoes off every stream she crossed so they wouldn't get wet and freeze her feet. And she saved a young boy by carrying him on her back at every crossing. She also tended the sisters who gave birth. Says it kept her moving about, and she didn't get so cold that way.

EMMA: Or have time to feel sorry for myself.

JACOB: That's mighty impressive, Sister . . .

EMMA: Batchelor. But you can forget that, Brother Hamblin, because the next time you me, it will be Sister

Fire In The Bones by Thomas F. Rogers

John D. Lee.

JACOB: Number seventeen.

EMMA: That's right--and proud of my seventeenth share in all his silver gray hairs. Especially after everything Brother Brigham just told me. Why, did you know, Brother Hamblin, that, if it hadn't been for my future husband, the Nauvoo temple might not have been finished in time for the Saints to take out their endowments? And that he was Brother Brigham's chief provisioner during the entire westward trek?

JACOB: He knows how to buy and sell, John D. does.

EMMA: And raised three thousand bushel of corn the next year at Winter Quarters for all that would follow. Why didn't you tell me any of this before, dear?

JACOB: Oh, he's too modest for that. Ain't you, John D.? If someone like me didn't tell you, you'd probably never find out how he led the cotton expedition to 'Dixie' and explored the Virgin River and the Santa Clara.

EMMA: You did all that, John D.? How wonderful!

(She squeezes his arm.)

JOHN D.: That, of course, was only after I'd diverted the Jordan River into Great Salt Lake. That was with my one hand. And chopped the wagon trail from Echo to Emigration Canyon with the other.

(John D. and Emma giggle.)

JACOB: Now you know why he's such a favorite with Brother Brigham. Always manages to get the credit--not take it, mind you--just get it for whatever happens. . . .

EMMA: *(sharply)* Anything more I should know about John D., Brother Hamblin?

JACOB: Oh, sure. Plenty more. Even some things he'd rather you didn't find out.

EMMA: Why, what do you mean?

JACOB: Oh, I mustn't spoil your wedding.

EMMA: Don't worry, Brother Hamblin. It will take more than your innuendoes to shake my confidence in John D. See, he hasn't even bothered to answer you .

JACOB: That's 'cause he don't know how.

JOHN D.: How's *your* new bride, Jacob?

JACOB: Priscilla's just fine, thank you.

JOHN D.: You took her to the endowment house--when was it: some time in early September?

JACOB: You have a good memory.

JOHN D.: I have reason to. It was a convenient time to be gone, wasn't it? Just after you'd brought our Indian chiefs to Brother Brigham--to fire them up about Johnston's Army?

JACOB: I couldn't have foreseen that.

JOHN D.: I couldn't have either, Jacob. You know that, don't you?

JACOB: I only know what I see, John D.--and sometimes what I hear

SECRETARY: Please, Brother Hamblin. The President is waiting.

JACOB: Excuse me then. And my congratulations.

JOHN D.: Thank you, Jacob.

EMMA: From both of us.

JACOB: *(without smiling)* Of course.

(He opens the upstage door, faces the inner office and smiles broadly.)

At your service, Brother Brigham.

Fire In The Bones by Thomas F. Rogers

(He closes the door behind him. John D. and Emma move away from the secretary and turn, as if into a corridor, then come face to face with a distinguished looking older gentleman.)

GENTLEMAN: Well, if it isn't John D.--and who's this with you?

JOHN D.: My new wife-to-be, Brother Smith. Emma--Apostle George Albert Smith.

SMITH: From the look on Emma's face you must have just received the President's stamp of approval.

JOHN D.: That we did. And he also told Emma she had a great mission to perform. "A very great mission"--those were his words.

SMITH: That's quite remarkable, Emma. The President doesn't make such statements lightly--and rarely to the sisters.

JOHN D.: That's true. He hasn't spoken like that to any of the others.

SMITH: I'm sure you know what kind of a man you're getting in turn.

EMMA: I've had a strong confirmation, Brother Smith.

SMITH: Did he tell you he helped me lead the mission to Iron County? I asked Brother Brigham especially for him. And he's doing a great work right now--teaching the Lamanites how to plant and cultivate, taming them along with their crops.

JOHN D.: Now, George Albert, more praise like that and she might just change her mind about marrying me.

SMITH: Why so?

JOHN D.: She won't believe it.

SMITH: Forgive me, Sister Emma. It's just the preacher in me. Hard to contain.

JOHN D.: Which reminds me, George Albert--are you still riling up the Saints about Johnston's Army?

SMITH: Got to, John D., as long as it's a threat. How, by the way, are the Indians down your way?

JOHN D.: Now that it's colder, they're minding their own business. You can ask Jacob when he comes out. He's in there now with Brother Brigham.

SMITH: You say, it's gone better since September?

JOHN D.: Since it's got colder, I said. That would be, yes, since late September

SMITH: Well, may the Lord's choicest blessings attend you both. I'll be visiting down south again in the spring--before we have to tangle with federal troops.

JOHN D.: Be sure you visit us after you get to Cedar.

SMITH: I will, John. And if later we need extra teams--to evacuate the city

JOHN D.: I'll have them for you, George Albert. As many as you need. I acquired new ones before it got so cold.

SMITH: In September . . . ?

JOHN D.: Yes. . . in September. They're at your and Brother Brigham's disposal.

SMITH: Thank you, John. Good day, Sister Emma. (He tips his hat and leaves.)

EMMA: What's all this talk about last September, John?

JOHN D.: It's nothing, Emma. Just a little trouble the Indians gave some gentiles that were passing through.

EMMA: Oh, yes. I remember now.

JOHN D.: Remember? Remember what . . . ?

EMMA: Oh, nothing.

JOHN D.: You're sure?

EMMA: Quite sure, dear.

JOHN D.: It didn't affect the Saints much, thank heaven. I'll tell you about it sometime. But not right now.
Today's especially set apart for just you and me.

EMMA: *(taking his arm and beaming at him)* The most important day of my life, John D. Lee!

JOHN D.: How young I feel again--young and innocent--with you by my side.

EMMA: How secure and strong I am with your arm around me.

JOHN D.: You're very special, Emma. If you were my only wife, you couldn't be more special.

EMMA: I couldn't imagine ever marrying anyone besides you, John D. That's why I'm willing to share you with the others.

JOHN D.: You're sure of that?

EMMA: Quite sure.

JOHN D.: I still can't understand why the Lord blessed me so--what made a young beauty like you fall in love with an old man like me?

EMMA: I knew it when I first laid eyes on you--that night in Salt Lake, at the meeting. I knew you were the one for me as soon as you started to pray. I wondered how long it would take before you saw me in the audience.

JOHN D.: But you never seemed to look up. I could tell you knew I was smiling at you, but you wouldn't look up. And when it was over, you ran away.

EMMA: I guess I was a little scared. And then I figured that, if you really wanted to, you could find me.

JOHN D.: And I did, Heaven be praised.

(He kisses her.)

How I love you .

EMMA: How I love *you*

JOHN D.: Now let's go tell the Lord and seek his benediction.

EMMA: His eternal benediction, John D.

JOHN D.: That's right, my dear, for now and ever after.

(They go offstage.)

ACT ONE, Scene 2

(The lights dim, then come up on Rachel, as in the Prologue.)

RACHEL: You had no real idea what trouble the Indians had given us, my dear. John wanted to spare you that as long as he could. Just the week before the massacre--on a Sunday evening--they met in Cedar City.

EMMA: *(rejoining her, in the cloak she wore previously, as in the Prologue)* They?

RACHEL: The brethren in the militia.

ACT ONE, Scene 3

(September 6, 1857. Cedar City, Utah. Evening. A candle-lit council room in the Cedar City church house. Several men, including Miles Pace, come into the room, while others have already seated themselves around a large oak table. There are around ten persons in all.)

MILES: Is this a meeting of the high council or the militia?

Fire In The Bones by Thomas F. Rogers

LEWIS: It don't matter. We're the same body. Just change hats and go by a different name.

HAIGHT: (*calling out*) Brethren, please be seated. This, as you know, is an emergency session. We have urgent business.

(*The others take their places.*)

HAIGHT: For all intents and purposes, the entire territory is now under martial law. President Young

DAME: Colonel Haight, this is a military, not a church meeting.

HAIGHT: Yes, of course, Colonel Dame. Governor Young, that is, has advised us that the federal expeditionary forces, numbering some 2,500 troops, are already in Nebraska and at the most another month away. We may be facing a war of extermination. We must make full use of every resource at our command. Our stores of food must be held in reserve for the ordeal ahead. And, above all, the Lamanites must remain our allies. Which leads me to invite Colonel Dame, our first in command, to detail the tense circumstances under which we and they now stand. Colonel Dame.

DAME: You know how these latest emigrants have already roused the Lamanites.

MILES: They're so riled up, they've begun to raid our settlements!

LEWIS: Don't forget, they outnumber us, four to one!

HAIGHT: Colonel Dame has the floor, gentlemen. But allow me to remind him . . . remind you all of the letter Governor Young sent just last month to Jacob Hamblin. Here, I made a copy: "You are hereby appointed to succeed Elder R. C. Allen as President of the Santa Clara Indian Mission. Continue the conciliatory policy towards the Indians which I have ever recommended, and seek by works of righteousness to obtain their love and confidence, for they must learn that they have either got to help us or the United States will kill us both." Then follow more detailed instructions

DAME: The point is that, with these emigres' recent harassment, the Lamanites are sure to retaliate and take it out on us too unless we prove that we're with them.

LOTT: "Emigres," you call them, Colonel. But they're not just ordinary emigres. They call themselves "Missouri Wildcats."

DAME: Some of their younger men, anyway.

MILES: That's right. Some claim they were in the mob that killed the Prophet Joseph and his brother, Hyrum. Others have threatened to come back and get Brother Brigham.

LOTT: (*standing*) I lived with the Prophet in Missouri. I witnessed his suffering, the tarring and feathering, and other persecutions. There we endured--not for a good name among men, but because it was required of us by the good Father in Heaven. There we were driven, robbed, and murdered. But now they're on our territory, and I hope before I die to see these damnable rebels make restitution, to see their children suffer for the wickedness of their fathers so that the blood of martyrs will be avenged.

MILES: Let's not forget the Haun's Mill massacre. That was in Missouri too.

DAME: Half the party are from Arkansas.

LEWIS: They're no better than Missourians. Wasn't Apostle Pratt stabbed to death there earlier this year--in Arkansas?

LOTT: That's right.

MILES: I'm with Brother Lott. I don't remember who of you was there that day, in Nauvoo. But when they brought back their dead bodies, Joseph's and Hyrum's, when I saw their beloved forms reposing in the arms of death, I was overcome with feelings so powerful I can't even begin to describe them. I then and there

resolved I would never let an opportunity pass to avenge their blood upon the heads of the Church's enemies.

DAME: Be seated. All of you! If this were a priesthood meeting, Brother Pace, that kind of talk would hardly be in order.

HAIGHT: Just so we don't minimize that danger, Colonel Dame. The Wild cats have sworn that when Johnston's Army descends on us from the East, they'll return from California and kill every Mormon in Utah.

(The others audibly gasp.)

I move the following resolution: That where the Indians are concerned, and these Missouri mobocrats--I think they also call themselves the Fancher wagon train--we deal with the situation now, so that our hands will be free to meet the Army when it comes Do I hear any objections?

MORRILL: Brother Haight . . .

HAIGHT: Colonel Haight!

MORRILL: Before I can support your resolution, I must know exactly what you mean by "dealing with the situation."

HAIGHT: Why, at least to arrest and punish the offenders--and let the Indians know whose side we're on.

MILES: That way we'll only end up sacrificing men to guard them and food to keep them alive, and be none the better off. Do away with them, I say.

LOTT: I'm for that.

LEWIS: I'm with you, Brother Pace.

HAIGHT: *(turning to Dame)* Now you see how it lies, don't you, Colonel?

DAME: I see how impulsive you all are. But since I'm first in command-- the one who will be responsible if anything goes wrong--I am going to recommend that, before we do anything more, we dispatch an express messenger to Brigham Young and ask for further instructions.

HAIGHT: I have just this much more to say: When the Missourians drove us out, Haun's Mill was our answer, and when we asked for bread they gave us a stone. We left the confines of civilization and came far into the wilderness where we could worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience and without annoyance to our neighbors. We resolved that if they would leave us alone we would never trouble them. But the Gentiles will not leave us alone. They still abuse us, and at this very moment their army is advancing toward our valleys, bent on our extermination. So far as I am concerned, I have been driven from my home for the last time, and I am prepared to feed the Gentiles the same bread they fed us. God being my helper, I will give my last ounce of strength and, if need be, my last drop of blood in defense of Zion.

LOTT: Hear! Hear!

MILES: Amen!

ACT ONE, Scene 4

(September 11, 1857. Mountain Meadows. Throughout the scene is heard the steady beat of a tom-tom, occasionally punctuated by a rifle shot, a war whoop, or a distant scream. Lee crouches on the ground, conferring with three others--Higbee, Klingensmith, and Johnson.)

JOHNSON: That was mighty chicken of you, John D. --getting us to come here by pretending they was

already massacred, an' you needed men to dig a common grave.

JOHN D.: Is that how they put it to you, Nephi?

JOHNSON: That's how they put it.

JOHN D.: Well, if that's what it took to get you here, I can't say I'm sorry.

HIGBEE: We need to see eye to eye about handling all those braves out there--how many hundred are there, John D.?

JOHN D.: Four, maybe six.

HIGBEE: --and then act on what we decide.

KLINGENSMITH: And act fast. They won't hold back much longer. How many'd you say they've already killed?

JOHN D.: At least seven. And the Missourians have killed as many of *them*. That's why they're so whoopin' mad. Chief Kanosh says they were promised that if they fought for the Mormons, the Mormon God would protect them from the emigrants' bullets. Now he says we must either help avenge their casualties or pay for their losses with our own men.

KLINGENSMITH: But the Indians aren't fighting for us. We didn't ask them to start this one.

JOHN D.: I know. I've told them that. I've plead with them so that now they call me "Yawgetts."

HIGBEE: "Yawgetts?"

JOHN D.: "Cry Baby" So what are we going to do? Major Higbee? You're closer to Colonel Haight than I am. You're his son-in-law and his First Counselor. You've seen him more recently. Since your arrival you're as much in charge here as I am.

HIGBEE: What did Colonel Dame say in the message he sent you?

JOHN D.: He sent it to Colonel Haight, and Haight forwarded it to me through you. Didn't you discuss it with him . . . ?

HIGBEE: No. . . What does it say?

JOHN D.: (*handing Higbee a piece of paper*) Here. Read it for yourself.

HIGBEE: (*reading aloud*) "Compromise with Indians if possible by letting them take all the stock and go to their homes and let the company alone, but on no condition are you to precipitate a war with them while there is an army marching against our people. As Indian Farmer and Major in the Legion, I trust you will have influence enough to restrain them and save the company. If that is impossible, save the women and children at all hazards. Signed--William H. Dame, Colonel and Commander, Iron Military District."

(*A shot is heard, followed by a man's piercing scream.*)

HIGBEE: What was that?

(*Another member of the militia rushes in.*)

HIGBEE: What is it, Brother Knight?

KNIGHT: The man who just screamed--he was a Missourian. He and two others all of a sudden left their wagons, leaped on their horses and headed toward us. One of our men gunned him down and then several braves came forward and finished him off.

HIGBEE: One of ours gunned him down, you say?

KNIGHT: He thought they figured we were Indians and were about to attack us.

HIGBEE: Three lone men . . . ? And the other two?

KNIGHT: They got away. Headed west.

KLINGENSMITH: Do you think they saw who it was shot their man down, Sam? Could they tell it were no Indian?

KNIGHT: About that--I couldn't say. They was going so fast and, from where they came, we was in the shadows.

KLINGENSMITH: We've got to do something.

JOHNSON: You got us into this mess, Major Lee. Now why don't you suggest what we ought to do?

JOHN D.: Have you any orders, Major Higbee?

HIGBEE: So you want me to speak first, do you?

JOHN D.: It's your privilege, Major.

HIGBEE: All right. Then my orders to you are that the Missouriians should at least be decoyed out and disarmed in some manner, the best way you can.

JOHN D.: Decoyed? The best way I can?

HIGBEE: You and those you ask to help you. If you want orders--then my orders, Major, are to use your own initiative.

JOHN D.: I see.

(He looks at the others, each in turn. When he begins to speak, he does so with almost mechanical deliberation.)

All right. I'll talk to them. I'll tell them we can only guarantee them safe passage if they agree to surrender and let us escort them. I'll tell them to put their weapons and the young children--those under ten--in one of the wagons. Have one of our men be their driver--say, Sam McMurdy.

(to Knight)

And you, Sam, drive another wagon right behind that one with their wounded. Have the women and older children follow the wagons. Leave a space. And have their men come behind in single file. There are enough of us to accompany each man, one on one. That, we'll tell them, is to reassure the Indians that the Gentiles won't put up any more fight and also be a sign to the Indians that we aim to protect them. We'll head through the meadow north toward Cedar, in the direction of Hamblin's ranch. I'll lead out--with a white flag. Then I'll signal with these words: "Halt! Do your duty . . . !" And each one of our men--you'll so inform them, Major . . . ?'

(Higbee nods.)

--each one of our men will fire his piece at the man next to him. If anyone is too faint-hearted, he can duck down and shoot into the air instead We won't touch the women and children, you understand.

HIGBEE: That's right. But they'll still be there across from the Indians where the canyon narrows.

JOHN D.: *(eyeing Higbee)* I guess they will Well, Major, is that a proper decoy?

HIGBEE: I . . . have no objections.

JOHN D.: Does anyone else have an objection. . . ? Then we all see this, I take it, as our needful duty

You're all with me then . . . ? You don't say, "Yes." You don't say, "No" I'll go talk to the emigres.

(He leaves.)

ACT ONE, Scene 5

(Mountain Meadows. Early the next morning. Haight and Dame appear, dressed in military uniform. They

move to stage center, then stare glumly about them. They look weary and depressed.)

DAME: Horrible! Horrible!

HAIGHT: Horrible enough, but you should have thought of that before you issued the orders.

DAME: I didn't think there were so many of them. And not just the men. But all those women and children too.

HAIGHT: It's a little late to express your regrets now. The fact is, it's done. And by your orders. Now what do we do next?

DAME: We must report this matter to the authorities.

HAIGHT: How will you report it?

DAME: I will report it just as it is.

HAIGHT: And implicate yourself with the rest?

DAME: No. I will not implicate myself, for I had nothing to do with it.

HAIGHT: *(suddenly furious)* That will not do, Colonel Dame. You know that you issued the orders to wipe out these people, and you cannot deny it! Nothing has been done except by your orders, and it is too late in the day for you to go back on the men who carried them out. If you think you can shift the blame for this onto me, you're wrong. I did nothing except what you ordered done. And I, for one, will not be lied on. You'll stand up to your orders like a man, or I'll send you to Hell cross lots! You cannot sow pig on me!!

(John D. and Johnson have meanwhile appeared and approached the other two.)

JOHN D.: Brethren, what's the trouble here?

HAIGHT: The trouble is this, Major Lee: Colonel Dame ordered me to do this thing, and now he wants to back out and lay it all on me. He cannot do it! He shall not do it! I shall blow him to Hell before he shall lay it all on me . . . ! He has got to stand up to what he did like a man. He knows he ordered it done, and I dare him to deny it.

DAME: Isaac, I did not know there were so many of them.

HAIGHT: That makes no difference. You ordered me to do it, and you have got to stand up for your orders.

JOHN D.: Come, brethren, this will get us nowhere. The deed is done. Now how do we proceed . . . ? We will need to round up the men and prepare a mass grave. That will take a couple of days. Meanwhile, I suggest you assign two men to each wagon, catch a team and hitch it up and drive the wagons in a train back to Cedar, as we talked of earlier. See, the sun is up. It's getting late and time for action, not contention. We can hold another council later to decide upon a report.

(Higbee runs in with a letter, which he quickly hands to Dame.)

HIGBEE: One of my men just intercepted a courier with this letter. It's for you--from Governor Young.

DAME: *(quickly opening the letter, then reading it aloud)* "Elder William Dame: Dear Brother--In regard to the emigration trains passing through our settlements, we must not interfere with them. The Indians we expect will do as they please, but you should try and preserve good feelings with them. The emigrants must be protected if it takes all the men in southern Utah. May the Lord bless you and all the Saints forever. Your brother in the gospel of Christ. Brigham Young."

(The men stare at one another. Dame moves aside with Haight. They briefly whisper together, then return to the others.)

DAME: At my request, men, I would like you to listen to Colonel Haight. Colonel.

HAIGHT: Men. Those of us who now stand here, and others with us, have been privileged to assist in

avenging the blood of the prophets, but not perhaps for the last time. When Johnston's Army marches upon us, we will likely be called upon to fight again, though under somewhat different circumstances. Now the most important thing is that we should not talk of what happened here yesterday, not to anyone, not even to our wives. Nor should we discuss it among ourselves. We should blot it from our memories and leave God to accept of our actions in light of our loyalty to His cause and the establishment of His kingdom upon the earth. . . . And now, Colonel Dame and I feel to suggest that, in order for this resolve to impress itself the more fully on our minds, we here should face one another and make an oath to that effect. So come forward now and face the two of us.

(The others do so.)

Now raise your arms.

(The others raise their arms as the lights fade.)

ACT ONE, Scene 6

(The next day. Lee's cabin at New Harmony, as in ACT ONE, Scene 4. Aggatha, Rachel and Mary Ann are setting a table. A knock on the outer door. Rachel answers it, admitting Miles Pace.)

MILES: They're on their way, Rachel. Left Cedar an hour ago.

RACHEL: She gave us no warning whatever. We had to send for John D. in the middle of the night, still down south with President Haight and Brother Dame. And now I'm expected to serve them a grandiose meal with just a half day's notice.

MARY ANN: Aunt Aggatha. Don't you think he was expecting her all along?

AGGATHA: I'm certain he'd already issued her a general invitation. It's just like him to keep it to himself and not tell us till the last minute.

RACHEL: If he arranged this visit, then they're sure to get married. So look alive, Mary Ann. Cleave to him while you still have the chance and he the inclination. She may lure him away forever with her Cockney accent.

MARY ANN: No. . . No. I'm still not ready. Excuse me.

(She exits to an inner room.)

MILES: Think he'll tell her?

AGGATHA: Tell who?

MILES: The English girl. About what them Indians done at the meadows?

AGGATHA: Why should he?

MILES: He were there, weren't he?

AGGATHA: He was sent there and had to witness the massacre. That's all. He arrived too late or else the Indians weren't in a frame of mind to let him intervene. Whichever way, it comes to the same thing. He couldn't help what happened. So what he wants to tell her--her or anyone else--is strictly his business.

MILES: I only wish I could of been there with him. That's all. If I hadn't come down with the flu again after last Sunday's meeting, I'd of gone with him, you can be sure. Nothing would of stopped me from getting a few licks in along with him. And afterward I'd of been proud to tell folks about it.

AGGATHA: Miles! John D. gave them no licks. It was all the Indians' doing. Now don't you forget that!

(From outdoors--the sound of horses whinnying and the creak of a carriage.)

MILES: That must be them now!

(He opens the door and goes outside.)

RACHEL: Now we'll see what she's really like--the little impertinence!

JOHN D.'S VOICE: (from outdoors) Miles, good to see you! Emma, my good friend, Miles Pace.

(John D., Emma, and Miles come through the door.)

JOHN D.: Aggatha, Rachel--this is Emma Batchelor.

(The women give Emma a perfunctory kiss.)

AGGATHA: I take it, my dear, that you don't intend to remain a Batchelor much longer.

(All laugh, Emma and Rachel--self-consciously.)

MILES: That was a good one, Aggatha!

(The others have stopped laughing.)

MILES: (coming to) Well, I'd better be getting along--so's you can all be by yourselves. One big happy family, so to speak.

RACHEL: *(reprovingly)* Miles!!

JOHN D.: That's enough Miles. Don't rush Sister Batchelor so. Why, she hasn't even sat down yet. You make her feel right at home, ladies, while I walk Miles to the corral.

RACHEL: Don't be gone too long, John D. Supper's waiting.

(John D. waves acknowledgement and exits with Miles.)

EMMA: How wonderful it all smells!

AGGATHA: Rachel's cooking, you mean?

EMMA: The air--out there on the heath.

RACHEL: *(scoffing)* That desert air?

EMMA: What's that lovely bloom that clumps here and there in leaping tongues like a miniature bonfire--so fiery red it is. Blood red even

AGGATHA: You must mean the Indian Paint Brush.

EMMA: It's lovely.

RACHEL: You'll get used to it soon enough . . . what looks like blood. Real blood too from time to time . . .

AGGATHA: John is fond of the paintbrush too. When he first saw it he quoted Jeremiah: ". . .his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones."

EMMA: A fire in the bones? Why that's a strange expression.

AGGATHA: It fits John though. When he sets his mind on a task it's as if the elements were conspiring within him. There's no dissuading him. That's, I imagine, why he manages to do so much. . . .But tell us something about yourself, Emma.

RACHEL: Yes, what's the high life like these days in Salt Lake City?

EMMA: I wouldn't much know about the 'high life,' Sister Lee--except for what I may have had a glimpse of, second hand. As soon as I'd recovered from the trek across the plains, they sent me to a house where the wife enjoyed poor health. And I mean enjoyed! She'd sit in her wrapper, follow me with her eyes and complain about everything I did. Her husband was always trying to maul and claw at me. So I left, and he complained to the Bishop. But I stood my ground. I told the Bishop I would work and earn my keep, but I would not do it in *that* house. So they transferred me to Father Rollins' place. And that's how I met John D. Before we ever exchanged one word, I knew he was for me.

(The other women exchange looks. Rachel clears her throat and busies herself at the table.)

AGGATHA: Has he proposed, my dear?

EMMA: Why yes. I think he fell in love with me through my cooking. . . .

(Rachel bangs a plate.)

You mean he didn't tell you? I came here at his request.

RACHEL: To look the rest of us over?

EMMA: To see how he runs his household. . . and to see if you'd all approve of me

(Rachel impatiently exits to an inner room.)

Oh, dear. . . .

AGGATHA: How do you feel about plural marriage, my child--and getting along with all of us? A pretty girl like you must have had plenty of chances to marry a man more nearly her own age.

EMMA: A girl doesn't take every chance she gets. I'd rather bear children to a man like John D., though he had others, than be the only wife of an inferior man.

AGGATHA: I hope you understand the principle well enough, my dear. There have been others who later found out it wasn't for them.

EMMA: I imagine there were. How about Mary Ann? His latest?

AGGATHA: Mary Ann's an orphan. John D. took her on to give her a home-- the way he did Mother. She doesn't love him--not in that way. She's really in love with my oldest son, Alma.

EMMA: Oh. What will she do?

AGGATHA: That will be up to John D. We'll just have to wait and see It's all part of a pattern, my dear. You can't fight the principle. You must give yourself to it or it's best you never come near it. A polygamous wife--a Mormon wife, for that matter--must know her place and keep it. Her first and chief business is to respect her husband's priesthood and love him so completely that she doesn't question him--making his will her law. She must also teach her children the proper honor and respect due their father. For his part, he must treat his wives with kindness and tenderness, but not allow them to sway his decisions or dissuade him from his duty. Brother Brigham scorns any man who doesn't hold himself above a woman's whims or who bends to a wife's will.

EMMA: I see.

AGGATHA: Do you suppose you can be happy with such a man? Because that's the kind of man our husband is. One of the best

EMMA: I know I must seem rather spunky. Too impatient. Too quick to do or say some things. I'm like that. And I have a terrible temper. But it's a little like a match set to rabbit brush--one quick sputter and it's out, without heat enough to start a flame anywhere else. I'd still like the chance to prove myself--to him and to the rest of you.

AGGATHA: How will you take to the work? There's wool to wash, pull, card and spin into yarn for knitting shawls, stockings and mittens. There's wood to cut and rick up, candles and soap to make. And on it goes. This isn't Salt Lake City.

EMMA: I'm still willing.

AGGATHA: That's right. You crossed the plains with the Martin Company, didn't you?

(Emma nods.)

Then I think you'll be equal to life in New Harmony and all that may yet lie ahead. I can already tell that it's

you, not Rachel, who will some day take my place.

EMMA: Why, no. What do you mean?

AGGATHA: (*handing her a bound notebook*) Here. Now don't argue. This is the journal John D. has asked me to keep for his wives. When you join us I'm going to turn it over to you. That will be one of your duties.

EMMA: (*reading*) Is this the latest entry?

AGGATHA: It is.

EMMA: "This morning a great number of Indians returned from an expedition to the Southwest. Also Brother John D. Lee." What was that about?

AGGATHA: Never mind.

EMMA: "We also have another mouth to feed--a baby boy. We don't know who his parents are and haven't yet decided what to call him." But where did you find him?

AGGATHA: Don't ask.

EMMA: "Have spent the morning sorting and arranging by size various pairs of shoes--men's, women's and children's. Also quilts and blankets, cooking utensils, dishes and some clothing. The skirts and dresses were bloody and had to be soaked in many waters, washed in suds and ironed for wear. Some of the wives became nauseated or turned faint but remained tight-lipped. We expect more such work during the next couple of days."

AGGATHA: Any comment?

EMMA: Why? I . . . does it have to do with those Indians?

(*Aggatha nods.*)

EMMA: Then . . . no. I guess I have no comment.

AGGATHA: (*extending her arms*) Emma, I think you'll manage well enough as John D.'s seventeenth wife.

(*Emma rushes into her embrace.*)

EMMA: Thank you, dear Sister Lee.

AGGATHA: Aggatha.

EMMA: Aggatha.

(*Rachel enters with a tray of food.*)

AGGATHA: Oh, John D. What is it about you that attracts women so . . . ?

RACHEL: Such a man. Too big for just one or two of us to hold him But what's keeping him . . . ?

(*good naturedly*)

If my food gets too much colder, I won't begin to compete with yours, Emma--though I dare say I've had a lot more practice and been trying to satisfy him a lot longer than you .

(*Lee returns with Alma.*)

ALMA: Good day, Mother. Aunt Rachel.

AGGATHA: Good day, Alma.

JOHN D.: Supper ready, my dear?

RACHEL: It's been long ready.

JOHN D.: Then we must quickly wash up. The pump's just outside. This way, Emma.

(*John D. and Emma go outside.*)

ALMA: Is she here?

AGGATHA: (*going to the inner door*) Mary Ann?

(Mary Ann appears, then blushes at the sight of Alma.)

RACHEL: We're about to eat.

MARY ANN: I'm not hungry.

ALMA: I'm not either

AGGATHA: We'll excuse you.

MARY ANN: Say I don't feel well.

ALMA: Tell him I'm not through milking.

AGGATHA: Go out the back way. But be quick.

(Alma and Mary Ann exit through the inner door.)

RACHEL: Do you think John D. will ever give her up?

AGGATHA: When he knows how Alma feels about her, I think he will.

RACHEL: And how will Emma work out?

AGGATHA: Just fine.

RACHEL: And when she finds out? About what happened this week?

AGGATHA: It will soon be public knowledge, won't it?

RACHEL: That's not what I mean. I mean, the rest. What the public, what none of us will ever be told. How will she take that?

AGGATHA: Don't worry, my dear. Emma already knows.

ACT ONE, Scene 7

(That night. Mountain meadows. The stage is in shadows.)

PRISCILLA'S VOICE: *(from offstage)* Jacob, please don't leave me!

JACOB: *(coming onstage from the same direction)* Don't worry, sweet! I'll just be a minute! I've just got to check on something. You stay in the wagon like I told you now, understand? That way you'll be perfectly safe.

PRISCILLA'S VOICE: Please hurry, Jacob! Remember, this is our honeymoon, and I miss you whenever you leave my sight!

JACOB: I'll be right back, sweet!

(He begins to look around the stage, bends down, then stands back in amazement, continues walking, stops and seems startled, probes something lying on the ground with his foot. His expression shows mounting shock and revulsion. He moves offstage in the opposite direction, still peering about him, as in a daze. A long pause. Then a young woman appears, barefoot, in a nightgown.)

PRISCILLA: *(unable to see in front of her, calling timidly)* Jacob. . .? Jacob?

(She suddenly appears to trip, lurches, falls, then, noticing what is beneath her, jumps back and screams hysterically. Jacob quickly returns and takes her in his arms. She continues to scream.)

JACOB: I thought I told you to stay inside the wagon!

PRISCILLA: *(finding her voice)* But I got so frightened all by myself.

JACOB: Not so frightened, I'll wager, as you are now.

PRISCILLA: Jacob, what . . . who is that? It's a woman, isn't it? Is she dead?

JACOB: Yes, dead.

Fire In The Bones by Thomas F. Rogers

PRISCILLA: And over there
(becoming hysterical again)
--is that another?

JACOB: Quit looking, Priscilla. Close your eyes. I'll lead you back to the wagon.

PRISCILLA: Jacob, what is this? How many are there?

JACOB: Don't ask.

PRISCILLA: What is this??

JACOB: It's folly, that's what it is. It's John D. Lee's folly. Brigham's favorite! But it's also my fault partly.

PRISCILLA: Yours?

JACOB: Yes, mine. If I'd of been here, I could of stopped it. It wouldn't of happened.

PRISCILLA: You mean, if I hadn't met you. . .if we hadn't gotten married--

JACOB: No, I don't mean that. I don't reproach you, sweet, or our marriage. Perish the thought. But you must do one thing, Priscilla.

PRISCILLA: Yes, Jacob?

JACOB: You must keep your eyes closed.

PRISCILLA: They are, Jacob. They're still closed.

JACOB: You must always keep them so.

PRISCILLA: What do you mean?

JACOB: Closed to what you saw here--what I said just now, and what you may think about it.

PRISCILLA: But why, Jacob?

JACOB: Don't ask, Priscilla. Just trust me

PRISCILLA: I will.

JACOB: You promise?

PRISCILLA: I promise.

(She leans against him, her eyes still closed. He assists her offstage in the direction from which they came. The lights dim.)

25 pages in act two