

PERUSAL SCRIPT

First Trump

a play in two acts

by Thomas F. Rogers



Newport, Maine

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FIRST TRUMP

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*To the memory of my mother's grandfathers, Alexander Fiddes Grieg Sims and Sylvanus Collett, and
all their extended kin*

"The child is father to the man." (Wordsworth, "Ode on Intimations of Immortality")

*"And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their
fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Malachi 4:6)*

*"The Prophet told us that there are many things that people have to do, even after the grave, to
work out their salvation." (Wilford Woodruff, Journal)*

CAST OF CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

Alexander Sims
Sylvanus Collett
Berdean Sims
Man's Voice
Other White Man's Voice
Indian's Voice
Strange Voices
Ann Karren
Woman's Voice (Mavis)
Tom Karren's Voice
Tom Collett
Balinese Dancer
Cleric
Sjech Yussuf
Bao Shen Ke
Judge Sutherland
Judge Tilford
Judge Emerson's Voice
Timothy Foote
Alice Robinson
William Skeen
Doctor Benedict
Charles Sperry
John Spiers

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*. 19M 4W 1TB (parts can be doubled to 11 men, 2 women, 1 teen male)
Several simple settings. About 2 hours. As one by one, individuals gather on a mountaintop near Fish Lake, Idaho, they find out why they are there. The First Trump of the Resurrection has signaled the beginning of that final thousand years and families are being gathered, and assigned missions to “turn the hearts of the father to the children and the children to the fathers.” But not just in a genealogical sense. It is time to link the generations together -- physically, intellectually and emotionally. A process explored in this thoughtful play that finds the ancestors and descendants of one family learning to ignore their prejudices and strive for a greater whole as they help the troubled ones among them -- only to find out that the whole is much greater than they thought it was. The little-known but infamous trial of Sylvanus Collett, an ancestor of the author, forms the center of the conflicted feelings of both the family, and the Territory of Utah. **ORDER # 2034.**

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Cemetery Hill. Fish Haven, Idaho. A late, still warm Fall day. ALEXANDER FIDDES GRIEG SIMS, fifty-eight, dressed in a dark, tattered nineteenth century men's suit, sits on a mound of grass, staring toward the audience and slightly above their heads. He is preoccupied by insects that appear to hover about and occasionally light on him. Suddenly--an elaborate trumpet refrain, ala Louis Armstrong.

ALEX: *(looking toward the sky till after the music ceases, then speaking in a thick Scottish brogue)* W'a' i' the... 'oose playin' that tru'pet? Ne'er 'eard such a wild tune, 'cept maybe from the Zulus...

(slapping at the insects)

Well, bite, w'y don' yuh? Then I'd a' least 'ave a chance tuh catch one o' yuh critters an' give yuh wat's for. W'y ain't yuh bi'in'? Yur as bad as some fish....

(touching his sleeves)

An' w'a' 'bou' these here rags? Never wore nothin' like this...!

(In her seventies, ANN KARREN approaches ALEX. She wears a floor length, long sleeved dark hued dress and a Queen Victoria indoor bonnet. She carries a cloth covered basket.)

ALEX: Good day, m'um. Can I assis' yuh?

ANN: *(in a distinct British accent)* I'm looking for my husband.

ALEX: Ain' seen anoother boody all day. Yur the first. W'ere yuh froom?

ANN: Lehi.

ALEX: Wa' brings yuh 'ere. migh' I ask?

ANN: Instructions in a note. It was pinned to my dress.

ALEX: In Lehi?

(ANN nods.)

ANN: With a train ticket to Montpelier.

ALEX: 'Ow was th' ride?

ANN: Smooth as ice. Sped like a bullet. Didn't see another passenger though. Not one.

ALEX: Walked 'ere from Moo'pelier, did yuh?

ANN: Just a small hike, it was. Nothing like crossing the plains. I'm to wait here for my grandson.

ALEX: Wa's 'is line o' work, yer gran'son's?

ANN: He ranches with his father, Svlvanus.

ALEX: W'ere at?

ANN: Cokeville. Seems like an age since I last saw him. You a Latter-day Saint?

ALEX: Indeed, I am, mu'm.

ANN: I've a concern...You could call it a sorrow.

ALEX: W'a's tha', mu'm?

ANN: This same grandson — Tommy's his name, named for my husband — was never baptized. And now he's a grown man. Already twenty.

ALEX: W'y ain' 'e a Moormon?

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

ANN: Our daughter Lydia died giving birth to him. Maybe that embittered Sylvanus. My husband, Tom Karren, blamed Sylvanus for neglecting her.

ALEX: ‘Ow so?

ANN: He has five wives. But so does my Tom Karren.

ALEX: Loord save us. Muhself, I never pursued th’ Pri’ciple.

ANN: That’s not the reason. It’s Sylvanus’s vigilanti-ism.

ALEX: One o’them marauders, is’e?

ANN: He’s from a good family. We came to Lehi together with the first settlers. Sylvanus was the town’s first constable. Then a sheriff’s deputy in Smithfield and Plain City. Indian fighter at Fort Lemhi. Now justice of the peace.

ALEX: A law man then?

ANN: And murderer.

ALEX: Yuh mean it?

ANN: Accused of it anyway. Had a big trial in Provo eight years back. Sylvanus was let off though. Couldn’t agree on a verdict.

ALEX: *Tha’* Sylvanus! Sylvanus Collett, yuh mean?

ANN: That’s right.

ALEX: Then yer gran’son’s a Collett too? Not *Tom* Collett?

ANN: Of course.

ALEX: Married muh daugh’er Catherine.

ANN: What? When?

ALEX: Joos’ last year.

ANN: My good man, surely I’d have known.

ALEX: You said ‘is father’s trial was joos’ eight year ago.

ANN: That’s right.

ALEX: W’a’ year was that then?

ANN: ‘78.

ALEX: Beg yer pardon? Yuh know w’a’ year this is, mu’um?

ANN: Why, yes, love. It’s 1886.

ALEX: Sorry, mu’um. It’s already 1893. An’ yer gran’son an’ muh daugh’er Kate was married a year ago.

ANN: Goodness. You seem so earnest. But you can’t fool me — now who’s that?

(SYLVANUS COLLETT, in his mid-sixties, grey and gaunt, appears from offstage and approaches them. He wears a plain dark turn-of-the-century men’s suit.)

ALEX: *(noticing SYLVANUS)* Afternoon, stranger.

SYLVANUS: How’s it goin’?

ALEX: Same as ever, ‘cept fer them pesky ‘squiters.

SYLVANUS: *(joining ANN and ALEX)* Don’t bother with ‘em. Ain’t bitin’ no more.

ALEX: Noticed that too, did yuh? Noth’n’ more fierce than Bear Lake ‘squiters. ‘Less it’s Bear Lake ‘oorseflies. You from roun’ ‘ere?

SYLVANUS: Wyomin’.

ALEX: ‘Ow’d yuh ge’ ‘ere with noo ‘oorse?

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

SYLVANUS: Walked. Been walkin'fer a day or two.

ALEX: W'a's yer business?

SYLVANUS: Supposed to meet a feller here. Got a job fer me, I guess. Note said he'd give me further instructions.

ANN: Another note?

SYLVANUS: Yeah. It was pinned to this funny suit I'm wearin'.

ANN: Where was that?

SYLVANUS: In a green place like this one.

ALEX: Sounds soospicious.

SYLVANUS: Oh, I'm used to rendezvous-in'.

ALEX: 'Ow's tha'?

SYLVANUS: My line of work. What's yours?

ALEX: Miller. Put in the first burr mill in these parts.

SYLVANUS: How's business?

ALEX: Joos' finished a canal 'twixt Swan Creek an' Saint Charles. We'll 'ave plenty o' wa'er now--muh sons an' me an' all our neighbors. An' lots more w'eat tuh grind. Took muh boys an' me seven years tuh blast through tha' mou'ain over there. Celebration was, le's see...sure, yesterday an' las' nigh'. Go' a li'le tipsy, I'm afraid.

SYLVANUS: Where you from?

ALEX: Name's Sims, Alexander. Born in Sco'land. But we coom 'ere, me an' Lizzie, from Sooth Africa. Wen' there as a miller's 'pprentice, an' tha's w'ere we me' th' Moormon elders. So 'ow was the trip 'ere...from Wyomin'?

SYLVANUS: Kinda spooky. Didn't see another soul. And that was way up on a mountain.

ANN: What mountain?

SYLVANUS: Well, I started for here yesterday mornin'. Then decided I'd make a detour an' climb what some say is the tallest peak in these parts — in the high Uintas. Always wanted to. Never got to it till now.

ALEX: That's a near eighty mile detour.

SYLVANUS: Eighty each way. But pretty level ground till you come to them peaks. Anyway, when I reached the pass at the base of it--'bout 11,000 feet up — it was just a plain of boulders as far as you can see. There's several peaks right there at the pass. I picked what looked like the tallest, an' up I went. Giant boulders all the way--huge steppin' stones piled on each other like the spine o' some ol' dinosaur. Nice view at the top. Just one lone red-tail hawk out there in the far distance, floatin' on a current of air. Not above me neither — but way below.

ALEX: You was that high, was yuh?

SYLVANUS: An' all so still an' quiet. No squabblin'. No cantankerous-ness. No outlaws anywhere to hunt down an' put away.

ANN: Away?

SYLVANUS: Sometimes. Sometimes you have to....That was 'bout four in the afternoon, judgin' by where the sun was. Goin' back, I told myself I'd never get to camp afore dark An' maybe freeze to death up that high unless I lowered myself over one o' them steep shale slopes that jut down from the pass--no zig-zags, no meanderin'.

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

ALEX: ‘Ow deep were the slope?

SYLVANUS: 4,000 feet, maybe. Couldn’t see the base of it from half way down.

ALEX: So yuh di’n’ know if i’ migh’ be too steep after tha’?

SYLVANUS: Took my chances. Them boulders wobbled each step yuh took. Couldn’t trust ‘em. So I moved slow motion, strainin’ my legs an’ gettin’ weaker with the effort.

ALEX: If yuhdda toppled, yuh’d o’ lost yer balance An’ kept tumblin’. I bet.

SYLVANUS: Fact is, I did just that.

ALEX: ‘ow far’d yuh tumble then?

SYLVANUS: Half the slope.

ALEX: An’ lived tuh tell ‘boo’ i’? W’ere’s yer scratches...yer bruises?

SYLVANUS: A mystery, ain’t it?

ALEX: ‘T is, surely.

ANN: Maybe you’re one of those three Nephites, You take a lot of chances.

SYLVANUS: Yeah, maybe I am.

(winking at them)

So watch yerself, hear...?

ALEX: Or yur a spirit.

SYLVANUS: Think so?

ALEX: I was a spiritualist ‘fore I were a Moormon.

SYLVANUS: You may be right about that. An evil spirit. Been accused of that too....How long you been in this place?

ALEX: Since early this moornin.’ Joos’ starin’ at the lake ou’ there. Can’ get muh fill o’ it. Like I’d just seen it anew. Same ol’ lake though, an’ beautiful as ever. Look at tha’ deep blue. An’ all the trou’ in it. Still, someth’n’s differen’.

SYLVANUS: Like what?

ALEX: Like this tattered suit I’m wearin’. Ain’t mine. Yers don’ look much be’er.

SYLVANUS: I wondered about that too. Ain’t my rags, that’s fer sure.

ALEX: An’ muh wife Lizzie....

(looking behind him)

Can’ see our cabin back w’ere it used tuh be. ‘Ope she ain’ lost. Miss ‘er bad....

ANN: And there’s all this confusion about what year it is. This gentleman claims it’s already 1893.

SYLVANUS: You must both have a bout of amnesia. We’re already in the Twentieth Century.

ALEX: Coom on, man!

ANN: What year do you say it is?

SYLVANUS: 1901.

ALEX: Yoor demen’////////ed, surely!

(Whistling is heard from offstage.)

ANN: *(noticing someone)* Who’s that?

ALEX: Soom kid loi’erin’.

SYLVANUS: Oughta be out in the fields helpin’ his pa.

ALEX: Or a’ school....Maybe ‘e’s yer messenger.

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

SYLVANUS: Don't think so. Note says he'll be wearin' a uniform.

(BERDEAN SIMS, sixteen and unusually thin, walks hesitantly toward them. He also wears a conservative dark suit, vintage 1940. In each hand he holds a tall, capped plastic ice cream container with a straw protruding from the top.)

ALEX: W'atcha go' there, laddie?

BERDEAN: Raspberry shakes. One's fer you. Didn't know you'd have company.

ALEX: 'Shakes'? W'a's a shake?

BERDEAN: You mix ice cream with fresh raspberries. They sell them at all the stands this time of year.

ALEX: Moos' be oother folk ou' there then — runnin' them stands.

BERDEAN: A few.

ANN: Where do you get the ice, love?

BERDEAN: They make it in machines.

ALEX: That so?

BERDEAN: Better eat yours before it melts. Use that straw.

ALEX: W'a' straw? I's soom kinda paper.

BERDEAN: *(handing the other container to ANN)* Here. Have mine. Already ate a couple on the way here.

ANN: Why, thank you, love.

BERDEAN: *(to SYLVANUS)* Sorry, I don't have another.

ANN: *(drawing on her straw)* Mmmm. Delicious.

ALEX: *(handing his to SYLVANUS)* Here. Try mine.

SYLVANUS: Much obliged....

ALEX: 'Oose boy are yuh?

BERDEAN: Everett and Buelah's.

ALEX: 'Oo's tha'?

BERDEAN: Oh, forgot. Never knew my daddy, did you? Grampa didn't marry till after you...you're sitting down, ain't you?

ALEX: Coorse I am--on this 'ere 'illock. So 'oose yer Grampa, laddie?

BERDEAN: Your son, Alma.

ALEX: Alma ain' married. 'Ow could 'e be yer grampa?

BERDEAN: He married in '94.

ALEX: Don' fool me, laddie. Tha's next year.

BERDEAN: I'm glad you're still sittin' down.

ALEX: W'y's tha'?

BERDEAN: I got a shock too when I found out where I was and how much time had gone by.

ALEX: W'addaya mean?

BERDEAN: I was sixteen when I died. But that's how old I still am, seems like.

ALEX: So you're suppoos'd to be some kind o' spook too, are yuh? Well, I know all aboo' 'em. 'Ad lots tuh do with 'em.

BERDEAN: I know.

SYLVANUS: How coom yuh know?

BERDEAN: You was a spiritualist when you was in Africa.

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

ALEX: Shh!

BERDEAN: And I'm no spook. I'm resurrected.

ALEX: Yoor w'a'??

BERDEAN: Right now is the morning of the First Resurrection.

SYLVANUS: Who told yuh?

BERDEAN: Can't rightly say. There's lots of messengers.

ALEX: Lookie 'ere, laddie. I'm fifty-eight year ol', an' yur joost a w'ipper-snapper. I seen a lotta things an' been a lotta places you still ain'. Started out way up in Aberdeen.

BERDEAN: I know. That's why they named me Berdean.

ALEX: Well, if I'm a resurrected bein', w'ere's muh Lizzie?

BERDEAN: She's waitin' fer you to claim her.

ALEX: Were?

BERDEAN: Garden City.

ALEX: Wa's she doin' there?

BERDEAN: What we've all been doin'. Me an' my folks--your sons an' daughters, their kids, an' theirs, an' theirs too.

ALEX: Doin' w'a'?

BERDEAN: Lyin' stretched out, facin' East.

ANN: You mean?

BERDEAN: That's what I've been tryin' to tell you.

ALEX: Alma married in '94, you say? W'a's th' year now?

BERDEAN: Can't say. At least a century later. Maybe more.

ANN: Good heavens!

ALEX: Think we're all resurrected too then, laddie?

BERDEAN: Look around yuh. Where you're at....

ALEX: Yeah. There's tombstones everyw'ere. (*to SYLVANUS*) W'a' green place was you in two days back?

SYLVANUS: Kinda like this here.

ALEX: Tombstones too?

SYLVANUS: Yeah, now I think of it.

ANN: And I was too. In Lehi.

BERDEAN: (*to ALEX*) See that hole way over in the corner? That's where you were. It was practically the first grave up here.

ALEX: W'y's that?

BERDEAN: 'Cause you died so early--practically the first one in Fish Haven.

ALEX: W'ere's all th' oothers?

BERDEAN: Haven't come out yet. Waitin' for the next trump. Or the next. You must of been good enough folks, or you wouldn't be sittin' upright yet either. Me? Guess I was too young an' weak to be much of a sinner....

ALEX: Resurrected, huh? Tha' w'y the 'squitters ain' bi'in'?

BERDEAN: That's right. From now on we're supposed to make peace with 'em. Like the lamb an' the lion.

ALEX: Think they're resurrected too?

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

BERDEAN: Why not? Couldn't sin, could they?

SYLVANUS: Every time they ever bit me, boy, it was sure a sin. Don't know about you.

ALEX: Wonder if tha's w'y they're so thick joos' now — cause it's all the 'squitters tha' ever was. All the way back tuh Adam.

SYLVANUS: That would be a heap, wouldn't it? With all the other animals.

ALEX: 'T would, surely. No' tuh mention all the plants--trees an' grasses. An' all we ever ate. Think they'll be resurrected too?

BERDEAN: Can't say.

ALEX: 'Twould crowd us off th' Earth, I'm thinkin'....If yur no' fool'n' us, laddie, w'a di' I die of?

BERDEAN: Spirits.

ALEX: Shh....So th' Spirits finally go' me, di' they?

BERDEAN: Not the kind you're thinkin' of. You drank too much on the day the canal went through. During the celebration you fell in an' drowned.

ALEX: Damn!

BERDEAN: Yeah, bad luck.

ANN: Just a small indiscretion, brother. But fatal....

ALEX: Dooble damn!!

ANN: What did you die of so young, love?

BERDEAN: Swallowed a tack.

SYLVANUS: Did yourself in with a tack?

BERDEAN: Didn't mean to. Picked it up from off the floor as a baby when I'd just begun to crawl. Lodged in my lung. They couldn't get it out. So I just kept coughin' up blood and phlegm and havin' infections. We'd go down to the doctors in Salt Lake to see what they could do, an' I'd sell newspapers on the street to help pay for it. Each time they'd drain the fluid from my lung. That's what finally did me in. One time during the procedure, it got in my blood stream. I was gone in just a instant. At least that's how it got explained to me.

ALEX: W'o di' th' explainin'

BERDEAN: Messengers....! It was a real worry for Momma. I know it aged her. An' when I suddenly died like that...musta broke her heart.

ALEX: So yuh never 'ad a family? Yer own, I mean?

BERDEAN: Hey, I'm only sixteen. But I can now.

ANN: You think so, love?

BERDEAN: That's the promise, ain't it? For those who come forth on the First Trump?

ALEX: (*nodding toward SYLVANUS*) 'ow'd you die, mister?

SYLVANUS: Have no idea. Must've went fast, like you. Maybe a heart attack.

BERDEAN: What's yer last memory before sittin' up again? Where was yuh?

SYLVANUS: Visitin' in Salt Lake.

ANN: In the year '01, was it?

SYLVANUS: That's right.

ALEX: Well, if I were goo' 'nough fer tha' First Troomp, then so was Lizzie. She's go'a be up too an' wai'in' already. W'en did she die?

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

BERDEAN: Twenty years after you. That's why they buried her in Garden City. None of your kids stayed around here. The ones that moved there took her in an' bought plots so they could all be together.

ALEX: An' left me 'ere?

BERDEAN: Didn't want to disturb you.

ALEX: Joos' as well. This 'ere's a be'er view.

BERDEAN: You've quite a progeny.

ALEX: Yeah, we 'ad th'rteen young 'uns.

BERDEAN: How many more by now, you suppose? Grandkids and greats, like me?

ALEX: You tell me. You go' all th' answers.

BERDEAN: Not so many as some, since you weren't no polygamist.

ALEX: Thank th' stars fer tha'. 'Ow many?

BERDEAN: More 'n a thousand.

ALEX: 'Oly catfish!!

BERDEAN: Finished your shakes?

ALEX: Yeah.

SYLVANUS: Not bad.

ANN: Truly delicious.

ALEX: Always 'ad great berries 'roun' 'ere. Well, let's ge' goin'. Afoot, it's a good three hour tuh Garden City.

SYLVANUS: (*rising*) Meanwhile, I'm goin' down to the lake an' catch me a fish. If that messenger comes askin' fer me, have 'im wait.

ALEX: Won' take long if they're bi'in' like usual....

(*SYLVANUS leaves.*)

BERDEAN: Strange fellow. What's his name? -

ALEX: Di'n' ask. Some kind o' moo'ain man. We 'ave a suspicion 'e's one o' them three Nephites.

BERDEAN: You believe in them?

ANN: They're in the Book of Mormon, love. You must read it some time.

ALEX: Well, let's get goin'. Gotta 'elp Lizzie.

BERDEAN: We can't go to Garden City — not directly. That's why they sent me here. To let you know.

ALEX: W'y's that?

BERDEAN: Business.

ALEX: Business?

BERDEAN: We've all got some. Mine was gettin' hold of you.

ALEX: W'a's mine?

BERDEAN: First, you've got to go north, to Montpelier, and take a train to Salt Lake. But that's just the beginning. The conductor, who married your daughter Catherine, will meet us here.

ANN: Tommy works for the railroad now, does he? That must be why I got a free ride to Montpelier.

BERDEAN: He should show up any time now.

ALEX: 'Is dad, Sylvanus, was soomeone t' reckon with. Joos' as soon keep muh distance from Sylvanus. Leastways, not git on 'is wroong side....

(*The actor playing SYLVANUS, now dashing and in his early twenties, appears in buckskin, on another part of the stage. The others remain stationary but seem not to notice.*)

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

OTHER WHITE MAN'S VOICE: Alright, you redskin sneaks. What you after?

INDIAN'S VOICE: Want speak with Father.

OTHER WHITE MAN'S VOICE: This here's Colonel Collett of the Nauvoo Legion. Whaddaya think, Syl?

SYLVANUS: Well, boy, yer mean old Daddy's under arrest fer what he did here in Smithfield in the late Indian War.

OTHER WHITE MAN'S VOICE: Let 'em talk to him, Syl.

SYLVANUS: Alright, bring him out....

OTHER WHITE MAN'S VOICE: Just be careful, is all.

SYLVANUS: Don't worry. I been ambushed enough times already....Just don't you boys try noth'n', understand...?

OTHER WHITE MAN'S VOICE: Hey, there! Get away from him. Look, Syl, the old man's boltin'....

(SYLVANUS calmly raises an invisible rifle, takes aim, and shoots into the audience.)

OTHER WHITE MAN'S VOICE: By golly, Syl, you got 'im. I think he's plumb dead. And did those other braves scatter...I do believe, Syl, you could hit a fly's heel from a thousand yards with a blank cartridge....

(The lights fade on SYLVANUS.)

ALEX: No, don't know 'ow close I'd wanna git tuh Sylvanus. So w'y 'ave I gotta talk tuh 'is son? W'y Catherine's 'usban' an' not soom oother?

BERDEAN: He'll have your ticket and tell you the rest. It's the order of the Church, you know. We accept our calls — wherever they send us.

ALEX: So the Church is still wi' us?

BERDEAN: In principle.

ALEX: An' is tha' all 'e 'as tuh do, this Tom Collett? Joos' 'an' me a ticke'?

BERDEAN: And reconcile his father-in-law to Sylvanus.

(ALEX eyes ANN.)

BERDEAN: With your encouragement.

ALEX: Is this life noo different from th' oother?

ANN: You ever hear of free agency, Brother Sims?

BERDEAN: We've still got to make the good things happen.

ALEX: So I'm tuh take a train, am I? Never rode many trains. 'T was mostly 'oorse an' booggy--an' a 'an' car' all th' way from Missouri.

BERDEAN: This Tom Collett has two tickets for you--one for his train, the other for an airplane. That's why you're going to Salt Lake. To the airport.

ALEX: 'Air Plane'? Don' suppose tha' means w'a' i' soon's like. An' 'ow far will tha' take me from Lizzie 'fore I git tuh claim 'er?

BERDEAN: How'd you like South Africa? Cape Town? Port Elizabeth?

ALEX: Weren't bad. We'd 'ave doon all righ' if them English woulda left the Boers alone. Lizzie's moomther was a Boer, yuh know, 'er father was Irish.

BERDEAN: That's what I hear--a Boer and several other races. That's, I believe, why you're goin' back there.

ALEX: Back w'ere?

BERDEAN: To Cape Town,

ALEX: Oh, no, yuh don'. I've paid muh dues, an' I'm far too old. Besides, w'y should I?

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

BERDEAN: I'll tell you why, Grampa. You need to go there, or do whatever else you're asked — because. until every last one of us has filled his or her...assignment, we won't be able to claim each other — you... Elizabeth or me. my parents and my future eternal companion. None of us. Wherever there were differences, all must now be '*reconciled.*' I...I think that's the word they've been battin' around.

ALEX: They?

BERDEAN: The messengers....

ALEX: So that's the deal, is it?

BERDEAN: That's the deal.

ALEX: An' 'ow many ooffspring 'ave I go' tuh claim in all, did yuh say? Besides Lizzie?

BERDEAN: Over a thousand.

ALEX: Sufferin' catfish! And they've all goot tuh be '*reconciled,*' too?

BERDEAN: At least to the th'rd or fourth generation. We've been given a thousand years if we need it.

ALEX: W'at's yer name again?

BERDEAN: Berdean.

ALEX: Well, Berdean, w'en will muh soon-in-law show up?

ANN: Yes, when? I'm so anxious to see him again.

BERDEAN: Any time now.

ALEX: Will I ever git back 'ere? Fer keeps, I mean?

BERDEAN: Probably.

ALEX: Because--look a' tha' lake oo' there, will yuh? She's as deep as Loch Ness. Even, some say, with 'er very own moonster.

BERDEAN: Did you ever see it? The monster?

ALEX: Just other moonsters. Moonsters an' demons.

BERDEAN: The spirits?

ALEX: Some dark wi'er nights they beat me tuh th' earth, coomin' 'ome late from th' mill. Shh...!

(He steps toward the footlights and, starting to writhe, falls to the ground.)

STRANGE VOICES: Stay with us, Alex....

ALEX: *(still writhing)* Yuh can' make me.

VOICES: If you don't, we'll destroy you.

ALEX: Wa' fer, if yur really muh friends, like yuh always claimed?

VOICES: You know too much. You've seen the other world. You're an initiate — one of *us*.

ALEX: Ain' noth'n' tuh me any more.

VOICES: That doesn't matter.

ALEX: I've found soomth'n' full o' love An' light — soomth'n' lo's be'er.

VOICES: That doesn't matter.

ALEX: I'll lean on muh Loord then an' call yer blooff. Take me if yuh can.

VOICES: We'll torment you then — torment you forever.

ALEX: Go ahead!

VOICES: *(fading)* You'll be sorry...sorry...sorry...sorry....

ALEX: They never fergive me tha' I fersook them fer Christ's priesthoo'. But I saw that priesthood work miracles far moor powerful. Helpful neighbors was prayed to muh sick wife in muh absence. Tha' firs' wi'er

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

in Salt Lake I was fellin' timber froom th' Oquirrh Moun'ains fer a tanner 'oo said 'e'd take care o' Lizzie an' our first se' o' twins. But they'd 'ave starved if i' 'adn' been fer those 'oo, unlike tha' man, were 'mong th' truly faithful.

(He turns and faces the auditorium.)

MAN'S VOICE: How's it goin', neighbor? How's the wife and kids?

ALEX: Strange. W'ile I was away, Lizzie fain'ed, she says, from bein' so weak. She was lyin' there on the col' floor, with chills an' fever--the babies untended. 'adn' ea'en fer several days. An' then you shoowed up an' go' 'er intuh be'. Fed 'em all too, an' give 'er a blessin'. An' she straightway goo' be'er. I believe yuh saved muh family. Bu' 'ow'd yuh know?

MAN'S VOICE: Brother Sims, I'd swear. You'd come to my window just a while before. Tapped on it several times and asked me to come over soon as I could.

ALEX: 'Ow could I? I was far off, in the mou'ains.

MAN'S VOICE: No you wasn't. Brother Sims. I swear it was you at my window. Or I'd of never thought to look in on your loved ones....

ALEX: *(turning again to BERDEAN)* Oothers coom back from th' shadow o' death under muh own 'ands — praise be to God, 'oose Spirit quickened 'em as it flowed through me. Just you look out there, laddie, a' tha' gorgeous blue lake. Them strong, comely mou'ains. There's th' gloory already, do' yuh see, laddie? The 'paradisiacal' gloory. An' if I am finally privileged to in'erit this Earth with soom oothers, tha's all I'll ever wan'. There ca' be noth'n' be'er... *(looking offstage)* 'Oo's tha' now? Man in a uniform. Must be 'im....

BERDEAN: I'll be movin' on then. See you in Garden City, Grampa....

(He leaves.)

ALEX: *(calling to him)* Sure 'ope so...!

(TOM COLLETT, in his mid-sixties and wearing a conductor's uniform, walks toward them from another direction. He carries a sheaf of documents.)

ANN: It's another stranger. Thought it was to be my grandson.

TOM: Gramma Annie!

ANN: Don't get fresh with me, mister.

TOM: Don't you recognize me...?

ANN: It can't be....My Tommy? He's...he was only twenty when I....Is it really you, Tommy love?

TOM: Yes, Gramma.

ANN: How old are you then?

TOM: I'm sixty-five.

ANN: Where did you ...die?

TOM: 1931, they tell me.

ANN: So it's really that much later.

TOM: A lot later than that, they say.

ANN: *(finally embracing him)* Oh, Tommy. This is all so awkward. Do you remember the tall willow in my front yard, Tommy?

TOM: Yes, Gramma.

ANN: And the long rope ladder that hung from its highest limb? How you used to love to swing on it whenever you came to see us. You'd swing and swing for hours on end.

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

TOM: Not when I got older, Gramma.

ANN: And what a handsome young man you were then, love. But why you were never baptized. Tommy, or why you weren't allowed to, I'll never understand...

(to both men, uncovering her basket)

Have one of my crumpets. They're mighty tasty.

ALEX: *(taking one)* I'm soopriised we still require noorishmen'.

ANN: Maybe we don't. But let's hope we're still allowed the pleasure.

TOM: *(handing papers to ALEX)* These are your instructions.

ALEX: So yur really muh Catherine's 'usban'? 'ow old are yuh?

TOM: Sixty-five.

ALEX: Amazin'!

TOM: What is?

ALEX: I'm only fifty-eight.

ANN: *(passing him her basket)* At least I'm slightly older than the rest of you. But my Tom Karren would only be Tommy's present age.

ALEX: I'm tol' Lizzie soorvived me by twen'y years. Tha' makes 'er foorteen years muh senior. Think they'll make an adjustment — bring us all back tuh our prime?

ANN: What age would that be?

ALEX: I'd se'ttle fer thir'y. When yuh think they'll switch us back? Our ages?

ANN: Not, I imagine, before the reunion.

ALEX: Reunion?

ANN: With all our kin.

ALEX: So yur really Tom's Gramma? An' yer 'usban' 'ad four oothers? Be' yuh 'ad a lo'a kiddies.

ANN: Eleven in all. Together we've had, I'm told, sixty-four grandchildren and, with my husband's four other wives, a total of ninety-three. By now his offspring numbers, believe it or not — I consulted with another early riser at the Lehi cemetery, a man who knows calculus — close to a million.

ALEX: Gloory! There war'n' that many in th' 'ole territory.

ANN: Can't help it. It's higher arithmetic. By now our descendants would have joined up with practically every other family from back then. Exciting, isn't it — we're all one big clan.

(SYLVANUS, older again and dressed in his dark burial suit, meanwhile settles, unnoticed, on a tombstone upstage from the others.)

ALEX: W'a's excitin'? They ain't now'ere 'round.

ANN: Who?

ALEX: Muh wife. Yer 'usban'. An' all our chil'ren. An' now we go' tuh 'ead in th' oopposite direction. I'm pinin' fer 'em already.

ANN: Patience, brother. You must have done a lot of good. Or they wouldn't trust you with this mission.

ALEX: In that sky vessel?

ANN: That's right.

ALEX: *(to TOM)* W'a' is muh mission, by th' way?

TOM: It's on account of your wife.

ALEX: Lizzie?

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

TOM: Her ancestors.

ALEX: Th' Dutch er th' Irish?

TOM: Others, farther back. Cape Town must have been quite a melting pot.

ALEX: 'oo then?

TOM: (*referring to his documents*) Well, Elizabeth's maternal line — she may not have even known herself — goes like this: Her great grandfather married a woman whose forebears were Chinese — exiles from Indonesia.

ALEX: Soo I'm 'ooked up wi' a boonch o' Asians....

TOM: It doesn't stop there. And this is the problem. An even earlier ancestor took for wife the daughter of two more Indonesian exiles with Semitic names, Moses and Sarah. Like the Chinaman, these Malays were sent to Capetown as pol'tical prisoners, possibly Dutch slaves.

ALEX: W'en was tha'?

TOM: 1600s.

ALEX: Tha's a loong time ago.

TOM: Not long enough.

ALEX: Fer w'a'?

TOM: This couple had Old Testament names, but they're also names out of the Koran.

ALEX: So?

TOM: They were Muslims, whose descendants, when they intermarried with the Dutch, became Christians.

ALEX: Good fer them.

TOM: This is also, unfortunately, known to the Muslim Sheiks and Imams in Capetown and in Jakarta. It's been their practice to execute those who leave their religion.

ANN: Gracious!

ALEX: Savages, tha's w'a' they are. No be'er 'n the Kafirs An' 'ottentots.

TOM: Of course, they can't execute anymore.

ALEX: W'y's tha'?

TOM: Death is done with — remember?

ALEX: Oh. Fergo'!

TOM: However, just as you and I are hoping to claim our posterity, so are the followers of Allah, worldwide.

ALEX: The Loord will 'ave soomethin' tuh say 'boo' tha'.

TOM: That's our hope.

ANN: A principle of our Faith.

TOM: They have a similar conviction.

ALEX: 'Cept we know 'oo's right — 'oo'll be th' winner.

TOM: That's how they see it too.

ALEX: W'ere's all this 'eadin'?

TOM: It's created another one of those differences that need to be resolved before we --

ANN: Can claim our families.

TOM: We and the Muslims. They're God's children too.

ALEX: An' that's w'y I'm goin' back tuh Cape Town?

TOM: Yes.

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

ALEX: There's anoother ma'er needs resolvin', by th' way. 'As to do with you.

TOM: My turn, is it?

ALEX: Yer task is easier. Won' take yuh nearly so far.

TOM: What is it?

ALEX: You go' tuh persuade yer father, Sylvanus, tuh return tuh Provo an' meet 'is jurors.

TOM: Revisit his trial?

ALEX: Yes.

TOM: Why?

ANN: It's on account of your grandfather — Tom Karren. If Sylvanus would just come clean about those murders, my Tom could accept him again as one of the family.

ALEX: Looks like tha' needs tuh 'appen too. So we can all rejoin our loved ones....

TOM: How should I put it to him?

ANN: It's already been said.

TOM: What do you mean?

ANN: (*nodding toward SYLVANUS*) Tommy, don't you know your own father? Don't you recognize him, Alex? Surely, you met each other, at least once, and stood together — maybe for pictures — at your childrens' wedding?

ALEX: Wa'? Tha' ol' moo'aineer?

ANN: There he sits, and he's taken in everything we've been saying.

SYLVANUS: (*suddenly shouting*) All of you — now freeze!

ANN: Come, Sylvanus. What's this always playing the desperado? You can't threaten us.

ALEX: (*in a whisper*) Shh, Sister Annie. I see it.

ANN: See what, Alex?

ALEX: (*still whispering*) Tha' Diamon' Back. Joos' two fee from w'ere yur si'in'.

ANN: (*also whispering*) Oh....He's a long one....

(The sound of rattles. SYLVANUS stalks toward the others, then crouches before them and, slowly waiving his hands, suddenly grasps an invisible snake.)

ALEX: Yuh go' 'im. An' joos' look a' 'im twist an' twine 'bou' yer arm.

ANN: How'd you dare do it?

SYLVANUS: Can't harm us so long as I keep grippin' him like this behind that hateful skull. Now git me a flat rock, someone....

ANN: (*handing him an invisible rock*) Here.

ALEX: No!

ANN: No, what?

ALEX: Don' 'ur' 'im.

SYLVANUS: Why not?

ALEX: Remember w'a' muh gran'son said 'bou' th' 'skeeters. They can' do us no more 'arm. An' remember Jooseph Smith at Zion's Camp? We mus'n' kill this one either.

SYLVANUS: Just had me a fish a while ago.

ALEX: But no' outa meanness, or 'cause yuh feared it....Lemme look a' 'im — a' 'is eyes. I know someth'n' 'boot these critters....

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

(drawing close to SYLVANUS's arm)

Yes, yuh divil. I see yuh. An' I see yer spiri'....

(to SYLVANUS)

Gi' 'im tuh me now....

(appearing to take the snake from SYLVANUS and bringing it close to his face)

Yuh may no' like me, mister, but I ain' afraid o' yuh. No' any more. I'm resurrected, see. An' tha' makes yuh 'elpless. Yer fangs can' reach me, see...? Wanna 'andle 'im, Sister Annie?

ANN: I'd say you're doing just fine without my help.

ALEX: *(to the snake)* Then go...go yer own way, mister. We'll leave yuh tuh the Lord now....

(He appears to release the snake. Turning in the same direction, all watch the snake crawl away.)

ANN: Praise God...! And how are you, Sylvanus? Didn't recognize you at first either.

SYLVANUS: Never thought they'd pursue me beyond the grave — and now my very own. All I ever did was for the Kingdom. When I protected the Saints with drawn weapons. When I married each of my wives.

ANN: When that Aiken party came along, poor boy, you were only twenty-one. Like Tommy here, the last time I saw him. But tell us, love. We need to know. Have you more to say than you told them at the trial?

SYLVANUS: So you doubt me too? Like all the others?

ANN: You need to reassure us. Particularly my Tom.

ALEX: You go' tuh face 'em again — the folks tha' wi'nessed ag'in' yuh. Those are th' instrooctions.

SYLVANUS: Another trial?

ALEX: *(reading from his papers)* The same trial, says 'ere.

SYLVANUS: Why should I?

ANN: Why, Syl, do you think you were raised up two days ago and directed here?

SYLVANUS: Can't say.

ANN: We prayed you here, that's why. And the Lord wanted you here too, or you'd still be laid out in the Cokeville Cemetery.

SYLVANUS: Think so?

ALEX: Lookee'ere. Do yuh care a' all 'bout yer...*our* kiddies? Muh girl Catherine, yer boy 'ere? An' all the oothers 'oo've come along since then? Look w'ere I go'a go tuh talk tuh soom infidel er oother. Flyin' there like a bird without muh own wings. If I cun do tha', you cun go back tuh Provo.

ANN: Tommy, can I join Alex?

TOM: You really want to. Gramma?

ANN: Something tells me I ought to. It's better than tending my garden all day or flouring my hands while we wait for others to get their head and heart together.

TOM: I'll need to check with...the Dispatcher.

ANN: How?

TOM: *(producing a cordless phone)* Just punch a few numbers. Our discussion's already been recorded. We'll get an answer shortly.

ALEX: Well, Sylvanus. 'ow 'bou' it...?

SYLVANUS: You corralled me. An', sure, I wanna see my kin again — all of'em. If I really thought any of this would make that possible. Just hold off on all your questions.

ANN: Alright, love.

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

TOM: Thanks, Father. You can stay on my train all the way to Provo.

(His phone beeps. He places it to his ear.)

Yes...? Thank you. Brother.

ANN: What did He say, love?

TOM: I'll make you up another ticket, Grandma....

(He hands her a sheaf of documents.)

ANN: What's that?

TOM: History of the Malays. Mostly about their religion. You're Alex's assistant now, and you're supposed to read up on it.

ANN: That's something I've never thought about. Time I did, I guess. Isn't eternity wonderful? There's no end to it — or to what we still have to learn...about practically everything.

ALEX: I feel a su'en chill.

ANN: Are you taking sick, love?

ALEX: No. I'm troobled. No' 'bout that flyin' contraption either. It's wa' cooms after — them pagan 'eathen we 'ave to deal with.

TOM: That's another reason you're being sent there.

ALEX: W'a's tha'?

TOM: Your experience...with the spirits.

ALEX: Though' so.

TOM: Just be as fearless as you were with that rattler.

ALEX: Tha's the thing, laddie. I fear they'll be snakes of a diffen' order -- changed in their shape bu' still doin' immense harm.

ANN: Now I know why I'm supposed to come with you, love. You'll need someone by your side.

ALEX: Aye, that I will...I'm curious on a cer'ain poin' though.

ANN: What would that be, Brother Alex?

ALEX: W'a made yuh soo a'ven'uresome?

ANN: Well, besides all the moves we made and all the children we had, I lost quite a few more while still in the womb. That was always a great sorrow...Just before we left Liverpool, our first child took ill. Little Joseph. Our trunks were already stowed in the ship, and each morning for an entire week we'd have to go to the harbor to see if that was the day we'd sail. The very last night Joseph passed away. I had to give him up for burial to my sister, who hadn't spoken to me since we'd made ourselves Mormons....

(She turns toward the auditorium, focusing on someone just in front of her, and extends her arms, as if holding a small bundle.)

Thanks for coming. Mavis.

WOMAN'S VOICE: I can't believe this.

ANN: I'm very grateful.

WOMAN'S VOICE: Grateful for what? That you're finally rid of this one?

ANN: No. Please.

WOMAN'S VOICE: You have no heart. Or you'd never leave the poor thing like this.

ANN: There won't be time. We sail at dawn. And my heart is broken, believe me. I know you'll give him a decent burial.

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

WOMAN'S VOICE: With his mother already far gone. How do you think that will make him...his spirit feel?

ANN: He'll understand.

WOMAN'S VOICE: And what will people say? The neighbors?

ANN: They'll call you a Saint.

WOMAN'S VOICE: And you something far different.

ANN: I can't let people's opinion decide what's important.

WOMAN'S VOICE: Like those charlatan elders?

ANN: Mavis, I refuse to argue. But thanks. Thank you for burying our boy.

WOMAN'S VOICE: Someone has to, that's for sure.

ANN: And, Mavis. I'll always love and pray for you.

WOMAN'S VOICE: No, I'll pray for you.

ANN: *(handing over her bundle)* That's good, Mavis. I hope you will. Goodbye....

(turning to TOM & ALEX)

We couldn't dwell on it, me and Tom Karren. We had to move on. And, with faith, we always did. I guess that's your answer.

ALEX: Sister Annie, yur a woonder! An' 'ow 'bout you, Thomas, 'ow many chil'ren di' muh Cath'rine give you?

TOM: We had a boy and two girls.

ALEX: Three only? Wa's this worl' coomin' to...?

TOM: We'll miss our train if we don't soon head for Montpelier.

ALEX: Aye, lad.

ANN: And then that flying machine. Will the crossing be as miserable this time?

ALEX: Guess we'll know shor'ly.

TOM: Are you still with us. Father...?

SYLVANUS: Whatever else these people may think. Son, I'm a man of my word.

ANN: Bless you, Sylvanus.

TOM: *(lightly touching his shoulder)* Thank you, Father....

(The lights dim.)

SCENE TWO

(Cape Town. Headquarters of the local Malay Imam. Incense and exotic Javanese music. The lights rise on ALEX and ANN, now seated on large satin, multi-colored poufs. Facing them is a raised throne-like structure before which a sarong-clad female DANCER expressively gesticulates in traditional Balinese fashion, then bows and leaves. An Indonesian CLERIC in Western attire, who has meanwhile stood by the 'throne,' now steps forward.)

CLERIC: We pray you had a pleasant journey.

ANN: We just whisked over those clouds.

ALEX: Like a tooboogan on snow.

ANN: Or whipped cream. Amazing!

ALEX: Truly a wonder!

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

CLERIC: And we hope you've just been duly entertained.

ALEX: Never saw noth'n' like 'er.

ANN: She's very pretty.

CLERIC: You found us, we assume, with little difficulty.

ANN: We came right to your address. Like we had some invisible guide.

CLERIC: Then, by the ever radiant stars, you were meant to be here. You are also most fortunate. Our Great and Unrivaled Sjech Yussuf is with us today and has agreed to grant you a rare audience.

ALEX: From Indonesia, is 'e?

CLERIC: Born there, yes. Brother to the King of Goa in Macassar.

ANN: (*taking notes*) What year was that?

CLERIC: 1626, by your reckoning.

ANN: My!

ALEX: W'a' brough' 'im an' all o' yuh — tuh Africa?

CLERIC: When the barbarian Dutch, who opposed Allah, first invaded Java, they immediately imprisoned His Blissful Blessedness Yussef in the Castle at Batavia. However, so dear was he to the oppressed Bantanese that, fearing an insurrection, the Dutch next exiled The Erudite and All Wise Holy Sage to first Ceylon, then the Cape as a safer remove from his devotees. It is said that on the voyage here the supply of fresh water failed. Dipping his foot in the sea, The Inspired Counselor commanded the sailors to let down their casks in that very spot. To their amazement, the water was perfectly drinkable. Just the first of the many miracles that occurred in The Peerless Benefactor's presence. Here at least The Great Prince, Priest and Spiritual Warrior's remarkable gifts were recognized. His lofty character and dignified bearing quickly won the friendship of the Cape officials, and, with the relative freedom here accorded him, he established a refuge for the exiled Malays and all other children of Allah in South Africa. Ever since, his tomb has been a hallowed shrine. It overlooks the Eerste River from a hillock appropriately named Macassar Downs. Through the centuries an ever growing stream of pilgrims has made its way there.

ANN: So he's been...resurrected too?

CLERIC: Pardon?

ANN: Well, he'd have to be if --

CLERIC: You people have, it seems, a rather shallow concept of Immortality. We consider The Beloved and Constant Guide Yussef to have been forever with us. His Dazzling Radiance does nevertheless regret he cannot greet you in the Paradisiacal Homeland —

ANN: Indonesia?

CLERIC: With its over 30,000 islands, Allah's true Eden, for whose perfumed spices--pepper, clove, nutmeg and sandal wood — and, later, coffee and rubber, other nations evilly subdued us and frequently went to war....His Eminence will shortly join you. Can I meanwhile further assist either you or your wife?

ALEX: She's not muh wife.

CLERIC: No? Normally, His Immaculate Benevolence holds no audience with the... impure.

ALEX: Say now!

ANN: Believe me, sir, there's nothing like that between us. We have common descendants, that's all. And we're here in their behalf.

CLERIC: Still, you traveled here together. Without escort?

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

ANN: We did.

CLERIC: This unusual circumstance will nevertheless be duly noted.

(To ALEX)

The Reverend Father Sjech may require your female companion to veil her face. I'll leave that to his faultless discretion. He'll attend you soon.

(He exits.)

ANN: Such formality.

ALEX: Like he was tryin' tuh pu' us in soom trance with all them 'igh bloown woords. An' I don' need no moor trances.

ANN: I think he's confused his leader with the Almighty Himself... Well, Alex, what's your opinion of these Malays? I never associated them with Africa.

ALEX: Noor I. Di'n' know they existed....

(The CLERIC returns.)

CLERIC: Please stand.

(They do so.)

CLERIC: His Holy Eminence....

(SJECH YUSSUF, an old man with a long beard, wearing a turban-like scarf and a floor length gown with billowing sleeves, enters with slow dignity and, staring straight before him, moves to the throne.

The CLERIC assists him to his seat, then leaves.)

YUSSUF: *(peering about him, then finally taking in ALEX and ANN)* You have a petition.

ALEX: We do.

YUSSUF: You've come a long distance.

ANN: From America.

YUSSUF: We are always pleased to meet new converts.

ANN: Converts, yes. But not to your faith.

YUSSUF: That's why infidels bring petitions.

ANN: Of their own free choice?

YUSSUF: Pray, woman, what do you mean?

ANN: On the trip here I studied up some on your religion.

YUSSUF: Unlike our Middle Eastern brethren, we Malays never force conversion. We only persuade.

ALEX: Tha's no' w'y we're 'ere. I's 'bou' muh wife.

YUSSUF: And your wife is *not* this woman. I'm informed.

ALEX: No.

YUSSUF: Does your wife know of this?

ALEX: She will. An' she'll rejoice.

YUSSUF: *(raising his arms in feigned dismay)* Oh, you Europeans...! So what is your petition?

ALEX: W'a' shou' we call yuh, by th' way?

YUSSUF: Spare me the titles. On your tongues they would only be a mockery.

ALEX: 'Ow so?

YUSSUF: They wouldn't be sincere.

ANN: That's true.

FIRST TRUMP by *Thomas F. Rogers*

YUSSUF: You may call me Joseph. That's what Yussuf means. You may recognize it from the scriptures.

ANN: Genesis.

YUSSUF: The Koran.

ALEX: Well, then, Joseph, Since, despi'e our differen' traditions, we're all dwellers on God's same Earth, 'ave yuh recently by chance no'iced anyth'n' unusual...say, in the last two er three days?

YUSSUF: Unlike you Westerners, the Malay Muslim views time as not, let us say, linear, but as a constant presence, so that what strikes you as new or "unusual" is, for us, always there, though we may not have previously noticed it.

ALEX: Pu' i' this way then: You yerself was boorn in--w'en was tha'. Sister Annie? She takes good notes.

ANN: (*checking her notes*) In 1626.

ALEX: An', like all o' us, after soo many years yuh died, di'n' yuh? Else w'y di' they pu' yuh in a tomb an' erect a shrine — w'ere is i', Annie?

ANN: (*consulting her notes*) On Macassar Downs.

ALEX: Well...?

YUSSUF: From a strictly mortal perspective, that did happen.

ALEX: Well then. From a "stri'ly moor'al perspective," woul' yuh also admi' tha' soometh'n' raised yuh ou'a tha' tomb so's you an' we can now si' in this 'ere room in Cape Town an' talk tuh each oother, mooch like we use' tuh talk with frien's an' neighbors afore our boodily foonctions ceased an' they laid us in th' grave?

YUSSUF: From that same mortal perspective, yes. I would agree.

ALEX: 'Ow duh yuh 'ccoun' then fer our renewed standin' an' sittiri upright again state o' bein'?

YUSSUF: That is a wondrous mystery.

ANN: It's more than that. It's the glorious and universal victory over Death that only one Being by His Supreme Atoning Sacrifice could make possible.

YUSSUF: That's of course *your* understanding. We do not belittle it, nor the Nazarene prophet. But how does any of this bear upon the fate of this man's wife?

ANN: Well, like other Christians — but with more certainty than many — we anticipate with our resurrection, and hope for, a literal reunion of our families and all our kin both from past ages and over the generations that have come and gone since we first walked the Earth.

ALEX: Sister Annie's a fine exam'le. 'Er 'usban', she figures, 'as by now sired o'er a million mortal bein's.

YUSSUF: Impressive indeed. Like our Father Abraham.

ANN: I don't doubt that, with your own venerable age and — you also observe the custom of plural spouses, I believe —

YUSSUF: I have two wives.

ANN: That you and your fellows have a similar claim to... a good many.

YUSSUF: That is so. And in the sacred name of Allah we hold them just as dear.

ALEX: That's, I guess, w'y we was tol' yuh 'ad some kinda oobjection tuh our wishin' tuh claim our own.

YUSSUF: 'Own'? Certainly not. Why should we? If, that is, they are truly *your* 'own' and not someone else's.

ALEX: I 'ave a feelin' yuh already knew w'ere this was leadin'.

YUSSUF: I won't equivocate, Mr. Sims. We too keep careful and accurate records of our and others' kin. And we know about the exiled couple, Moses and Sarah. They are in fact my contemporaries. Never for an

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instant did they wish their daughter, Rebekka, to co-habit with the Dutch infidel--with a certain Otto Ernst Van Graan.

ALEX: (*consulting his notes*) Rebekka an' th' Dootchman Van Graan was, lessee, muh wife's great-gran'parents, four times removed. Moses an' Sarah was still another generation back.

YUSSUF: Our records bear that out.

ANN: Which means, according to my arithmetic, that Brother Alex's wife Lizzie had a mere one part of their blood to 127 parts everything else — including her father's half Irish and then mostly Dutch, with a smattering of other surprising nationalities and races thrown in.

YUSSUF: Quite so.

ALEX: Soo, with that cleared up, there's prob'ly noo objection after all...

YUSSUF: I truly wish, Mr. Sims, that I could accommodate your family's wishes. But I cannot re-fashion, nor would I wish to, the very mandate of Allah, the Supreme Being, as revealed to us by His Incomparable Prophet Muhammed, peace be upon him.

ALEX: Tha's 'ccordin' to yer understanding

YUSSUF: Yes. For which the children of Allah have always been willing and ready martyrs.

ANN: So, Joseph love...

(YUSSUF glares at her.)

ANN: Joseph, I mean. What you're saying is that, whoever has the tiniest bit of Malay ancestry —

YUSSUF: Whoever is a devotee of Allah, not just Malay. You Mormons, particularly, ought to understand that.

ANN: That your people intend to claim such persons as their own, and that exclusively.

YUSSUF: Not only such persons, but *all their offspring* to the very last generation!

ALEX: You mean *muh own* chil'ren, an' *their* chil'ren?

YUSSUF: Thus decree-eth, peace be upon him, the Prophet Muhammed.

ALEX: Boo' is tha' fair?

YUSSUF: It's not, Mr. Sims, a question of what might be 'fair.' It's a question, finally, of Who is God. Your god or Allah. And who should be his devotees.

(The CLERIC reappears with the BALINESE DANCER, now swathed in a number of luminous silk scarves.)

YUSSUF: My worthy associates are just in time.

ALEX: Fer w'a'...?

(The earlier music resumes. The DANCER, now writhing and undulating, draws near to ALEX.)

ANN: My!

ALEX: (*dropping his papers, completely entranced*) Tha's muh snake, fer sure...

ANN: Careful, Alex.

(While the DANCER mesmerises ALEX, she hands a scarf to the CLERIC, who suddenly grasps ALEX's arms and binds them behind him. Meanwhile, YUSSUF has descended his throne and pinned ANN's arms in a similar fashion.)

ANN: Alex! No! Lord, help us!

(The music stops. The DANCER leaves.)

YUSSUF: Your Lord's not here. He will not help you. And you are in our power.

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ALEX: (*coming out of his spell, but only slightly, and still restrained by the CLERIC*) W'a' yuh gonna do with 'er?

YUSSUF: Make you an offer.

(The DANCER returns, carrying a scimitar with a wide, curved blade, which she hands to the CLERIC.)

ALEX: W'a' offer's tha'?

YUSSUF: Your female companion...

(With the DANCER'S assistance, he lays ANN across the poof she earlier sat on, her head extending beyond it.)

...must be the sacrifice if you do not both immediately convert to Allah and forfeit to Him your entire issue.

ANN: Never!

YUSSUF: What do you say, Mr. Sims?

ALEX: Sister Annie, I can' le' 'em!

ANN: Don't give in, Alex. No matter what!

ALEX: Bu' Sister Annie!

ANN: (*to YUSSUF*) I thought you didn't use force.

YUSSUF: Certainly not. We fully respect your agency and offer you a choice, don't you see?

ALEX: So this is yer kinda persuasion. We spit on yer 'persuasion.'

ANN: That's the way, Alex!

YUSSUF: (*to the DANCER*) Hand me the axe.,..

(She does so. YUSSUF lifts the axe over ANN's head.)

YUSSUF: I shall now deliver the blow, sure and swift.

ALEX: No! We'll recoonsider....

ANN: Wait, Alex.

YUSSUF: There's no more waiting.

ANN: (*turning on her back and staring directly at YUSSUF and the poised axe*) Oh, yes, there is, Joseph. You can't kill us..

ALEX: Annie, please!

ANN: Remember that rattler, Alex. And the mosquitoes. We're resurrected beings. And there's no more death.

ALEX: Least tha's w'at they tol' us — our gran'soons.

ANN: Don't you believe them, Alex? Don't you believe in Christ's Atonement?

ALEX: I do, yes, boo'--

ANN: Then show it and repudiate your fear. That's the real snake, Alex, and always was.

(to YUSSUF)

Well, what are you waiting for...?

ALEX: Tha's righ'. W'a' yuh wai'in' fer...?

YUSSUF: (*putting down the axe, to the others*) Untie them.

(The DANCER and CLERIC untie ANN and Alex, then exit with the scimitar and scarves.)

YUSSUF: Please forgive our roughness. It was only a stratagem. The scarves were silk. We tried to be as delicate as possible. It works most of the time--a deftly perfected mode of, yes, persuasion. Rather clever, don't you agree? But you both withstood it, especially the woman.

ALEX: Yer faith was grea'er thun mine, Sister Annie.... (*gathering his documents, to YUSSUF*) W'a' now?

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(The CLERIC reappears.)

CLERIC: Forgive me. Eminence. A most irregular intrusion. I can't account for it. But another party has made his way here and also insists on being part of the present discussion.

YUSSUF: Who, pray?

CLERIC: A Chinese.

YUSSUF: A detestable Chinaman? But why?

CLERIC: I cannot say. But he knows about this gathering and all present. He insists on joining you.

YUSSUF: Where did he get such information? Who could have told him...? Well, allow him into our presence, and we shall see.

CLERIC: *(moving away from them, but still in view and addressing someone in the shadows)* You may enter.
(BAO SHEN KE, middle-aged, sporting a red-tasseled black silk beanie and attired in a traditional floor length Chinese smock, comes into view.)

YUSSUF: You are...?

BAO: *(in a thick Chinese accent)* Bao Shen Ke.

YUSSUF: Your surname is therefore 'Bao.'

BAO: Yes, sil.

YUSSUF: What brings you here?

BAO: I have celtain offspling.

YUSSUF: Not in this case.

BAO: China peopre have gleet intelest in ancestals and offspling.

ALEX: Just a minute. Mr. Boo, was it?

BAO: Yes, yes. Bao.

ALEX: *(consulting his documents)* Do I guess right w'en I say you was boorn in th' early 1700s an' come tuh Cape Town a fairly yoong man?

BAO: You light. You light. How you know?

ALEX: An' yer descendants included a yoong girl, maybe, who married intuh w'a' Dootch line?

BAO: Smyt. It was-a Smyt.

ALEX: 'Ow far removed would yuh then be from Johanna Smyt, muh wife's mother?

BAO: *(counting it out on his fingers)* Ressee, that would-a be, that would-a be daughtel of my son's glandson.

ALEX: Then that would make yuh muh Lizzie's grea' gran' father, three removed.

BAO: Yeah. Thata light.

ALEX: Tha' makes 'er one in th'rty-two parts Chinese. She's more Chinese than Malay, or Muslim.

YUSSUF: But, by her birthright, still a child of Allah.

BAO: I come to craim hel too and arr hel offspling.

YUSSUF: That is ridiculous. Who do you Chinese even pray to? You are the very worst mercenaries. Parasites. Sponges. And always were. The Dutch made you managers of our villages in the homeland.

BAO: China peopre thlifty and wolk hald.

YUSSUF: And relentlessly ambitious. You squeezed every last drop of life blood from our peasants.

BAO: Dutch peopre give quota — so much nutmeg, so much crove, so much lice.

YUSSUF: Lice indeed. And in the cities your merchants always made great profits from the rest of us.

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BAO: China peopre good at business.

YUSSUF: That's what *you* call it? And the European Dutch were no better. They brought us their fatal infectious diseases, including the sexual. And stunk. Oh, how they smelled! While our people wore appropriate light clothing and faithfully performed their daily ablutions, the Dutch officials and their soldiers insisted on outlandish, sweltering frock coats and wool uniforms. The worst insult was that, having few Dutch females along, they co-habited with and occasionally bothered to marry our women. On top of that, the Dutch also found it lucrative to import and addict us to opium.

BAO: Rike Blitish do in China! China peopre much suffel too. 1740, in Batavia, China peopre accused of conspiling against Dutch govelnment. Not so. Not so.

YUSSUF: You had sneaked your fellows into the country with bribes — far exceeding our government's quotas. So they finally had to deport you too — to Ceylon, then here, when not back to China itself.

BAO: Yes, we vely flightened. We know they thlow some China peopre into sea. So we plotest, and Dutch shoot China peopre on open stleet.

YUSSUF: Be that as it may, we do not, nor do we dare, concede that any children of Allah or their offspring be claimed or gathered by other than their *faithful* forebears.

BAO: Too bad. Too bad.

ANN: What about your *Hindu* forefathers, those who... (consulting her notes) ...preceded the Muslims by 1200 years?

YUSSUF: That is simple. From the enlightened perspective taught by the prophet Muhammed, peace be with him, they were, though well intended, nevertheless pagan and in error.

ANN: Like those before them who worshipped tree-gods?

YUSSUF: Exactly. With which, I believe, you would hardly disagree. Of course, by contrast with our brothers in, say, Damascus or Morocco, we are philosophically malleable, tentative, syncretistic and multi-voiced. This enables us to remain inwardly inviolate and to maintain a constant mental poise, which renders any and all other considerations ultimately unreal and unimportant.

ALEX: Like maybe yer claim on our chil'ren?

YUSSUF: It is, you see, this cosmic understanding which enables us to reject your petition without a qualm. Inner serenity is all that matters.

ANN: Your ideas — they're hard to catch hold of.

YUSSUF: Which makes them all the more unassailable, don't you agree?

ALEX: Soo, yull make no concession?

YUSSUF: We cannot. However, you are still welcome to re-examine your own lives and join us in the true Paradise.

ALEX: I've already tasted tha' Paradise, thank yuh. There cun be noon be'er....

(ANN and ALEX move farther downstage. As they do so, the lights dim on the others.)

ANN: So how do you feel now, Brother Alex? About these African spirits?

ALEX: I don' fear 'em like I di' earlier. But they still pertoorb me....Looks like we still 'ave tuh live by faith, don' i'?

ANN: Why, Alex, what ever made you think we wouldn't need to live by faith...? But what can we do now?

ALEX: We'll 'ave tuh stay 'ere.

ANN: In Africa?

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ALEX: Least 'til these folks boodge. I' serves no poorpose tuh return if we canno' claim our own.

ANN: That's true. It's an impasse. A sad impasse....But what saddens me most is, we won't be there in Provo to attend Syl's trial and cheer him on.

ALEX: To *condemn* 'isself?

ANN: To *qualify* himself, whatever it takes, before the only Judge that really matters, and all his kin.

ALEX: W'a' 'boot us?

ANN: To begin with, you and I ought to go somewhere and get on our knees, wouldn't you say?

(The LIGHTS dim)

(End of ACT ONE)

18 additional pages in act two *(it is the trial within the trial -- a very interesting time-warp)*