

PERUSAL SCRIPT

*A High
and
Glorious Place*
A One-Woman Show
by **Elizabeth Hansen**



Salt Lake City

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A HIGH AND GLORIOUS PLACE

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ACT I

SETTING: The small, low ceilinged attic room of a modest farm house in Nauvoo, Illinois, on the evening of February 11, 1846. The door is stage RIGHT with coat hanging from a nail and a window down left. The furnishings are sparse and functional. A small bed, meticulously made; a small writing desk fully fitted-out with writing paper, pen, ink and blotter; one small straight-backed chair with a black shawl draped over the back, a small pot-bellied stove, a small trunk, one small tallow candle in a small candlestick. Everything in here is small and insignificant.

AT RISE: As the lights rise, off stage a word can be made out here and there of a WOMAN and MAN in mid-fight. Then the door bursts open, from downstairs we hear a heated argument.

MAN'S VOICE: There is no room, Hannah!

WOMAN'S VOICE: ...then we shall make room!

(A flurry of petticoats that is ELIZA R. SNOW sweeps in. She wears an apron and carries a pitcher of water. She shuts the door and leans against it, out of breath.)

ELIZA: Contention can...rob the spirit of grace and wisdom and is responsible for catapulting me upwards at least seven times a day.

(She opens the door quickly.)

WOMAN'S VOICE: ...Steeee-!

(Then shuts it.)

ELIZA: Sometimes eight.

(Still out of breath.)

Stairs are like the Almighty, they are no respecter of persons. But for a middle-aged matron, or any middle-aged woman for that matter, stairs represent...Oh, stop pontificating, Eliza, stairs are hell.

(She enters the room, strides to the wash stand and sets the pitcher into the basin.)

I have been immersed in the company of saints this whole day making ready for our compulsory journey west. The Elders have met and continue to meet in the temple, the sisters called a meeting to correlate supplies, the brethren met to determine the wagon situation, add to that any number of individual family meetings around town. I have never known a people such as us Mormons, who delight so in meetings.

(As she speaks she removes her apron, folds it meticulously and lays it on the bed. From the waist of her bodice hangs a man's gold watch attached to a chain.)

Though President Young has forbidden our Female Relief Society, we renegade sisters, I say "renegade" with a smile, have continued our relief efforts to see that all families have the necessities to sustain life. Our only dilemma? There are not enough necessities to sustain life. How the gentiles expect us to survive this brutal winter...Though I am not at all sure that our survival is their goal.

(She crosses to the wash stand.)

Sarah and I were talking...You don't know Sarah, do you?

(Raising the pitcher to the unseen Sarah.)

Sarah Melissa Granger Kimball. Is that not a name to be reckoned with?

(She pours a small amount of water into the basin, rolls up her sleeves and begins to wash her hands.)

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Sarah, my best friend and compatriot, Sarah and I were talking about the remarkable resilience we saints have. This is the third time in our short Mormon history that we have settled in an undesirable place, made it prosper, attracted the gentiles, angered the gentiles and been forced to move. What an interesting pattern we have. What a peculiar people we are. The gentiles hope to disband us, but many of us have left countries, families and former homes for this church and we will not so easily be discouraged. Hopefully we will relocate ourselves far enough away, this time, that the gentiles cannot so easily track us down.

(She looks for the towel, then with a flash of recollection, crosses to the chair and finds it under the shawl.)

For these past three weeks I have been up at five and it has been non-stop till supper.

(She eases into a chair.)

Blessed respite.

(She leans back and closes her eyes.)

O thou fav'rite retirement! palladium of joys
Remov'd from the bustle of nonsense and noise
While so sweetly the moments in silence pass by
When there's nobody here but Eliza and I.

That is one of my favorites. I am quite fond of my verse. It shows great prowess, don't you think?

In my youth I imagined myself a great poet living in London or Paris where I would write and read and converse with other great poets. Doing great work and thinking deep thoughts.

Oft'times, I look around me and wonder how a woman, such as I, from such a heritage, with such varied prospects...

(She looks at her pathetic surroundings.)

This is not the stuff of dreams.

(Looks around again.)

Well, some dreams perhaps...just not mine.

I realize that the thought of me having prospects, marriage prospects, is enough to make the youthful chuckle and the aged sneer, but it is true none-the-less. In my youth I had...

(She surreptitiously counts two on her fingers.)

...proposals.

(She reacts to a snicker in the audience.)

I did. But no suitor was...suitable.

(Ambles back to the wash stand and meticulously lays down the towel.)

I could not comprehend why this was at the time. Father was perplexed. And I was as well. But none of them seemed right.

Then I embraced the gospel and finally understood my selectivity.

(Rolling down her sleeves.)

You see, I doubt if any of my unsuitable suitors have converted to my particular faith. And to be shackled in a marriage which might have prevented my footsteps being led to the truth.

I would prefer a lifetime of physical isolation to an eon of spiritual emptiness.

And so, I have been able to explain away those years of matrimonial deprivation which occurred before my

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conversion as the hand of God intervening on my behalf.

(She pauses a moment.)

But I must admit to a certain...sorrow---

(Catching herself.)

---No, no, more an irritation...

(Crossing to the bed and retrieving a wooden box from underneath.)

...That after my conversion some years ago, flocks of Mormon men did not beat a path to my door.

Granted there was not an abundance of the animal...but still...It makes a body wonder...perhaps discouraged.

I-I-I realize that I was not the comeliest of females. But I was intelligent and...and...honorable...of good family...

(Her thoughts stop her. Then:)

Yes, well...

(Pulls herself together. She sits on the bed, opens the box and searches through the papers within.)

But so that you do not think me entirely without feminine merit, there was, before all of our current troubles, one young man.

(She finds the letter.)

Able Butterworth.

He was a friend and missionary companion of Lorenzo's. You know my brother, Lorenzo, don't you?

(Moves downstage with one letter.)

Oh, you must meet him. He is the most extraordinary person. Intelligent, righteous...a prophet if I ever saw one.

But I was speaking of Able. Tall, sinfully handsome. I have to admit, until he came along I had resigned myself to a life of religion and solitude. It was not until Able that I could actually picture myself...as wife.

(She holds the letter arms-length and reads.)

Ye maidens who are blest with sense,
Wit, beauty and intelligence;
Whene'er you leave the single life,
Be each, a thrifty farmer's wife.
Ye vainer ones, who're fond of show,
Who step as mincing as you go,
If you would make the best of life,
Be, (if you can) the farmer's wife.

Wife...What an illusive state that has been for me.

But why did this condition of matrimony not transpire with Able? I was amiable, generous...of spirit...There was no logical reason...

I prayed, fervently. Yet, he went away.

(Once again, she is halted by past memories.)

Yes, well...

Since then, I have always inwardly thanked Able for giving me the first glimpse of myself as wife, a role that was, of sorts, to come.

(She pauses, smiles devilishly, then hastens to the door and opens it quickly.)

WOMAN'S VOICE: ...---ven!

(She shuts the door.)

ELIZA: Hannah Markham has the wind capacity Gabriel would envy. But they will be quiet by ten.

(Checks her watch.)

Mark my words.

I have never known two bodies that argue as much as Hannah and Stephen Markham. If one said something was red, the other would say it was blue. It's amazing they agree on the gender of their children.

But they do love each other. Of that I am sure. At least I think they do. Oh, I don't know. I have lived in this attic room with the Markhams nearly these two years, and I still do not know if they like each other. Affairs of the heart perplex me.

Suffice it to say that if Providence had willed, it might be my husband and me arguing downstairs about taking the china tea service across the plains.

(As she reviews her thoughts.)

Part of me longs for an argument of that nature.

(She pulls herself out of her melancholy.)

Yes, well...spilt milk...It's stopped snowing.

The stars, with deep amaze,
Stand fixed in steadfast gaze...

(Tries to find the word.)

I never can remember this part here. It talks about how Satan tried to move the stars...

But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until their Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.
The Lord has spoken. It is time to go.

(She eases to the trunk in silence. Starts to open it, then stops.)

Oh, those couplets are not mine, lest you think me a plagiarist. Milton, who should be awarded exaltation for those lines alone.

(Sits on the trunk.)

I believe fervently that God is indeed no respecter of persons...except for the artist. I like to think God smiles a little broader on us artists. Aren't delusions comforting?

Now...to pack.

(Pulling the trunk round.)

That should take all of ten minutes. I had never realized, but there are advantages to being nearly destitute.

(She unpacks a good black dress and lays it on the bed.)

Never a confusion as to what to wear...Lack of clutter...The object of service. Yes, except for starvation, poverty does have its moments.

(Pulls out a lovely white dress.)

I will not leave this behind.

(She continues to unload the trunk.)

I have three brothers, Lorenzo, Lucius Augustus and Samuel Pearce. Lorenzo is in Nauvoo, Lucius and Samuel live with my Mother in Walnut Grove, some 75 miles due East from here.

And I have two sisters. Well actually, I had three, but Melissa, dear, sweet Melissa died in '35. I will always

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remember because it was in that year, April 5th to be exact, that I finally embraced the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, three months after Melissa died.

Losing Melissa and finding Christ. Death and salvation. Sorrow and rapture. To experience two such contradictory emotions in the span of months. I thank the Lord for the resilience of the human heart.

1835. My...Has it been eleven years?

On the night of my baptism, as I lay in bed reflecting on the event...I remembered the water. The sound of it gurgling around my waist...Its clarity. In April you would expect a river to be cold...And it was, at first, very...but then...Never have I, before or since, felt warmer, more inviting water. That night as I lay in bed, I felt an indescribable, tangible sensation. Like...well, like...

(Words fail her.)

That is why it is indescribable. It started at my head and enveloped my whole body. For an instant, I was with God. Then, just as quickly, it flew through my feet, leaving me filled with inexpressible joy.

Immediately, I saw a beautiful candle with an unusual, long, bright blaze directly over my feet. Since floating candles were not a usual occurrence in my room, I asked the Lord what it meant...and I received the following...“The lamp of intelligence shall be lighted over your path.”

I was satisfied.

Is God not a glorious being?

(Her emotion spills forth. Embarrassed.)

Excuse me, but I had a handkerchief.

(She rummages around in the tray. Pulls out a pretty camisole and holds it up.)

Oh! I do beg your pardon!

(Shoves it back down. Looks around and spots her handkerchief on the wash stand. She goes to it and wipes her eyes.)

My two remaining sisters, Percy Amanda, my younger by four years, and Leonora, my elder by three, stand contradicted about the journey west.

Leonora, a staunch church member, and her family will journey with us.

But Amanda, whom I regret is not a member, is opposed to our leaving civilization in the middle of winter for who knows where or what. I believe “damn fool” was the term Eli, Amanda’s husband, used. They wonder why on earth we could not wait until at least the weather breaks. But the invitation to leave has been

(She grabs a newspaper from the desk and reads.)

“Mormons out or death to them all.”

Who could ignore such a heart-felt proposition? There is not a belch in the land that is not blamed upon the saints. I would they might take responsibility for their own societal indigestion.

Scoundrels.

And though I will admit that I shall miss this, my temporal, albeit Lilliputian sanctuary, my forthright reply to Eli was, “If this is civilization then I welcome with open arms the wilderness and savages, for they could not be any worse than the people of Hancock county.”

(Throws the paper on the desk.)

Amanda has invited me to leave Nauvoo not for the West but for her farm. And I could just as well venture an hour further to Mother’s where I could take care of her in her declining years. I have to admit that the

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thought of living with an actual family member is persuasive. There I could stay, write...rest...

To the friends of your childhood--
your country your home,
Go, go and be happy--
'tis folly to roam...

It is a generous offer, and it would be to Mother's house, if any, that I would go if not with the saints. But to stand and see the salvation of God seems to be the only alternative for the present.

I believe.

(Crosses back to trunk.)

Besides my duty is with the saints. To follow the prophet.

As you well know, President Young is a formidable pillar upon whom one can depend. However, he has made it quite clear that, with the responsibilities of being Prophet along with his other wives and children, not to mention the rest of the escaping saints, he will be able to lend meager, if any, support financially to my person.

(A moment.)

And that is how it should be. After all, I am not an invalid. I can pull my weight.

(Beat.)

Yes, well...once again. To pack. To be accurate, it will be more like repacking.

(She refolds and rearranges delicate items in the tray making them as small as possible.)

I only have space in the Markham's small wagon for essentials. And as you can see, all I have are essentials. Oh, I must show you this.

(She carefully unwraps an old military medal and moves straight DOWNSTAGE to show the audience.)

Isn't it remarkable. It's my Grandfather's on my Mother's side, Grandfather Pettibone. Who was in the Revolutionary War.

(She reads from the medallion.)

"For bravery in battle." An understatement I should say...And though it is not emblazoned on the emblem, "for honor, virtue and endurance."

He journeyed to Valley Forge over hard frozen ground and through snow, bare-footed, leaving footprints of blood on the white carpet beneath.

He had a friend who died, poor wretch, of what? Fever, cold, starvation...longing for home, who on the night he died cried out in despair, "I am sick, my feet lame, my legs sore, my body covered with this tormenting itch, my clothes worn out, my constitution broken, I am exhausted by fatigue, hunger and cold. I fail fast, and soon shall be no more! and all the reward I shall get will be, 'Poor Will is dead'."

No more the ruffian foe to meet,
Her tender heart no more to beat
O'er those she loves in death--
A husband, sire, or brother dear,
Pierc'd by the warrior's ruthless spear,
And catch the parting breath.

Over 1,800 good soldiers died that cruel winter. Grandfather was spared, I like to think, for my sake. In all the world's history was there ever purer devotion, holier sincerity or more righteous self-sacrifice, than was

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exhibited in that winter quarters?

(She dabs her eyes and nose.)

I have often wondered if I were a soldier, and indeed I am...a soldier in God's army, how I would have endured such consequences. Such trials of faith. Such longing for home and hearth. How would I fair in such a situation...?

(She gets a chill from the draft.)

What a bitter winter we are having.

(She looks 'round, grasps the newspaper and stuffs it in the window cracks. Regarding the newspaper.)

Well, at least their "hot air" can keep me warm.

(Looking out the window.)

It is as active out there as noonday.

(She checks the time on her watch.)

And here it is coming up on ten.

(As she gazes out the window.)

There are lights at the Weeks. Discussing what is to accompany them west, I presume. Lights at the "70s Hall", Clark's store, and a light is still lit at the Temple. I trust God is giving the Brethren a map.

I will miss my perch. The benefit of living in this high place is it affords the glories of a watch tower.

(She winds the watch.)

Sometimes as I gaze out, I imagine myself as a goddess sitting at the right hand of my husband looking down from the heavens, delighting in all we have created.

(Counting the final winds of the watch.)

Fourteen, fifteen. Fifteen winds. No more no less. I was well-instructed.

I wonder if I shall make any improvements on my world. One looks at this earth and questions if she can improve on the marvels of God's handiwork or simply replicate and sustain them?

Farewell--farewell, I leave you

The time is drawing nigh

When I shall witness sceneries

Beneath a distant sky.

This flowing, sunny landscape

In nature's grandeur spread;

Will meet no more, my raptur'd gaze,

Nor my delighted tread.

But nature's gifts are ample,

And landscapes far away,

Perchance will seem as beautiful--

Perchance will look as gay.

And when I gaze upon them

In all their summer pride;

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They'll seem to speak of days gone by
When thou wert by my side.

(She takes a chill.)

Perhaps I would make the winters or the wool a little less penetrating.

(She rearranges the newspaper in the sill. Again the window draws her gaze.)

Ah...William Gheen has just lit his candle. To abridge his packing, no doubt.

I dare say a head will not "hit the pillow" this evening until well past midnight.

(She leans her head against the sill.)

This place. How cruel...how kind...

This flowing, sunny landscape

In nature's grandeur spread;

Will meet no more, my raptur'd gaze...

(Her thoughts take her elsewhere. For a moment, she lets them. Then, she quickly pulls herself out of her contemplation.)

Sentiment is a precarious station in which to pause.

(She crosses to a small pot-bellied stove to warm herself.)

This migration is not at all unlike when we were forced to leave Missouri on the kind extermination order of Governor Boggs.

You remember Lilburn Boggs don't you? Um-hmm. The fat, balding, blow hard. What was he? Democrat? Whig? What is the difference? He was a politician. Drifting wherever the blustering winds of popularity and power took him.

Wait, wait, I wrote the extermination order in my journal.

(She shuffles through the papers in the desk drawer and finds a small notebook. As she rifles through the pages.)

Here, here it is:

"Headquarters Militia, City of Jefferson, October 27, 1838. Sir, someone or other..."

(She scans the page.)

"The Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state, for the public good."

More like his good.

"Their outrages are beyond all description."

And he goes on and on about our lawlessness and evil doings. Lies. Bold faced lies. I know, I was there. Boggs, a most despicable character. Debased the vile name of politician. We need fewer politicians and more statesmen. Like Adams and Jefferson. Oh, don't get me started on politics.

(She sweeps back to the stove. Its heat is not at all satisfying.)

I could well as warm myself outside.

(She then picks up the last stick of wood.)

The last of it. Little stick you must last me the night.

(She pokes at the fire, then stops.)

Governor Boggs...Meet your reward.

(She tosses the stick into the fire.)

Finally, a use for a politician.

(Grabbing a piece of paper and fanning the fire.)

As I was saying, our migration from Adam-ondi-Ahman, Missouri was in the winter as well. The extermination order was October of '38 we left in December. I remember because I had just gotten a new pair of boots that were ill fitting.

(She fans harder.)

It was freezing, the wind was pitiless. If you know that part of Missouri, the wind goes right through you.

(The fire satisfies her, she stops fanning.)

Father was a member at that time. He left the church in '42, his faith unable to sustain him through the growing persecutions.

Yes, well...But, I digress.

(She sits at the desk and sorts through letters. Separating them into two piles. Those that are written on only one side. The other written on both sides.)

Winter. The wind whipping the snow 'round my skirts. We were standing outside the cabin waiting for Father to hitch the team. We waited outside because the couple from whom we had purchased the cabin a few months earlier, took it back that morning, without returning our money, and did not have the decency to let us wait inside.

Sometimes I do not understand humans or why God made them like He did.

My feet were aching from both the cold and shrinking leather. I had to get them moving, so I decided to start out on foot and walk until the teams came up.

There I was, trudging along in the snow, weighted down by skirt and mood, when about two miles out, I met one of the so-called Missouri Militia, who were really just an organized mob demanding our extermination. This "soldier" accosted me with, "Well, I think this will cure you of your faith." His conceited words and puny mind set my blood to boil.

I stopped, and fueled by the rage of injustice looked him squarely in the eye and replied, "No, Sir, it will take more than this to cure me of my faith."

Well, you should have seen his face. His eyes bugged, his face paled and his jaw dropped until I thought it would worry his horse. And he responded, "I must confess you are a better soldier than I am." But unless he was superior to his fellow soldiers, I did not take it as a compliment.

(Standing close to the stove to melt away the chill.)

The saints migrated to Illinois and settled around Nauvoo. Commerce it was called then.

That was a time. Even amidst the sorrows, we had such hopes. We carved this city out of marsh and swamp. It was to be our place. Our home. A city where the gospel and the saints could thrive, undisturbed. Yes, well...Father and Mother settled in Quincy, about 60 miles South, and Leonora and I found work as seamstresses in Lima, about 30 miles south.

Not long after we settled, Sidney Rigdon, who was a Counselor in the First Presidency, sent for me to teach school. I would teach about 20 youngsters, including the Prophet's children. My heart leapt at the prospect of being so near the Prophet again...and his wife.

(Pulling her shawl tighter.)

It is frigid. Why can't the gentiles tire of us during good weather?

(She turns and takes stock of what must be attended to next. Crosses to the desk.)

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Several hundred saints left Nauvoo a few days ago and are camped along the Mississippi. They were being forced to cross the river during a bad time, several wagons and oxen were lost but no lives, thank the Lord.

(Takes the wooden box back to the bed slips it back under the bed. As she continues, she takes a leather folder from the trunk, returns to the desk and places the "to be saved" letters inside, then, unhurried, returns to the bed and places the folder inside the tray.)

However, that night the strangest weather hit. Cold. Wind more bitter than rhubarb. I thought word would come back that we had lost some saints for sure. But that chilly winter's curse, God's frigid breath, had frozen the Mississippi solid. Never could anyone remember an occurrence such as that.

When the rabble returned early in the morning to continue their unkindly push of them west, there were the saints, crossing the river on the ice, just as plain as you please.

I can just see the gentiles' faces. Watching hundreds of their one-time-friends, now enemies, crossing that frozen torrent, the oxens' backsides waving in the mob's direction. God is good.

We are to start out for the Mississippi tomorrow. I wonder how the river will fare...I cannot swim.

(She holds up her sewing kit.)

I shall hang out my shingle and sew. Ergo, I must have the tools.

(Next, several folded pieces of material.)

I no longer need---

(An idea strikes. She pulls the wooden box from underneath the bed, and places the material inside.)

Yes, I shall take them. They will make excellent patches. And now...?

(She peruses the room, then goes to the desk and scoops up the books.)

Shakespeare. You cannot expect me to travel unaccompanied.

Paradise Lost...seems apropos. Only books 1,3,4 and 5. I lost number 2 and never had number 7. I plan to get "Paradise Regained" when, indeed, we do.

And Alexander Pope.

I know a thing that's most uncommon

(Envy, be silent, and attend);

I know a reasonable woman,

Handsome and , yet a friend.

I'm not sure I take to his verse.

"I know a thing that's most uncommon." "I know a reasonable woman." "Uncommon," "Woman." The rhyme is forced don't you think? Not to mention he's a nincompoop. "I know a reasonable woman." Obviously, he knew no Mormon women, or he wouldn't have deemed it so rare.

But...it was a gift from my Father. It will attend me where ever I go.

And...my treasure.

(She pulls out a lap desk, well used but well taken care of.)

My sanity.

(She opens the lid. It brims with paper.)

Well stocked. One's desk should be like one's heart. Full and waiting to take dictation from heaven.

(She picks up a pen. Regarding it.)

One's faith.

(She picks up a sheet of paper.)

One's will.

(She looks to the ink well.)

I thought I put it... Yes, of course.

(She sails to the desk drawer. No luck.)

I couldn't have lost it.

(She checks the pockets of her dress. Nothing. She panics. Checks the pockets of her coat. Looks under the bed. Everywhere she can think. While on her knees, she closes her eyes.)

Please, Father. Help me remember.

(Her eyes open.)

I did?

(She is skeptical, but goes to her boots next to the door and shoves her hand inside one. She chuckles as she pulls out a wad of newspaper.)

I am wearing these tomorrow.

(She holds the bundle to the audience.)

My foot was sure to find it.

(She closes her eyes.)

Thank you, Father.

(Unwrapping the bundle.)

One's faith. One's will.

(Holds up a small bottle of black ink.)

One's spirit. I am complete. It took my last dime. Others buy food but I say one can "browse with the cows" but you cannot find India ink in the wilderness.

(She removes the cork and smells it.)

Nectar. Do you know why they call it "India" ink? I don't either. I was hoping you would.

(She strides to the lap-desk and places the new ink in the well, then fusses. The sound of a wagon goes by outside. The fire crackles. She listens intently, then checks her watch.)

Ten o'clock.

(She moves to the door and opens it. Not a sound. She checks her watch.)

You see? You can set your watch by them.

(Closes the door.)

I wonder if the tea service will be traveling with us or not. I suppose I will find out in the morning.

(From the tray, she takes a bundle of letters tied with a ribbon.)

It is on evenings such as this that I miss Joseph the most.

(She places them carefully inside the wooden box in the trunk.)

His gentle spirit, his kind eyes. I have never met a man with such eyes.

(She unwraps a silver-handled hairbrush and matching button hook from it's material bundle. She holds up the pair.)

Ah, aren't these lovely. My grandmother's. On my Father's side. I never knew her. She died before I was born.

I wonder how I ended up with these instead of Amanda. I certainly was not the favorite, Nor was I the prettiest. My hair, though adequate, is not fine...

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(She puts them aside.)

No, these do not belong with me. To possibly be lost or buried with me on the plain...if I die. If I am to die.

(Pause.)

'Tis not the tribute of a sigh
From sorrow's bleeding bosom drawn;
Nor tears that flow from pity's eye,
To weep for me when I am gone;

It is holier tithes I crave
Than time-proof, monumental piers,
Than roses planted on my grave,
Or willow drip'd in dewy tears.

For friendship holds a secret cord,
That with the fibres of my heart,
Entwines so deep, so close, 'tis hard
For death's dissecting hand to part.

(Pause. She rewraps them.)

Yes...These belong with Amanda. I will send them along tomorrow.

(Places them by the door. She unties a package she has placed on the bed.)

Saint Vitus dance, where did I ever get these?

(Holding up an enormous pair of Long Johns.)

Good heavens they are Brother Richards. Why are they still... Ah, yes, I remember.

(Her countenance grows somber.)

June 24th, 1844. You may wonder why I recall so specifically such a common Monday. That was the day they took the prophet Joseph to the Carthage jail.

I was waiting for Brother Richards to pick up his order. I was growing concerned, he had always been so prompt. Then Sarah rushed over to tell me that Joseph, along with Brother Richards, John Taylor and Joseph's brother Hyrum had been taken by the Hancock County Sheriff early that morning and they were to return later that evening.

Sarah's words instilled an unexplained dread in my heart. I waited in this very room for word of their return. Of Joseph's return. But none came. I longed to go to Emma to offer some comfort about the fate of her husband and perhaps find some comfort myself as well, but it did not seem befitting.

The city was quiet and calm. Strangely so. My heart quickened at every passing horse. Then on the morning of June 28th, before dawn, I heard a horse gallop through the street. I remember, because I could not sleep so I was writing. I ran to the window in time to see Brother Rockwell disappear toward the temple.

Joseph was dead. Murdered at five p.m. the day before.

Earthly happiness is fleeting---

Earthly prospects quickly fade--

Oft the heart with pleasure beating

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Is to bitterness betray'd!
Ah! me thinks I see you bending
Like a willow o'er the urn;
Yet a heav'nly voice descending
Sweetly whispers "do not mourn."

(Folding the long Johns and setting them on top of the brush.)

I shall give them to him in the morning.

(She looks at her watch.)

The day went so quickly and yet the night does not.

(To busy herself, she folds up the black dress.)

I have had the fidgets all day. I have not been able to sit still for more than five minutes. Excitement at my impending journey, no doubt...

(She looks at her watch, then crossing to the window. Looking out.)

Oh...It's snowing. Yet again. The infernal snow. A blessing at the Mississippi, but a burden in Nauvoo. Lord can you not give us some meteorological encouragement?

(Paces and looks at her watch. She dips the towel in the water and dabs her face.)

Eliza settle down.

Eliza, finish the task at hand.

(She returns to the trunk...all is packed except for the white dress and the tray. She replaces the tray.)

The task is finished. Well, Eliza what an impressive temporal estate you have built.

(She paces toward the desk.)

Forty years of toil and faith and work and this is your Western dowry.

(Her fingers light upon her scriptures.)

But, I have this.

(She picks them up.)

The dowry I treasure is the restored truth of the Book of Mormon. God's words are at my finger tips.

(She opens to a page and reads.)

"I know that which the Lord hath commanded me, and I glory in it. I do not glory of myself, but I glory in that which the Lord hath commanded me...and this is my joy." Alma, chapter 29.

(She holds the book to her bosom.)

Can these words not sustain through the bitterest of affliction. That was my counsel to Father during his turmoil. Can we care about the weather when we read: "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy." What else is there that the body needs?

Peace. Peace comes to mind.

(Standing very still.)

Oh, my Father...

(Something comes to her. She hurries to the desk, scrounges in the drawer and finds an old pencil. She writes.)

Oh, my Father...Why is my heart so troubled?

(The pencil is down.)

Why can I not calm my spirit? Is this inner turmoil the result of a normal apprehension for the journey

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ahead, or is it because I should not depart at this time?

Would I be an ungrateful servant to admit...I do not want to go. This is the third time, Father, and I do not want to go. Joseph said we were to fight in Nauvoo. We would not be pushed out again.

Chas'd into environs, and no where to fly,
Too weak to contend, and unwilling to die,
Oh where will a place for the Mormons be found?
Shall we take to the skies? or retreat under ground?

Will we ever stop? Will we ever find a place? Will Satan's rage against us ever be suppressed? After this journey will there be another and another and another? I do not want to trudge about again. I do not want to start from scratch again. I do not want to be the faithful soldier...again.

(Pause.)

I do not have doubts like these. What is it You are trying to tell me? Do You wish me to stay...or is it that I wish to stay so much that I make it Your wish as well?

(She paces to her bed.)

There is no floating candle tonight.

(To God.)

And I am not satisfied.

(She scoops up her Book of Mormon and hurriedly shuffles through the pages.)

I wonder what insight the Elders within the temple are receiving. Those within are receiving more, I'll wager, than those without.

I wonder if Lorenzo questioning the journey West? Or Leonora? Do they wonder the same thing about me? And what of Emma? Dear Emma, the prophet's "elect lady," so rebuffed by the Elders for her views. Is Emma, who cannot go West, wishing to? And Eliza, who can go...

(Crossing to the bed and sitting. Places the scriptures in the tray.)

President Young was unkind to Emma. They were never great friends. One too proper, one too passionate. Emma was fervent about which direction she thought the church should go. And that was not with President Young. President Young felt all of Joseph's property should revert back to the church. Emma did not. But did this disagreement warrant his words to her? That Emma was Joseph's greatest enemy? That it was because of her persuasion that Joseph gave himself up and was led to Carthage?

No. There were too many evils. It was not only her...It was Governor Ford, afraid of our power, and Marshal Greene, afraid for his position, and Hiram Kimball and Reynolds Cahoon afraid for their property. It was...fear. I should not speak contrary to the Elders but to lay blame on just one...There were too many evils.

(She collects her thoughts. Then she rises and walks downstage.)

Emma was zealous but not wicked.

She detested the "new order of marriage." At first Joseph was hesitant as well. But when God tells you you will be destroyed if you do not obey...Joseph had to obey. He tried to explain to her, but the thought of sharing her husband with another woman was immoral and indecent.

(She crosses to get the Bible from the desk then she places it in the trunk.)

I, too, shared her view until I understood that the importance of it was to progress in the eyes of God. To partake of the bounties of the spirit, not of the flesh. Some have abused the order, and they will have to

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answer for that. But when ordained by God, as it was in the time of Solomon and David, it is sacred...not sinful.

(A hesitation. She takes the white dress and spreads it carefully on the rug.)

In retrospect, we should have told her. Joseph and I should have been forthright about our marriage and told her.

(Painstakingly folding the dress.)

She so loved Joseph. She felt betrayed by me. She had given me home and hearth and in return I caused my friend bitter anguish. She removed me from her house, and I felt sorrow but no rancor. After all, Joseph loved her...more.

When Joseph was martyred, our hearts were broken, Emma's soul was broken.

(She nearly collapses.)

I miss him so. His calming hand on my shoulder. His loving chastisement. His eyes. His eyes...Like the eyes of God that peered into my soul, knew my faults and cherished me still.

Why was he taken? What was the need? And do not quote me revelation.

(Rising to her knees, defiantly.)

I have the revelation, I know the scripture. Why was he taken from us? From our hearts. From my heart! From mine!

(She grabs the white dress.)

White is not for me.

(She hurls it aside.)

I am too old for white.

(Rising.)

Dreams do not come true. Hope does not spring eternal. Men are that they might have pain. And I have had enough of pain!

I have sacrificed everything, my family, my property, my self. And in return my reward is emptiness.

Happiness has been taken from me. Always from me.

(She paces.)

It is time for me to decide. Me. I am the one left alone, I am the one left without! I have no status, no real husband, no home! I have memories and a trunk load of inconsequential things!

(She stops dead center.)

I will not go, Father. What need is there? I am no leader. I am no one of any promise. You will have to do without Eliza, for I will not go. I will go to Amanda's or Mother's. Mother needs me. The saints do not need me. The church does not need me. You do not need me.

To the friends of your childhood--

your country your home,

Go, go and be happy--

'tis folly to roam...!

Lights out.

End Act I.

(Act Two has another 12 pages)